

**Managerial competencies among first-line news managers
in South Africa's mainstream media: A newsroom
management framework**

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Abstract

In recent years, a number of changes characterised the business management environment nationally and internationally. These include global expansion of business activities, business alliances and expanding business interests across industries. Related changes also characterise the media environment. These comprise (amongst others) technological changes; globalised business interests and activities; increasing numbers of news events to be covered and increasing competition to do so. South African media enterprises have not escaped these changes. In fact, they face an additional challenge to adjust to changing political, economic and social landscapes that characterise South Africa post-1994.

Business owners and managers thus increasingly realise that people are among their most important assets and resources, and that they should manage these resources properly. However, traditional management approaches (also in the media) often neglected this aspect, as management styles were autocratic and top-down. Businesses are therefore now required to fit human resources management into a paradigm that benefits both staff and the enterprise.

To achieve this, managers need expertise in six managerial competencies rooted in general management theory. These are communication, planning and administration, strategic action, teamwork, global awareness, and self-management. This study aimed to measure the importance attached to and current implementation of these competencies by first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media. This was done among first-line news managers and reporters from a representative sample of South African mainstream media titles.

Effect size analyses identified gaps between the importance and implementation for all six competencies. In many cases, qualitative data from interviewees on higher management levels of media enterprises confirmed these gaps. This implies that human resources management in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms is currently neither effective nor efficient.

Abstract

The study concludes with a proposed newsroom management framework based on the six managerial competencies measured. It is argued that implementation thereof could improve human resources management in newsrooms. This, in turn, could enable South African media enterprises to produce and distribute more professional news products to the benefit of internal and external stakeholders.

Opsomming

Bestuursbevoegdhede onder operasionele bestuurders in Suid-Afrika se hoofstroom media: 'n Raamwerk vir nuuskantoorbestuur

'n Aantal veranderinge kenmerk die hedendaagse bestuursomgewing. Dit sluit in die internasionalisering van sake-aktiwiteite, besigheidsvennootskappe en 'n uitbreiding van sakebelange na verskillende bedrywe. Soortgelyke veranderinge kenmerk ook sake-aktiwiteite in die media. Dit hou, onder meer, verband met tegnologiese vooruitgang; uitbreiding van sakebelange en –aktiwiteite oor landsgrense heen, en 'n toenemende aantal nuusgebeure wat te midde van sterk kompetisie deur die media gedek moet word. Die Suid-Afrikaanse media spring nie hierdie veranderinge vry nie. Inteendeel, die bedryf staar 'n addisionele uitdaging in die gesig, naamlik om aan te pas binne politieke, ekonomiese en sosiale veranderinge in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika.

Sake-eienaars en bestuurders besef toenemend dat mense van hul belangrikste bates en hulpbronne is, en gevolglik behoorlik bestuur moet word. Tradisionele bestuursbenaderings (ook in die media) het egter nie noodwendig hierdie siening ondersteun nie. As sodanig, is bestuurstyle dikwels gekenmerk deur outokrasie. Sake-ondernemings word dus nou uitgedaag om mensehulpbronnebestuur op 'n benadering te skoei wat beide personeel en die onderneming bevoordeel.

Om dié doel te bereik, moet bestuurders vaardig wees in ses stelle bestuursbevoegdhede wat in algemene bestuursteorie gesetel is. Hierdie bevoegdhede omsluit kommunikasie, beplanning en administrasie, strategiese aksie, spanwerk, globale bewustheid, en selfbestuur. Die studie het ten doel gehad om die belangrikheid te toets wat aan hierdie bestuursbevoegdhede gekoppel word. Die huidige implementering daarvan deur operasionele bestuurders in Suid-Afrika se hoofstroommedia is ook ondersoek. Dit is gedoen onder operasionele bestuurders en verslaggewers uit 'n verteenwoordigende steekproef van media-organisasies.

Opsomming

Ontleding van effekgroottes dui op gapings tussen die belangrikheid en implementering van al ses bestuursbevoegdhede. In baie gevalle bevestig kwalitatiewe data uit onderhoude met bestuurders op hoër bestuursvlakke hierdie gapings. Dit impliseer dat mensehulpbronnebestuur in Suid-Afrika se hoofstroom media tans nie effektief of doelmatig is nie.

Gegee hierdie bevindinge, stel die studie 'n raamwerk voor vir nuuskantoorbestuur. Die rasionaal is dat implementering van die bestuursbevoegdhede kan bydra om mensehulpbronnebestuur in Suid-Afrikaanse nuuskantore te verbeter. Dit kan daartoe lei dat Suid-Afrikaanse media-organisasies 'n meer professionele nuusproduk vervaardig en versprei, wat tot voordeel van interne en eksterne belangegroepe is.

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Mark 5:34: *Jesus said to her, Daughter, you took a risk of faith, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed! Be healed of your plague.*

(The Message, Peterson, 2002:1833).

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Chapter 1:

Introduction and orientation

South Africa is a different country to what it was 10 years ago. And newsrooms need to reflect that – not simply by how many black and female faces make up our teams and are sourced in our media, but also in how we work together.

– **Ranchod** (2003:10)

In the last ten years we have seen media owners and managers grapple with varying degrees of success with managing media in a democratising and developing country. In general there is a tendency towards short commercial imperatives and profit making at the expense of long term planning for sustained viability and profitability.

Managers need to develop better managerial skills.

– **Kupe** (2004:38)

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the importance and implementation of six managerial competencies in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. These competencies are inherent to general management theory, and encompass communication, planning and administration, strategic action, teamwork, global awareness, and self-management. The importance and implementation of these competencies were tested among respondents from the first-line news manager and reporter tiers of a sample of mainstream media titles in South Africa. This was done to develop a newsroom management framework for South African mainstream media, given the gaps between importance respondent groups attach to these competencies, and the current implementation thereof by first-line news managers.

This chapter provides the background and motivation to the study. It furthermore focuses on the research objectives and research hypotheses in light of the problem

statement described. These elements form the framework against which the research methodology is delineated and suggestions for future research are made. The chapter concludes with the division of the study by means of a chapter outline.

1.2 Definition of research terminology

For the purposes of this study, the following operational definitions apply.

1.2.1 Managerial competencies

Within the framework of this study, managerial competencies refer to sets of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes (first-line news) managers need to be successful. These competencies specifically relate to communication, planning and administration, teamwork, strategic action, global awareness and self-management (Hellriegel, Jackson & Slocum, 2005:4-5; Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Kloppe, Louw & Oosthuizen, 2004:5; Oosthuizen, De Bruyn, Jacobs & Kruger, 2002:29-32).

To be more specific, individual managerial competencies comprise of (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:4-5; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:5; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:29-32):

1.2.1.1 Communication

Communication refers to the effective transfer and exchange of information to promote understanding between managers and employees. This is crucial in media management (Markus, 2001:15). Peters (2004:5) substantiates this statement as follows: "Reporters complain that editors communicate with them exclusively through e-mail, (while) ... top editors complain that they are the last to know about problems that might profoundly impact (on) the enterprise".¹ In comparison, one of the characteristics afforded to "successful" news managers is their "human" approach to newsroom communication – personal contact, interaction and discussions with

¹ For the purposes of this study, the terms "enterprise" or "enterprises", "organisation" or "organisations" and "company" or "companies" are used synonymously to the terms "business" or "businesses".

employees (Young, 2003:26-29; Fink, 1996:96). Internal communication also needs proper attention in South African newsrooms. In an environment traditionally characterised by strained relationships between newsroom management and staff, open communication channels could increase sensitivity and understanding. Moreover, the potential for conflict and misunderstanding due to different cultural backgrounds necessitates proper communication to foster trust and credibility (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:63). This competency is discussed in detail in chapter four of the study.

1.2.1.2 *Planning and administration*

Planning and administration as a managerial competency refers to managers' ability to decide "what tasks need to be done, determining how (these) can be done, allocating resources to enable them to be done, and then monitoring progress to ensure that (these) are done" (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:17).² This includes gathering and analysing information, solving problems, and properly managing time and financial resources – all important aspects to the media industry and media management (Hollifield, 2003:136; Fink, 1996:78; Rankin, 1986:33). A new ownership class, increased competition for advertising and market share, and lower profit margins all necessitate sound financial management skills. As is the case among international media enterprises, these aspects are all prevalent in the current South African media environment (Berger, 2004a:36). Flowing from these, news managers need good time management skills to manage an increasing workload amidst tighter deadlines (see Du Toit, 2003:25; Steyn & De Beer, 2002:53). This competency is discussed in detail in chapter five of the study.

1.2.1.3 *Strategic action*

Strategic action requires insight into the enterprise's vision, mission and values (ensuring that management actions are aligned accordingly) as well as into the

² This description serves as the operational definition for planning and administration as a managerial competency in the context of this study. As such, the dimensions of planning and administration outlined by Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:17) are perceived more from a general management perspective than from a financial management angle. The financial management qualities of this competency do subsequently not feature as strongly as financial management experts might expect (also see the discussion in section 5.3.4).

industry (e.g. see Küng-Shankleman, 2000 on the role of organisational vision, mission and culture in managing the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] and Central News Network [CNN]). It also requires managers to take visionary leadership, especially when it comes to change management (Bridle, 2006:45; Gade, 2004:6). *The New York Times* Group primarily had this in mind when it implemented webcasts to inform employees of its vision and mission, and provide them with continuous information on the company's performance (Jones, 2003:14-17). However, as Du Toit (2003:25) points out, involving news managers in strategic thinking and planning processes is something new to the South African media. As a result, more attention should be paid to this competency. It is discussed in detail in chapter six.

1.2.1.4 Teamwork

Teamwork relates to accomplishing tasks through small groups who work interdependently and who are collectively responsible to achieve set goals and/or objectives (Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopfer, Ivancevich, Lorenzi, Skinner & Crosby, 2001:18). Specific dimensions include team design, a supportive teamwork environment and team dynamics (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:18-20). Whereas the media of the past (also in South Africa) was characterised by "lone wolf" reporters covering news events (see Gade, 2004:10) the teamwork approach becomes more common in modern-day media environments. Underwood (1995:x) refers to "team journalism", where editors, for instance, work with reporters and graphic designers to produce "a slick and stylised editorial product". In the United States (US), "newspapers across the country have embraced the team concept. If implemented effectively, (it) can energise employees, ... enhance quality and encourage ... innovation in ... newsrooms" (Thompson, 2001:7; also see Fink, 1996:80). However, poor implementation can de-motivate employees, resulting in less creative energy and inferior work. This competency is discussed in detail in chapter seven of the study.

1.2.1.5 Global awareness

Global awareness refers to managers' ability to draw resources from different countries and regions and serve markets across multiple cultures, appreciate cultural

knowledge and cultural sensitivity (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:21). Although South African news managers need sound knowledge and understanding of international cultures, they especially need insight into the multicultural and multilingual nature of South African newsrooms and media audiences (Nsidi, 2002). As Ranchod (2003:8) points out, all these cultural groups have stories that need to be told. The media should tell it in such a way that it facilitates understanding between different groups in the country. This can, however, only happen if news managers and reporters are skilled in the global awareness competency. If they lack understanding of their multicultural environment, media personnel could struggle to adequately perform and properly reflect on events typical to the South African society. This competency is discussed in detail in chapter eight of the study.

1.2.1.6 Self-management

Self-management requires managers to take responsibility for their professional and private lives (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:24-25). As such, it entails that staff (especially managers as leaders) act with integrity, and base their actions on clear ethical conduct. It also requires them to display personal drive, lead a balanced work and private life, and take responsibility for developing their skills (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:24). This is especially needed at a time when employees across different industries (also in the media) experience increased conflict to fulfil their personal and professional responsibilities (see Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli & Den Ouden, 2003:195-211 with regard to this challenge among newspaper managers). In the South African media context this competency is also needed to keep political and other celebrities (also those in the media) true to their moral claims (Makhanya, 2003:12). If news managers take responsibility for their actions, they will be more confident to admit mistakes and enforce ethical conduct among reporters (see Nel, 2003:15; also see Gaziano & Coulson, 1988:871). This competency is discussed in detail in chapter nine of the study.

1.2.2 First-line news managers

First-line managers are employees who “are directly responsible for the production of goods and services” (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:12). Within the context of this study,

these refer to news managers (e.g. news editors, assignment editors, section editors or night editors) responsible for the "production" of news by reporters or rank-and-file employees as referred to in the US context (see Herrick, 2003:39). Due to flatter organisational structures typically found in newsrooms, first-line news managers often also perform activities traditionally associated with middle management tiers in other enterprises. As such, Peters (1999:9) points out that this is "the worst job in journalism". On the one hand, these managers are responsible to meet the needs and expectations of subordinates (i.e. reporters, camera people and other technical staff). On the other, they are also required to adhere to the professional needs and expectations of top level management and owners. First-line news managers also need to satisfy demands and expectations from more diverse audiences, and a more demanding and diverse workforce. This happens amidst constantly changing media conditions. These relate to technological changes, a shrinking newshole³ and expanding news agenda, as well as increased competition for news and profitability (see Serafini, 2004:24; Campbell, 2000:56; Underwood, 1995:30). Moreover, news managers are expected to accomplish increasing volumes of work with fewer human (and often other) resources. In light of this, first-line news managers who participated in Peters' (1999:9) newsroom study indicated that this position is probably one of the most challenging in the media industry today. Issues related to these challenges are discussed in chapters four to ten of this study.

1.2.3 South African mainstream media newsrooms

In the context of this study, South African mainstream media newsrooms refer to newsrooms of daily and weekly newspapers, consumer magazines, radio stations, television channels, on-line media and mainstream news agencies. Sections 1.7.3 and 1.7.4 provide a detailed discussion of the parameters according to which these media newsrooms were selected (also see sections 3.3.1; 3.4.1 and 3.4.2). Only including mainstream media newsrooms in the study was motivated by the fact that

³ Newshole refers to the space available to a specific media type to report on news events (i.e. the news agenda) (Fink, 1996:206). For newspapers, for instance, this refers to the number of pages available to cover news events for a specific period of time (either daily in the case of daily newspapers or weekly in the case of weekly newspapers). For television channels, for instance, it refers to the length of a news bulletin, as well as the number of news bulletins allocated in programming schedules. Given increased costs associated with news production (either in terms of human resource or technical costs), the newshole for different media types is shrinking. More careful planning and consideration is thus needed to fill the newshole given an expanding news agenda.

these media enterprises employ more full-time salaried workers and operate under different conditions than community media (also see section 1.8).

1.2.4 Newsroom management

Hellriegel *et al.* (2001:8) define management as “the tasks or activities involved in managing an enterprise, namely planning, organising, leading and controlling”. For purposes of this study, newsroom management refers to planning, organising, leading and controlling tasks and activities in a newsroom environment. Fink (1996:77) provides a more focused definition of newsroom management, by indicating that this term involves the “efficient use of all resources at every level to move the (news enterprise) toward planned organisational goals. Resources include people, money, time, the goodwill of readers and advertisers – and increasingly these days – the new technology revolutionising the industry”. It is argued in this study that effective newsroom management is only possible if managers are aware of, comprise of and properly implement certain management tasks related to the six managerial competencies defined in section 1.2.1.

1.2.5 Respondents

Throughout this study, the terms “respondent” or “respondents” refer to first-line news managers and reporters who participated in the research by completing and returning self-administered questionnaires (also see section 1.7.2.2.1).

1.2.6 Interviewees

Throughout this study the terms “interviewee” or “interviewees” refer to those senior members of staff at each media title with whom qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted (also see section 1.7.2.2.2). Given prior arrangements that no statement or perspective would be linked to individuals, their newsrooms or their media enterprises, no references are provided for statements by individual interviewees. In these cases, it is merely stated that “interviewees indicated/mentioned/highlighted ...”. With regard to interviews for the 2002 South African National Editors’ Forum (Sanef) National Journalism Skills Audit (see Steyn &

De Beer, 2002),⁴ references are, however, provided. Discussions with Audit 1 interviewees did not reflect on their own capabilities or management approaches.

1.3 Background to the study

The need for effective and efficient management in any enterprise needs no motivation, as it is the tool through which organisational resources are steered to achieve organisational goals and objectives. As such, media management is the tool through which media enterprises achieve organisational goals, and thus needs little motivation either. In fact, a recent study in the US found that effective and efficient management is an important contributing factor in media enterprises' success or failure (Fedler, 2003). The study found that only 29% of US employee-owned newspapers founded in the twentieth century survived the turn of that century. Insufficient management was one of the main factors contributing to the failure of the remaining 71% (see Fedler, 2003).

1.3.1 *Changing management approaches*

With the advent of the twenty first century (and concomitant global changes) business owners and managers are faced with an additional dilemma. This takes on the form of a quest for effective and efficient management styles and structures. In order to survive amidst changing political, economic and social dispensations and among conditions of increased competition, enterprises need to successfully address this challenge. The media is no exception.

Fortunately, more enterprises realise that a large percentage of organisational success lies in their human resources capacity. As a result, their focus shifts towards attracting, developing and keeping talented and loyal workers (Von Bormann, 2004a:28-34; Claassen, 2002; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:5; Stamm & Underwood, 1993:528). Many media enterprises similarly realise that motivated staff are crucial in achieving organisational goals by improving quality, productivity and profitability

⁴ Hereafter Audit 1. This Audit was conducted to investigate the reporting, writing and accuracy skills among (especially junior) reporters in South Africa's mainstream media. It became clear, however, that improper human resource management is a main contributing factor to the level of professional media output.

(Fink, 1996:145). This is especially the case given higher self-interest and job ideals/expectations among employees than was the case some decades ago (e.g. see Codrington, 2004:36-37; Warhover, 2003).

This approach directly contrasts “older”, top-down management approaches (in the media and elsewhere) where employees were “managed by fear” (Cameron, 2003). As such, enterprises now focus on more open, democratic and participative management styles that acknowledge, accommodate and manage employee needs and expectations (Rensburg & Cant, 2003:178; Rue & Byars, 2000:236; also see Gallet, 2002; Els, 2002; Geldenhuys, 2002 for how role-players in the South African media view this shift).

In the US for instance, CNN “reorganised” a senior employee, Richard Kaplan, out of his position because he still followed an autocratic management approach. Moreover, he was said to be “arrogant ... and difficult” and “could explode on people” (Farhi, 2000:42-45). Clear distinctions on this issue were also identified in the South African media during research for Audit 1. At media titles with an autocratic management approach, editors/news editors could not understand “what is wrong” with today’s young people who have no respect for or loyalty to the media enterprise (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:53). On the other hand, media titles with more participative management approaches seemed to experience organisational success on many levels. Editors/news editors at these titles highlighted financial success, while employees were committed, loyal and enthusiastic about their jobs (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:53).

1.3.2 The quest for a new media management paradigm

However, given the traditional top-down management approaches found in the media, the above is not an easy transformation. Media researchers, academics and practitioners currently “struggle” to fit newsroom management into a new paradigm (e.g. see www.aejmc.org for research papers presented on this topic during the 2003, 2004 and 2005 Annual Conventions of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication [AEJMC]). This paradigm should provide that

the enterprise, its employees, its audience and ultimately society at large benefit from improved professional output (see Ratlou, 2005:51).

This ideal is, however, clouded by the contradiction media enterprises find themselves in. On the one hand, the media is responsible for promoting diverse perspectives and viewpoints among citizens (i.e. media audiences).⁵ This keeps them informed about the world around them. However, on the other hand (and since as early as 1897), voices are raised that the media's financial operations, activities and involvement is "turning journalism upside down" (Herrick, 2003:5). This often causes tension between professional newsroom staff and media owners (see Liebes, 2000:295).

Today, this is probably more the case than ever before in light of emphasis on profit, increased competition and growing media conglomerates. As one editor interviewed for Audit 1 put it: "Journalism has lost its social cause. Whereas it used to be about making a difference, it is now about getting rich" (Khumalo, 2002).

1.3.3 Media management in a South African context

As can be seen from the above statement, the South African media does not escape the controversies outlined above. South African media post-1994 experiences continuous change, ranging from diversity in ownership, legislation, titles, employment equity, media coverage, and global/international exposure to the audiences it serves (Kupe, 2004:38; Berger, 2004a:36; Von Bormann, 2004a:28-34; also see *The International Journal on Media Management* (2003, 5[2]); Cameron, 2003; Brown, 1992:46 for perspectives on how these issues impact on international media enterprises). Findings from Audit 1 therefore implied that newsroom management in the South African mainstream media needs to improve for the media to fulfil its rightful role in a democratising society (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:62-65; also see De Beer & Steyn, 2002; Steyn & De Beer, 2003; 2004 for additional research on this issue). One editor interviewed for Audit 1 felt so strongly about this

⁵ Obviously, "the media" in itself can not perform this role, as it comprises of outlets (e.g. newspapers, radio stations, television channels) through which audiences are informed and entertained. This responsibility rather lies in the hands of media owners and staff who communicate viewpoints through these outlets to promote diverse perspectives.

issue that he indicated that the "legacy of neglecting proper news management now impedes on the level of newsroom performance" (Whitfield, 2002). Another editor contributed the lack of journalism skills to a lack of media management skills (More, 2002).

1.3.4 Factors challenging media management in South Africa

Media transformation is a long-term process, and some commentators argue that many issues still need to be successfully addressed before media enterprises in South Africa and elsewhere can operate optimally (e.g. see Albarran, Chan-Olmsted & Wirth, 2006; Kupe, 2004:38; Berger, 2004b:1; Tyler Eastman, 2002:102-105). This specifically became apparent during the so-called Sun City Indaba between government and Sanef in 2001. During this indaba government expressed criticism and concern that the media does not properly cover events in the South African society. Moreover, they complained that the media (from their perspective) tries to portray government (and its activities) as negatively as possible (see Makhanya, 2003:13). These discussions formed the main catalyst for Audit 1.

From a theoretical point of view, the following issues are said to contribute towards the problem of insufficient newsroom management in South Africa (e.g. see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:1-3; Tomaselli & Shepperson, 2002:190-213; Berger, 2002:254-277; Steenveld, 2002; Proctor Simms, 2002; Megwa, 2001:281-285; also see Thornton, 2003; Peters, 1999 with regard to the international situation).

1.3.4.1 A lack of skills

Results from Audit 1 highlighted a lack of skills among (especially junior) reporters to properly identify, gather and present news events in a professional manner. These particularly related to a lack of reporting, writing and accuracy skills (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:9). More specifically, skills shortage was also identified with regard to (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:12-23):

- Aspects of general knowledge and skills to properly contextualise news events;

- Knowledge and insight into ethical issues and how the media should report on it;
- Sensitivity towards typical South African issues (e.g. HIV/Aids) and how the media is supposed to report on those; and
- The ability to produce a fair and balanced news story in which all relevant issues and angles were taken into account.

1.3.4.2 *Transformation in the media industry*

The South African media industry post-1994 witnessed transformation in a number of areas. In general, transformation was characterised by liberalisation in terms of:

- Changed legislation guiding media enterprises and their activities (see Li, n.d.:1; Steyn & De Beer, 2002:22);
- Increased focus on employment equity, both in terms of race and gender. Media enterprises subsequently introduced a number of equity programs and policies (see Kupe, 2004:38). This inevitably affected newsroom activity and output (see section 1.3.4.1; also see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:24);
- Increased media coverage of local and international events as a result of globalisation and the opening of international markets for news, information and entertainment (Berger, 2004a:36; Von Bormann, 2004a:28-34). This was also brought about by changes in the South African society, resulting in a changed media audience with changed needs and expectations (see section 1.3.4.3);
- Liberalisation of ownership structures. The media during apartheid was characterised by "state control of especially the electronic media, ... big business monopoly of the English press" (Louw, 1993:1) and the majority of the Afrikaans language press "in favour of the National Party government" (Louw, 1993:2). However, already in the early 1990s, calls were made for liberalisation of media ownership. Towards the start of the twenty first century this increasingly became a reality. A variety of national and international role players gained ownership access of South African media. This affected the media on a number of levels. Firstly, large corporations and financially strong

individuals have the financial muscle and diverse resources to ensure the success of their ventures. Unfortunately, these (especially international) owners' interest in the media often does not go beyond maximising profit (e.g. see Pillay, 2002). This results in increased pressure on employees to perform and deliver the news product. Secondly, a new breed of owners are said to lack experience and understanding of the media industry. Moreover, they lack insight into the history and format of specific media titles. As a result, they lack the ability to manage these titles optimally (e.g. see Abraham, 2002). These issues inevitably also impact on the management of human (and other) newsroom resources;

- Media convergence, brought about by changed technology. The pace of technological development also impacts on media activities;
- Changing newsroom cultures, linked with changed roles and expectations among newsroom staff. Results from Audit 1 highlighted that newsroom subordinates expect media enterprises to offer them more than financial remuneration. Moreover, they expect their superiors to manage them (and the news product they produce) differently (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:48); and
- Increasing criticism of the media industry and how it addresses national and international events. As indicated in section 1.3.4, this was one of the major contributing factors to the start of discussions between the government and Sanef on how to improve the level of professional output in the South African media.

All these factors put increasing strain on newsroom staff to be skilled and experienced in what media enterprises expect of them.

1.3.4.3 *Socio-economic challenges*

In the context of this study, these challenges relate to an emerging group of media staff and audiences. These groups do not necessarily belong to a particular cultural or racial group. Instead, they see themselves as professionals/media users *per se* who interpret news issues *vis-à-vis* new social and economic circumstances (see Makhanya, 2003:12). Whereas the political and socio-cultural situation in the country influenced reporters', managers' and audiences' view of life during apartheid, post-

apartheid media professionals and audiences seem less clamped down by political and other baggage. On the one hand, socio-economic and political changes impact on the way newsroom staff and audiences view their personal (and professional) situations. On the other hand, it also seems to impact on the way in which they form their perspectives on reality (e.g. see Jacobs, 2002; Pretorius, 2002; Nsidi, 2002). While some commentators see this as a positive situation (e.g. see Pretorius, 2002), others express concern that a lack of political knowledge and experience might prevent the media from playing its rightful role in post-apartheid society (e.g. see Jacobs, 2002). Others are also of the opinion that affirmative action, empowerment, and fast-tracking policies and programmes might leave a skills gap which could take a long time to fill (see Barrell, 2002).

Linked to the above is the increase in celebrity culture and absence of role models whom junior reporters (and increasingly also news managers) can imitate or who can personally mentor and coach them to acquire professional skills (see Wrottesley, 2002; Barrell, 2002).

1.3.4.4 News, staff, and infrastructure management

Changes in news coverage, human resource management and management of infrastructure over the last decade or two necessitate that these issues are analysed. This specifically relates to issues such as technological convergence and the introduction of new technology (e.g. see Omar, 1999), increased media competition, and a growing number of news events (with potentially widespread impact on society) that call to be included on the national and international media agenda. This inevitably calls for new management approaches – not only with regard to human resources, but also in terms of news and infrastructure.

1.3.4.5 Apparent juniorisation of newsrooms

Newsroom juniorisation results from high staff turnover, empowerment and fast-tracking policies. Results from Audit 1 highlighted that juniorisation is a reality among reporters (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:25). However, results from the 2005 Sanef Skills Audit Phase 2: Managerial competencies among first-line news managers in

South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms (Steyn, De Beer & Steyn, 2005a)⁶ indicated that this is also the case among first-line news managers. Results from Audit 2 also indicated that issues such as staff turnover and fast-tracking policies impede on first-line news managers' performance. However, inexperienced reporters, increasing deadline pressure and competition add to the pressure on first-line news managers to perform effectively and efficiently.

1.4 Problem statement

Within general management theory, properly addressing human aspects of management is integral to organisational success (DuBrin, 2003:6; Rue & Byars, 2000:4). Audit 1 illustrated this with regard to the South African media. Since then, a number of local media researchers and practitioners also underlined the need to properly address these issues (e.g. Kupe, 2004:38; Nel, 2003:14-16; Du Toit, 2003:24-25; Whitfield, 2002; More, 2002; Steyn, Steyn & De Beer, 2004). However, this is not an easy process in a media management context. On the one hand, few media enterprises demand, coach, embrace or reward human aspects of management (Peters, 2004:30). Moreover, managers do not necessarily obtain management skills from previous experience (Rankin, 1986:24), despite the importance thereof (see Radipere & Van Scheers, 2005:410). As such, improved managerial competencies could address these dilemmas and assist in better management performance (Akande, 2001:10; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:26). This could lead to increased organisational effectiveness and efficiency – the goals of any successful enterprise, also the media (Louw, 2002:109-112; Rabe, 2002:115-119; Fink, 1996:98). Key to this success, however, is media enterprises' ability to attract, motivate and retain good employees (Rankin, 1986:32).

Given the above, the rationale for this study is to determine the importance first-line news managers and reporters in South Africa's mainstream media attach to the six managerial competencies set out above. The study will also determine perceptions

⁶ Hereafter Audit 2. The baseline data for this research study was compiled for the purposes of Audit 2. Sanef granted the researcher permission to use research data and results from both Audit 1 and Audit 2 for the purposes of completing this study. The baseline data provided the framework along which additional qualitative and quantitative data analyses were performed with the aim of establishing a newsroom management framework for mainstream media newsrooms in South Africa.

among these groups with regard to the current implementation of managerial competencies in mainstream media newsrooms. Based on this, the study aims to develop a framework for newsroom management in the South African context.

1.5 Purpose of the study

1.5.1 General research objective

A growing body of knowledge shows that addressing the human aspects of management should form an integral part of organisational management in order to bring about organisational success (e.g. see Redmond, 2006:118; Cole, 2004:349; Kennedy, 2002:14). In a developing and democratising South African media context, the importance of this aspect was illustrated in findings from Audit 1 (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002). Using a framework of six managerial competencies rooted in general management theory (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:4-5; Lussier, 2003:4-14; Daft, 2003:4-12) this study aims to determine how important first-line news managers and reporters consider each competency. Moreover, it aims to ascertain perceptions (among first-line news managers and reporters) on the current implementation of these competencies by first-line news managers. Subsequently, a framework for newsroom management in a South African context will be developed – an area in which little research has been done.

1.5.2 Specific research objectives

The following specific research objectives were set for the study.

- 1.5.2.1 To determine the importance reporters in South Africa's mainstream media attach to the six managerial competencies of communication, planning and administration, strategic action, teamwork, global awareness, and self-management *vis-à-vis* the general management theoretical framework;
- 1.5.2.2 To determine the perception among reporters with regard to the implementation of these managerial competencies by first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media;

- 1.5.2.3 To determine the importance first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media attach to these managerial competencies *vis-à-vis* the general management theoretical framework; and
- 1.5.2.4 To determine the extent to which first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media perceive themselves to implement these managerial competencies.

1.6 Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were set for this study.

- 1.6.1 First-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media do not consider the managerial competencies important for newsroom management;
- 1.6.2 Due to the little importance they attach to these competencies, first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media do not implement them optimally either, with subsequent negative impact on newsroom activity;
- 1.6.3 Reporters in South Africa's mainstream media, on the other hand, consider the managerial competencies essential to effective and efficient newsroom management. They consider it more important than news managers;
- 1.6.4 Given the importance they attach to these competencies, reporters do not consider their first-line news managers to implement these optimally, with subsequent negative implications for newsroom activity and professional media output;
- 1.6.5 Due to factors such as structure, audience characteristics and historical background associated with different media types, reporters and first-line news managers at the respective media types attach different levels of importance to the six managerial competencies. As a result, they also perceive the optimal implementation thereof differently; and
- 1.6.6 Based on advantages and challenges associated with different media ownership structures in the country, reporters and first-line news managers at media titles operating under different ownership frameworks perceive the importance of the six managerial competencies differently. As a result, they also perceive the optimal implementation thereof differently.

1.7 Research design and methodology

The framework for this study was developed around a literature study (see section 1.7.1). This framework was expanded through empirical research into the importance and implementation of the six managerial competencies among reporters and first-line news managers in a sample of mainstream media newsrooms in South Africa (see Table 1.1; also see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:2-23).

1.7.1 Literature study

The literature study on the six managerial competencies embedded in general management theory focused on issues regarding the importance and effective implementation of these competencies at enterprises across different industries. However, the specific focus was on instances where the competencies relate to media management or newsroom management. Because only a few examples could be found where studies specifically pertain to the South African newsroom management environment, the majority of the applications were made from a general management context or an international newsroom management context (see section 3.2.1).

1.7.2 Empirical research

1.7.2.1 Research designs

This study combined quantitative and qualitative research designs. This decision was motivated by perspectives among scholars such as Neuman (2004:82) and Struwig and Stead (2001:19) that quantitative and qualitative research complements each other (despite their many differences). The aim was thus to transform “data into information, (providing better) insights and knowledge” (Struwig & Stead, 2001:19) into the phenomenon researched. The aim was furthermore to gain a true understanding of the issues set out in the research objectives and hypotheses. Qualitative and quantitative data was compared through triangulation (see section 3.2.2.1.3).

1.7.2.2 *Research instruments*

The following research instruments were developed and applied.

1.7.2.2.1 *Quantitative research instruments*

Two research instruments were used for the purposes of quantitative research. These were a self-administered questionnaire for first-line news managers and a separate one for reporters (see Addendum A and Addendum B). The questionnaires aimed to collect data pertaining to respondents' professional profile, attitudes about issues related to their media enterprises and work environment, as well as the importance and implementation of the six managerial competencies (see section 3.2.2.2.1 for a detailed discussion of self-administered questionnaires used).

Questionnaires were developed and revised in cooperation with the Sanef Education and Training Committee (ETC). Input was also obtained from other members on Sanef's electronic mailing list, in order to address issues of time (i.e. how long it will take respondents to complete the questionnaires given the fact that research was done in real-time situations) and practicality. The concept questionnaires were tested during a pilot study at Mooivaal Media's offices in Vanderbijlpark at the end of August 2004. Feedback from respondents in the pilot study was used to adjust and refine questionnaires.

Final questionnaires were distributed among and completed by a sample of reporters (n=207) and first-line news managers (n=79) (see sections 1.7.4; 3.4.6 and 3.4.7). All care was taken that respondents remained anonymous in order to encourage open and honest responses.

1.7.2.2.2 *Qualitative research instruments*

The qualitative research section of the study was conducted through semi-structured interviews (n=43) among a sample of interviewees (see Addendum C for the interview framework used). These interviewees consisted of newsroom staff on higher management levels of the media titles included in the sample. Arrangements

were made telephonically and via electronic mail beforehand with potential interviewees. They were informed on the purpose of the research and fieldwork procedures (see section 3.2.2.2 for a detailed outline of the interviewing procedure).

Qualitative data was also compiled through observational research. According to Adler and Adler (1994:378) this refers to “the act of noting a phenomenon ... and recording it for scientific or other purposes”. Qualitative observations thus focused on interviewees’ verbal and nonverbal expressions related to newsroom management approaches, as well as the implementation of the six managerial competencies tested in the questionnaires. Section 3.2.2.2 provides a detailed description of the approach implemented during observational research.

1.7.3 Research population and sample frame

The research population for the study consisted of all mainstream media titles in South Africa at the time when the study was initiated in May 2004. From this population a sample frame was constructed for the study (N=106). The following specific considerations were taken into account (in cooperation with and upon approval of the Sanef ETC) when the sample frame was compiled.

1.7.3.1 Media types

Compiling a representative sample of mainstream media types operating in South Africa was the first consideration for the study. The sample frame based on media type included (also see section 3.3.1 for a detailed discussion):

- Daily newspapers;
- Weekly newspapers;
- Consumer magazines dealing with hard and soft news⁷ and published weekly;

⁷ In a journalism context, the term “hard news” refers to “event-based stories ... and to depth coverage” (Nel, 2001:58), such as a natural disaster, the death of a celebrity or an accident with large scale implications. Similarly, the term “soft news” refers to “stories ... whose purpose is more to entertain than to inform. ... Sometimes the terms ‘human interest’ or ‘features’ are used to describe soft news stories” (Nel, 2001:59-60).

- Independent/commercial radio stations, as well as radio stations forming part of the public service broadcaster (South African Broadcasting Corporation [SABC]) and who are specifically responsible for producing and distributing news;
- Independent/commercial television channels, as well as television channels forming part of the SABC and who are specifically responsible for producing and distributing news;
- On-line media responsible for producing and distributing news; and
- Mainstream news agencies.

1.7.3.2 *Media ownership*

The sample frame in terms of media ownership was compiled on the basis of the following categories (also see section 3.3.2 for a detailed outline of these categories):

- Companies listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE);
- Companies not listed on the JSE;
- Media titles with a public service mandate; and
- Media titles with a majority of foreign ownership (although local shareholders might also be involved).

1.7.3.3 *National representivity*

In order to generalise results across mainstream media titles in the country, the sample frame needed to be nationally representative. Purposeful sampling was subsequently used to obtain a sample frame of media titles from geographical areas with the largest concentration of mainstream media (see section 1.7.4; also see section 3.3.3).

The following geographical areas were included in the sample frame:⁸

⁸ Geographical areas such as Kimberley, Polokwane and East-London were not included, as they do not have national media which would fit the research profile.

- Cape Town;
- Johannesburg/Pretoria;
- Durban;
- Port Elizabeth;
- Bloemfontein; and
- Nelspruit.

1.7.4 Sampling procedure

As indicated in section 1.7.3.3, the aim with the sampling procedure was to have a research sample from which research results could be generalised beyond the sample. As a result, sampling needed to be as representative as possible of the country's mainstream media. After consultation with the Sanef ETC and a senior statistical advisor at the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University (Ellis, 2004), the following sampling procedure was implemented (also see section 3.4 for a detailed discussion):

- Compiling the sample frame of media titles, based on the above considerations (see section 1.7.3);
- Calculating the proportional sample per media type strata. The sample of media titles per media type and media ownership type needed to be proportional to that in the sample frame and distributed across the geographical areas set out in section 1.7.3.3 (see section 3.4.2 with regard to the specific formula used to compile this sample). This sample rendered 47 media titles (across media types and media ownership types) to be included in the study ($n=47$);
- Drawing a systematic sample from the respective strata, to make the sample as representative and random as possible (see section 3.4.4 for a detailed discussion of this procedure);
- Categorising the above sample into the relevant geographical areas in order to conduct the fieldwork;
- Drawing a volunteer and availability sample of first-line news managers at the identified media titles, as fieldwork was conducted in real time; and

- Drawing a volunteer and availability sample of reporters (reporting directly to the first-line news managers included in the above sample). These reporters needed to be available at the media title at the time when fieldwork was conducted.

Based on the above, Tables 1.1-1.3 indicate the sample of media titles included in the research.

Table 1.1: Sample of mainstream media in South Africa per media type (n=47)

Media type	n
Daily newspapers	8
Weekly newspapers	6
Magazines	4
On-line media	4
News agencies	2
Radio stations	16
Television channels	7
Total	47

Table 1.2: Sample of mainstream media in South Africa per ownership type (n=47)

Media ownership type	n
JSE listed companies	18
Unlisted companies	10
Public service mandate	13
Companies with a majority of foreign ownership	6
Total	47

Table 1.3: Sample of mainstream media in South Africa per geographical area (n=47)

Geographical area	n
Johannesburg/Pretoria	25
Cape Town	10
Durban	6
Port Elizabeth	2
Bloemfontein	2
Nelspruit	2
Total	47

1.7.4.1 Professional profile of first-line news managers included in the study

Based on the quantitative data obtained from the volunteer and availability sample, Table 1.4 summarises the professional profile of first-line news managers who participated in the study (n=79) (also see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:24-43).

Table 1.4: Abridged professional profile of first-line news managers in the South African mainstream media

Variable	Most prevalent percentages
Ownership type	Work in JSE listed company – 50.63%
Geographical location	Johannesburg – 54.43%
Media type where respondents currently work	Daily newspaper – 34.17%
Gender	Male – 60.56%
Highest educational qualification	Advanced diploma – 20.25% 3 year B degree – 21.52% Honours degree – 22.78%
Mother tongue	English – 50.65%
Language respondents mostly communicate in at work	English – 80.82%
Period in journalism	Longer than 5 years – 48.05%
Position in the news enterprise	Other (e.g. sports editor, managing editor, life-style editor, executive producer, supplement editor, foreign editor, and assistant editor) – 37.18%
Period in this position	Inexperienced - 58.23% in position less than 3 years
Position before becoming a first-line news manager	Other (e.g. sub editor, night editor, senior producer, editor at other media, feature editor and deputy editor (e.g. news, sport) – 43.04% Senior reporter – 41.77%

Table 1.4 above highlights the following salient professional characteristics of first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media:

- Half of the respondents work in JSE listed companies, while 54.43% are located in Johannesburg;
- Just more than one third work at a daily newspaper;
- Males represent 60.56% of the respondents, indicating that gender equity programmes have not yet changed the composition of first-line newsroom management;

- First-line news managers are highly qualified, although it was not determined whether these qualifications are in communication or journalism related fields or in management;
- Although English is the mother tongue of just more than half of respondents, more than 80% indicated that they predominantly communicate in English at work. As will be indicated later (e.g. sections 4.6.1.15 and 8.3.1.2) this poses significant challenges to effective newsroom communication and subsequently newsroom management; and
- Just under half of first-line news manager respondents are working in journalism for more than 5 years, while more than half employed in their current positions for between 1 and 3 years. This indicates high levels of juniorisation and inexperience among first-line news managers. The implications thereof are discussed throughout the study.

1.7.4.2 Professional profile of reporters included in the study

Based on the quantitative data obtained from the volunteer and availability sample, Table 1.5 summarises the professional profile of reporters who participated in the study (n=207) (also see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:24-43).

Table 1.5: Abridged professional profile of reporters in the South African mainstream media

Variable	Most prevalent percentages
Ownership type	Work in JSE listed company – 40.58%
Geographical location	Johannesburg – 48.79%
Media type where respondents currently work	Weekly newspaper – 25.85% Broadcasting (radio) – 25.85%
Gender	Male – 51.03% Female – 48.97%
Highest educational qualification	Advanced diploma – 23.98% 3 year B degree – 19.89%
Mother tongue	English – 28.86% Afrikaans – 20.9%
Language respondents mostly communicate in at work	English – 72.49%
Period in journalism	Longer than 5 years – 50.24%
Position in the news enterprise	Reporter – 35.29%
Period in this position	Inexperienced – 67.32% in position less than 3 years
Person reporter reports to	News editor – 53.73%

Table 1.5 highlights the following salient professional characteristics of reporters in South Africa's mainstream media (also see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:24-43):

- A total of 40.58% work at a JSE listed company, while 48.79% are based in Johannesburg. The latter can be expected, as the highest concentration of media titles in South Africa is located in Johannesburg;
- Male (51.03%) and female (48.97%) respondents are almost evenly represented. This indicates that gender equity programmes have been more successful on reporter level than on first-line news manager level;
- Most reporters have an advanced diploma as highest educational qualification. As was the case with first-line news managers, the areas in which these qualifications were obtained were, however, not determined;
- Only 28.86% indicated that English is their mother tongue, while 72.49% indicated that they predominantly communicate in English at work. As was the case among first-line news managers, this situation poses challenges to effective newsroom communication and management;
- More than two thirds of reporters (67.32%) have been in their current position for less than three years; and
- Most of them (35.29%) indicated that their job title was that of reporter, with 73.73% of them reporting to the news editor.

The above profiles provide the context for the research results reported in chapters four to nine of this study.

1.7.5 Data analysis

Both quantitative research instruments were tested for validity and reliability by subjecting it to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) (see Bartholomew, Steele, Moustaki & Galbraith, 2002:143-174) and calculating Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (Anastasi, 1988). These tests proved that the questionnaires were both valid and reliable. Data collected on the importance and implementation of managerial competencies was analysed through effect size analysis (see Ellis & Steyn, 2003:52;

Cohen, 1988:20-27), while data on the professional profile of reporters and first-line news managers was analysed through frequency tables (see Tables 1.4 and 1.5). Specific aspects related to the data analysis are discussed in detail in chapter three of the study.

1.8 Possibilities for further study on newsroom management in South Africa

After completing the study on newsroom management in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms *vis-à-vis* the six managerial competencies applied in general management theory, the following possibilities were discovered for further study on the topic. These possibilities can also be applied in further study on newsroom management in South Africa in general.

1.8.1 Involving community media in the country

The nature of activities, deadline pressure, audience needs and expectations, and structure of community media are some of the factors differentiating it from mainstream media (see Emdon, 2005:34-40). Another factor relates to the percentage of full-time and paid staff members employed by the mainstream media, compared to those employed by community media. As a result, it would not have been possible to place these two media entities on the same level and include both in the same study.

However, as Emdon (2005:34-40) indicates, community media also experience particular difficulties when it comes to effective and efficient management, especially when managing newsroom staff. As such, it would present valuable insight into the nature of newsroom management at community media if a similar study is conducted among these titles. If similar research designs and research instruments to the current study are used, the results of the two studies could be compared in order to develop a comparative newsroom management framework applicable to mainstream and community media in the country.

1.8.2 Expanding quantitative research to respondents on higher management levels

As indicated in section 1.7.2.2.2, respondents on higher media management levels only contributed to this research study by means of qualitative data. This data proved valuable for triangulation purposes (see section 1.7.2.1) as (in some cases) it refuted quantitative results obtained from questionnaires completed by first-line news managers and reporter respondents. As such, it provided an additional perspective on quantitative results. On the other hand, however, it indicated that higher management levels might (in some cases) not be properly informed or cognisant of newsroom conditions or challenges.

Additional to the qualitative input provided by these managers, future research studies into newsroom management could also include a quantitative research instrument (questionnaire) similar to the ones completed by first-line news managers and reporters. Such a research instrument will add an additional (third) tier of similar quantitative results for comparative purposes. Moreover, it could serve as an additional triangulation method to increase the validity and reliability of qualitative results.

1.8.3 Expanding qualitative research to first-line news manager and reporter respondents

As was indicated in section 1.7.2.2.1, quantitative research instruments only applied to first-line news manager and reporter respondents. As a result, quantitative data obtained from these respondent groups could be biased in one way or another. Respondents completed the questionnaires while also being occupied with day-to-day news production and distribution responsibilities. As such, time and other pressures could have influenced the perspectives they provided.

Time and other constraints (e.g. financial, deadline pressure, staff shortages) allowing, it would be useful for future research also involve these respondent groups in qualitative research processes. As individual interviews would be difficult, focus group interviews with samples of these respondent groups might be valuable to

expand on quantitative data. With regard to reporters, it can provide insight into specific positive and negative issues related to newsroom management. These can then be compared with quantitative results from questionnaires. As far as first-line news managers are concerned, focus group interviews could be valuable to ascertain specific factors hampering their newsroom management skills or abilities. Comparing qualitative input with quantitative research data could provide insight into the causes of inefficient management. In the current research, the researcher could merely speculate on such causes.

1.8.4 Increasing the time spent at individual media titles, in order to increase the size of the volunteer and availability samples

As was indicated in sections 1.7.2.2.1 and 1.7.4, the fieldwork for this research was done in real time. As a result, the researcher needed to work with those reporters and first-line news managers available at the media titles during the 3 hour period allocated per title. Factors such as staff shortages, deadline pressure, the operating schedule at some media titles, and breaking news stories played a role in limiting the number of questionnaires completed per title.

When future research on this topic is considered (and time, personal and financial resources are available) it would be valuable to spend longer periods of time at each media title. While this would enable the researcher to increase the number of questionnaires received (and subsequently increase the representivity of data), it would also increase the amount of qualitative observations made. The latter could especially be valuable to provide additional insight into newsroom management activities and approaches. However, given the pressure under which many newsrooms operate to produce and distribute news stories on an increasing number of news events, this might be difficult. In some cases contact people at media titles were reluctant to allow the researcher more than 30 minutes to 1 hour in their newsrooms.

1.9 Division of the study

The study consists of ten chapters, compiled as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction and orientation;
- Chapter 2: Theoretical framework: General management within the context of newsroom management. This chapter provides the theoretical framework against which the six managerial competencies are discussed in later chapters (see below);
- Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter expands on the methodological framework provided in section 1.7. As such, it provides insight into the research design, research instruments, research population, sampling procedure, research sample, and data interpretation procedures followed;
- Chapter 4: Communication as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management. This chapter delineates the dimensions of communication as a managerial competency. Against this theoretical background, the research results pertaining to the importance and implementation of the communication competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms are presented;
- Chapter 5: Planning and administration as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management. Similar to the above, this chapter focuses on the dimensions of the planning and administration competency. The theoretical framework is again used as a backdrop for discussing the research results related to the importance and implementation of this competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms;
- Chapter 6: Strategic action as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management. The dimensions of strategic action as a managerial competency are set out in this chapter. These dimensions are used as a framework to provide and discuss the research results on the importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms;
- Chapter 7: Teamwork as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management. This chapter presents the theoretical framework for

teamwork as a managerial competency by unpacking the dimensions related to this competency. This is followed by the research results applicable to the importance and implementation of the teamwork competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms;

- Chapter 8: Global awareness as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management. The need for managers to be cognisant of the dimensions of the global awareness competency is highlighted in this chapter. This provides a framework against which the research results on the importance and implementation of this competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms are discussed;
- Chapter 9: Self-management as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management. This chapter focuses on the dimensions of self-management as a managerial competency. The final set of research results pertaining to the importance and implementation of this competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms is also provided and discussed; and
- Chapter 10: Conclusions and recommendations. In this chapter the outcome of the study is summarised in conclusions based on the research objectives and hypotheses provided in section 1.6. This chapter also provides recommendations with regard to implementing more effective and efficient newsroom management practices in South African mainstream media newsrooms *vis-à-vis* the six managerial competencies tested. These recommendations form the basis of the proposed newsroom management framework.

1.10 Summary

This chapter provided the introduction and orientation to the study. In the first instance, the specific terminology was clarified. This was followed by the background and motivation for the study in light of changing management approaches worldwide. This was posted against the changes characterising the South African mainstream media environment since the advent of democracy in the country in 1994. It was also indicated how these changes challenge media and newsroom management. Against this backdrop, the research purpose, objectives and hypotheses of the study were provided, followed by a brief exposition of the research methodology implemented.

This issue is discussed in more detail in chapter three. Based on the quantitative results obtained from first-line news manager and reporter respondents, a brief outline was provided of the salient aspects related to the professional profile of newsroom staff. This was followed by suggestions for future research focusing on media/newsroom management in South Africa. The chapter concluded with an outline of how the remaining chapters of the study are presented.

The next chapter focuses on general management as a framework against which the six managerial competencies are discussed.

Chapter 2:

Theoretical framework: General management within the context of newsroom management

The traditional world of work assumed the purpose of management was to control and limit people, enforce rules and regulations, seek stability and efficiency, design a top-down hierarchy to direct people, and achieve bottom-line results. The new workplace and emerging management paradigm recognises that today's managers need different skills to engage workers' hearts and minds as well as take advantage of their physical labour. The new workplace asks that managers focus on leading change, on harnessing people's creativity and enthusiasm, on finding shared vision and values, and on sharing information and power. ... Managers focus on developing, not controlling, people to adapt to new technologies and extraordinary environmental shifts, and thus achieve total corporate effectiveness.

– Daft (2003:iii)

Management is not an activity that exists in its own right. It is rather a description of a variety of activities carried out by those members of organisations whose role is that of a "manager" i.e. someone who either has formal responsibility for the work of one or more persons in the organization or who is accountable for specialist advisory duties in support of key management activities.

– Cole (2004:9)

The (news manager) is a representative of the working journalist to the corporate world, and at the same time the representative of corporate back to the world of writers, photographers, and other creative professionals. All (news managers) operate under substantial stress in a highly competitive environment.

– Redmond (2006:127)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines dimensions of the general management theory. In the process of optimising owners' wealth, managers are required to effectively and efficiently utilise organisational resources available to them. To achieve this, managers perform specific management tasks and functions. The discussion subsequently outlines elements of basic management functions (i.e. planning, organising, leading and control). It also focuses on additional management functions (i.e. decision making, coordination, communication, motivation, delegation and discipline) managers perform in this process. Dimensions of these functions are applied to and discussed within the context of newsroom management in South Africa's mainstream media.

2.2 The dimensions of management

Managers are responsible to achieve organisational goals and objectives by efficiently and effectively utilising organisational resources available to them (DuBrin, 2003:5; Lussier, 2003:5). In a free market and capitalistic environment, organisational goals and objectives will (in the final instance) always be connected to maximising owners' wealth in some way or another (Ehrhardt & Brigham, 2003:9; Ross, Westerfield, Jordan & Firer, 2001:9-10). To achieve the above, managers are required to utilise organisational resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible. While the former refers to the way in which the activity is approached – i.e. realising maximum output with minimum input, the latter focuses on taking the correct action to achieve the set goal or objective (see Daft, 2003:748).

Modern day media enterprises (similar to businesses in many other industries), however, often have a one-dimensional view of success, namely financial. Maximising owners' wealth as a measure of financial success could imply that resources are exploited if efficiency is not qualified by social and stakeholder responsibility (De Klerk, 1998:139). A more balanced approach to management will therefore argue that owners' wealth is *optimised* (instead of maximised) by utilising resources effectively and efficiently. This will contribute to improved quality of life for stakeholder groups affected by the enterprise's actions (DuBrin, 2003:95-96). In the case of the media, applying resources with the predominant aim of financial success

could also result in other organisational goals and objectives (such as responsible and truthful reporting) falling by the wayside (see Wasserman, 2003).

Managers have access to a number of resources, namely (DuBrin, 2003:6; Lussier, 2003:6):

- Human resources (i.e. the people needed to do the job). The specific people chosen to perform specific tasks depend on the nature thereof (e.g. reporters, technical crew, camera people);
- Financial resources (i.e. capital available to achieve set goals and objectives). Whereas capital can become available through profit, it can (in some cases) also be borrowed or obtained through contributions from other sources (including the government, foreign donors, advertising revenue) (also see section 8.2.1.1);
- Physical resources, e.g. office space, raw material, office equipment and production facilities; and
- Information resources, namely data used to take decisions before performing the expected task.

In order to utilise resources effectively and efficiently, managers need to perform certain management tasks. According to management guru Peter Drucker, these tasks are similar across business industries. Drucker was of the opinion that, although management tasks could be performed in a different sequence, they all need to feature somewhere in the management process (Starbuck, 2005:2).

Management tasks are rooted in the general management framework. According to Kroon (1995:4), general management as a business function differs from other functions in that it does not exist as an independent division within an enterprise. Rather, it refers to all management activities which guide managers on different management levels. Over time, management tasks have been categorised into four basic and six additional management functions. Basic management functions refer to planning, organising, leading and controlling, while additional management functions refer to decision making, coordination, communication, motivation, delegation and discipline (Lussier, 2003:9-10).

Researchers such as Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:10) and Rue and Byars (2000:6) emphasise that these management functions are not necessarily performed individually or separately. They rather form a combined cycle of activities, each contributing towards more effective management. Moreover, managers are not required to allocate a specific amount of time to each function. Depending on their position in the business and the specific organisational goal that needs to be achieved, managers can decide on the amount of time needed for each function. They can also decide on the sequence in which management functions should be implemented.

Linked to these management functions, DuBrin (2003:8-12) highlights seventeen managerial roles managers can perform in the course of their management activities. These roles specifically refer to “expected sets of activities or behaviours stemming from a job” (DuBrin, 2003:8). The relevant roles applicable to each management function are discussed in more detail in each section related to basic management functions.

2.3 Planning as a basic management function

Planning as a management function refers to short, medium and long-term planning. As such, it constitutes a two-phase process. In the first instance, organisational goals and objectives are set. In the second phase, managers identify ways to meet these goals and objectives through tailor made policies, plans and programmes (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:10; DuBrin, 2003:6; Kroon, 1995:10).

Aspects related to planning as a basic management function are subsequently discussed.

2.3.1 The need for proper planning

“Planning enables a manager or an enterprise to actively affect rather than passively accept the future” (Rue & Byars, 2000:140). This quotation summarises the need for proper planning in any enterprise. It also constitutes planning as the central

management function needed for organisational success (DuBrin, 2003:6). Kroon and Van Zyl (1995:111) support the above, by stating that proper planning reduces future business uncertainties.

The latter seems especially relevant within an increasingly changing and uncertain local and global business environment (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:10). Within this environment it becomes increasingly important for businesses to implement proper planning in order to pro-actively perform the activities outlined in sections 2.3.1.1-2.3.1.5 (see Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:40-41; Kroon & Van Zyl, 1995:113).

2.3.1.1 Identify potential problems which might negatively impact on business success

Increased organisational complexity, on the one hand, and increased global competition on the other necessitate this. In an age of multinational companies, company mergers and global activity, improper planning affects all areas of business activity (also see section 8.2.1 for the extent to which this applies to a global media environment). In an increasingly competitive business environment, this can determine organisational failure or success.

2.3.1.2 Establish the business' future focus (goals and objectives)

This might relate to increased focus on social responsibility, improved competitiveness or increased market share. As discussed in section 5.2, changes in internal and external markets necessitate that media enterprises are clear about their future strategies. However, as outlined in section 7.3.1.1, a lack of properly defined individual and team goals and objectives seems to constrain proper newsroom activity in South Africa's mainstream media.

2.3.1.3 Determine how available resources should be utilised and applied to achieve organisational goals and objectives and maximise profit

This can be especially relevant in instances where the time span between decision-making and results is longer. As such, proper planning can ensure that resources

allocated for a long-term project (e.g. research, development and introduction of a new product) are allocated effectively (see section 5.2.2 for the extent to which this is effective in mainstream media newsrooms in South Africa). In a changing management environment (see Daft, 2003:iii quoted at the outset of this chapter) resources should also be utilised to achieve optimum profit (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:76). Managers can attain this through, for instance, loyal and motivated staff. While these staff contribute to the business' financial bottom-line, they also add to long-term business growth, profitability and survival.

2.3.1.4 Support another management function, namely control

Proper planning facilitates properly defined goals and objectives. This, in turn, facilitates performance measurement (see section 2.3.4).

2.3.1.5 Prevent misunderstanding on the tasks that need to be performed and the people responsible for it

Proper planning avoids duplication, while it also prevents that some tasks are not performed at all. A case in point relates to the BBC. It is said that a BBC radio reporter left Heathrow airport on the same flight as a BBC television reporter to cover the same story. The reporters only discovered this duplication while collecting their luggage upon their return to Heathrow airport (see Quinn, 2002:21).

2.3.2 Levels of planning

The need for proper planning necessitates managers to plan on three levels. These are subsequently discussed (see Cole, 2004:136-139; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:77-78; DuBrin, 2003:10; 112-113; Lussier, 2003:131; Rue & Byars, 2000:142).

2.3.2.1 Strategic level

This is primarily the responsibility of top management. Strategic planning includes that long-term plans are formulated to determine the enterprise's overall direction. These plans also assist in dealing with challenges due to changes in the enterprise's

external environment. Moreover, it facilitates the development and implementation of corporate policy. In order to achieve this, management needs to be aware of organisational strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, they need to identify external opportunities and threats. Based on the characteristics identified, the enterprise can develop a proper vision, mission, goals and objectives. These, in turn, assist in the development of proper strategies which clearly delineate the necessary resources. Chapter six of this study outlines detail with regard to strategic thinking and planning processes.

2.3.2.2 Tactical level

Middle managers are responsible to develop and implement tactical plans within the framework of strategic plans (see Kroon & Van Zyl, 1995:116) in order to "accomplish a specific part of the company's strategy" (Daft, 2003:215). In the first instance, tactical planning supports strategic planning by means of short-term plans with a time frame of one year or less. Strategic plans are thus transformed into specific plans relevant to a department or a challenge that needs to be addressed. Middle and first-line news managers are usually responsible for tactical planning.

2.3.2.3 Operational level

According to DuBrin (2003:113) and Daft (2003:216) planning related to day-to-day business activities is termed operational planning. This usually is the responsibility of managers on lower organisational levels (e.g. supervisors, department managers and individual employees) (see Daft, 2003:216). As such, it forms the "tool" for daily and weekly operations. Within the context of the newsroom management, a daily or weekly diary meeting or conference is a tool through which news managers plan for the day or week ahead (see section 5.4.1.4-5.4.1.11 for the extent to which operational planning occurs in South African mainstream media newsrooms). As such, schedules or time frames are important instruments for measuring staff's performance (also see section 5.3.3).

Given the context of this study and the subsequent focus on first-line news managers (see section 1.5.1) operational planning is particularly relevant. In performing short-

term and day-to-day planning activities, first-line news managers are primarily concerned with operational planning. As discussed in sections 5.4.1.4 and 5.4.1.5, first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream news media admit that they have trouble to plan their activities properly, in support of their news enterprises' strategic and tactical planning activities. Over and above this, results outlined in sections 6.2.3 and 6.3.1.17 also highlight that first-line news managers are often ill-informed about their news enterprises' strategic plans. This prevents them from properly aligning operational plans with strategic and tactical ones.

2.3.3 *Factors that hamper effective planning*

For planning to be effective, it needs to be flexible (see Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:39). This is especially important given the constantly changing internal and external environments in which businesses operate (see section 8.2). Managers (on different organisational levels) should thus attend to the following factors that could hamper effective planning (Plunkett & Attner, 1994:116-117).

2.3.3.1 *The inability to plan*

Some managers lack effective planning abilities due to a lack of skills and experience. Inexperienced managers might find it difficult to plan effectively, despite possible management education. In order to address this situation, enterprises should take care to appoint and task a more experienced colleague to mentor and coach inexperienced staff. Given juniorisation and fast-tracking programmes in the South African media (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:38), inexperience in planning as a management function could pose important challenges to newsroom management.

2.3.3.2 *Inadequate planning processes*

Enterprises with inexperienced management staff should especially emphasise adequate planning processes. These processes could facilitate planning activities among inexperienced managers. However, a lack of sufficient planning processes, linked with inexperienced staff might present a barrier to organisational success. As such, results from Audit 2 (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:45-48) indicate that reporters in

South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms are especially negative about the lack of sufficient newsroom planning processes.

2.3.3.3 *Lack of commitment to the planning process*

As outlined above, some managers lack skills and experience to plan properly. Others fail to plan properly because of an alleged lack of time (Lussier, 2003:131). Another contributing factor, however, is a lack of commitment to planning. This could be attributed to a lack of insight into the benefits of proper planning, linked to insufficient knowledge about the disadvantages of insufficient planning. As outlined in section 5.2.2, first-line news managers experience difficulty to properly design and implement medium to long-term plans. While this could be attributed to a lack of skills and experience, it could also result from a lack of commitment to planning.

2.3.3.4 *Inferior information*

As indicated in section 5.3.1, managers need adequate information to plan properly. This relates to aspects such as costs, personnel, time frames, or potential changes/developments that might affect the enterprise. In the South African media context, interviewees who participated in the study emphasised that they increasingly involve role-players from other departments in the media enterprise (e.g. advertising, promotions, human resources) in their planning activities. This initiative strengthens the diversity of input into planning. It also ensures that managers are properly informed of organisational activities.

2.3.3.5 *Lack of focus on the future*

Section 5.2.2 outlines that a lack of proper longer term planning currently hampers proper organisational performance in some South African media enterprises. Managers might subsequently lack focus on the future strategies and activities of their business operations. This could result in organisational failure or sub-par performance.

2.3.3.6 Over-reliance on the planning department

Organisational interests and activities are characterised by an intertwined network across geographical borders and business interests (see section 8.2.1). As a result, businesses can no longer afford to solely rely on a single department for all their planning activities. This requires that role-players from as many departments/units as possible are involved in the planning process. Such an approach will expose managers on higher organisational levels to the realities facing first-line news managers and subordinates at the lower end of the organisational ladder. This could reveal possibilities or challenges a single planning department would not necessarily be aware of. Section 5.2.1 also indicates that this approach empowers employees on lower organisational levels. This, in turn, could stimulate their creativity and commitment. Failing to do so might communicate to these employees that their perspectives and experiences are not important enough for top management to take cognisance of.

Some commentators (e.g. see Van Niekerk, 2004:33; Daft, 2003:227) take this approach further by demonstrating the importance of involving the enterprise's external stakeholders in planning activities. Such an approach could expose external stakeholders to business strategies related to, for instance, social responsibility.

2.3.4 Decision making as an additional management function associated with planning

One of the characteristics of successful planning is that a variety of options are considered before decisions are taken (see Daft, 2003:228). Within the context of this chapter, decision making is the first additional management function discussed.

Drawing on different perspectives (e.g. DuBrin, 2003:493; Lussier, 2003:544; Rue & Byars, 2000:444) the essence of decision making refers to the process of deciding on an approach/strategy/plan/goal after considering different alternatives. In order to take informed decisions, management teams should (DuBrin, 2003:139-143; Daft, 2003:281-287):

- Clearly identify and analyse the extent to which the current situation differs from the desired one. This will facilitate that the ultimate solution is identified and implemented;
- Generate as many alternative solutions as possible in light of the above analysis;
- Determine the value of each suggestion and establish to what extent it could solve the problem;
- Take a decision based on the most suitable alternative;
- Implement the strategy decided on. This entails that sufficient resources are available to facilitate implementation; and
- Evaluate and control how effectively the strategy has solved the problem.

In applying the above to the media newsroom, a case in point could be what the best possible news angle should be to cover a news event. The newsroom team thus needs to decide what they want to achieve with their news coverage (e.g. do they want to give more depth to information already published; or do they want to cover the story from a different angle than has already been done). Their next challenge would be to list a variety of alternatives. Interviewees who participated in the research indicated that they would involve as many newsroom staff as possible in this process. The team then considers alternative solutions through open debate. Ultimately, however, the news manager remains responsible for taking the decision and defending the consequences thereof. Finally, news managers need to secure ownership and commitment from newsroom staff to implement the decision to the benefit of the news enterprise as a whole.

However, different situations call for different decision making methods. This depends on the amount and type of information available or the risk associated with each situation. As Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:154) indicate, the following types of decision making methods are available.

2.3.4.1 *Routine decisions*

These refer to standard decisions managers take, and usually flow from well-defined

or day-to-day situations. Within the context of this study, routine decisions might relate to news managers deciding whether to assign one or more reporters to cover a predetermined news story such as the arrival of a movie star in the country. As such, the news manager will know in advance who the celebrity is and how important he/she is for the media title's target audience. However, routine decisions can be influenced by important, yet unexpected news occurrences.

2.3.4.2 *Adaptive decisions*

Unexpected occurrences necessitate managers to take adaptive decisions. In an attempt to improve on organisational performance, managers' planning and decision making approach should be such that plans can be adapted if necessary. With reference to the above example, news managers should be adaptive enough to scale down on the number of reporters covering the celebrity's arrival if an unexpected event occurs. As such, a bus accident in the target audience's immediate area can necessitate the media title to send more reporting staff to the scene of the accident and fewer to cover the arrival of the movie star.

2.3.4.3 *Innovative decisions*

These decisions are the result of unusual circumstances. In many cases managers need to take innovative decisions as situations develop, despite having incomplete information. These decisions should be limited as much as possible, because decisions based on inadequate information could be detrimental to organisational success. In a newsroom context, media enterprises often need to cover stories related to natural disasters or incidents of crime despite limited information. Given tight competition among media titles, news managers are often challenged to take innovative decisions. In the case of a natural disaster, for instance, it is important to have a reporting team on the site ahead of the competition.

In order to achieve planned goals and objectives, managers should organise available resources in the most effective and efficient manner. Organising thus constitutes the second basic management function.

2.4 Organising as a basic management function

"If planning is considered as providing the route map for the journey, then organising is the means by which you arrive at your chosen destination" (Cole, 2004:184; also see Daft, 2003:312). Organising can therefore be defined as the management function which aligns "duties, responsibilities and authority of people and departments" (De Bruyn, 1995:221) to achieve objectives (Lussier, 2003:172). In this process, each manager is assigned specific activities. Managers thus have authority over staff who are responsible to perform activities (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:10; Rue & Byars, 2000:186). In this process, organisational resources (see section 2.2) are utilised more effectively and organisational goals and objectives met more efficiently.

Aspects related to organising as a basic management function are subsequently discussed.

2.4.1 *The importance of organising properly*

Apart from optimally achieving organisational goals and objectives, proper organisation is also necessary for the reasons discussed below (see DuBrin, 2003:7; Rue & Byars, 2000:186).

2.4.1.1 *To establish lines of authority*

Clear lines of authority leave little doubt about who is responsible for what. In turn, clearly defined roles and responsibilities facilitate that goals and objectives are met more effectively (see section 7.3.1.1. Also see section 7.3.1 for a discussion of reporters' and first-line news managers' perspectives on this issue). Clear lines of authority also improve control over organisational resources.

2.4.1.2 *It improves organisational output*

Individuals or departments should predominantly be concerned with their contribution towards organisational output and success. Rue and Byars (2000:186) describe this

as synergism – efforts to produce a whole greater than the sum of the parts. However, to achieve this, individuals must be informed of organisational goals and objectives. Moreover, they need to know how they (or their departments/units) can contribute towards achieving these. Quantitative data analysed for this study indicate that this is not currently the case among reporters and first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media (see section 6.3.1.13).

2.4.1.3 To communicate properly

The need for and dimensions of proper communication as a managerial competency is discussed in chapter four of this study. Suffice to state here that clear and effective communication (on all organisational levels) informs staff of changes, decisions or challenges facing the enterprise. As a result, they can contribute better towards addressing these, feeling more valued and part of the enterprise (see section 4.6.1 for reporter and first-line news manager respondents' perceptions of current newsroom communication).

2.4.2 Organising as a process

The need for proper organisation entails that managers systematically go about implementing it as a management function. As such, the following steps can facilitate proper organisation (see Lussier, 2003:188-194; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:60-64; De Bruyn, 1995:222-231):

- Clearly define organisational goals and objectives derived from the planning process;
- Determine the most important activities through which goals and objectives can be achieved;
- Determine which human and other resources should be allocated to perform defined activities;
- Classify activities in terms of departments/units responsible for performing them. This step aims to ensure that tasks are performed systematically. As such, organisational activities occur on different levels, namely:

- Functionally (e.g. the marketing, administration, human resources and/or production departments are responsible to perform specific tasks);
- Divisionally (i.e. on the basis of characteristics such as geography, product or service, customers, or processes); or
- As a combination of functions and divisions.

In the South African media, the SABC's regional offices are examples of a divisional classification. As such, news gathering, production and distribution activities are done regionally (although some news items are also broadcasted nationally) (see SABC, 2003/4). On the one hand, this approach ensures that the corporation spends its resources (human, financial, infrastructure) more sensibly. On the other, divisional classification also facilitates that different geographic regions receive news coverage.

Functional classification is also found within regional offices. In some instances, television reporters and technical crew would be responsible to produce a news story for national television only. However, in other cases, functional and divisional classification is combined, when a single reporter and technical crew produces a news story for local and national radio, as well as for national television;

- Refine job design within each department/unit to define what each staff member is responsible to do. The importance of this aspect for individual and organisational success is outlined in section 7.2.1. Individual responsibilities should be defined in terms of individual strengths/weaknesses (see section 7.3.3.1). Finally, job design should ultimately facilitate that individual staff members are not assigned too many or too few tasks (also see section 9.2.2.2).

Given conditions of convergence, introduction of new information technology and smaller newsrooms, staff members in the South African media are required to become more multi-skilled (see Frense, 2003:29). Although this can be positive, managers should be cautious not to over-task individuals in

terms of scope and depth of tasks. This is especially relevant given the juniorisation of South African newsrooms (see section 1.3.4.5).

Organisational structure largely affects job design. While organisational structures can be formal and highly standardised, it can also be flexible and more spontaneous. The type of enterprise, the nature and scope of its activities, as well as its goals and objectives all determine organisational structure. In this regard, managers within a flatter organisational structure should also ensure that their span of management is not too wide, as this could hamper their performance.

Interviewees who participated in this research described that flatter organisational structures, with more informal lines of reporting, are at the order of the day in many South African media newsrooms. On the one hand, they highlighted the benefits of flexibility in terms of decision making, action and participation by more newsroom employees. On the other, however, they expressed the negative impact on management functions such as proper planning;

- Delegate tasks, authority and responsibility to individuals in departments/units (see section 2.5.4 for a more detailed discussion on delegation as an additional management function); and
- Provide staff with adequate feedback on both positive and negative aspects of their performance (see section 4.4.9 for a detailed discussion on the importance of proper feedback). However, within the context of newsroom management in general (see Geisler, 2004:2; Peters, 1999:20) as well as in the South African media (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:54), this issue does not receive sufficient attention yet.

2.4.3 Managerial roles implied by organising as a management function

In order to properly perform the above-mentioned steps related to organising as a management function, managers need to perform five managerial roles (DuBrin, 2003:10-11). These are subsequently discussed.

2.4.3.1 *Organiser*

Managers must be good organisers. During the course of a day they need to assign individual tasks to staff, serve as sound-boards to assist staff with progress on tasks; communicate organisational goals and procedures to staff; and establish procedures guiding departmental activities. News managers do not escape these responsibilities. In fact, the fast-paced newsroom environment places an additional premium on news managers to be good organisers. They should be in control of progress made with every news story, and informed of new developments which could impact on news angles. News managers should thus ideally be reporters' first point of contact while working on a story.

Over and above this, news managers are also responsible to keep staff abreast of the "bigger" organisational picture. As such, they should inform them on where the newsroom fits into the organisational structure, how it could contribute towards organisational success, and how organisational changes (positive or negative) could affect its activities. Results from this study, however, indicate that both first-line news managers and reporters are more focused on the work they need to do than on wider organisational issues (see sections 6.3.1.4 and 6.3.1.5).

2.4.3.2 *Liaison officer*

Managers need to develop and sustain a network of contacts beneficial to the enterprise and/or the department. As such, they should act as liaison officers, constantly looking for potential new contacts, while simultaneously maintaining existing contacts. Managers are also required to liaise with colleagues on higher management levels. Improved interpersonal relationships could foster trust between these managers. Finally, managers also need to liaise with subordinates on lower

organisational levels.

The latter presents managers with a particular challenge. To be effective in the media environment, reporters must also liaise with news sources and potential contacts. This enables them to build a relationship of trust with news sources, which could be especially beneficial when they need to obtain information under difficult circumstances. However, results from Audit 1 highlighted that celebrity status plays an increasingly important role among South African reporters (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:53). Seeing their names printed in newspapers and magazines, hearing their voices on radio and seeing their faces on television is becoming an important networking tool for reporters. The negative element associated with this is that reporters sometimes unconditionally demand by-lines, irrespective of how much effort they put into a news story or how many times superiors had to rewrite a story because of insufficient information or incorrect facts (see Msibi, 2002; Leballo, 2002; Du Plessis, 2002). This presents managers with an additional liaison function, as they need to organise reporters and their efforts to the advantage of the news enterprise.

2.4.3.3 *Staffing coordinator*

Managers are responsible to recruit, evaluate, remunerate, train, promote and demote staff members. This role also relates to the additional management function of coordination (see section 2.4.5). Organisational goals and objectives can only be achieved effectively and efficiently if managers properly organise and coordinate all employees. This relates to both the over-achievers and the under-achievers.

Over-achievers should be organised in such a manner that they do not cause harm to their employer, themselves or their profession. The recent Jayson Blair case in the US serves as a case in point. Allegations are that news managers failed to properly perform this role. Blair, an apparently talented, young, black *New York Times* reporter, was found guilty of providing false quotations, plagiarising other newspapers and reporters and pretending to report from locations he did not visit (Kelly & Venezia, 2003:1; Morton, 2003:76). Critics claim that if Blair's activities were coordinated and organised more effectively, this situation could have been

prevented. Some are of the opinion that Blair was pushed too hard to perform and that he was forced into a situation too challenging for his skills and experience (see Shafer, 2003:1; Wasserman, 2003).

2.4.3.4 Distributor of resources

In performing this role, managers ensure that available resources are distributed to the ultimate benefit of the enterprise. As such, managers are required to authorise the use and discontinued use of physical resources (such as motor vehicles and technical equipment) and the expenditure of financial resources.

Interviewees who participated in this research indicated that this role poses a difficult challenge for South African news managers. One interviewee indicated that they were forced to implement a stringent policy guiding the use of company vehicles. Incidents were recorded where staff would use a company vehicle with new tyres for "official" purposes, and return it with retread tyres. Another interviewee elaborated on the transport service they introduced for staff members. While this service ensures that staff do not experience problems getting to work due to unreliable public transport, it also prevents that company vehicles are used for private purposes.

2.4.3.5 Delegator of tasks

Managers are responsible to assign tasks to staff; ensure that they correctly prioritise these tasks and that they are committed to perform tasks effectively and efficiently. Delegation as an additional management function is discussed in more detail in section 2.5.4. A seemingly important challenge facing South African news managers is to delegate both responsibility and authority to reporters. This issue is discussed in more detail in sections 5.4.1.7 and 5.4.1.8. Inability to also delegate authority (together with responsibility) might leave reporters negative towards their news managers and the tasks they need to perform.

2.4.4 Factors hampering effective organisation

As is the case with planning as a management function (see section 2.3) certain

factors can also hamper effective organisation (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:73; De Bruyn, 1995:238-239). These are subsequently discussed.

2.4.4.1 Insufficient planning

Insufficient planning results in the organising function not being thought through and implemented properly. This, in turn, could see resources being organised haphazardly and subsequently wasted. The unexpected nature of news events, however, often leaves news managers with little option but to organise resources on short notice in order to cover a breaking news event.

2.4.4.2 Improper definition of relationships and lines of authority

This results in roles and responsibilities not being clarified. It thus necessitates that proper communication channels are established, job descriptions clarified and reporting lines confirmed (also see sections 2.4.5.1-2.4.5.3). The impact of this issue on effective and efficient newsroom management in South Africa is outlined in sections 7.4.1.9 and 7.4.1.10.

2.4.4.3 Inability to delegate properly

The need for and impact of proper delegation is outlined in section 2.5.4. Managers thus need the skills and experience to properly delegate both responsibility for tasks and the authority associated with it to subordinates (see sections 5.4.1.7 and 5.4.1.8 for the extent to which this barrier currently hampers organising as a management function in South African mainstream media newsrooms).

2.4.4.4 Abuse of functional authority

Managers outside of a department can easily be guilty of abusing functional authority. Departmental managers should subsequently be cautious to “protect” staff members from this abuse. Failing to do so could negatively impact on organising as a management function. As such, interference from other managers could confuse staff about activities already agreed upon within their own department. Managers from the

marketing or circulations departments at a media enterprise can, for instance, assign tasks to reporters who fall outside their functional authority. If this issue is not managed properly, tension can arise between reporters and the first-line news managers they are supposed to report to.

In addressing the factors outlined above, managers must perform the second additional management function, namely coordination.

2.4.5 Coordination as an additional management function associated with organisation

Coordination refers to the additional management function through which all organisational resources are synchronised in order to achieve organisational goals and objectives (e.g. see Daft, 2003:747; Plunkett & Attner, 1994:279). According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:211-213) effective coordination relies on the three principles discussed below.

2.4.5.1 Unity of command

This principle implies that each staff member is only directly responsible to one supervisor. Both managers and staff should be clear on who gives direction to a staff member and to whom each staff member reports. On the one hand, this principle eliminates confusion on who staff should report to. On the other hand, it can also improve staff morale and motivation if they receive clear guidance from a specific manager. Proper guidance and feedback on performance can also facilitate that staff members develop a relationship of trust with superiors.

Within a newsroom context characterised by flatter organisational structures, this principle should in theory be easier to implement. Interviewees who participated in the research indicated that these structures do support and accommodate unity of command. However, quantitative results obtained from first-line news managers and reporters show that this is not necessarily the case. Discussions in section 7.4.1 indicate that first-line news managers are not always clear on how to coordinate staff. This is especially the case given their own lack of management experience.

Moreover, reporters experience a need for clearer guidance from their news managers. These especially seem prevalent in teamwork situations.

2.4.5.2 *Scalar principle*

This principle implies that a clear chain of command links each staff member to someone on a higher organisational level. If this is the case, staff members are clear on who their “boss” is. They subsequently have the opportunity to develop a relationship with one superior. Ideally this person should also be the one staff members approach when they need guidance on personal or professional problems.

Interviewees highlighted a more flexible and democratic approach to newsroom management (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:23). This implies an open door approach, with interviewees emphasising that staff members are welcome to approach them with personal or professional problems at any time (also see section 4.6.1.4). However, the absence of clear reporting lines might overstretch a particular news manager whom reporters feel more comfortable with.

2.4.5.3 *Span of management*

This principle implies that the number of people reporting to a single manager should be limited. Flatter and non-hierarchical organisational structures in newsrooms could imply that managers' span of management increases. Given the open door approach, managers might spend so much time addressing reporters' problems that they have little time available to perform other management tasks. Moreover, a wider span of management might see less diligent reporters (who might happen to have fewer personal or professional problems) “disappearing” and not performing as they are supposed to.

Once resources are co-ordinated and activities assigned to designated staff members, managers need to influence subordinates, peers and superiors. This is where leading as a basic management function becomes important. The interpersonal processes of motivation, communication and delegation (as additional management functions) support leading as a basic management function (see

Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:11).

2.5 Leading as a basic management function

Kroon (1995:10) defines leading as the process through which people (as human resources) are influenced to such an extent that they enthusiastically participate in tasks aimed at effectively achieving organisational goals and objectives. Daft (2003:514) coins leading as the “people activity” of management functions. As such, Lussier (2003:310) highlights that leading should be characterised by:

- A common goal and a sense of belonging among staff. This will enable them to reach their goal quicker and more efficiently;
- Strength, safety and power in numbers. Staff should operate in unity in order to successfully achieve a common goal;
- Organisational leaders taking turns to do the hard (or more challenging) work. This allows leaders with different skills to address different challenges, instead of one person suffering from too much responsibility; and
- Continuous support and encouragement while staff do their jobs. This specifically relates to staff who experience difficulty to perform properly (due to personal or professional problems). Once these problems are resolved, those team members will have more confidence to rejoin the rest of the team.

Aspects related to leading as a basic management function are subsequently discussed.

2.5.1 Management roles associated with leading

In properly performing their leading function, managers need to perform the following roles (DuBrin, 2003:11-12).

2.5.1.1 Figurehead and spokesperson

This role implies that the manager entertains members of external publics (such as strategic partners or clients) as the official organisational representative. The

manager also acts as organisational spokesperson in times of crisis. In the media (as in other enterprises), higher-level management often performs this role. In the case of a print publication this is usually the editor, while in broadcasting the station manager can act as spokesperson.

2.5.1.2 Negotiator

The negotiator's task is to consult with internal and external role-players. News managers often negotiate with superiors (e.g. the editor or station manager) for additional funds or technological equipment needed to cover a news story. Similarly, news managers in radio broadcasting negotiate with colleagues in television units for shared use of facilities or staff. This is often the case when a news event is covered for both television and radio and combined resources are utilised more effectively.

2.5.1.3 Coach

Coaches take responsibility to mentor and guide staff. Editors and news editors who participated in Audit 1 expressed the need for improved newsroom coaching and mentoring (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:30, 38, 44). Aspects related to first-line news managers' coaching roles are discussed in more detail in sections 4.4.8; 4.4.9; 7.3.2; and 9.2.4.1.1.

Managers' coaching role within the South African mainstream media is made more difficult given the generation of younger reporters currently active in media newsrooms (e.g. see Heyl, 2002; Pretorius, 2002; Leballo, 2002). In contrast to their predecessors, these reporters have a different perspective on their financial, personal and professional needs. They are also more aware of their rights, conditions of employment and the "rewards" associated with these (see McCabe, 2002; Claassen, 2002). Many of them have a negative stance on coaching, and perceive it as negative criticism on their work and professional conduct. Unfortunately many South African newsrooms are also characterised by a lack of (human and other) resources (e.g. see Els, 2002). This hampers effective coaching even further.

2.5.1.4 Team builder

Team builders aim to build and maintain effective teams. This role is becoming

especially relevant in the media. An increasing number of newsrooms prefer teamwork as a substitute for the individual, lone-ranger approach (see section 7.2.2.1; also see Gade, 2004:7). As team builders, managers must ensure that staff receive recognition for work well done. At some on-line media newsrooms in South Africa, for instance, news managers would circulate e-mails of praise when an employee performed well. A carbon copy of the note would also be sent to superiors. While this motivates employees, it also keeps management informed about subordinates' performance (Gallet, 2002). Managers should also initiate informal work-related or additional activities that could boost team morale. These include sports activities in which staff from one department or different departments can participate against each other. The extent to which first-line news managers succeed in performing this role is discussed in section 7.4.1.

2.5.1.5 *Team player*

Team players strive to display appropriate personal conduct, resulting in admiration and support from staff. Within the context of the study, first-line news managers indicated that they are often expected to give up personal values in order to perform as media enterprises expect of them (see section 9.3.1.1). While this situation could be detrimental for managers' personal and professional lives, it also communicates a negative image to staff members.

2.5.1.6 *Technical problem solver*

Modern-day managers are increasingly challenged to be multi-skilled. While they need technical skills related to their jobs (e.g. reporting, writing and production skills), they are also expected to display knowledge and insight into other areas related to their business activities (e.g. sales, marketing and human resource management).

2.5.1.7 *Intrapreneur/Entrepreneur*

In the context of this study, this role first and foremost refers to that of corporate intrapreneur. According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:143) an intrapreneur is "someone in an organisation who champions turning new ideas into profitable realities". The

changing face of the South African media landscape (see section 6.2.1.2) will increasingly challenge media managers to perform this role.

In the recent past, this role has been taken to an extreme when media managers were compelled to face an entrepreneurial challenge. When South African airwaves were liberalised in the early 1990s (see section 1.3.4.2), many news managers and staff were challenged to set up and develop successful, independent radio stations. As a result, media practitioners had little choice but to think innovatively, take cognisance of their competition, and determine market expectations. They were also required to successfully market the new stations to potential customers and audiences. Many of these stations are now examples of entrepreneurial thinking and independent media success (e.g. see Kahn, 2002; Nash, 2002; Katopodis, 2002).

The above management roles related to leading as a basic management function imply that managers perform additional management functions. These are subsequently discussed.

2.5.2 Motivation as an additional management function associated with leading

Motivation can be defined as “any influence that triggers, directs or maintains goal-directed behaviour” (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:262; also see Rue & Byars, 2000:290). Explanations related to why people are motivated in a specific manner (e.g. see Lussier, 2003:381-394; Rue & Byars, 2000:290-299; Du Toit, 1995:327-344) all focus on individuals’ basic needs which need to be satisfied. If this is the case, individuals experience a reward, communicating to them that their behaviour is appropriate and that similar behaviour could in future result in similar need satisfaction (Daft, 2003:546-547; DuBrin, 2003:320-325). As such, managers should be aware of different circumstances and events that motivate different people. If this is the case, motivated staff will contribute towards effectively and efficiently achieving organisational goals and objectives.

This is one of the main catalysts behind changed management approaches, also in a media management context (see sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3). As indicated by the

quotation at the start of this chapter (Daft, 2003:iii), changed organisational environments and human resource characteristics necessitate a different look at motivational factors. This became evident in the South African media during research for Audit 1. On the one hand, managers at traditional media (especially newspapers) with traditional management approaches complained about uninspired staff. On the other hand, colleagues at “new” media such as on-line sites and independent radio stations experienced the opposite (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:53; also see Bezuidenhout, 2002). In brief, enterprises can focus on the following aspects to satisfy staff needs and subsequently increase their motivation.

2.5.2.1 Job design

Work should be structured in such a manner that it increases productivity and job satisfaction (Daft, 2003:562). As such, jobs should be simplified and staff assigned tasks they are skilled to perform. Staff could also be rotated between jobs in order to prevent boredom and encourage multitasking. Finally, job enrichment can be encouraged, allowing staff to have more control over what they need to do and how they need to do it.

The latter was witnessed during a number of interviews for this research. As such, interviewees explained initiatives through which staff agreements attempt to utilise the skills of, for instance, employees with small children who need more flexible working conditions. While the media enterprise benefits from such agreements, it also motivates staff members, as it provides them with opportunities for personal growth and a sense of achievement.

2.5.2.2 Setting specific goals

Managers should keep in mind that staff need specific (individual and team) goals to improve their performance (see DuBrin, 2003:325). These goals should also be used as a measure to evaluate performance. This issue is discussed in detail in section 7.3.1.5. The extent to which first-line news managers succeed in properly motivating reporters through well-defined goals is discussed in section 7.4.1.10.

2.5.2.3 Financial and other incentives

Financial incentives for good performance have traditionally been considered one of the main factors motivating staff to improve their performance or to keep up good performance (DuBrin, 2003:331). However, a changed workforce has necessitated that enterprises think innovatively about (and wider than) financial incentives when trying to motivate staff. One aspect related to his expansion is profit sharing and gain sharing. Successful motivational initiatives introduced by East Coast Radio in KwaZulu-Natal are discussed in section 6.2.2.1.

2.5.2.4 Inclusion in decision making

Including staff from different organisational levels in decision making has also (within some sectors of the South African media industry) proven to be a strong motivational factor. This ranges from decisions on designing and developing new office space (see Kahn, 2002) to establishing organisational goals and objectives (Nash, 2002). Other media titles initiate frequent discussions during which staff are briefed on their role at the title and within the context of the broader enterprise (see Els, 2002; Claassen, 2002). The benefits associated with this initiative are discussed in section 6.2.3. However, the extent to which first-line news managers and reporters experience this to be the case in their day-to-day newsroom activities are discussed in section 6.3.1.

2.5.3 Communication as an additional management function associated with leading

According to Daft (2003:581), communication can be defined as "the process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more people, usually with the intent to motivate or influence behaviour" or "to inform or remind" someone (Smith, 1995:373). As such, managers are responsible to persuade colleagues, initiate dialogue and feedback, and listen actively (see sections 4.4.6 and 4.4.9). Over and above these, communicators should also be sensitive towards nonverbal communication (see section 4.4.8). Since perception, backgrounds and interests influence these messages (DuBrin, 2003:350), this is especially relevant in South

Africa, given the multilingual and multicultural composition of newsrooms (see section 8.2.2.2).

The full scope of communication within the context of management in general, but specifically newsroom management, is outlined in chapter four. For the purposes of this discussion, it will therefore suffice to state that results from this study identified gaps in newsroom communication that need to be addressed (see section 4.6.1).

2.5.4 Delegation as an additional management function associated with leading

Delegation flows from setting organisational goals and objectives, prioritising tasks and allocating resources to achieve these (see section 5.3.2.2). As such, Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:302) describe delegation as “the process of giving authority to a person (or group or team) to make decisions and act in certain situations”. Effective delegation motivates subordinates, while it also frees managers to avail sufficient attention to tasks high on their list of priorities (see Fink, 1996:89). Increasingly complex and diverse business demands leave modern-day managers with little choice but to delegate tasks to subordinates (see Ströh, 2002:66).

Unfortunately, it is common for managers to fail in effectively performing this management function (see Daft, 2003:315; Simmons, 1990:55). One of the most common reasons for this relates to fear (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:215). Managers fear losing power and control, have perceptions that employees are inexperienced or already too busy, or are concerned that mistakes could damage the enterprise (also see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:215). As a result, managers easily fall into one of the following traps (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:303).

2.5.4.1 Delegating authority without responsibility

Once subordinates have the authority to perform delegated tasks, they need to take responsibility for it. Within a more open and participative newsroom management approach post-1994, reporters seem to have more authority than within the autocratic newsroom management system pre-1994. However, news managers who

participated in both Audit 1 and this research complained that many reporters lack responsibility to properly do their jobs. As such, reporters are said to neglect attention to detail (e.g. completeness, correctness, fairness), but nevertheless expect to see their names printed in a story by-line. They attributed this situation to reporters' youth and inexperience. Obviously, this presents managers with a difficult challenge in terms of delegation.

2.5.4.2 *Delegating responsibility without authority*

Subordinates will find it difficult to perform optimally if they are not given authority to complete the tasks delegated to them (see Ströh, 2002:67; Fink, 1996:91). Research results discussed in section 5.4.1.8 indicate that first-line news managers can still improve on this aspect of their management armour. While reporters indicated that they lack authority to perform delegated tasks, first-line news managers themselves admitted that they need to improve on this area. However, given reporters' seeming lack of responsibility, news managers can not be blamed for being reluctant to delegate more authority.

As is outlined in sections 5.4.1.7 and 5.4.1.8, inability to delegate responsibility and authority was found to be one of the most important shortcomings among first-line news managers who participated in this study. The management implication of such failure is that news managers might end up with insufficient time to properly do all their work, while simultaneously having an unmotivated and unenthusiastic workforce (Ströh, 2001:68).

2.5.5 *Leadership skills as a tool to lead more effectively*

Managers need leadership skills to effectively perform leading as a basic management function. Kruger (1995:353) defines leadership as the ability to "get people to effectively work as a team, create loyalty among group members and contribute meaningfully to achieving organisational goals" (also see Bridle, 2006:45). Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:284) emphasise that this should be achieved by establishing and maintaining sound interpersonal relationships rather than imposing administrative activities on staff members (also see Leballo, 2002 with reference to

the SABC's perspective on this issue).

Commentators differ about the origin of leadership skills. While some are of the opinion that true leaders are born, others believe that leadership skills can be developed (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:438; Lussier, 2003:406). According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:301-302) this can, for instance, be achieved through:

- On-the-job training. In the South African media on-the-job training (e.g. through cadet schools at media enterprises) has traditionally formed an integral part of media training. However, this tradition has largely been phased out, leaving a gap in practical newsroom training;
- Formal assessment and training. Interviewees who participated in the research indicated that this forms an important part of leadership training. However, some explained that it is not always easy to achieve (see section 9.2.4 for a discussion of the challenges facing South African media enterprises in this regard); and
- Coaching and mentoring. This is achieved with the assistance of senior colleagues who have the skills and experience to guide younger and more inexperienced staff. Given the inexperience among first-line news managers in South Africa (see section 1.7.4.1) this becomes especially important. This issue is discussed in section 9.2.4.1.1.

Following the basic management tasks of planning, organising and leading, managers need to monitor the extent to which staff perform the planned (Cole, 2004:240). To achieve this, managers need to implement control as a basic management function.

2.6 Control as a basic management function

Rue and Byars (2000:378) describe control as the systematic “process of ensuring that organisational activities are going according to plan; accomplished by comparing actual performance to predetermined standards or objectives”. Control activities thus aim to ascertain deviations from predetermined decisions and introduce corrective action to address these (Kroon, 1995:11).

In essence, control therefore entails a process through which quantitative and qualitative feedback systems are developed and introduced (Cole, 2004:240). These measures include (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:404-405; DuBrin, 2003:411-413; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:100-102):

- Preventative or pro-active control measures set out before activities commence. These aim to reduce errors and minimise the need for corrective action. Specific mechanisms include rules, regulations, policies and recruitment procedures. In a media context, news policies and codes of ethics are preventative measures guiding newsroom staff's reporting activities (see sections 6.2.2.3 and 9.3.1.3 for a discussion on the implementation of these measures in South African mainstream media newsrooms);
- Concurrent or steering control measures intended to monitor activities or actions while these are carried out. This type of control is especially relevant in contexts where time is essential and corrective action is needed before the job can be completed successfully. Interviewees who participated in the research emphasised their focus on monitoring reporters' progress on assigned tasks during the course of the day. As such, they aim to identify potential problems with stories in order to rectify it before deadlines. However, they also highlighted factors hampering their success in this area (e.g. see section 4.6.1.2); and
- Post- or feedback control measures aimed at rectifying problems that have occurred and preventing them from occurring in future. Interviewees who participated in the study highlighted that they post corrections and guidelines on previous mistakes on the enterprise's intranet as a post-control measure. These guidelines are aimed to prevent reporters from making the same mistakes in future (e.g. see Els, 2002). However, post-control mechanisms are only effective if employees actively strive to implement these as a way of improving their efforts.

Aspects related to control as a basic management function are subsequently discussed.

2.6.1 The need for proper control

Changed organisational structures, management environments and management approaches necessitate that enterprises revisit control as a management function (see Daft, 2003:672-675). With the emphasis on open, democratic and participative management, staff members often take responsibility to align their performance in terms of organisational success themselves.

As such, employees are informed about the business' financial performance, in order to see how they could contribute towards success in this area. With regard to this issue, it seems as if news managers in South Africa face a dilemma. On the one hand, interviewees stated that few members of newsroom staff (including lower level managers) are interested in the financial status and activities of the enterprise they work for. This was especially relevant among media titles that form part of larger media enterprises. On the other hand, interviewees at, for instance, independent radio stations, smaller news agencies and some on-line media expressed the importance of keeping reporters and news managers updated on this issue. Moreover, staff seem interested in receiving this information, as it motivates them to contribute to the business' financial success.

Against this background, enterprises particularly need proper control measures in order to (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:404; DuBrin, 2003:410; Rue & Byars, 2000:378; Crous, 1995:444):

- Prevent crises. Because management is constantly aware of any problems, these can be addressed before turning into crises. As such, concurrent control in the newsroom enables managers to address imbalance or insufficient information in a story before it is published or broadcasted. In this process, the media enterprise prevents a crisis due to incorrect news reporting;
- Standardise quality and output, implying that resources are applied more efficiently. In a media context, this ensures that media titles constantly provide target audiences with fair and balanced news coverage of events;
- Prevent malpractice, theft and wastage. Section 2.4.3.4 outlined control measures implemented by a weekly newspaper to prevent staff members from

using company vehicles for personal purposes or redistributing company assets for personal gain;

- Stimulate delegation, as managers are better informed about staff members' workload and performance; and
- Facilitate performance evaluation and appraisal of each staff member.

2.6.2 Control as a process

Control as a management function implies implementation of the control process. According to Cole (2004:240), DuBrin (2003:413-417), Oosthuizen *et al.* (2002:107-111) and Crous (1995:446-448) this process entails the following elements.

2.6.2.1 *Establishing performance criteria based on goals and objectives*

These criteria should be clear and verifiable and determined during the planning process. Criteria usually evaluate aspects such as production, profitability, and productivity. In order to effectively perform this task, managers need adequate, timely and relevant information. Staff members should be involved in establishing these criteria to know exactly what the basis of measurement is. Measurement can either be done quantitatively (e.g. expressed in numbers, currency or time) or qualitatively (e.g. expressed in terms of expected behaviour associated with service delivery). Quantitative standards provide a clearer picture of the number of units an employee produced. However, in a media context, it is difficult to use these in isolation of qualitative standards.

It could be useful for news managers to use the number of stories a reporter wrote in a specific period of time as a measure of performance. However, managers should also consider the quality/depth of these stories when measuring output.

2.6.2.2 *Comparing actual performance with predetermined standards*

This enables managers to determine the extent to which actual performance differs from the standards agreed upon. It is important, however, that managers and staff agree beforehand on how much deviation will be allowed before action is taken. It is

also important that personal conditions (such as illness, marital problems or personal loss through death) are taken into account when performance is compared with predetermined standards. Results of comparisons should be communicated to both managers and staff concerned. As such, managers and staff need to know about negative deviation, but definitely also about instances in which employee performance exceeded expectations and agreements (see section 2.5.1.4 for an example of how this is done at on-line media titles in South Africa).

2.6.2.3 *Reinforcing positive behaviour or taking corrective action*

This depends on the outcome of the above stage. Managers should clearly and objectively determine causes of sub-par performance. These would indicate whether measures should be introduced to improve performance or whether standards should be adjusted to a more acceptable level. It is again important that managers properly communicate the outcome of this stage to staff in order to provide alternatives that could address deviations.

Similarly, managers should reinforce positive behaviour through coaching and mentoring. Coaching entails the process through which managers observe employees over a specific period of time and provide feedback on how to keep up or improve performance (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:370). The benefits of proper coaching are discussed in sections 7.3.2.3 and 9.2.4. However, the challenges facing South African news managers to properly implement this reinforcement measure are highlighted in sections 7.3.1 and 9.3.1.

Most importantly, control should be perceived as a balanced and fair process. Too much lenience on sub-par performance can be as detrimental to organisational success as managers being too stringent. In the latter situation, staff can manipulate information to portray a more positive picture of their activities. Moreover, organisational productivity can be limited if staff need permission for every decision they want to take (see Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:106).

2.6.3 *Managerial roles implied by control as a management function*

In order to effectively perform control as a management function, managers perform the roles outlined below (DuBrin, 2003:12).

2.6.3.1 *Overseer*

Overseers are responsible to develop and implement systems to measure departmental or individual performance and productivity. This role also entails that staff receive constant feedback. Finally, overseers are responsible to monitor staff's use of technical facilities and equipment. This role aims to ensure that resources are utilised effectively and that activities stay within the framework of plans developed in the planning phase.

Within the context this study different views exist on managers' role as overseers. Qualitative data collected for Audit 1 showed that this role is much more prevalent in media newsrooms with autocratic management approaches. In these newsrooms managers "check up" on reporters much more than in newsrooms with open and participative management approaches. Interviewees pointed out that once staff members bought into the enterprise's plans and objectives, this role almost becomes obsolete (see Kahn, 2002; Katopodis, 2002).

2.6.3.2 *Handler of disturbance*

This role implies that managers are responsible to handle grievances in the department and resolve complaints from staff and other managers. This role also requires managers to resolve team conflict and performance related complaints raised by other departments. Resolving team conflict is probably one of the most important activities news managers need to perform. Section 7.3.3.2 outlines details with regard to this management role, while section 7.4.1.15 describes the extent to which first-line news managers are successful in performing this role.

2.6.4 Discipline as an additional management function associated with control

Discipline is generally regarded as the last alternative to correct human action. In the disciplinary process, managers introduce punitive measures in order to rectify performance that deviates from set standards or agreed upon activities (see Lussier, 2003:452). As such, discipline can take on the form of immediate dismissal (in cases where employees commit serious offences). In other cases, however, discipline can also imply corrective action, providing employees an opportunity to rectify behaviour (see DuBrin, 2003:455). Within a participative and democratic working environment, the latter is most often the preferred way of introducing disciplinary measures.

Lussier (2003:452-453) outlines that disciplinary processes should include the following steps (also see DuBrin, 2003:456):

- Refer to previous incidents and subsequent agreements on how to improve behaviour;
- Give staff an opportunity to explain their behaviour. This step provides managers with the opportunity to gain as much information about the incident as possible;
- Refer to previous discussions (if any) in which staff members committed to adjust their behaviour according to agreed principles;
- Managers subsequently introduce disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the offence (and previous disciplinary encounters), staff can either receive an oral or written warning;
- Offenders get an opportunity to rectify their behaviour. As such, managers receive a commitment from staff that the situation will improve;
- Managers and offenders sit down and develop a workable plan through which commitment can be displayed. If such a plan was developed in the past, staff need to recommit to it; and
- Finally, managers summarise the discussion and subsequent agreements. If monitored behaviour does not improve, staff could be suspended or discharged.

First-line news managers should also ensure that disciplinary procedures take the relevant provisions of South African labour legislation into account.

Within the context of this study it seems as if disciplinary action is not a common occurrence in South African mainstream media newsrooms. Other than the examples of offences described in section 2.4.3.4, interviewees made little reference to the need for serious disciplinary action. They did state, however, that labour legislation plays an important role in the way disciplinary hearings and procedures take place. Some referred to the benefits associated with these procedures. Others, however, expressed their concern that it provides staff with leeway to take chances. They mainly ascribed this to staff's knowledge that labour legislation makes it more difficult for media enterprises to suspend or discharge them.

2.7 Summary

This chapter outlined dimensions of general management theory. As such, managers' responsibility to optimise owners' wealth rests on their ability to effectively and efficiently utilise the organisational resources available to them. This, in turn, implies that managers perform specific management functions and tasks. The discussion subsequently focused on the basic management functions, namely planning, organising, leading and control. It was indicated in each instance how changing organisational environments necessitate a different perspective on managers' performance of these tasks. More specifically, dimensions of these management functions were explained within the context of newsroom management in the South African mainstream media. Additional management functions associated with the basic management functions were also outlined. These discussions delineated the elements of decision making, coordination, communication, motivation, delegation and discipline.

In order to effectively and efficiently perform the above-mentioned management functions, managers need specific managerial competencies. Within the context of this study, these competencies refer to communication; planning and administration; strategic action; teamwork; global awareness; and self-management (see section 1.2.1). Together with general management theory, these managerial competencies

form the theoretical framework of this study. As such, each is discussed in detail in chapters four to nine. In each instance, theoretical elements associated with the dimensions of these competencies are outlined, followed by qualitative and quantitative results obtained from data collected for this study.

The following chapter outlines aspects of the research methodology applied in the study.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

Quantitative research and qualitative research respectively ... provide an ideal complement to one another such that their sensitive and focused combination will result in an excellent and all-round picture of the issue being researched.

– Roe (2004:79)

Conducting research on the journalists' turf enhanced understanding and interpretation of the context in which newsroom changes are occurring.

– Singer (2004:843)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter expands on the methodological framework applicable to this study as outlined in section 1.7. As such, aspects related to the research design and research instruments are set out. This is followed by a discussion of the research population, research sample and sampling procedure applicable to the study. In the final instance, aspects of the data analysis and interpretation procedures used during the research process are delineated.

3.2 Research framework

The first point of departure for this study was to undertake a thorough literature study from which the research could be expanded. Expansion was done through empirical research into the importance and implementation of the six managerial competencies applicable to this study (see section 1.2.1; also see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:2-23).

3.2.1 Literature study

In line with the perspective of authors such as Daymon and Holloway (2003:35) and Jankowicz (2005:163), the first rationale behind the literature study was to become familiar with published material on some aspects related to the research problem addressed in the study. The rationale also flowed from the need to position the current research approaches, findings and suggestions within a “body of scientific knowledge” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:565). As such, literature was studied on the importance and implementation of the six managerial competencies applied in this study (see section 1.7.1). While literature on these competencies related to business activity across various industries, attention was specifically focused on the relevance thereof within a media and newsroom management context.

Literature indicated a variety of trends. On the one hand a shift in management approaches and styles was witnessed (see section 1.3.1). This not only became apparent in organisational activity across various industries, but specifically also in the media (see section 1.3.2). On the other hand, cognisance of the changes within the South African media environment post-1994 (and concomitant challenges facing the media) suggested that a different media management paradigm is needed. Results from Audit 1 confirmed this need (see section 1.3.3).

The latter fulfilled another purpose of the literature study. As Daymon and Holloway (2003:35) state, a literature review provides researchers with a rationale for their study. This was also the case with regard to the current research study. The majority of literature studied related to a general management context (across a variety of business industries and in different countries around the world). A number of applications were found with regard to media and newsroom management in an international context. However, literature specifically pertaining to media and newsroom management in South Africa is scarce. Moreover, literature specifically related to the importance and implementation of the six managerial competencies in media and newsroom management in South Africa could not be found. The lack of sufficient literature on the research topic, linked to the need for proper newsroom management in a changing media environment, underlined the relevance and necessity of this study.

As Neuman (2004:68-69) and Cooper and Schindler (2003:101) suggest, the literature review comprised of:

- Textbooks on management in general, but specifically also on media and newsroom management. The latter largely consisted of recent international publications on the topic;
- Articles published in newspapers and popular journals. These articles are predominantly written with the mass market in mind (Neuman, 2004:69). However, it provided interesting insight into changing local and international trends related to management in general. Moreover, it provided insight into challenges facing local and international media. These challenges, in turn, confront academics and media practitioners with questions related to human resource management in a media environment;
- Articles published in opinion magazines in which experts and intellectuals debate and express their views. These debates specifically relate to the above trends and the way in which they affect media activity and media management in particular;
- Articles in academic journals. With regard to media and newsroom management, these articles were again largely applicable to the international context. However, related to management in a broader context, results were found on research studies specifically pertaining to the South African business environment and management within this context. Relevant issues discussed in these articles were applied to management in a newsroom and media context;
- Conference papers obtained from researchers personally, collected while attending national and international conferences or via Internet sites developed and managed by conference organisers. Personal notes taken during panel discussions on media and newsroom management at (specifically) international conferences were also included in the literature overview;
- Research reports published after the completion of research projects. These reports were either obtained from the researchers themselves or from the

investigated from more than one perspective. This provided a fuller understanding of the research issues under discussion and was especially valuable during the qualitative part of the data collection process;

- Methodological triangulation. This refers to the use of different methodological approaches when collecting data. As indicated above, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods were used in the study. These comprised of semi-structured interviews, observation and self-administered questionnaires (see section 3.2.2.2.1); and
- Interdisciplinary triangulation. This approach to triangulation implies that researchers apply different interdisciplinary approaches in a single study. As Janesick (1994:215) states, this combination assists researchers to gain a broader understanding of the research phenomenon they investigate. For the purposes of this study, the researcher combined the disciplines of media and management. As such, the researcher utilised a theoretical framework traditionally applied in management studies to gain a better understanding of management activities in a media newsroom context.

With the previous discussion in mind, the next section outlines the specific research instruments used in the study.

3.2.2.2 *Research instruments*

As indicated in section 3.2.2.1.1, quantitative and qualitative research instruments were implemented to collect data. These are outlined below.

3.2.2.2.1 *Quantitative research instruments – self-administered questionnaires for reporters and first-line news managers*

Two research instruments were used to collect quantitative data. Both were self-administered questionnaires aimed at reporters and first-line news managers.

- *Self-administered questionnaire for reporters*

In the first instance, respondents from a reporter sample (see section 3.4) completed a questionnaire focusing on aspects of their professional profile, and attitudes towards aspects of their working environment (see Addendum B). For the purpose of this study, the final part of the questionnaire is of particular importance. In this part of the questionnaire reporters rated the importance they attach to the six managerial competencies by rating management tasks associated with each. They also rated their perception of how well first-line news managers (they report to) currently implement the same management tasks. A total of 207 reporter respondents completed questionnaires at the various media titles visited (n=207).

It was important to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Validity indicates the extent to which research findings “are accurate, reflect the purpose of the study and represent reality” (Daymon & Holloway, 2003:274). Reliability, on the other hand, points out “the extent to which a particular data collection approach will yield the same results on different occasions” (Lancaster, 2005:72). Two tests were subsequently performed on the questionnaire (also see Gade, 2004:28 with reference to a newsroom study in which similar tests were applied to measure validity and reliability of research instruments).

In the first instance, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on each of the six managerial competencies to determine the dimensionality of the sets of items (see Stamm, 2003:137). A small number of factors explaining a large proportion of the variance indicates that the set of items measures a few latent variables (factors) (see Bartholomew *et al.*, 2002:143-174). The ideal is to have items pertaining to a specific variable measuring only one factor. This implies that the items only measure one variable/aspect. Table 3.1 outlines the EFA results as calculated for each of the six managerial competencies.

implementing the process of triangulation. According to Lancaster (2005:175) the term triangulation was “borrowed from navigation and surveying, where multiple reference points are taken to check an object’s location”. In the context of data collection and interpretation, triangulation refers to the process by which researchers combine methods, data, and theoretical approaches in one study. On the one hand, this approach addresses biases of single methodologies and/or perspectives (see Fortner & Christians, 2003:354; Struwig & Stead, 2001:18-19). On the other, the purpose is to establish a “fully rounded analysis of some phenomenon” (Fortner & Christians, 2003:354). This process verifies data (Hickson, 2003:194) and subsequently increases data reliability and validity (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275-276; Du Plooy, 2002:39).

Researchers have the option to apply different types of triangulation in a research study. For the purposes of this study, the researcher implemented the following types (see Lancaster, 2005:76; Daymon & Holloway, 2003:98-99; Janesick, 1994:214-215):

- Data triangulation refers to collecting different sets of data (qualitative and/or quantitative) from different groups of respondents and at potentially different research sites. For the purposes of this study data was collected quantitatively from a sample of first-line news managers and reporters employed at different mainstream media newsrooms across South Africa. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires (see section 3.2.2.2.1). Another set of data was collected qualitatively among managers in higher management tiers of the media titles included in the study. This data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observation (see section 3.2.2.2.2). As outlined in section 3.2.1 the literature study provided another data source;
- Investigator/researcher triangulation. As was indicated in section 1.3.4.5, baseline data for the research study was collected as part of research for Audit 2. Within the framework of the Audit, investigator/researcher triangulation was used to compile baseline data. As such, the skills and expertise of more than one researcher were used in all qualitative and quantitative data collection processes. Apart from addressing Audit requirements, this approach also prevented researcher bias as far as possible. Over and above this, researcher triangulation was useful in that issues were

investigated from more than one perspective. This provided a fuller understanding of the research issues under discussion and was especially valuable during the qualitative part of the data collection process;

- Methodological triangulation. This refers to the use of different methodological approaches when collecting data. As indicated above, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods were used in the study. These comprised of semi-structured interviews, observation and self-administered questionnaires (see section 3.2.2.2.1); and
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Table 3.1: Results of validity tests performed on the questionnaire for reporters

Reporters – Importance			
Managerial competency	Number of factors retained by Kaiser's criterion⁹ and the relation thereof to the dimensions of individual managerial competencies	Cumulative variance explained by the number of factors retained	Communality estimates for all items
Communication	2 factors retained • Informal communication; and • Formal communication.	66.46%	0.50 – 0.74
Planning and administration	3 factors retained • Budgeting and financial management; • Gathering and analysing information; and • Planning and organising projects.	74.42%	0.58 – 0.90
Strategic action	3 factors retained • Understanding the internal and external media environment; • Monitoring changes and aligning the media enterprise accordingly; and • Cognisance of the national and international news agenda.	72.12%	0.60 – 0.86
Teamwork	1 factor retained	73.44%	0.53 – 0.83
Global awareness	2 factors retained • Cultural knowledge and understanding; and • Cognisance of national and international changes and the impact thereof on the media enterprise.	79.97%	0.48 – 0.91
Self-management	2 factors retained • Integrity and ethical conduct; and • Balanced personal and professional lives.	73.97%	0.56 – 0.92
Reporters – Implementation			
Communication	1 factor retained	63.86%	0.51 – 0.73
Planning and administration	2 factors retained • Planning and organising projects; and • Budgeting and financial management.	76.27%	0.65 – 0.90
Strategic action	2 factors retained • Understanding the internal and external media environment; and • Monitoring changes in the media environment and aligning the media enterprise accordingly.	73.64%	0.60 – 0.87
Teamwork	1 factor retained	78.35%	0.61 – 0.87
Global awareness	2 factors retained • Cultural knowledge and understanding; and • Cognisance of national and international changes and the impact thereof on the media enterprise.	84.28%	0.56 – 0.92
Self-management	1 factor retained	73.38%	0.62 – 0.81

⁹ Addendum D outlines the rotated factor patterns retained by Kaiser's criterion. This is provided for all competencies retaining more than one factor.

From the results outlined in Table 3.1 one can conclude that the questionnaire for reporters was a valid research instrument. This is based on the finding that a principal components analysis retained between one and three factors for each competency. The cumulative variance explained by factors was in all instances higher than 50% and the communality estimates were larger than 0.48 for all items. To compare the six managerial competencies in terms of importance and implementation among first-line news managers and reporters, the average count of items in each competency was calculated as a measure of that competency.

Secondly, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated for each of the six managerial competencies contained in the questionnaire. These coefficients estimate the reliability of the type of scale where interrelated items are summed to obtain an overall score for each participant. This is done by determining the internal consistency of the test or the average correlation of items in the test (SAS Institute Inc., 2005:295). According to Hocking *et al.* (2003:131) Cronbach's Alpha coefficient indicates how constant respondents were in the responses they provided for a given competency when they completed the questionnaire. This reflects the extent to which the items used in the questionnaire (i.e. specific management tasks related to each managerial competency) reflect the competency (construct) it is supposed to (see Cooper & Schindler, 2003:237). Table 3.2 outlines the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients as calculated for each of the six managerial competencies.

Table 3.2: Results of reliability tests performed on the questionnaire for reporters

Managerial competency	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	
	Importance	Implementation
Communication	0.95	0.96
Planning and administration	0.95	0.97
Strategic action	0.96	0.97
Teamwork	0.98	0.98
Global awareness	0.94	0.95
Self-management	0.97	0.98

According to Hocking *et al.* (2003:132) the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients should at least be 0.9 for a research instrument to be reliable. However, coefficients of

between 0.7 and 0.9 are also acceptable in instances where new research instruments are developed. Based on the results outlined in Table 3.2 one can conclude that the questionnaire for reporters was a reliable research instrument. All the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients calculated were higher than 0.9.

- *Self-administered questionnaire for first-line news managers*

Respondents from a first-line news manager sample (see section 3.4.6) also completed a similar questionnaire than the one administered to reporters (see Addendum A). They also provided data related to their professional profile and attitudes towards aspects of their working environments. Similar to reporters, they also rated the importance they attach to each of the six managerial competencies by means of rating management tasks associated with each competency. More importantly, however, they rated their perspective of how well they implement these management tasks in their daily newsroom management activities. A total of 79 first-line news manager respondents completed this questionnaire at the different media titles visited (n=79).

As was the case with the questionnaire for reporters, the one for first-line news managers was also tested for validity and reliability. An EFA analysis was performed on the items in each competency to test for validity, using the principal components method. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were also calculated to test for reliability. Table 3.3 outlines the results related to validity of the research instrument, while Table 3.4 outlines the results obtained for the reliability thereof.

Based on the results outlined in Table 3.3 one can conclude that the questionnaire for first-line news managers was a valid research instrument. Although a number of constructs retained 4 to 5 factors, the cumulative variances explained were above 68% in all cases. The communality estimates were larger than 0.46 for all items. It should also be taken into account that the EFA was conducted on only 79 questionnaires completed by first-line news manager questionnaires. In some cases, 25% of these cases were excluded from the calculations on the basis of missing data values. The relatively small number of cases tested, together with the cases ignored on the basis of the missing data values, could have negatively influenced the validity

results. However, since the questionnaire for first-line news managers was the same as the one used for reporters (and found to be a valid research instrument), one can state that this research instrument was also valid. In order to compare the six managerial competencies in terms of importance and implementation among first-line news managers and reporters, the average count of items in each competency was calculated as a measure of that competency.

Table 3.3: Results of validity tests performed on the questionnaire for first-line news managers

First-line news managers – Importance			
Managerial competency	Number of factors retained by Kaiser's criterion	Cumulative variance explained by the number of factors retained	Communality estimates for all items
Communication	3	68.34%	0.56 – 0.85
Planning and administration	5	80.88%	0.60 – 0.95
Strategic action	3	75.54%	0.64 – 0.90
Teamwork	2	85.25%	0.75 – 0.92
Global awareness	2	73.57%	0.59 – 0.82
Self-management	4	76.05%	0.52 – 0.94
First-line news managers – Implementation			
Communication	5	76.09%	0.50 – 0.88
Planning and administration	4	75.09%	0.48 – 0.91
Strategic action	4	76.49%	0.46 – 0.89
Teamwork	3	79.05%	0.70 – 0.94
Global awareness	2	70.10%	0.46 – 0.85
Self-management	4	73.10%	0.57 – 0.87

Table 3.4: Results of reliability tests performed on the questionnaire for first-line news managers

Managerial competency	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	
	Importance	Implementation
Communication	0.93	0.89
Planning and administration	0.91	0.86
Strategic action	0.96	0.95
Teamwork	0.98	0.96
Global awareness	0.91	0.90
Self-management	0.94	0.93

All Cronbach's Alpha coefficients outlined in Table 3.4 were above 0.90 except for implementation of the communication competency and the planning and administration competency respectively. Although all these coefficients should ideally

be at least 0.90, values between 0.7 and 0.9 are acceptable in instances (such as this) where new research instruments are developed (Hocking *et al.*, 2003:132). It is therefore concluded that the questionnaire for first-line news managers was a reliable research instrument.

Both questionnaires were compiled in English, and consisted of three types of questions:

- Closed questions to compile data on respondents' professional profile. These questions specifically related to biographical details (e.g. gender, the media type they are currently employed at; educational qualifications; mother tongue; position in the media enterprise; period of time they have been in that position). In each instance, the question contained a fixed number of items. The respondent had to choose the most applicable one from the list provided (see Du Plooy, 2002:138). Given the risk associated with closed questions that the list of options might exclude a respondent's potential answer, care was taken to make these lists as extensive as possible. Respondents were also encouraged to provide their answer even if it did not match the options provided. For this purpose, the option "other" was listed. Respondents were requested to specify their answer in cases where they chose "other";
- Likert-type statements were used to measure respondents' attitudes towards specific organisational and job-related aspects such as infrastructure, remuneration, management style, ethics and working conditions. Although relevant for Audit 2, these were not a primary focus of this research study and thus not reported on directly. For the purposes of measuring respondents' attitudes, they were asked to rate the Likert-type statements on a five level scale. As such, it was indicated on the questionnaire that 1 = extremely negative and 5 = extremely positive;
- Likert-type statements were also used to determine perceptions¹⁰ on the importance of the six managerial competencies among respondents in the two

¹⁰ "Perception" was defined as "ways of observing and the bases for making judgments" (Plunkett & Attner, 1994:359). It enables individuals to "make sense out of the environment, by selecting, organising and interpreting information" (Daft, 2003:485). Perceptions "affect behaviour and performance" (Lussier, 2003:269) and management should be aware thereof, to anticipate how it might affect behaviour and performance (also see Steyn *et al.* 2005:12).

respondent groups. As Bagozzi (1994:14) states, Likert scales can be used to measure respondents' perceptions on a series of statements (also see Crimp, 1990:100). The same scale applied than the one discussed above. It was thus indicated on the questionnaire that 1 = not important and 5 = absolutely important. This scale was applicable to a list of management tasks specifically related to each of the six managerial competencies. The same scale was furthermore used to determine reporter respondents' perceptions of how well first-line news managers currently implement the six managerial competencies. First-line news manager respondents needed to indicate how well they perceive themselves to implement the management tasks listed; and

- Open-ended questions. The aim with these questions was to encourage respondents to offer "any answer they wish" to the question posed (Neuman, 2004:361). As such, respondents were asked to list the three most important constraints and three most important opportunities facing first-line news managers in their departments/sections. Again, first-line news managers' answers had to relate to issues hampering or promoting their own performance. Responses from this section were incorporated with qualitative and quantitative research results on the importance and implementation of the six managerial competencies.

Questionnaires were handed out to the volunteer and availability sample of first-line news managers and reporters (see sections 3.4.6 and 3.4.7) at the start of the interview with the contact person (see below) and collected afterwards. Care was taken to assure respondents that they would remain anonymous in order to encourage frank and open responses.

3.2.2.2.2 Qualitative research instruments – interviews and observational research

Qualitative research instruments comprised of semi-structured interviews and observational research. These are subsequently discussed.

- *Semi-structured interviews*

The first qualitative research instrument used was semi-structured interviews (n=43) among a sample of interviewees. These interviewees comprised of newsroom staff on higher management levels at the media titles included in the sample (see section 3.2.2.2.2). As Jankowicz (2005:257) indicates, semi-structured interviews refer to a technique in which the sequence of the interviewing process is not strictly determined beforehand. May (2001:123) considers this characteristic one of the biggest advantages related to semi-structured interviews. Due to the flexible nature thereof, researchers can probe interviewees about additional (but relevant) aspects that come to the fore during the interviewing process. Given this "freedom", researchers usually have a list of specified questions or topics to be discussed during the interview (see Addendum C for the interview framework used in this research). These questions or topics are asked to or discussed with interviewees in a systematic and consistent manner (see Struwig & Stead, 2001:98).

Telephonic and/or e-mail arrangements for the interviews were made in advance with the editorial person in charge of the media title. In the majority of cases this was the editor (at print media) or news editor, regional editor, current affairs editor or on-line editor (at broadcasting media, on-line media or news agencies). In some cases, however, the editorial person in charge of the media title delegated the interviews to a newsroom colleague (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:9-21 for a complete list of interviewees as well as their contact details). During initial discussions, the researcher explained the purpose of the research to potential interviewees. A document containing specifics on the research study, as well as details on the research and fieldwork procedures was then passed on to them electronically once the interview was confirmed. The arrangement was that they would facilitate newsroom access by informing staff (especially first-line news managers and reporters) of the proposed research. The rationale was that informed respondents would be more willing to be included in the research project when approached.

On average, interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. In some cases, however, interviews exceeded an hour. Interviews focused on the general

management approach applicable in newsrooms as well as the importance and implementation of the six managerial competencies used in the research.¹¹

- *Observational research*

Qualitative data was also compiled through impressions obtained during observations. According to Adler and Adler (1994:378) observational research entails “the act of noting a phenomenon, often with instruments, and recording it for scientific or other purposes”. As such, observations were made of, amongst others, respondents’ and interviewees’ verbal and nonverbal expressions; reactions towards the research project in general and the specific newsroom atmosphere at the time of conducting the fieldwork.

This was made possible because fieldwork for the study was done in real-time. As such, the phenomenon of managing people was observed in a real-time and natural newsroom environment. First-line news managers and reporters were thus observed in their natural contexts and among those colleagues they naturally interact with in their day-to-day activities. As indicated in the quotation from Singer (2004:843) at the outset of this chapter, such an approach enables researchers to gain a better understanding of the environment in which the research data is collected. This understanding facilitates data interpretation, as researchers are able to identify and elaborate on trends and situations. This insight provides a different perspective to the “clinical” data collected with quantitative research instruments.

In the context of this study, triangulating qualitative and quantitative data provided valuable insights into the phenomenon of managing newsroom staff. In some instances the two sets of data complemented each other, confirming a trend or situation. In other instances, however, qualitative and quantitative data contested

¹¹ The possibility exists that qualitative data provided during interviews could (to some extent) be (positively or negatively) biased. This is based on the argument that interviewees’ perception or experience of the issue under discussion could be influenced by their general approach to newsroom management. These perceptions could be formed through interaction with newsroom staff (including first-line news managers and reporters). However, the same could be argued with regard to perceptions reporters and first-line news managers expressed quantitatively. While there is no guarantee that interviewees’ perceptions truly reflect newsroom situations, policies or activities, one can accept that higher level managers would be well-informed about management activities in their newsrooms.

each other. Questions subsequently arose about which set of perspectives truly reflects newsroom management activity. Due to the nature and scope of the research it is only possible to indicate that different perceptions/experiences exist among different respondent groups who participated in the research. It is not possible to indicate with confidence which perception and/or experience most accurately reflects newsroom reality. One has to accept, however, that the quantitative responses represent a reasonably acceptable statistical view of responses provided by a larger group of respondents than the single-respondent interviews.

Data obtained from observational research was combined with qualitative data from interviews, as well as quantitative data from questionnaires. In line with what Lancaster (2005:99) suggests, this was done to:

- Identify connections and possible causes¹² between qualitative and quantitative data in relation to larger trends, patterns or styles of behaviour not verbalised during interviews. Instead of relying solely on data provided during interviews, observations gave an additional perspective to newsroom management activities. In some cases, a positive and relaxed newsroom atmosphere matched interviewees' descriptions of newsroom management approaches. In other cases, however, the newsroom atmosphere and respondents' verbal as well as nonverbal communication indicated that newsroom staff were not satisfied with newsroom management. In many cases quantitative data analysis indicated that these newsrooms experience the most serious problems. By implementing observational techniques, subtle issues were identified which would probably not have come to the fore if only quantitative research techniques were used;
- Support or refute comments made during interviews;
- Verify or oppose quantitative data from questionnaires; and
- Draw more substantiated conclusions based on an additional research dimension. These, in turn, facilitated better research recommendations.

¹² However, the research did not intend to establish causal links between the different research variables.

Once the nature of the research instruments was determined, the methodological focus shifted to the research population and sample frame. These are subsequently discussed.

3.3 Research population and sample frame

As was outlined in section 1.8, a variety of factors differentiates mainstream and community media in the country. These relate to the nature of news production and distribution, deadline pressure due to different production and publication schedules, different needs and expectations from target audiences and different newsroom structures. Another, more important, factor within the scope of this research relates to newsroom staff composition. Whereas mainstream media almost solely employ full-time and paid staff members, community media often relies on volunteer staff who work only a certain number of hours. As a result, community media face different human resource management challenges than their mainstream counterparts.

Based on these considerations (and factors such as financial and time constraints) the study only focused on mainstream media. The Sanef ETC also approved this decision. The research population of mainstream media was used to construct a sample frame. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:188) a sample frame is a "list of elements from which the sample is actually drawn". The sample frame for this study consisted of all mainstream media titles in South Africa (N=106) at the time when the study was initiated in May 2004.

In cooperation with and upon approval by the Sanef ETC, specific considerations about fixed variables formed the framework for the sample frame. If fixed variables are set, researchers can draw conclusions and make comparisons across variables. The only prerequisite is that at least two cases/sites related to each fixed variable must be included in the sample (Ellis, 2004). For the purposes of this research study, this implied that at least two daily newspapers had to, for instance, be included in the national sample.

In applying the above method, data could also be used to calculate a standard deviation. According to Weaver (2003:152) standard deviation is the "most commonly

used measure of dispersion" and is important in "estimating the probability of how frequently certain scores can be expected to occur in random sampling" (also see Clifton, Nguyen & Nutt, 1992:74).

The following considerations applied in determining the fixed variables for the study.

3.3.1 Media types

The first consideration was to draw a representative sample of mainstream media types in South Africa. The following parameters were used to develop the sample frame applicable to media types:

- The researcher's existing knowledge of mainstream media types in the country which are responsible for producing and distributing news products. Media types which only focus on entertainment were not included in the sample frame, as newsroom management was the central focus of the study;
- The researcher collaborated with other South African media experts (academics and practitioners) to verify the completeness of the sample frame;
- The researcher also collaborated with members of the Sanef ETC to verify the list;
- Experience on the part of the researcher and the Sanef ETC gained after conducting and completing research for Audit 1 among (mainly) mainstream media in the country;
- Additional recommendations by the Sanef ETC, namely that mainstream news agencies should also be included in the research. This did not form part of initial research parameters, and news agencies were also not included in Audit 1. However, including this media type proved useful, as the researcher gained valuable insights from respondents and interviewees at these sites. These did not only relate to human resource management challenges in a newsroom context, but also to management approaches in general; and
- Requirements for a stratified systematic random sample (see section 3.4.4).

Based on these parameters, the sample frame according to media type included:

- Daily newspapers;
- Weekly newspapers;
- Consumer magazines. Although South African media enterprises produce and distribute a large number of magazines, the sample frame only included those dealing with aspects of hard and soft news. Moreover, only magazines with a weekly production and distribution schedule were included in the sample frame. The rationale behind this was that magazines with a monthly schedule face different/more lenient deadline challenges, which could skew research results. Finally, only magazines that focus on general actuality issues were included in the sample frame. This implied that titles focusing on, for instance, health, business, gender, crafts or do-it-yourself were excluded;
- Radio stations producing and broadcasting news. These included radio stations affiliated with the public service broadcaster (SABC) as well as independent/commercial broadcasters. The sample frame did not include campus or community radio stations which use volunteer staff members. Only radio stations with salaried employees were included in the sample frame. SABC regional stations were also included in the sample frame, given that they produced and distributed news;
- Television channels producing and broadcasting news bulletins on an hourly/daily basis. As was the case with radio stations, these channels were only included in the sample frame if they had salaried employees. Television channels affiliated with the SABC and independent/commercial broadcasters were again included in the sample frame. International news channels broadcasting in South Africa (e.g. CNN or the BBC) were not included in the sample frame;
- On-line media specifically responsible for distributing news. In some cases, on-line media titles were responsible for limited news production by compiling news items. The majority, however, mainly focused on adjusting existing news items (compiled and distributed by news agencies) for distribution to target audiences. Both on-line media titles connected to print publications (e.g. daily or weekly newspapers) and electronic broadcasters (e.g. television channels) were included in the sample frame; and

- Mainstream news agencies. Regional (e.g. Eastern Cape News Agency [ECNA]) and international (e.g. Reuters and Associated Press [AP]) news agencies were not included in the sample frame, even though they deliver news to the South African media on a large scale. NGO/specialist news agencies or government news agencies were also not included in the sample frame.

3.3.2 Media ownership

Since 1994, ownership of South African media changed considerably, especially in terms of (see section 1.3.4.2; Froneman, 2004:6-11):

- Deregulation of interests (especially in broadcasting);
- Foreign media ownership;
- Liberalisation of broadcasting airwaves, with licences being awarded to community and commercial media; and
- Various black economic empowerment initiatives.

To some extent, each of these changes imposed new demands on owners, shareholders, political role-players and audiences. One specific area relates to the availability/lack of resources for media enterprises to perform their activities effectively and efficiently (see section 1.6). As a result, media owners, managers and reporters could think differently about the importance of the six managerial competencies applicable to this study. More importantly, however, it could also affect the effective and efficient implementation of these competencies in mainstream media newsrooms.

Based on these considerations, and after consultation with the Sanef ETC, it was decided that media ownership would form the second fixed variable for the study. The same prerequisites applied as outlined in section 3.3.1.

The sample frame of media ownership types was subsequently compiled according to the following ownership categories:

- Media titles affiliated with companies listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE);
- Media titles affiliated with companies not listed on the JSE;
- Media titles with a public service mandate; and
- Media titles affiliated with companies with a majority of foreign ownership (although local shareholders might also be involved).

3.3.3 *National representivity*

In order to generalise research results wider than the research sample, the latter must be representative of the research population (see Babbie & Mouton, 2001:647; also see Struwig & Stead, 2001:5). To generalise research results obtained from the sample frames discussed in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to all mainstream media in South Africa, the sample frame also had to be nationally representative. The following geographical areas were therefore included in the sample frame:

- Cape Town;
- Johannesburg/Pretoria;
- Durban;
- Port Elizabeth;
- Bloemfontein; and
- Nelspruit.

To accomplish the required geographical distribution, purposeful sampling was used. According to Neuman (2004:138) a purposeful or judgemental sample refers to a procedure in which researchers use their knowledge, expertise, judgement or specific research objectives to draw a sample that would serve a specific purpose (also see Du Plooy, 2002:114). This provides researchers with a sample frame from which a sample of "information-rich" (Struwig & Stead, 2001:122) respondents can be drawn.

Purposeful sampling is classified among non-probability samples. This implies that not all members of the research population have an equal chance to be included in the sample (Du Plooy, 2002:113-114). Subsequently, it is not suitable or advisable in

all instances. However, as Neuman (2004:138-139) states, some situations justify the use thereof. These are:

- Instances in which researchers are cognisant of cases/situations/individuals which will be especially informative about the research problem. In the context of national representivity, the researcher knew that the geographical areas included in the purposeful sample are those with the highest concentration of mainstream media titles. As a result, these areas will also be the most “informative” about newsroom management;
- Cases in which researchers want to research a specialised population that is difficult to “list” for the purpose of random sampling; and
- Instances in which researchers do not necessarily strive to generalise research results, but rather gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under discussion. As indicated in section 3.2.2.1.2, the purpose with combining qualitative and quantitative research instruments in this study was to gain a better understanding of the interaction between managers and reporters in real-time newsroom situations.

The next step in the methodological process was to draw the research sample.

3.4 Sampling procedure

As indicated in section 3.3 (also see section 1.7.3.3) the aim with the sampling procedure was to have a representative sample in terms of media type and media ownership type that could be generalised to the bigger research population. After consultation with the Sanef ETC and a senior statistical advisor at the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University (Ellis, 2004), the following sampling procedure was implemented.

3.4.1 Step 1: Compiling the sample frame of media titles

Taking into account the considerations of media types (see section 3.3.1), media ownership types (see section 3.3.2) and national representivity (see section 3.3.3) a sample frame of 106 media titles was subsequently compiled (N=106).

3.4.2 Step 2: Calculating the proportional sample per media type

As Cooper and Schindler (2003:195) indicate, proportional sampling refers to a sampling procedure which ensures that all strata in a research study are proportionally represented (also see Struwig & Stead, 2001:113). The sample of each stratum drawn from the sample frame is therefore proportionate to its representation in the total research population. In the context of this study, media type and media ownership type each represented a stratum. The sample from these strata had to be proportional to each stratum's representivity in the total sample frame and distributed across the different geographical areas (see section 3.3.3).

The following formula was applied to calculate the proportional sample for each media type included in the research sample (also see Dillon, Madden & Firtle, 1990:283):

$$n = (X \div Y) \times N$$

Where:

- n = the number of media titles of each media type included in the sample;
- X = the number of media titles of each media type in the sample frame;
- Y = the total sample frame; and
- N = the total number of media titles to be visited for the research.¹³

Table 1.1 outlines the stratified random sample according to media type.

3.4.3 Step 3: Calculating the proportional sample per media ownership type

The same formula was used to calculate the proportional sample per ownership type, namely:

¹³ Due to budgetary considerations, Sanef suggested that 47 media titles were to be included in the research.

$$n = X \div Y \times N$$

Where:

- n = the number of media titles of each ownership type included in the sample.
- X = the number of media titles of each ownership type in the sample frame;
- Y = the total sample frame; and
- N = the total number of media titles to be visited for the research.

Table 1.2 outlines the stratified random sample according to media ownership type.

3.4.4 Step 4: Drawing a systematic random sample from the respective strata

A systematic random sample according to media type and media ownership type was subsequently drawn to make the sample as representative and random as possible. The first step was to determine the number of each media type according to different ownership categories. A calculation was subsequently done to determine the proportional number of media in each ownership category to be included in the sample. A systematic random sample was then drawn. According to Hocking *et al.* (2003:232) this sampling procedure requires researchers to:

- Start at any randomly chosen point on the sample frame. In the context of this study, a randomly selected point was used on the list of media types contained in the sample frame;
- Ensure that all potential respondents in the sample frame have an equal chance to be included in the sample. For the current research study this implied that all media titles listed per media type needed to be considered for inclusion in the sample; and
- Calculate a skip interval. After choosing a random spot on the list of each media type from where sampling started, initially every third and thereafter

every second of the remaining cases were included in the sample to reach the required number of cases per media type.

In cases (at daily and weekly newspapers) where the systematic random sample only rendered one mainstream title, a community newspaper (including Verified Free Distribution [VFD] titles) was included in the sample. However, this title needed to:

- Have comparable circulation figures to mainstream titles in the specific metropolitan/urban area;
- Be situated in the metropolitan/urban area already included in the geographical sample frame;
- Be published on a daily (in the case of daily newspapers) and weekly (in the case of weekly newspapers) basis; and
- Have salaried employees.

3.4.5 Step 5: Categorising the above sample into geographical areas

Based on the sample compiled through the above procedure, the chosen media titles were categorised into geographical areas for the purposes of conducting the fieldwork. As outlined in section 3.2.2.2.2, meetings were subsequently set up with the relevant contact people.

Table 1.3 outlines the sample of mainstream media per geographical area.

3.4.6 Step 6: Drawing a volunteer and availability sample of first-line news managers

Fieldwork commenced once meetings at individual media titles were arranged per geographical area. During fieldwork, a volunteer and availability sample was drawn of first-line news managers available at each media title. Volunteer and availability samples are classified as non-probability samples. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:183) this implies that sampling is “arbitrary and subjective” – each member of the research population thus does not have an equal chance to be included in the sample (see Du Plooy, 2002:113).

Non-probability sampling is generally not considered a preferred sampling method (e.g. see Jankowicz, 2005:203; Cooper & Schindler, 2003:198; May, 2001:95). However, researchers acknowledge specific instances/situations in which it can provide useful data. These include instances when (Jankowicz, 2005:202; Neuman, 2003:137; Du Plooy, 2002:113; May, 2001:95):

- Researchers want to focus more on issues, trends or events and the extent to which these affect society. Smaller and non-probability samples can then provide meaningful insight into these matters. In these instances, the aim is not to generalise research results, but rather to improve understanding of the phenomenon under discussion;
- Researchers do exploratory research or when pre-testing a research instrument (e.g. questionnaire);
- It is difficult to compile a sample frame from which a random sample can be drawn. These include instances where people in dispersed, rural areas are the target population and little “formal” information is available about them. The best method to apply then is for the researcher to “collect” respondents while travelling through the area and conducting fieldwork among respondents whose details are available;
- The researcher uses a small target population and the non-probability sample includes the majority of the target population in any way;
- The research objective or research problem is more “fit” for non-probability sampling than for statistically proven methods; or
- Researchers have limited time and financial resources. Obviously, these factors should ideally not limit a research project. However, researchers often have few resources available for exploratory research or a pilot study. Non-probability sampling could then provide equally insightful data in a shorter period of time and at a lower cost.

As outlined in section 3.2.2.2.2, fieldwork for the research was done in real-time situations. As a result, the researcher spent only a specific time at each media title,

collecting quantitative and qualitative data. This motivated the use of availability and volunteer samples among first-line news managers for the following reasons:

- It was difficult to have an exact sample frame of the first-line news managers who would be available to participate in the research at the time the fieldwork was conducted. This was due to tight news production schedules and managers' responsibility to meet deadlines irrespective of the research project. While first-line news managers could thus potentially be in the newsroom at the time of fieldwork, professional obligations could prevent them from being included in a predetermined sample; and
- As a rule, questionnaires were handed out when fieldwork commenced and collected once fieldwork was completed. In a few cases, contact people requested that questionnaires were handed out before the actual fieldwork commenced. In these instances, the contact person briefed potential respondents and handed out questionnaires. These were collected after the fieldwork was completed. As a rule, questionnaires were also not left at media titles after the fieldwork was completed. As a result, first-line news manager respondents had to be available at the site and willing to participate in the research in the period that fieldwork was conducted in order for them to be included in the sample.

Given the requirements discussed above, a total of 79 first-line news managers were included in the volunteer and availability sample (n=79).

3.4.7 Step 7: Drawing a volunteer and availability sample of reporters

The research required that reporter respondents needed to report directly to the first-line news managers included in the above sample. The same guidelines applicable to first-line news manager respondents also applied to reporter respondents. Reporters also had to be available at the media title at the time when fieldwork was conducted, and were voluntarily included in the research. Apart from the factors which motivated the use of volunteer and availability sampling among first-line news managers (see section 3.4.6), the nature of the news process necessitated that this sampling method was also applied among reporters. Although reporters were

scheduled to be in the office at the particular time of visiting the media titles, breaking news stories could compel them to leave the newsroom. If these reporters were identified for inclusion in a predetermined sample, their absence from the newsroom could render a dysfunctional probability sample.

Given the considerations discussed above, 207 reporter respondents were included in the volunteer and availability sample (n=207).

3.5 Data analysis

The final step entailed that the researcher analysed data collected during the above process. These processes are subsequently outlined.

3.5.1 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data from interviews and observational research (see section 3.2.2.2) was analysed and interpreted through qualitative content analysis. As Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994:464) explain, content analysis was traditionally a quantitative method used to analyse numerical data. However, in quantitative research, researchers often exclude the context in which events occur. In a qualitative research approach, however, context provides researchers with an additional and important understanding of events (see Neuman, 2004:87; Struwig & Stead, 2001:12).

Qualitative content analysis thus entails a process through which themes, patterns and categories emerge as the research progresses. By studying field/interview notes, documents (e.g. letters, memoranda, diaries) and taking into account the context in which the events took place, qualitative researchers are able to identify trends and occurrences that enrich their research studies.

For the purposes of this study, qualitative content analysis entailed that interview notes and observations were transcribed, categorised and compared. As such, the researcher identified similar and different trends for inclusion in the research results. Specific care was taken to highlight instances in which different trends, perspectives or challenges were identified. In some instances, these differences highlighted

positive aspects related to newsroom management. In other instances, however, it was concluded that differences contributed to ineffective and inefficient newsroom management. These were highlighted and discussed in the results sections of chapters four to nine.

3.5.2 Quantitative data analysis

As Clifton *et al.* (1992:98) state, the issue of “significance” is often considered when researchers analyse and interpret empirical research data. As such, “significance” refers to whether a change or trend is noteworthy enough to be considered important. Moreover, the question whether the difference between two issues (e.g. importance and implementation of managerial competencies) is big enough to notice can also be answered in terms of “significance”. Within the context of quantitative research, significance is often measured in statistical terms (e.g. see Babbie, 1989:455).

However, as Steyn (2005:1) explains, statistical significance does not indicate how important the differences or correlations between statistical data are. In order to address this shortcoming, Steyn (2005:2) suggests that effect size indexes are used. The size of these indexes is a direct indication of the practical significant differences or correlations between the items measured.

The general research purpose of this study was to determine the importance first-line news managers and reporters in the South African mainstream media attach to the six managerial competencies applied (see section 1.5.1). The study also aimed to determine perceptions related to the current implementation of these competencies by first-line news managers (see section 1.5.2). The researcher thus used effect size indexes (d-values) to indicate practically significant differences between the importance and implementation of the six competencies (see Ellis & Steyn, 2003:52). In this process, the research aimed to identify problems related to ineffective and inefficient newsroom management.

Effect sizes indicating practically significant effects were calculated by using the following formula (Cohen, 1988:20-27):

$$d = \frac{|\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2|}{s_{\max}}$$

Where:

- d = effect size;
- $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$ is the difference between the means of quantitative data obtained from the two respondent groups (first-line news managers and reporters); and
- $s_{\max}$ is the maximum standard deviation of the two compared groups.

Once effect sizes were calculated, the researcher used the following guidelines to interpret these values (Cohen, 1988:20-27):

- $d \approx 0.2$ = no practically significant effect;
- $d \approx 0.5$ = moderate effect; and
- $d \approx 0.8$ or larger = a practically significant effect.

Over and above these, quantitative data analysis on the professional profile of respondents was also done and reported in the form of frequency tables (see sections 1.7.4.1 and 1.7.4.2).

3.6 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodological framework and techniques applied to investigate the importance and implementation of six managerial competencies among first-line news managers and reporters in South Africa's mainstream media. It outlined and motivated the triangular combination of qualitative and quantitative research designs in order to obtain as much insight into the research phenomenon as possible. The chapter also delineated the quantitative and qualitative research instruments used for data collection purposes. The researcher substantiated this approach through relevant literature on qualitative and quantitative research methods. Similar literature was also used to motivate the specific methodological

approach applicable to compiling the research population and sample frame. An outline of the sampling process indicated how the representative research sample was drawn. The chapter concluded with an outline of the qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods used to obtain the richest possible insight into the research phenomenon.

The next chapter of the study outlines the dimensions of communication as a managerial competency. These dimensions serve as the backdrop against which research results on the importance and implementation of this competency in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms are outlined.

Chapter 4:

Communication as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management

Effective communication is the glue that bonds people together
regardless of language, race, or ethnic background
– **Maddox** (1990:11)

We can communicate with the world, but we
can't seem to communicate with each other
– **United States (US) newspaper editor** (Peters, 2004:2)

4.1 Introduction

Little argumentation is needed that news managers (as managers in any other industry) need good communication competencies to assist them in properly doing their jobs. As such, proper communication is needed for media (and other business) enterprises to effectively and efficiently achieve organisational goals and objectives (see section 2.2). If managers effectively communicate with both subordinates and superiors, the media enterprise's internal as well as external stakeholders will benefit (see section 4.2).

This chapter focuses on communication as a managerial competency. In the first instance, the dimensions of this competency are discussed. This is followed by an outline of potential barriers to effective communication, as well as ways through which these barriers can be removed. The chapter concludes with qualitative and quantitative research results on the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency among first-line news managers and reporters in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms.

4.2 The need for proper communication in modern-day enterprises

Broadly defined, communication refers to “the process of sending and receiving messages” (Thill & Bovée, 2002:2). This process can only be successful if the receiver receives and understands the intended message correctly. This understanding, in turn, results in desired action or reaction. Effective organisational communication poses many benefits, including quicker problem solving; improved decision making; increased productivity; steadier work flow; stronger business relationships; enhanced professional image; and improved response from internal and external stakeholders (Thill & Bovée, 2002:3).

In a more focused sense (and specifically as a managerial competency), communication refers to the effective transfer and exchange of information in order to facilitate understanding between managers and others in the enterprise (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:16). According to Daft (2003:580) managers spend at least 80% of their working day communicating with others. Proper and clear communication between management and employees is thus crucial. On the one hand, obtaining and disseminating relevant information (i.e. communicating) can ensure successful strategic positioning and eventually organisational survival (Orpen, 1991:31). On the other hand, Jo and Shim (2005:277) found that employees who receive sufficient information through proper communication processes are more likely to form trusting relationships with their managers. This, in turn, results in improved job satisfaction and employee performance. Inadequate internal communication, however, prevents employees from developing a clear picture of the enterprise's vision, mission and goals (and where they stand in the process of achieving those). This results in an overall lack of organisational effectiveness (Orpen, 1994:58). It also prevents management from identifying and reacting to potential organisational problems (Thill & Bovée, 2002:7).

Media enterprises are no exception. The primary aim of these enterprises is to communicate. As such, they strive to communicate messages about societal events (local, national and international) to target audiences in the fairest and most balanced manner possible. However, media communication does not end there. Media enterprises are primarily also expected to facilitate proper two-way communication

between employers and employees. Despite this, Northrup (1996:7) points out that the media is often bad at managing internal communication, despite its communicative nature. Peters (1999:10) supports this. Reporters and other newsroom staff (not appointed in management positions) indicated in a newsroom study in the US that many newsroom problems could be solved if internal communication were to improve.

The increasingly global nature of media activities (see section 8.2) linked with more flexible conditions of employment (see section 2.5.2.1) progressively sees media enterprises implementing the concept of “virtual newsrooms” and “virtual offices” (Northrup, 1996:6). Thill and Bovée (2002:3) indicate that the number of US telecommuters¹⁴ is estimated around 16 million. Virtual offices are especially prevalent among female media practitioners, also in South Africa. An interviewee who participated in this research outlined that the media title she works for increasingly accommodates female staff members who work from home offices. She accentuated that they would rather be more accommodating towards these employees than stand a chance of losing their skills to another media title.

Some of the challenges mentioned above are subsequently discussed in more detail (also see Thill & Bovée, 2002:3-6).

4.2.1 Technological innovation

Technology has the potential to improve communication. It has already improved the speed and frequency of communication. Moreover, it has enabled people across the globe to be in contact on a minute-to-minute basis. New technology (such as the Internet, electronic mail, voicemail) thus facilitates new and innovative employer-employee communication, irrespective of space and time (see Chan-Olmsted, 2006a:251; Wicks, Sylvie, Hollifield, Lacy & Sohn, 2004:99).

¹⁴ As Thill and Bovée (2002:4) indicate, telecommuters are employees who do not physically commute to work. Instead, communication technology (such as the Internet, electronic mail, cellular phones) enables them to perform their agreed upon activities from home (or other form of virtual) offices. Telecommuters are often expected to perform their jobs, complete projects and meet deadlines with little or no supervision.

Enterprises in the twenty first century thus have little choice but to improve internal communication. This is especially relevant given the increasingly limited personal contact between personnel and the increase of virtual offices. A lack of proper communication could detrimentally affect organisational management, and subsequently business success.

Media enterprises in South Africa and abroad already utilise the opportunities new technology present to improve internal communication. As such, the *New York Times* Group uses webcasts to reinforce their "journalistic mission and ... cherished values, yet encourage (their) ambitions as a business organisation so that (they) could raise (their) level of performance to new heights" (Jones, 2003:14). According to Jones (2003:14), this approach addressed the dilemma that communication messages simply become "pieces of paper" fluttering down from management to staff members. In a South African media context, Media24, for instance, uses its intranet (scoop.net) as both a communication and training instrument. As such, it provides reporters with feedback on stories written, as well as areas in which stories and story ideas could be improved. The intranet also serves as an information tool through which staff are informed of salient issues on the national and international media training agenda (Els, 2002; also see section 2.6).

4.2.2 Communicating with a culturally diverse workforce

This issue is probably nowhere more relevant than in South Africa (also see chapter eight). The country's post-1994 landscape changed to such an extent that the media needs to address the needs and expectations of a "mixed mosaic of identities divided up by age, language, culture, urban/rural differences, regions ... education and incomes" (Addison, 2004:35; also see Witepski, 2006:40). As such, recent studies found that more than 40% of South Africans "often do not, or seldom, understand what is being communicated in English" (Anon, 2004:14).

This challenge also faces the media in terms of internal communication. As part of media transformation since 1994, several attempts were made to address cultural and language diversity in the media. As such, multilingual staff members from a more diverse cultural background were increasingly appointed in media positions. On the

one hand, these initiatives ensured that media enterprises have a more representative workforce. On the other, it enables the media to produce and distribute a more diverse news product to the country's media audiences (see Von Bormann, 2004a:31; Berger, 2004a:36).

Given the increasingly global nature of media audiences, this challenge is not unique to South African newsrooms. Wicks *et al.* (2004:42) argue that having a culturally diverse workforce is probably one of the biggest challenges facing media managers in the next decade (also see Fink, 1996:148). As such, news managers are likely to face tests related to newsroom conflict and tension among colleagues from different cultural backgrounds and orientations. To address these, managers and reporters will require skills that demonstrate sensitivity and adjustment when communicating with a culturally diverse workforce (also see sections 4.6.1.6 and 4.6.1.14 for an outline of how well first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media perform on this area).

4.2.3 Communication in an information age

Communicating in an information age requires staff on all organisational levels to manage increasing volumes of information. This is positive in the sense that more information is available upon which to base decisions. However, given the importance of basing decisions on proper information (see section 5.3.1), staff need skills to effectively and efficiently find, analyse, evaluate and disseminate information. They also need skills to properly communicate relevant information to the appropriate stakeholder groups for inclusion in their decision making processes.

As such, proper internal communication can facilitate organisational success, as staff members understand events and decisions affecting the enterprise (see Burton, 2001:16). Moreover, it provides them with insight on their role in these events and decisions and strengthens their sense of organisational "belonging". Enterprises should thus ensure that relevant information is communicated timeously and effectively throughout the organisational ranks.

4.2.4 Communication with staff in teams

Organising staff into work teams has become increasingly popular among enterprises worldwide (see section 7.2.2). This is encouraged by the increase realisation that top-down and authoritarian management styles do not render optimal staff performance (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:36-61 for an overview of how management styles and approaches have been adapted over the years). Moreover, global and increasingly networked organisational operations necessitate a shift towards collaborative work groups or teams responsible for realising organisational goals and objectives (see Ilbury & Sunter, 2005:76). Employees on different organisational levels should therefore have the skills to properly communicate with colleagues within a teamwork context.

This also applies to the media. As such, the shift towards newsroom teams can be attributed to factors such as digital (and increasingly also virtual) newsrooms, more flexible conditions of employment and technological developments (see Quinn, 2002:33). However, not all agree that teams are necessarily the ultimate framework upon which to base newsroom activity. Peters (2004:37), for instance, points out that many employees are “not enthusiastic about the teams they’re on ... (and) many are forced to partner with co-workers who have few teamwork skills”. Similarly, the *Financial Times* Group states: “Just as our editorial reporting and analysis aims to stand out from the crowd ... so too our internal culture promotes an environment where individual contribution is highly valued (and where) ... individually and differing opinions are not subsumed by an overriding team ethos” (Young, 2003:27).

Reality is, however, that teamwork is currently the preferred way of organising organisational activities (for many enterprises) and managers will need to adjust their communication skills and competencies accordingly (Quinn, 2002:53). The extent to which this is successful in South African mainstream media newsrooms is outlined in section 7.3.1.

Given this background, the dimensions of communication as a managerial competency are subsequently outlined.

4.3 Dimensions of communication as a managerial competency

According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:15)

communication (as a managerial competency) is perhaps the most fundamental. Unless you can express yourself and understand others in written, oral, and nonverbal ... communication, you can't use the other competencies effectively to accomplish tasks through other people. Nor can you effectively manage the vast network of relationships that link you to other people inside and outside of your organisation.

Jacobs (2004:7) supports this perspective by stating that effective communication should be the vehicle through which management and employees aim to engender "goodwill and mutual understanding". This will, in turn, facilitate that organisational goals and objectives are aligned with personal ones. Given the dynamic and changing environment in which businesses operate and employees perform their professional activities, this issue is particularly important (see Gillis, 2004:8).

Managers will only successfully achieve this if they are aware of and skilled in the different dimensions of communication as a managerial competency. These dimensions are subsequently discussed (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:15-17; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:29; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:16-17).

4.3.1 Formal communication

Formal communication techniques are implemented to inform internal and external stakeholders of organisational activities and events. The style and format of formal communication depends on factors such as the nature of the enterprise; the nature of the message communicated; and the nature of the target audience. Specific communication instruments include presentations, written letters and memoranda. Within a modern-day organisational context, formal communication messages are increasingly also distributed via electronic mail. Irrespective of the specific communication instrument used, messages should remain clear, accurate, concise and understandable.

Contemporary media enterprises utilise the opportunities presented by new communication technology. As such, senior managers at the *Financial Times* Group use (amongst others) quarterly presentations to staff members as formal communication instrument. These presentations aim inform staff of important business issues and projects adding to the group's success (Young, 2003:29). Similarly, top management at the *New York Times* Company uses webcasts to communicate important information to staff. Video recordings are made of top management discussing relevant issues with each other and "with staff" (by looking directly into the camera). These "conversations" are then communicated electronically to staff via the group's intranet (Jones, 2003:15). Members of top management are of the opinion that these messages convey "a sense of enthusiasm and commitment from the top" and in the process also motivate staff (Jones, 2003:14).

As stated above, electronic mail is an increasingly popular means to pass on formal communication messages to staff. However, as Peters (2004:5-6) points out, this is not necessarily ideal in a newsroom context. Peters conducted a newsroom study at almost 40 newspapers in the US. Findings from this study confirmed that 60-65% of respondents are introverts. As such, electronic mail could be perceived an ideal instrument to avoid direct interaction or verbal communication with colleagues. However, respondents seemed aware of the potential danger of over-utilising electronic mail as a formal communication instrument. Their main concern focused on the extent it limits proper interaction and discussions between themselves and their supervisors.

During qualitative interviews for this research, interviewees on higher management levels of South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms highlighted the use of various formal communication instruments. These included:

- Electronic mail correspondence, especially when managers want to keep a record of correspondence between themselves and reporters. These messages would especially be used to keep record of discussions aimed at improving reporters' performance;
- Messages posted on the intranets of media titles (also see section 4.2.1);

- Letters and/or memoranda, especially when formal organisational policy issues or other organisational changes are communicated to staff;
- Presentations used when people in higher management positions want to address staff on company policy or related changes; and
- Newsletters or other internal publications. These communication instruments are implemented to communicate changes in company policy or related issues to staff. However, managers in regional offices of the SABC expressed their concern that they (and staff) would often learn about these changes only through messages in newsletters or other publications. As such, they would not be informed personally of changes which might affect their working conditions or personal situations. They attributed this to a lack of formal communication between higher level managers and staff. In their view, one explanatory factor could be the distance between regional offices and the head office in Johannesburg.

Given the different formal communication instruments available, Vogt (2004:24) warns that these processes can not be effective if management actions do not support communicated messages. This could see organisational morale, productivity, motivation and performance suffering. Young (2003:28) supports this sentiment: "if managers bark orders at their people, keep key information from their teams or chop and change their minds about funding products ... a lack of credibility in leadership messages ensues and people quickly feel disempowered". Clearly, any enterprise striving for success would want to prevent this.

The extent to which first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms succeed in implementing formal communication instruments and processes is outlined in section 4.6.1.1.

4.3.2 Informal communication

It is estimated that 80% of information passed on through informal communication networks relate to the enterprise and its activities (Thill & Bovée, 2002:8). By implementing informal communication processes, managers build a network of contacts among relevant internal and external stakeholder groups (Hellriegel *et al.*,

2005:16). These contacts aim to elicit feedback and ultimately promote two-way communication between managers and stakeholders. Despite this, managers often lack the skills to utilise proper feedback (see section 4.4.9 for more detail on the effect this has on effective communication).

4.3.2.1 *The need to adjust informal communication to reach the target audience*

Informal communication approaches need to vary, depending on the receiver's background, education, language, culture or ethnicity. As such, it can include informal discussions, lunches or the occasional cup of coffee with a randomly selected group of employees (Rankin, 1986:34). Senders need a sound knowledge and understanding of their audience's characteristics before formulating and transmitting messages. If not, it might be decoded incorrectly and be misunderstood, with the original intention being lost (Thill & Bovée, 2002:11).

Within a globalising organisational environment, enterprises need to be even more aware of the potential for inappropriate communication or misunderstood messages. Rodriquez (2004:6) summarises this dilemma:

Communicators need to counsel executives on ... how to verbalise the messages that reflect the company's real objectives, how to pick the right channel and media to communicate, how to present themselves so that people will listen, how to anticipate the outcomes of communication and how to gather feedback.

As such, language is an important factor. This is especially relevant for internal and external communication in the South African media environment. Results from Audit 1 highlighted that almost half of the reporters participating in the research did not work in their mother tongue (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:37). As a result, print media reporters often find it difficult to accurately spell words, formulate sentences and logically put a story together. Similarly, broadcast reporters face challenges to pronounce words and phrases understandably, given that it could be in a second or third language. This, in turn, poses the dilemma of communicating effectively with the target audience (also see Anon. [2004:15] with reference to similar challenges facing other media publications in South Africa).

Despite the external communication challenges described above, effective internal communication is similarly challenged by staff who communicate in a language other than their mother tongue. As such, about 30% of first-line news managers and more than 40% of reporters who participated in this study indicated that (on average) they do not communicate in their mother tongue (also see sections 1.7.4.1 and 1.7.4.2). Managers should thus be cautious of potential misunderstanding and adjust informal communication messages in order to optimally facilitate effective communication. Interviewees included in the research confirmed these findings. However, they stated that multilingualism in newsrooms facilitates communication, staff morale and interpersonal relationships. They therefore do not perceive it as a hampering factor.

4.3.2.2 Initiatives to facilitate understanding in informal communication situations

Understanding between sender and receiver can be facilitated through sensitivity towards and tolerance of others' needs, opinions, feelings and idiosyncrasies (Peters, 1999:12). Communicators thus need to hone interpersonal skills.

However, recent research indicated that news managers perform worst in this area (Geisler, 2004:1). While these managers were said to be strong in areas of product and process management, reporters rated them worst at managing people. The study (Geisler, 2004:1) found that one in four newly appointed managers needed significant improvement in this area (also see section 10.1). Findings from other studies (see Jo & Shim, 2005:277; Xenitelis, 2004:7; Heuman, 2004:7; Gillis, 2004:8; Romano, 2002:14-16; Peters, 1999:22; Gaziano & Coulson, 1988:869; 871) confirmed these results. Apart from insufficient communication skills, these studies found that managers also spend too little time with subordinates, lack leadership and interpersonal skills, and do not provide sufficient feedback. As a result, they are perceived as impatient, bad tempered and bad mannered. These characteristics do not facilitate informal communication or interpersonal relationships. Given the importance subordinates attach to it, managers need to focus on improving these skills.

Participants in South African newsroom studies also expressed these sentiments. Respondents who participated in Audit 1 had two broad perspectives. At media titles where more stringent management styles apply, (especially older) respondents complained that younger reporters seemingly lack motivation and loyalty. Moreover, these reporters were said to be in journalism only for the celebrity status associated with their jobs. As this perspective differs from that held by older colleagues, a negative newsroom atmosphere developed. On the other hand, (especially younger) respondents employed by media titles with more participative management approaches were very positive that employees work hard and enjoy their jobs. Moreover, they were appreciative about the valuable contribution these staff make towards the media titles and the profession. As a result, the latter group of respondents seemed more prone to focus on interactive communication sessions. During these sessions, staff on different organisational levels participate in open and frank discussions on issues confronting the enterprise. On the one hand, these discussions were said to benefit interpersonal relationships (despite different cultures and backgrounds). On the other, it also increases awareness, sensitivity and understanding among employees on different organisational levels.

Accessibility on the part of both parties involved in the communication process also facilitates effective two-way communication. This is especially applicable when managers communicate with staff. Inaccessibility was said to be one reason why top manager Richard Kaplan was “managed” out of his position at CNN’s headquarters in Atlanta. Staff members experienced him as “arrogant, demanding and difficult”, with the tendency to “explode on people” (Farhi, 2000:42-43).

4.3.3 Negotiation

Negotiation skills are often considered “survival skills for managers” (Romano, 2002:16). As such, it requires managers to negotiate with superiors and subordinates on behalf of an enterprise or a team in order to establish consensus on an issue. Consensus is needed on goals and objectives as well as willingness to achieve these (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:16). Negotiation might also be needed to determine and establish organisational roles, as well as to identify, obtain and utilise resources to the benefit of all parties involved.

Within a newsroom context, the above could relate to managers negotiating with owners of media enterprises to, for instance, obtain adequate technological equipment needed to cover news events. Some interviewees who participated in this research aired their frustration about the nature and outcome of these negotiation processes. As such, they experience that owners are unaware of the needs and requirements of the news production and distribution environment. They ascribed this to the fact that media owners are not familiar with the media industry, as their ownership interests stretch over various industries. As a result, they fail to understand the need to upgrade or replace outdated equipment. If this is the case, media titles find it difficult to cover certain news events. Moreover, if they do cover the events, the news product is often inferior and unprofessional compared to that of their competition who have access to better equipment.¹⁵

Newsroom negotiation might also be needed to decide whether news footage or photographs should be included in coverage of a specific news event. On this issue, interviewees stressed that the majority of newsrooms prefer negotiation and democratic decision making to resolve these issues. They outlined how newsroom staff (from different organisational levels) use newsroom meetings to discuss advantages and disadvantages of covering a particular news event. However, many emphasised that they (as managers) ultimately remain responsible to take the decision and be accountable for their decision. Van Nostran (2004:10) echoes this approach: "employees seem to have more things to say and more questions to raise ..., but it is still the leader's responsibility to make the decisions and live by the consequences".

Given the multicultural nature of many work environments (see section 8.2) managers need awareness of and experience in negotiating styles across cultures. As such, Thill and Bovée (2002:11) state that negotiators from the US, Canada and

¹⁵ Because the sample for this research did not include media owners, it is possible that this perspective only provides one angle to this situation. As such, the possibility exists that the media owners under discussion do not have funds to immediately upgrade or replace equipment. It might also be the case that they consider other issues more urgent. As a result, they would rather spend available funds to address those issues. This does not imply, however, that interviewees' frustration is not valid. Again, proper communication and information between owners and managers could reduce this frustration.

Germany often approach negotiations on a more impersonal basis than their counterparts from Japan. Whereas the former group is more interested in the economic gains as primary outcome of the negotiation process, the latter focuses on establishing and maintaining long-term relationships.

Irrespective of the negotiation approach followed, successful negotiators are expected to have an honest and genuine approach to the negotiation process. Moreover, they are required to control their emotions, listen actively to what is said and how it is being said, and demonstrate understanding of the message. Unfortunately, these are often also the factors that hamper effective communication. Given the need to optimise communication, these barriers are subsequently discussed.

4.4 Barriers to effective communication

Although all communication interaction implies that meaning is exchanged between senders and receivers, Thill and Bovée (2002:12) point out that the message as such contains no meaning. Meaning is only established once the intended meaning (on the part of the sender) matches the perceived meaning (in the mind of the receiver). Inability to achieve this indicates that communication barriers hamper effective communication. Unless these barriers are identified and overcome, effective communication can not take place. The following issues pose barriers to effective communication (see Lussier, 2003:345-362; DuBrin, 2003:359-362; Thill & Bovée, 2002:12-14).

4.4.1 Semantics and jargon

Semantics and jargon can cloud message perception. This is especially true in South Africa. Employees from 11 different language backgrounds potentially interact and communicate with each other. In an attempt to address this challenge, many enterprises adopted English as the language of communication, even though it is not the mother tongue of many employees. This notion is especially witnessed among young black South Africans (Anon, 2004:14). As such, it is likely that English will

remain a prevalent language in print and electronic media, despite government (and other) efforts to redress the language imbalance in the media.

However, communicating in a second or third language can increase communication barriers associated with semantics and jargon. The current research supports this statement. Interviewees indicated that newsroom staff are more multilingual than two to three years ago. They also emphasised that this aspect unifies newsrooms and facilitates internal communication (Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:32). However, quantitative results (see sections 4.6.1.13 and 4.6.1.15) indicate that first-line news managers and reporters perceive multilingualism as a potential barrier to effective newsroom communication.

4.4.2 Information overload

Thill and Bovée (2002:13) indicate that the average white-collar worker in the US sends and receives almost 200 messages per day. This happens through a variety of communication channels such as telephone calls (more than 50), electronic mail (around 30), voice mail (more than 20) and other forms of mail (almost 20). On the one hand, this could broaden their perspective and facilitate decision-making. On the other, it could also lead to information overload (also see section 4.2.3). Communicators are thus challenged to be clear and concise, in an effort to effectively transfer the message the first time. Respondents in a newsroom study (Peters, 2004:26) echoed this. They indicated that news managers need to be more direct in internal communication. This will enable employees to know exactly what is communicated to and expected of them.

4.4.3 Communication channels

The type of message largely determines which communication channel will be most appropriate. Each communication channel has limitations which could distort some part of the message (Thill & Bovée, 2002:81). It is therefore important that communicators convey their message in such a manner that staff's "imagination (is captured) and ... level of passion and commitment (is raised)" (Vogt, 2004:26). Failure to successfully decide on the most appropriate communication channel could

prevent effective communication. However, this is not an easy task. Differences in ethnic and cultural backgrounds, language, education and individual personalities all influence this decision. Different communication channels also communicate different "pictures" about the sender in the mind of the receiver. For instance, a formal message needs to be communicated through a formal letter or memorandum. Moreover, a confidential matter would be better communicated by letter than by fax.

Section 4.3.1 outlined that reporters place a high premium on proper communication through the most appropriate channel. As such, it is important that news managers focus on establishing and utilising proper interpersonal communication channels instead of using impersonal channels such as electronic mail. One reason for this is that reporters increasingly want the opportunity for personal feedback and interaction (see Jo & Shim, 2005:278; Geisler, 2004:2). This especially relates to information that directly affects their working conditions. Mediated messages often do not allow this opportunity.

Within a changing and increasingly interactive newsroom environment, however, the role of electronic communication channels (such as electronic mail) should not be underestimated. For instance, news editors at on-line media (such as news24.com) indicated that they utilise electronic communication to encourage interaction and the exchange of ideas. As such, the website would update editors of print newspapers on breaking news by sending electronic newsletters to them. This proves to be particularly valuable with regard to sharing ideas between different media outlets (see Heyl, 2002).

4.4.4 Noise or distraction

Noise or distractions can hamper effective communication. As such, illegible copy (e.g. due to bad fax transmission), bad telephone connections or poor acoustics during an oral presentation can hamper the communication process. However, distractions can also relate to limitations on the side of the receiver. These include health problems, emotional problems or negative attitudes (also see sections 4.4.6, 4.4.7 and 4.4.9).

4.4.5 Trust and credibility

Trust and credibility can determine the measure of response to a message. In a recent study on the relationship between effective employer-employee communication and trusting relationships, Jo and Shim (2005:279) found that "managers who communicate well and attentively to their subordinates perform better in situations that involve nurturing and maintaining trusting relationships". The same authors also found that "employees receiving positive communication are more likely to ... form trusting relationships with ... management" (Jo & Shim, 2005:278). Gillis (2004:8) similarly found a positive correlation between trust and credibility and the extent to which employees participate in organisational communication. As trust and credibility increases, staff tend to be more committed to the enterprise. This results in improved organisational relationships.

However, developing relationships with superiors or subordinates takes a deliberate effort (on any organisational level). As Orpen (1991:36) states, it is easier for people to communicate with colleagues on the same organisational level. This is ascribed to the fact that these people are more likely to share interests and concerns. Interaction is thus less threatening. Managers therefore need to make a concerted effort to build trust between themselves and subordinates. This requires open and honest communication, accessibility and respect of others' needs and expectations (Romano, 2002:15).

As is the case in other industries, media managers also need to foster trusting and credible external relationships with various stakeholders (e.g. the government, other media enterprises, audiences and advertisers). This will only succeed if media titles convey factually accurate, clear and correct messages to these stakeholders (see Bezuidenhout, 2002; Du Plessis, 2002).

External relations, however, are not the primary focus of this study. As a result, the extent to which first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media are able to establish and maintain sound internal relationships is outlined in sections 4.6.1.5 and 4.6.1.8.

4.4.6 *Listening skills*

Selective listening (or a lack of listening skills) can also hamper effective communication. The finding that first-line news managers spend most time at the workplace listening to others (Maddox, 1990:2) necessitates that they address poor listening skills (also see Berryman-Fink, 1985:309 for differences distinguishing listening skills among female and male manager respondents). As such, former AlliedSignal (*sic*) Aerospace ranked good listening skills a critical component of effective communication when they developed a formal management training program. This program was aimed at addressing communication challenges managers are expected to face (Van Nostran, 2004:10).

Research findings highlight that news managers also need to improve their listening skills. "Not listening" was one of the negative behaviours cited in a recent study on news managers' strengths and weaknesses (Geisler, 2004:2). Equally, respondents identified "listening with respect and interest" as some of the most positive management behaviours that foster "a climate for good work" (Geisler, 2004:4).

4.4.7 *Emotional barriers*

Emotional barriers often debilitate clear communication and objective listening. While people communicate on a content level as well as an emotional level, it is said that the latter potentially affects communication behaviour most (Romano, 2002:14). Managers should thus have the skills to identify and control the emotive side of communicating and interacting with staff. Moreover, they have the additional task to control their own emotions. Ability to do this could help them to remain calm when communicating with (potentially difficult) employees. As a result, contentious issues will be resolved more satisfactorily.

First-line news managers' ability to be sensitive towards staff's emotional needs and control their own emotions when communicating with staff is outlined in section 4.6.1.6.

4.4.8 Nonverbal communication

This form of communication includes facial expression, vocal quality, gestures and posture. It is estimated that nonverbal communication constitutes at least two thirds of total communication (Beall, 2004:18). Despite this, many communicators tend to overlook nonverbal activity and focus more on verbal expressions. Maddox (1990:2) found that formal communication training could exaggerate this situation. As such, it was found that the more business communication courses first-line news managers took, the less important they considered nonverbal communication compared to verbal skills. This finding necessitates that managers pay particular attention to align nonverbal communication with verbal messages.

Nonverbal communication can pose particular cross-cultural communication challenges, as different rules guide communication across societies. For instance, eye contact may differ between communicators from an Arab or North American culture. Similarly, gestures and physical contact (or the absence thereof) could send different messages in different cultures (Beall, 2004:20).

Given the above (and within multicultural South African newsrooms), managers and reporters should attend to their nonverbal messages. As such, clothing and professional conduct (or the lack thereof) could send a particular negative message. As newsroom coaches and mentors, first-line news managers should thus highlight the professional aspects of nonverbal communication to staff. They should also indicate the negative effect of improper nonverbal communication. This will probably become more important due to the younger, more inexperienced and multicultural nature of South African newsroom staff (e.g. see Ludman, 2002; also see section 1.7.4.2).

4.4.9 Feedback

Feedback verifies messages. However, receivers are often reluctant to give feedback, especially when they are uncertain about the sender's reaction to feedback. A lack of trust and credibility in a relationship can also prevent receivers from giving truthful and open feedback. As was indicated above, managers should be

skilled to interpret both verbal and nonverbal elements of feedback. By asking questions or requesting receivers to paraphrase, managers can ensure that they understand feedback correctly and that they address potential misunderstanding.

Peters (2001:5) confirmed the above with regard to news managers. Research results indicated that these managers consider it "perhaps the most dreaded of all management duties". They ascribed their reluctance to give feedback to a fear of hurting employees' feelings. Moreover, respondents indicated that giving constructive feedback is not a natural "talent" and that they receive too little training, coaching and mentoring on this area from higher level managers. Geisler (2004:3) supports these sentiments, as it was found that newsroom staff consider regular feedback an area in which newsroom management skills should improve most.

With regard to South African newsrooms, findings of Audit 1 and Audit 2 indicate that juniorisation and inexperience are significant characteristics of reporters and first-line news managers (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:25-26; Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:38-39; also see sections 1.7.4.1 and 1.7.4.2). Feedback and coaching thus become even more important. However, the potential value of proper feedback is hampered by newsroom realities such as staff shortages, increased deadline and competitive pressure, and resultant lack of time. First-line news managers' performance on this management task is outlined in section 4.6.1.2.

4.5 Addressing communication barriers

Section 4.4 delineated aspects that potentially hamper effective communication. Given that breakdown in communication is often blamed for personnel problems, and given the amount of time managers spend trying to rectify these problems, it is obvious that these barriers should be addressed. As such, the following can serve as important guidelines (Vogt, 2004:25; Thill & Bovée, 2002:15-18; Romano, 2002:14-16).

4.5.1 Focus on the audience – whether one person or more

When communicating, senders should focus on their audiences, irrespective of the size thereof. Communicators should take the needs, preferences and characteristics of audiences into account. They should also be informed of the receiver(s)' level of education, age, perceptions and biases. Furthermore, parties should agree on how much time is available for communication. This requires senders to spend time with their audience in order to properly understand these issues. Once senders are in a position to see the world through the eyes of their audience, a relationship will develop, interaction will improve and communication will probably become more effective. This, in turn, will again reflect in employees' loyalty and commitment towards the enterprise (see Wells, 2004:1 for a recent illustration of loyalty among newsroom staff at the BBC). Results from this study (see section 4.6.1.4) show that first-line news managers are not very successful in communicating with newsroom staff as an internal audience.

Getting to know the audience is not only relevant when communicating with subordinates. It can also be particularly valuable in communication with superiors. If managers get to know their superiors better, they could be successful in developing a relationship of trust with them. This, in turn, will enable them to exercise influence when communicating with them (see Ford, 1996:7) The extent to which first-line news managers succeed in successfully communicating with superiors is discussed in sections 4.6.1.8 and 4.6.1.9.

4.5.2 Create a climate for open communication

In any relationship or interaction, two-way flow of information is important to develop and maintain the relationship. In the context of organisational communication, it is therefore important to create a climate for open communication. Orpen (1994:59) found that enterprises that encourage employees to participate in open, two-way communication and decision making create a more loyal and committed employee corps.

This approach can be facilitated through open and informal communication settings. In these settings, managers can get a better sense of the needs and ideals among a wide variety of employee groupings (Porter, Lorsch & Nohria, 2004:68). Open debate also tends to favour organisational development and success. By obtaining a wider range of solutions, potential organisational problems can be solved more effectively. Finally, open communication also poses the advantage of higher accuracy, as both parties can ensure that the message is properly understood (see Rankin, 1986:35). Again, proper feedback and good listening skills are important.

4.5.3 Be cautious not to cloud messages with too much information

As was indicated in section 4.4.2, information overload currently challenges many enterprises. Communicators should thus continuously review their communication strategies and the nature of messages. The main aim should be to determine whether messages do not provide too much or too little information to the audience. Just as the latter can leave audiences detached and uninvolved in organisational activity, the former can leave them helpless due to information overload.

4.5.4 Effectively manage emotions

All parties involved in the communication process should effectively manage their emotions (also see section 9.2.3.1.1). For communication to be effective, both parties should (as far as possible) remove emotions from the communication process. In an organisational context, managers are responsible to restore their own “emotional equilibrium” as well as that of staff members they communicate with. They should also try to avoid situations where emotional barriers (such as misunderstanding or overreaction) can hamper effective communication.

4.5.5 Implement active listening skills

Active listening skills can avoid communication barriers. According to Romano (2002:15) active listening skills are most effective in managers' endeavour to control emotional barriers. By actively listening to a subordinate, managers demonstrate that

they have empathy with the person and/or the situation. As a result, subordinates might also try to be more accommodating.

Active listening skills include (see Thill & Bovée, 2002:36-37):

- Paraphrasing (i.e. “repeating” the person’s comments);
- Emotional labelling (i.e. identifying the person’s feelings and indicating that the message is listened to and understood);
- Reflecting/mirroring (i.e. repeating the last part of the communicated message). In this process more information is solicited without guiding the direction of the conversation;
- Effective silences to diffuse highly emotional conversations;
- Minimal encouragers (i.e. gestures such as nodding the head or proper eye contact);
- Using “I” messages;
- Using open-ended questions to stimulate discussion; and
- Summarising the sender’s story in the listener’s own words.

Taking notes (if appropriate) can also facilitate the listening process, although the receiver should be cautious not to focus so much on the note taking process that the oral message is misunderstood or missed.

4.5.6 Use technology sparingly

Section 4.2.1 outlined that technological developments can facilitate effective communication. However, technology such as the Internet and teleconferencing should be utilised to support and improve the quality and effectiveness of the communicated message. Technology as such will not necessarily facilitate communication. Again, aspects related to the audience, the type of message and the intention of the message should be considered when deciding to use technology or mediated communication instead of an interpersonal communication approach.

Within the context of this research study, reporters recognised the importance of technology as a means to promote effective newsroom communication (see section 4.6.1.3). However, unlike respondents in similar studies (e.g. Peters, 2004) their perception is that first-line news managers in South African mainstream media newsrooms use technology too sparingly. Moreover, they are also of the opinion that mediated communication could facilitate effective communication (see section 4.6.1.3).

4.5.7 *Communication should be based on sound ethical standards*

Messages based on sound ethical standards should include “all relevant information, (be) true in every sense, and (not) deceptive in any way” (Thill & Bovée, 2002:17). Communicators (especially managers) should also ensure that messages are legal, balanced and something they can live with (also see section 9.2.1 for a more detailed discussion of the issue).

In organisational communication, a formal code of ethics can be valuable to guide the above process. As such the importance of ethical communication in a media context can not be underestimated. This does not only relate to communication with audiences and other external stakeholders, but specifically also to internal communication. Changed legislation compels managers to adhere to legal conduct and ethical standards. In addition, interviewees who participated in the research indicated that the younger generation of newsroom reporters are well informed about their conditions of employment. Subsequently, media enterprises and news managers have little choice but to ensure that all staff members act in an ethical and legally acceptable manner. Research results from Audit 2 (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:46) reinforce this need. As such, both first-line news managers and reporters indicated that they have very positive attitudes about the existence and implementation of ethical codes at their respective media enterprises (also see section 9.3.1.1 with regard to the current implementation of management tasks related to ethical conduct by first-line news managers).

Qualitative data obtained from interviewees, however, provided differing perspectives. One interviewee admitted that “there might be a code of ethics (in this

enterprise), but I am unaware of it". Another said that they have a formal newsroom code of ethics, but that "the newsroom is not very strong on ethics" and that "the code of ethics is not applied". Some interviewees also stated that their media enterprises lack a formal code of ethics. Despite this, others stressed the importance of upholding sound ethical standards despite the danger of losing a good story. Their perspective is that inability to do so could result in audiences losing trust and credibility in the media title.

Other interviewees indicated that a formal code of ethics forms an important part of their news operations and that they have mechanisms in place to formalise the code. At a magazine (that forms part of a bigger media enterprise) the interviewee indicated that, although they do not have a formal code of ethics for the magazine itself, they are currently developing a joint code for all magazines in the group. An interviewee in broadcasting probably made one of the most important comments on this issue. He acknowledged that news enterprises can "have beautiful policies in glossy books, but if people do not inculcate the issue of ethics and a professional approach", news enterprises will still have problems (Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:91).

The previous three sections of this chapter outlined the dimensions of communication as a managerial competency. It also set out potential barriers to effective communication and ways to overcome these and improve communication.

The next section focuses on research results, specifically pertaining to the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency among first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. Quantitative results are based on first-line news managers' and reporters' perspective of how important they consider the management tasks related to communication as a managerial competency. It also outlines the extent to which first-line news managers perceive themselves to implement these tasks, as well as reporters' experience thereof.

4.6 Results – the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 display quantitative results on the following issues:

- The difference between the importance first-line news managers attach to each of the management tasks related to communication as a managerial competency and the extent to which they perceive themselves to implement the tasks described. This is compared with the difference between the importance reporters attach to each management task and the extent to which they perceive their first-line news managers to implement the task; and
- The difference between first-line news managers' perception of how they currently implement the management tasks compared to reporters perception thereof.

The aggregate effect size of communication as a managerial competency (without dividing it into separate management tasks or comparing it on the basis of media type or media ownership type), shows that:

- First-line news managers indicated a practically significant difference ($d=0.81$) between the importance of communication as a managerial competency and their current implementation thereof; while
- Reporters only indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.66$) between the importance of communication and the current implementation by first-line news managers.

This implies that first-line news managers are significantly aware of their inability to implement the communication competency given the importance they attach to it. Media enterprises should appreciate that managers voice their concerns about their lack of communication skills. If something is not done to address the issue, managers might feel that their concerns are not important enough for media enterprises to address.

Table 4.1: Comparing the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Communication as a managerial competency								
Management task	First-line news managers				Reporters			
	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)
13.1.1 Originating formal communication	71	0.45	0.92	0.47	180	0.63	1.32	0.48
13.1.2 Encouraging feedback and comment from reporters	70	0.57	0.81	0.69	175	0.75	1.42	0.53
13.1.3 Technological resources to accommodate communication needs	68	0.38	0.98	0.38	166	0.80	1.30	0.62
13.1.4 Soliciting interpersonal communication between self and reporters	67	0.43	1.03	0.42	174	0.87	1.49	0.58
13.1.5 Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with reporters	72	0.42	0.84	0.50	175	0.82	1.37	0.60
13.1.6 Taking into account reporters' feelings/emotions in communication	74	0.24	0.77	0.32	172	0.83	1.63	0.51
13.1.7 Negotiating resources for reporters	61	0.48	0.10	0.50	169	0.95	1.59	0.60
13.1.8 Developing relationships with higher management	71	0.62	1.05	0.60	173	0.54	1.48	0.37
13.1.9 Exercising influence with higher management	71	0.87	1.07	0.66	168	0.62	1.46	0.43
13.1.10 Decisively handling difficult reporters	67	2.78	1.01	0.81	172	0.76	1.61	0.47
13.1.11 Handling difficult reporters fairly	67	0.55	0.94	0.59	167	0.75	1.56	0.48
13.1.12 Using hierarchical structures to promote communication	68	0.32	1.00	0.32	162	0.38	1.53	0.25
13.1.13 Aligning goals to promote communication	64	0.58	0.99	0.59	164	0.75	1.42	0.53
13.1.14 Language skills that promote communication	71	0.54	1.05	0.51	170	0.67	1.32	0.51
13.1.15 Handling multicultural differences to promote communication	68	0.27	0.84	0.32	168	0.69	1.40	0.50
13.1.16 Handling multilingual differences to promote communication	65	0.51	0.99	0.52	164	0.60	1.41	0.42

4.6.1 Comparing the importance of management tasks related to communication as a managerial competency with the implementation thereof

Table 4.1 outlines the following with regard to each management task related to communication as a managerial competency.

4.6.1.1 Originating formal communication

A moderately significant effect ($d=0.47$) was calculated on the difference between the importance first-line news managers ($n=71$) attach to originating formal communication, and their current ability to do so. Reporters ($n=180$) regard this management task more important ($x_1=4.26$) than their managers do ($x_1=4.14$). From their perspective, first-line news managers are also worse at originating formal communication than first-line news managers perceive it to be the case. As such, reporters indicated a higher moderately significant effect ($d=0.48$) than managers do. Both managers and reporters thus identified this as an area in need of improvement.

4.6.1.2 Encouraging feedback and comment from reporters

A moderately significant difference was again found between the importance first-line news managers ($d=0.69$) and reporters ($d=0.53$) attach to the issue and the extent to which it is implemented. However, first-line news managers ($n=70$) seem more concerned about their management performance on this issue than reporters ($n=175$) are. Both groups of respondents therefore indicated that improvement is needed in this area. This finding corresponds with other studies quoted earlier (see section 4.4.9). The difference, however, is that first-line news managers participating in this study acknowledge that their feedback skills should improve. Unlike colleagues quoted in other studies, they might thus be open to feedback, even though they currently lack proper skills to invite feedback.

Interviewees also stressed the importance of consultation with and proper feedback to reporters. This does not only relate to the stories they write, but also to organisational decisions (e.g. on audience focus, or other organisational changes). As indicated in section 4.3.3, however, interviewees emphasised that staff would only be consulted to a certain point. Afterwards, managers need to take a decision.

Despite the finding that first-line news managers should encourage more feedback from reporters, some reporters seem to disapprove of feedback. As such, interviewees explained that reporters often regard it as negative criticism on their work or their performance. If this is the case, the purpose of feedback as a constructive tool to improve performance can be forfeited.

4.6.1.3 Using technological resources to accommodate communication needs

Reporters ($n=166$) regard the use of technological resources to accommodate communication more important than first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. As such, a moderately significant effect was calculated ($d=0.62$). Section 4.4.3 highlighted that findings from international newsroom studies indicate reporters' preference to interpersonal communication over electronic communication (also see Peters, 2004). South African reporters, however, differ. Research results from this study indicate that they expect first-line news managers to increase their use of electronic communication (and other technological resources). They are of the opinion that this could facilitate effective newsroom communication.

The finding that first-line news managers ($n=68$) highlighted no practically significant difference ($d=0.38$) between the importance and their current implementation of this management task indicates that they are satisfied with their current performance.

4.6.1.4 *Soliciting interpersonal communication between first-line news managers and reporters*

Reporters (n=174) also seem dissatisfied with the current implementation of interpersonal communication in newsrooms. As such, they indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.58$) between the importance they attach to this management task and managers' current implementation thereof. Again, first-line news managers (n=67) seem satisfied with their current implementation of interpersonal communication, as they highlighted a practically insignificant effect ($d=0.42$).

The majority of interviewees outlined that they have an open door approach to newsroom communication. This implies that they regularly leave their offices to discuss professional (and personal) issues with staff. Conversely, they also openly invite staff into their offices to discuss issues of concern. Through observation, the researcher also witnessed that physical newsroom layout in many instances facilitate this approach. Many editors/managers sit in offices without curtains or blinds, with only glass partitions separating them from the newsroom. In other newsrooms, first-line news managers share offices/newsrooms with reporters to facilitate interpersonal relationships.

On a more interpersonal level, other interviewees highlighted that newsroom staff (across organisational levels) get along well outside the office. As such, staff often join in informal social activities after work. They were of the opinion that this interaction strengthens newsroom relationships.

Qualitative data thus somewhat contradicts quantitative findings. The latter shows that, despite the activities and initiatives outlined above, reporters still experience insufficient interpersonal communication with first-line news managers.

4.6.1.5 *Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with reporters*

Quantitative findings support a need between both groups of respondents to improve interpersonal newsroom relationships. First-line news managers ($n=72$) and reporters ($n=175$) both indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to sound interpersonal relationships and the current state thereof. Again, the effect size was bigger for reporters ($d=0.60$) than for first-line news managers ($d=0.50$). This indicates that reporters experience a greater need for improvement in this area than first-line news managers.

This finding can be linked to the importance of developing trust for mutually beneficial communication (see section 4.4.5). Developing trust, however, requires sound interpersonal relationships, open communication and insight. The need for (but absence of) sound interpersonal relationships between news managers and reporters also features prominently on international media management agendas. This is due to the realisation that poor newsroom relationships can “lower newsroom morale, disrupt newsroom routines, impair a newspaper’s performance and drive good people from the business” (Fedler, 2002:171).

4.6.1.6 *Taking reporters’ feelings/emotions into account when communicating with them*

First-line news managers ($n=74$) indicated no practically significant difference ($d=0.32$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof. Reporters ($n=172$), on the other hand, indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$). They therefore highlighted a bigger gap between the importance they attach to it and first-line news managers’ implementation thereof. These results indicate that reporters are of the opinion that first-line news managers can do more to accommodate their feelings and emotions when communicating with them. News managers need to address this perception. If reporters experience that their feelings and emotions are not sufficiently taken into account, they might become

demotivated and less committed to their jobs or media enterprises. This could ultimately have a negative effect on newsroom productivity.

4.6.1.7 Negotiating resources for reporters

The importance of negotiation was outlined in section 4.3.3. Despite this, quantitative findings indicate that both first-line news managers ($n=61$) and reporters ($n=169$) experience that too little is done to negotiate resources for reporters to do their jobs. As such, moderately significant differences between the importance and current implementation were calculated for both reporters ($d=0.60$) and first-line news managers ($d=0.50$). Since reporters highlighted a bigger effect size, it is clear that they experience a bigger gap between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof.

4.6.1.8 Developing relationships with higher management

The importance of establishing and maintaining satisfactory relationships with people on higher management levels was discussed in section 4.5.1. However, quantitative findings from this study indicate that (although they consider it an important management task) first-line news managers ($n=71$) experience difficulty in this area. They subsequently indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.60$) between the importance they attach to it and their ability to develop relationships with superiors. Reporters ($n=173$), however, perceive their first-line news managers successful in performing this management task given the importance they attach to it. As a result, they highlighted a practically insignificant effect ($d=0.37$).

These results again contradict earlier (qualitative) findings. Section 4.6.1.4 indicated that news managers on higher management levels have an open door approach to newsroom management and communication. However, despite their perception that they are accessible to subordinates, first-line news managers still experience a need to interact with them more often and on a more meaningful basis. Whereas these

relationships could benefit first-line news managers, they should guard against a situation of us (management) versus them (reporters). Newsroom segmentation on this basis could be detrimental to staff relationships in general.

One interviewee in broadcasting described the serious problem he experienced with newsroom segmentation when he joined the title. Improper internal communication (coupled with a rigid management approach) resulted in constant "in-fighting". Subsequently, debriefing sessions and discussions on stories ended in accusations that first-line news managers challenge reporters' integrity and intelligence. This caused reporters to become demoralised and insecure. Subsequently they failed to take responsibility for their stories and missed deadlines. He outlined how addressing these issues and focusing on the newsroom's main objective (namely to produce good news stories) rectified the situation to some extent.

4.6.1.9 Exercising influence with higher management

In line with the above, first-line news managers ($n=71$) also expressed an inability to exercise influence with higher levels of management ($d=0.66$) despite the importance they attach to it. Weakness in this area might leave first-line news managers feeling discouraged and unwilling to persevere in their attempts. Despite the perception among managers on higher organisational levels that they encourage open newsroom communication, a number of quantitative results indicate that first-line news managers do not necessarily experience it that way.

4.6.1.10 Decisively handling difficult reporters

The majority of interviewees identified direct confrontation as a primary tool to resolve newsroom conflict. While first-line news managers ($n=67$) regard it important to decisively handle difficult reporters, they indicated a practically significant gap ($d=0.81$) with regard to their current ability to do so. Reporters ($n=172$), however, do not totally agree. As such, they only indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.47$) between

the importance they attach to it and first-line news managers' implementation thereof. Reporters thus perceive first-line news managers better at handling difficult reporters than managers rate themselves.

Inability to properly perform this management task might leave first-line news managers feeling ill-equipped to address newsroom conflict. Moreover, it could create the perception that they fail to perform part of their management duties. Similarly, difficult reporters might sense that they can cause newsroom tension or conflict without being reprimanded, as their first-line news managers lack the skills to do so. Likewise, reporters on the receiving end of conflict might become frustrated and negative about newsroom relationships if managers fail to effectively address conflict.

4.6.1.11 Handling difficult reporters fairly

The potential consequences of the above situation seem to already affect newsroom relations. As such, both reporters ($n=167$) and first-line news managers ($n=67$) experience a gap between the importance of handling difficult reporters fairly and the extent to which this happens in practice. First-line news managers seem most aware of this situation, as the effect size calculated for them ($d=0.59$) was higher than that calculated for reporters ($d=0.48$).

4.6.1.12 Aligning goals to promote communication

Both first-line news managers ($n=64$) and reporters ($n=164$) indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance of aligning goals to promote communication and first-line news managers' ability to do so. Again, first-line news managers seem more aware of their inability in this area ($d=0.59$) than reporters' perception thereof ($d=0.53$). Uncertainty about newsroom or organisational goals results in difficulty or inability to achieve these goals (also see section 7.2.1). This could eventually also contribute towards organisational failure. A clear focus on individual and

organisational goals and activities, on the other hand, could improve commitment, productivity and ultimately newsroom output.

4.6.1.13 Language skills that promote communication

The multilingual and multicultural nature of South African newsrooms was touched upon in section 4.2.1 and is discussed in more detail in section 8.3.1.2. However, quantitative results show that first-line news managers do not necessarily possess the language skills needed to promote newsroom communication. Both first-line news managers ($n=71$) and reporters ($n=170$) are equally aware of managers' shortcomings in this regard. As such, moderately significant differences were calculated between the importance and current implementation of this management task ($d=0.51$ for both first-line news managers and reporters).

4.6.1.14 Handling multicultural differences to promote communication

Despite their perceived inability to handle multilingual differences (see section 4.6.1.15 below), first-line news managers ($n=68$) do not perceive a significant gap between the importance they attach to handling multicultural differences and their ability to do so ($d=0.32$). Reporters ($n=168$), however, differ. They experience a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to this management task and managers' current implementation thereof ($d=0.50$). Whereas first-line news managers thus feel satisfied with their ability to resolve multicultural differences (given the importance they attach to it), reporters feel that they should improve this skill to facilitate effective newsroom communication. Multiculturalism will most probably continue to characterise South African newsrooms. First-line news managers should thus be equipped to address these differences and improve newsroom communication.

4.6.1.15 Handling multilingual differences to promote communication

First-line news managers (n=65) acknowledged that they possess insufficient skills to adequately address multilingual differences and accordingly promote communication (d=0.52). This finding was made despite an earlier discussion that 75.10% of first-line news managers (on average) communicate in their mother tongue as part of their newsroom activities (see section 1.7.4.1). Reporters (n=164) did not indicate this as an area in need of improvement given the importance they attach to it (d=0.42).

As was outlined in section 4.5.1, interviewees seem to share reporters' perspective on this issue. They underlined the multilingual nature of newsrooms, but perceive this to be a unifying rather than a dividing feature. Given the multilingual nature of South African newsrooms, first-line news managers' perspective with regard to their own language ability should be addressed. They should also be skilled in the strategies needed to effectively handle multilingual differences and utilise language as a unifying factor in newsroom communication.

4.6.2 Implementation of management tasks related to communication as a managerial competency

Table 4.2 displays a general trend that first-line news managers perceive their implementation of the management tasks related to communication better than reporters. Despite this, practically significant differences between these two respondent groups were found in two areas. These are outlined below.

4.6.2.1 Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with reporters

First-line news managers (n=76) and reporters (n=192) experience a moderate significant difference (d=0.46) on the former group's ability to maintain sound interpersonal relationships with the latter. As such, first-line news managers regard interpersonal relationships with reporters more positive than reporters do.

Table 4.2: Comparing the implementation of communication as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Management task	First-line news managers			Reporters			Effect size (d)
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	
Originating formal communication	75	3.71	0.94	193	3.63	1.20	0.06
Encouraging feedback/comment	74	3.69	0.91	189	3.41	1.20	0.23
Technology to accommodate communication	72	3.43	1.11	182	3.22	1.16	0.18
Soliciting interpersonal communication	71	3.87	0.93	191	3.38	1.28	0.39
Interpersonal relationships with reporters	76	4.01	0.83	192	3.42	1.29	0.46
Reporters' feelings and emotions	78	4.03	0.81	187	3.23	1.38	0.58
Negotiating resources for reporters	65	3.65	1.01	185	3.17	1.31	0.36
Relationships with higher management	75	3.27	1.11	188	3.28	1.20	0.01
Exercising influence with higher management	75	2.88	1.17	187	3.12	1.20	0.20
Decisively handling difficult reporters	70	3.33	1.06	188	3.23	1.29	0.07
Handling difficult reporters fairly	71	3.79	1.07	180	3.27	1.19	0.44
Hierarchy to promote communication	72	3.17	1.19	183	3.21	1.19	0.03
Aligning goals to promote communication	68	3.41	1.12	179	3.15	1.16	0.22
Language skills that promote communication	75	3.68	1.02	187	3.46	1.25	0.18
Handling multicultural differences	71	3.79	0.97	183	3.28	1.24	0.41
Handling multilingual differences	69	3.46	1.09	180	3.26	1.23	0.17

4.6.2.2 *Taking reporters' feelings/emotions into account when communicating with them*

First-line news managers ($n=78$) and reporters ($n=187$) also experience a moderate significant difference ($d=0.58$) on the former group's ability to take reporters' feelings and emotions into account when communicating with them. Reporters rating the implementation of this management task lower ($x_2=3.23$) than first-line news managers ($x_2=4.03$) might be influenced by their perception that they lack sound interpersonal relationships with managers. Nevertheless, the implication is that trust and credibility do not necessarily characterise reporter-manager relationships. This could negatively affect overall newsroom activity and professional output.

4.6.3 Comparing the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency across media types

In order to obtain a more detailed perspective on the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among reporters and first-line news managers employed at different media types.

Table 4.3: Importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of reporters

Media type	Reporters									
	Importance – Communication									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	44	3.93	0.74		0.03	0.03	0.49	0.08	0.21	0.57
Weekly newspaper	50	3.90	1.09			0.05	0.36	0.08	0.17	0.41
Magazine	10	3.95	0.77				0.43	0.05	0.16	0.51
Television	18	4.28	0.64					0.38	0.32	0.09
Radio	46	3.99	0.79						0.11	0.45
On-line media	11	4.08	0.49							0.49
News agency	8	4.34	0.55							
Media type	Implementation – Communication									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	47	3.46	0.76		0.37	0.15	0.33	0.18	0.19	0.08
Weekly newspaper	51	3.04	1.16			0.49	0.09	0.22	0.50	0.30
Magazine	10	3.60	0.95				0.47	0.33	0.02	0.23
Television	19	3.14	0.98					0.16	0.49	0.25
Radio	49	3.30	0.94						0.35	0.10
On-line media	12	3.62	0.83							0.25
News agency	8	3.39	0.95							

Table 4.4: Importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media type	First-line news managers									
	Importance - Communication									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	26	4.03	0.80		0.07	0.02	0.05	0.42	0.21	0.16
Weekly newspaper	22	3.97	0.65			0.03	0.12	0.60	0.17	0.23
Magazine	2	4.00	1.06				0.07	0.34	0.13	0.14
Television	3	4.07	0.83					0.35	0.25	0.10
Radio	8	4.36	0.36						1.01	0.27
On-line media	8	3.86	0.49							0.38
News agency	5	4.15	0.77							
Media type	Implementation - Communication									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	26	3.68	0.55		0.24	0.73	0.12	0.21	0.99	0.60
Weekly newspaper	23	3.53	0.63			0.55	0.35	0.42	0.63	0.38
Magazine	2	3.05	0.87				0.81	0.90	0.10	0.26
Television	3	3.75	0.55					0.11	1.13	0.70
Radio	11	3.83	0.71						0.98	0.79
On-line media	8	3.14	0.28							0.2
News agency	5	3.28	0.68							

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 highlight the following results.

4.6.3.1 Importance of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.49$) on the importance of communication as a managerial competency was highlighted between reporters from daily

newspapers ($n=44$) and those employed by television channels ($n=18$). A similar difference ($d=0.57$) was recorded between reporters from daily newspapers ($n=44$) and their colleagues at news agencies ($n=8$). Reporters working in television ($x_1=4.28$) as well as those working at news agencies ($x_1=4.34$) consider the communication competency more important than their counterparts at daily newspapers ($x_1=3.93$);

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) was found between reporters working at magazines ($n=10$) and those at news agencies ($n=8$). Similarly, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.49$) was calculated between reporters working at on-line media ($n=11$) and those from news agencies ($n=8$). In both cases, reporters working at news agencies ($x_1=4.34$) perceive communication more important than their colleagues at magazines ($x_1=3.95$) or on-line media ($x_1=4.08$); and
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.45$) was calculated between reporters working at radio stations ($n=46$) and those working at news agencies ($n=8$). The former group considers communication as a managerial competency less important ($x_1=3.99$) than the latter ($x_1=4.34$).

4.6.3.2 *Implementation of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.49$) exists on the implementation of communication as a managerial competency between reporters at weekly newspapers ($n=51$) and those at magazines ($n=10$). A similar difference ($d=0.50$) was calculated between reporters employed by weekly newspapers ($n=51$) and those at on-line media ($n=12$). In both cases, reporters at weekly newspapers ($x_2=3.04$) perceive their first-line news managers' implementation of communication worse than reporters at magazines ($x_2=3.60$) and on-line media ($x_2=3.62$);
- Reporters employed by on-line media ($n=12$) are also of the opinion that their first-line news managers implement communication better ($x_2=3.62$) than their

colleagues in television ($n=19$) ($x_2=3.14$). A moderately significant difference was subsequently calculated ($d=0.49$); and

- Reporters working at television channels ($n=19$) also rated their first-line news managers worse at implementing communication ($x_2=3.14$) than their colleagues at magazines ($n=10$; $x_2=3.60$). As a result, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.47$) on the implementation of this competency was calculated between these two groups.

4.6.3.3 *Importance of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Based on the importance first-line news managers attach to communication as a managerial competency, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.60$) was calculated between managers at weekly newspapers ($n=22$; $x_1=3.17$) and those working at radio stations ($n=8$; $x_1=4.36$); and
- A practically significant difference ($d=1.01$) was calculated between the importance first-line news managers at radio ($n=8$) and their colleagues at on-line media ($n=8$) attach to this competency. The latter group considers communication much less important ($x_1=3.86$) than their counterparts at radio stations ($x_1=4.36$).

4.6.3.4 *Implementation of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.73$) was found between the implementation of communication among first-line news managers at daily newspapers ($n=26$) and their colleagues at both magazines ($n=2$) and news agencies ($n=5$; $d=0.60$). The former group consider themselves better ($x_2=3.68$) at implementing communication than the latter two groups ($x_2=3.05$ for magazines and $x_2=3.28$ for news agencies). However, a practically significant difference ($d=0.99$) exists between the former group and their counterparts at on-

line media ($n=8$). The former ($x_2=3.68$) again consider themselves better implementers than the latter ($x_2=3.14$);

- Moreover, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.55$) was calculated between managers at weekly newspapers ($n=23$) and their peers at magazines ($n=2$) as well as on-line media ($d=0.63$; $n=8$). In both cases the former group considers their implementation better ($x_2=3.53$) than the latter groups ($x_2=3.05$ for magazines and $x_2=3.14$ for on-line media);
- However, practical significant differences ($d=0.81$ and $d=0.90$ respectively) were found between first-line news managers working at magazines ($n=2$) and those working in television ($n=3$) and radio ($n=11$). In both cases, first-line news managers at radio ($x_2=3.83$) and television ($x_2=3.75$) regard themselves better implementers of communication than those at magazines ($x_2=3.05$);
- A practically significant difference ($d=1.13$) was also found with regard to the implementation of communication between first-line news managers at television stations ($n=3$) and those at on-line media ($n=8$). The former indicated that they rate their current implementation better ($x_2=3.75$) than the latter ($x_2=3.14$). First-line news managers at television channels also rated their implementation moderately significantly better ($d=0.70$) than their colleagues at news agencies; and
- Finally, practically significant differences ($d=0.98$ and $d=0.79$ respectively) on the implementation of communication were calculated between managers at radio stations ($n=11$) and on-line media ($n=8$) as well as news agencies ($n=5$). Radio station managers again perceive themselves better implementers of communication ($x_2=3.83$) than those at on-line media ($x_2=3.14$) and news agencies ($x_2=3.28$).

4.6.4 Comparing the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency across media ownership types

In order to obtain a more detailed perspective on the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among reporters

and first-line news managers employed at media titles with different ownership structures.

Table 4.5: Importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of reporters

Media ownership type	Reporters						
	Importance – Communication						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	76	3.99	0.79		0.01	0.09	0.17
Unlisted companies	48	3.99	1.01			0.08	0.12
Public service mandate	33	3.91	0.84				0.25
Foreign ownership	30	4.12	0.64				
	Implementation - Communication						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	81	3.52	0.90		0.33	0.71	0.03
Unlisted companies	48	3.12	1.20			0.20	0.31
Public service mandate	37	2.88	0.81				0.75
Foreign ownership	30	3.49	0.68				

Table 4.6: Importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media ownership type	First-line news managers						
	Importance - Communication						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	39	3.99	0.77		0.04	0.58	0.11
Unlisted companies	13	4.03	0.69			0.60	0.17
Public service mandate	9	4.44	0.32				1.20
Foreign ownership	13	3.91	0.44				
	Implementation - Communication						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	39	3.57	0.62		0.28	0.63	0.32
Unlisted companies	14	3.40	0.59			0.94	0.05
Public service mandate	12	3.96	0.60				0.98
Foreign ownership	13	3.37	0.58				

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 highlight the following results.

4.6.4.1 Importance of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- No practical significant difference was found on the importance of communication among reporters at media with different ownership structures. Reporters overall perceive communication an important managerial competency ($x_1=4.00$).

4.6.4.2 *Implementation of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- Irrespective of the ownership model, reporters rated the implementation of communication lower than the importance they attach to it ($x_2=3.25$);
- As such, a practically significant difference ($d=0.75$) was found between reporters at the public service broadcaster ($n=37$) and those employed by foreign owned companies ($n=30$). The latter indicated that their first-line news managers implement communication better ($x_2=3.49$) than the former ($x_2=2.88$);
- Furthermore, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.71$) was found between reporters employed by the public service broadcaster ($n=37$) and those employed by companies listed on the JSE ($n=81$). The former group again perceives their first-line news managers worse implementers ($x_2=2.88$) than the latter ($x_2=3.52$);
- From reporters' perspective, first-line news managers at the SABC are thus worse implementers of communication than those employed by both listed and foreign owned companies. As such, reporters at the SABC consider their first-line news managers worst at the following management tasks associated with communication:
 - Handling difficult reporters fairly ($n=34$; $x_2=2.56$);
 - Taking into account colleagues' feelings and emotions when communicating with them ($n=34$; $x_2=2.65$);
 - Using hierarchical structures in the media enterprise to promote communication ($n=35$; $x_2=2.69$);
 - Developing relationships with higher levels of management ($n=34$; $x_2=2.71$);
 - Exercising influence with higher levels of management ($n=34$; $x_2=2.71$);
 - Aligning (personal and reporters') goals to promote communication ($n=35$; $x_2=2.71$); and
 - Decisively handling difficult reporters ($n=37$; $x_2=2.73$).

Qualitative data obtained from interviewees at the SABC confirm these findings. Interviewees highlighted that managers at the corporation often neglect communication. As such, staff members (especially those in regional offices) are often deprived of proper communication and information from head office. Given the composition of the SABC (in terms of staff and audience composition) and the geographical challenges associated with regional offices, it is important that the corporation focuses on properly informing staff of all relevant issues. Moreover, given the importance attached to interpersonal communication, the corporation should ensure that representatives from head office regularly communicate with staff in regional offices. A variety of communication instruments are available to facilitate this despite challenges posed by physical structure or location of offices. Managers at the SABC should utilise these. Although mediated communication is not always the preferred channel of communication, it remains better than not communicating at all.

4.6.4.3 Importance of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the ownership structure associated with their media enterprise) consider communication a very important managerial competency ($x_1=4.09$). They even consider it more important than reporters (see section 4.6.4.1);
- When comparing the importance first-line news managers attach to this competency across media titles with different ownership structures, interesting findings were made. A moderately significant difference ($d=0.58$) was found between the sample of first-line news managers at listed companies ($n=39$) and those employed by the SABC ($n=9$). Unlike their subordinates, first-line news managers at the SABC consider communication more important ($x_1=4.44$) than their colleagues at listed companies ($x_1=3.99$). First-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) also consider communication more important ($x_1=4.44$) than their

peers at unlisted companies ($n=13$; $x_1=4.03$), as a moderately significant difference ($d=0.60$) was calculated;

- Finally, the sample of first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) also seems significantly more aware of the importance of communication ($x_1=4.44$) than their colleagues at foreign owned companies ($n=13$; $x_1=3.91$). As such, a practically significant effect size was calculated between these two groups ($d=1.20$);
- The above indicates that the sample of first-line news managers at the SABC is most aware of the importance of communication as a managerial competency. They are much more aware of this issue than their peers at other media titles. These managers are also more aware of the importance of communication than SABC reporters who participated in the study. These findings contradict reporters' perspective on the issue. While first-line news managers at the SABC might thus consider communication important, their subordinates experience the opposite when it comes to the implementation thereof.

4.6.4.4 *Implementation of communication as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the ownership structure on which the media title operates) consider themselves better implementers of the communication competency ($x_2=3.58$) than reporters experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.25$);
- As such, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.63$) was calculated between first-line news managers at listed companies ($n=39$) and those employed by the SABC ($n=12$). The latter group considers themselves better at implementing tasks associated with communication ($x_2=3.96$) than the former group ($x_2=3.57$);
- First-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) also consider themselves far better at implementing the communication competency ($x_2=3.96$) than their colleagues at unlisted companies ($n=14$; $x_2=3.40$). A practically significant difference ($d=0.94$) was subsequently calculated between the two groups. Managers at the SABC also regard themselves far better communicators than their peers at

foreign owned companies ($n=13$; $x_2=3.37$). A practically significant difference ($d=0.98$) was again calculated;

- The above implies that the sample of first-line news managers at the SABC considers themselves better at communication than any of their colleagues at other media enterprises. However, the extent to which this reflects the actual newsroom situation is debatable, as SABC reporters indicated their first-line news managers worst at implementing this competency.

The conclusions and managerial implications of the above findings are discussed in chapter ten of this study.

4.7 Summary

This chapter focused on communication as a managerial competency. Firstly, the importance of and need for effective workplace communication was highlighted. This was outlined against the background of changing technological developments; the need to communicate with a culturally diverse workforce which increasingly operates in teams; and challenges presented by the information age. These aspects were applied to newsroom communication in a changing global (and South African) workplace environment.

Secondly, attention was focused on the dimensions of communication as a managerial competency, with specific reference to newsroom management. This discussion focused on formal and informal communication as well as negotiation as dimensions of the communication competency. Attention was also given to barriers which could hamper effective communication, as well as ways to address these barriers.

In the final part of the chapter, qualitative and quantitative research results on the importance and implementation of communication as a managerial competency were discussed. As such, it was found that first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms experience a bigger gap between the importance and

implementation of the communication competency than reporters. In light of this, first-line news managers also perceive themselves better implementers of this competency than reporters experience it to be the case.

Comparing research results across media types, it was found that reporters at news agencies consider communication most important, while reporters at weekly newspapers consider their first-line news managers the worst implementers of this competency. When looking at first-line news managers, those at news agencies indicated the competency to be most important, while peers at magazines perceive themselves to be the worst implementers.

Finally, results were also compared across media ownership types. As such, reporters employed by foreign owned companies indicated that they regard communication the most important. Their colleagues at the SABC, however, indicated that their first-line news managers are the worst implementers thereof. Despite this, first-line news managers at the SABC indicated this competency to be most important, with colleagues at foreign owned companies perceiving themselves to be worst implementers of the communication competency.

The following chapter focuses on planning and administration as a managerial competency, with specific reference to the importance and implementation thereof in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms.

Chapter 5:

Planning and administration as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management

Any manager who wants to make effective decisions must be certain those decisions are closely aligned with the current business opportunities, unique resources, and strengths of the media company. Planning is done in cycles with careful timing and resource allocation part of the process.

– **Wicks et al.** (2004:159)

Thirty or forty years ago practically no planning took place on any newspaper. Profit margins were so handsome little thought was needed in the long range direction. This whole scene has changed radically. If a newspaper is to survive and show good progress today it must have an annual plan and a strategic (long range) plan or failure will result over the course of time.

– **Rankin** (1986:33)

The communications and media industries are not quite at a “cross-roads” – but rather “a spaghetti junction”. And the better map you have, the easier it will be to make the right decision on which road to take.

– **Boone** (2005:2)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on planning and administration as a managerial competency. Guidelines delineating the importance of proper planning as a basic management function within the management process were set out in section 2.3. As a result, this

chapter primarily focuses on the dimensions of planning and administration as a managerial competency.¹⁶ It also highlights research results particular to this research study. The focus is specifically on the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters and first-line news managers active in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms.

5.2 Planning and administration within a changing business environment

Within a changing twenty first century business environment, enterprises are challenged to rethink planning strategies and procedures. These challenges also face the media. Changes in internal and external media environments affect the way media enterprises think about planning (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:159; also see Fink, 1996:118). These include:

- Technological innovations;
- Economic recesses affecting staff numbers;
- Increasing competition among media enterprises;
- Within the US context also the events of September 11, 2001;
- Changed consumer attitudes and values;
- The role of government and regulatory bodies;
- Advertising trends; and
- Trends in competitor strategies.

Within a South African media environment, all the above factors impact on media enterprises' planning approaches. Moreover, the birth of democracy in 1994 brought about additional challenges (e.g. see sections 1.3.4.1-1.3.4.5).

Given these challenges, "change" is becoming the "mantra" (Gade, 2004:5-6) of many enterprises (also the media). This necessitates that planning activities and approaches are adjusted accordingly. One way in which media enterprises currently accommodate this is by revising the regularity of their budgeting review process. While simultaneously

¹⁶ See footnote 2 for an operational definition of the planning and administration competency.

planning for longer term goals and objectives, a large US media enterprise, for instance, also introduced a twice-annual review process. This approach enables them to have better control over shorter term fluctuations in consumer and advertising behaviour (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:159). This strategy underscores management guru, Gary Hamel's, approach that enterprises can no longer perceive their customers and markets to remain unchanged (Kennedy, 2002:73). As a result, they need to adjust their approaches to planning.

5.2.1 Increased need for proper planning

Given the above challenges, executives and managers agree that (apart from proper human resource development) planning has probably become more important than ever (e.g. see Masitsa, 2005:176 on the importance of proper planning skills needed among school principals in South Africa). As such, they consider it the second most important contributor to organisational success (Grimm, 2000:32). In support of this perspective, CEO of Sonic, Cliff Hudson, summarises the essence of planning by describing a typical day at his office: "Basically, the whole day comes down to a series of choices" (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:17).

Quinn (2002:51) endorses this perspective with regard to the media. He states that news managers increasingly focus on the need for better planning, while simultaneously questioning "the historical attitudes" about newsroom planning. According to Fink (1996:117) previous generations of media managers considered planning too time consuming, too expensive and too bureaucratic. Exaggerating this situation, Gade (2004:6) points out that many news managers lack the organisational background to plan, execute and monitor newsroom change. As a result, they lack the ability to manage newsrooms effectively and efficiently, often resulting in crisis management (Fink, 1996:117). However, a recent study by the Poynter Institute (Geisler, 2004:1) found that "new bosses in newsrooms" were rated fairly well on "their ability to develop systems, organise the work, manage their time and resources, multi-task plan, think strategically and troubleshoot".

To a certain extent Underwood (1995:26) supports the view that newsroom planning should become more of a priority. As such, he quotes Walker Lundly (at the time editor of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* in the US) who is of the opinion that "You can't plan too much". However, Underwood (1995:163) also highlights the dangers associated with too rigid planning, given the unpredictable and unexpected nature of news. As such, he warns that too much planning could turn newsroom staff into "loyal corporate soldiers". If this is the case, newsroom staff could be "robbed" of their creative and individual professional freedom. As a result, they could be expected to perfectly fit into pre-planned, packaged needs of media titles. This poses the risk that reporters become mere gatherers of information. In the process, they could lose sight of the original aim of journalism, namely to portray societal events fairly and balanced (Underwood, 1995:163).

5.2.2 Approaches to newsroom planning in the South African mainstream media

Focusing on the South African media context, planning as a managerial competency seems in need of improvement. As such, reporters who participated in this research study expressed a negative attitude about the level of planning and administration at their media titles (Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:48). In a certain sense, interviewees who participated in the research agreed that planning should be improved. This is especially the case with regard to medium to long-term planning (especially among first-line news managers). Interviewees attributed the decreased focus on longer term planning to flatter organisational structures in many newsrooms (also see Kupe, 2004:38). Interviewees at radio and on-line media operations especially highlighted this shortcoming. Due to flatter organisational structures, first-line news managers at these enterprises are often expected to perform multiple roles. On the one hand, they are managers (with the responsibilities associated with these positions). On the other hand, they also need to mentor and coach inexperienced staff members. In addition, many of them are also reporters and presenters. All these responsibilities distract their attention from proper newsroom planning.

Other interviewees were of the opinion that the unexpected nature of the news industry makes long-term planning more difficult. However, news managers have the responsibility to communicate to newsroom staff that planning is high on their management agenda. As one interviewee put it: "It is still better to have plans which are delayed or changed due to breaking news stories than to do no planning at all". One way news managers can get the message across to newsroom staff that planning is a priority is to pro-actively plan coverage of newsworthy events that are known well in advance. These, for instance, include events such as a national election or a major sports event (e.g. the Olympic Games) (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:48). Ways in which to address this challenge are discussed in section 5.3.1.2.

In order to achieve the challenges described above, managers (and for the purposes of this study specifically news managers in the South African mainstream media) need to hone their planning skills. They can do this by improving on the dimensions of planning and administration as a managerial competency. These are subsequently discussed.

5.3 Dimensions of planning and administration as a managerial competency

The planning and administration competency includes activities where managers identify objectives and ways to achieve them (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:17). As such, it involves (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:17; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:30; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:17-18):

- Gathering and analysing information in order to solve problems;
- Planning and organising projects;
- Proper time management; and
- Skills related to budgeting and financial management.

Each activity is discussed in more detail in sections 5.3.1-5.3.4.

5.3.1 *Gathering and analysing information to facilitate problem solving*

According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:19) this dimension of the planning and administration competency implies that managers process all relevant information. This will enable them to take proper and timely decisions. These decisions are aimed to optimally reach goals and objectives (see Badenhorst, 2003:62). In addition, relevant information enables managers to pro-actively identify issues which could affect the future success of the enterprise. It also provides them with the opportunity to determine the origin thereof (Ford, 1996:7). With this in mind, managers need the skills to pro-actively anticipate potential consequences of their decisions, as well as ways to counteract these (see Fink, 1996:89). In short, managers need proper information to do proper planning (Rankin, 1986:32).

Unfortunately, research shows that this area needs improvement within a newsroom management context. As such, reporters, first-line news managers and their superiors highlighted insufficient planning and organising skills as a reason for “sub par performance” by first-line news managers (Peters, 1999:22). The same respondent groups labelled the inability to plan properly as a characteristic of poor first-line news managers (Peters, 1999:35).

5.3.1.1 *Gathering and analysing information on external and internal factors*

As indicated earlier (see section 5.2) changing business environments most likely require more thorough planning than ever before (also see Rosentiel & Mitchell, 2004:85). Within the media environment, managers need proper information on past and current market conditions to align their planning decisions accordingly (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:163). This includes information on consumer preferences, technological developments, economic changes, government decisions on media policy, changes in legislation guiding the media, as well as strategies and activities among competitors. These, however, all relate to external factors which could influence a media enterprise's performance.

Media managers, however, also need to gather and analyse relevant information on internal aspects and activities, as these factors can play an equally important role in a media enterprise's success or failure. Aspects include defining goals and objectives, allocating resources and monitoring staff performance.

Liebes (2000:296), however, also suggests that input from internal and external stakeholders can be combined for planning purposes. As such, input from newsroom staff on how to cover a specific news story (or whether to cover it at all) can be compared with input from external stakeholders (e.g. government, media audiences, media owners). This approach can present news managers with even more information on which to base decisions.

5.3.1.2 The need for a more participative approach to gathering and analysing information

In order to achieve the above, managers need feedback and participation from staff across organisational levels (see Quinn, 2002:37). Implementing this approach presents a number of benefits that could improve internal management. On the one hand, staff members will experience that their input and views are valued and important. On the other hand, managers will be provided with more meaningful and adequate information on a wider range of topics and perspectives to use in decision making (see Porter *et al.*, 2004:68; Anon, 1998:52). Unfortunately, management styles of the past did not necessarily value this approach (see Pretorius, 1996:21).

In a South African newsroom environment characterised by inexperienced first-line news managers (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:39), more participative approaches could contribute meaningfully to organisational success. On the one hand, it could facilitate information gathering and generating different approaches to problem solving. On the longer term, reporters with experience in participative management approaches will be equipped to implement these initiatives once they become managers themselves. This will improve

their management skills, as they had “access to vast amounts of information, to years ... of (other managers’) experience ... (to) use (in their) own jobs” (Juechter, 1982:45).

Fortunately, it seems as if many South African media enterprises are already implementing this management approach. During interviews for Audit 1, the news editor of a magazine in Gauteng outlined their approach to information gathering (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:44). This entails meetings attended by staff from different organisational levels (including security personnel or cleaning staff). These meetings are a platform during which employees present “unique” story ideas from various communities which would not traditionally receive news coverage. In cases where supporting staff present a viable idea, members of the reporting staff are assigned to cover the story. She outlined that this approach provides the magazine with a variety of story ideas. It also increases the amount of information on which to base news decisions. Finally, it communicates to staff members that they make meaningful contributions towards the magazine’s success.

Data for this research study indicate that a participative approach to information gathering is even more entrenched at media enterprises than was the case during Audit 1. Interviewees emphasised that they encourage two-way flow of information from as many staff members as possible (Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:50). Their approach is to “hear” all possible voices/viewpoints. However, as outlined in section 2.3.4, news managers seem aware of the potential negative affect of this management approach. These include lengthy newsroom discussions and delays in decision-making (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:54).

5.3.1.3 *Technology as a means to facilitate information gathering and analysis*

A decade ago, Pretorius (1996:22) envisaged that “accurate and timeous information by means of the right computer technology will become a critical success factor (for winning enterprises)”. Today, technological innovation provides managers with a “dynamic way” (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:163) to gather information. This relates to both external (e.g.

customers and other stakeholders) and internal markets (staff members). As such, communication technology (e.g. the Internet, electronic mail, intranets) assists managers to become aware of and address potential internal and external problems. Quinn (2002:23) points out that these instruments could become a core component of organisational success in future.

This specifically relates to media enterprises. Technological development enables these enterprises to gather and analyse information on a breaking news story more professionally and timely than in the past. In the process, they largely overcome limitations of time and space. As such, Northrup (1996:6) stresses that “virtual newsrooms” can assist news managers in this process. By utilising the advantages of improved technology, news managers can update and inform those involved in the news production and distribution process, irrespective of the time of day or physical location. They can also use technology to inform reporters and technical staff of relevant information on the news event. As indicated in sections 2.6 and 4.2.1, intranets provide media enterprises with an instrument to facilitate and encourage two-way information flow.

5.3.2 Planning and organising projects

According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:19) this dimension of planning and administration as a managerial competency includes the following elements.

5.3.2.1 *Developing plans and schedules to achieve organisational goals and objectives effectively*

Organisational goals and objectives can not be achieved without proper schedules. This is especially the case in a rather unpredictable business environment such as the news industry. News managers therefore need to develop plans and schedules and prioritise tasks as much as possible. On the one hand, this will provide them with a framework according to which organisational goals and objectives can be achieved. On the other, it

will also enable them to accommodate unforeseen events within the predetermined framework.

Despite the importance of this aspect, news managers' inability to properly develop plans and schedules was highlighted as an important obstacle towards effective newsroom management (see Peters, 1999:22). Reporters participating in Peters' study indicated that their managers only pay proper attention to those tasks which would make them look organised in the eyes of their superiors. As a result, assignments are often handed out to staff at the last minute and story angles are only discussed when information gathering and processing is well underway. Such an approach is obviously detrimental to the effective and efficient application of organisational resources.

5.3.2.2 Obtaining and organising resources needed to achieve organisational goals and objectives

In order to prevent a situation as described above, managers need the skills to identify, obtain and organise resources. Media managers face a situation in which an increasing number of national and international news events need to be covered. Given a media environment characterised by staff reductions (e.g. see Wicks *et al.*, 2004:35; Herrick, 2003:75) and increased pressure for financial profitability (Herrick, 2003:228; Campbell, 2000:57), this is not an easy task. News managers thus need skills to determine the resources needed to meet predetermined goals and objectives in the short, medium and long-term.

Once resources are identified, managers need the skills to properly organise these. This could be difficult in an unpredictable media environment. However, Davis and Dunlap (2000:79, 82) and Fink (1996:201) underline the importance that newsroom resources are properly organised to cover news events when they do occur. If this is the case, available resources will be utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible. Over and above this, proper planning will justify the need to apply additional resources to cover unexpected breaking news stories. However, this should still result in appropriate return

for the media enterprise – financially and journalistically (Fink, 1996:200). This necessitates that news managers are well versed in budgets and other aspects of financial management (see section 5.3.4).

5.3.2.3 *Delegating responsibility for task completion to staff*

Once managers have set goals and objectives, prioritised these and allocated resources to achieve these, it is important that they have the skills to effectively delegate tasks to staff members. Delegation as an additional management function associated with leading was outlined in section 2.5.5.

5.3.3 *Time management*

As one of the most influential management thinkers (Kennedy, 2002:48), Peter Drucker was of the opinion that “nothing is more important to executives and managers than time management” (Herrick, 2003:52). Drucker based his argument on the fact that time (as a resource) can not be bought, created or invented. If managers fail to effectively utilise the amount of time available to them, it is wasted for good.

With this in mind, time management as a dimension of the planning and administration competency refers to managers’ ability to (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:19):

- Handle several projects at once (without spreading their own resources too thin);
- Keep a schedule of activities and negotiate changes within that schedule with staff members;
- Work efficiently under time pressure; and
- Screen interruptions which might negatively impact on their activities.

Herrick (2003:53) subsequently suggests that managers need the ability to properly manage their own time. This is achieved through proper prioritising and planning – both long-term and short-term, and keeping (personal and organisational) goals and

objectives in mind. Moreover, managers should guard against changing these priorities, unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

As was stated in section 5.3.2.1, this is not an easy task for news managers. Unexpected news events could make it difficult for them to stick to predetermined ideas and approaches – also with regard to time management. As a result, flexibility is probably the key in newsroom time management. Managers should develop skills to manage their own time as well as that of others, given the flexibility needed to accommodate unforeseen events.

5.3.3.1 Aspects related to time management in a South African media context

The need for proper time management among news managers and reporters was already highlighted during interviews for Audit 1. Aspects playing a role in this process relate to:

- A changed media environment. Since the mid-1990s, South African and international newsrooms are characterised by fewer and more diverse human resources (also see section 2.4.2). As such, downsizing initiatives in the US resulted in major newspaper companies reducing their workforce with 5-10% by 2001 (see Gade, 2004:7). This implies that remaining staff experience increased pressure to cover an increasing number of news stories. Increased deadline pressure (due to a focus on profitability and competition) leaves reporters and managers little choice but to work in a “fast paced daily environment” (Cresswell, 2002), exaggerating this situation even further (see Katopodis, 2002). Adding to this dilemma, interviewees for Audit 1 stated that inexperienced staff and high staff turnover in newsrooms all need to be considered when thinking about time management (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:24-27; Proctor Simms, 2002; Philips, 2002; also see sections 1.3.4.2 and 1.3.4.5);
- Changed profile of newsroom staff. Interviewees (especially in smaller newsrooms such as independent radio stations or news agencies) indicated that

the profile of their current newsroom staff makes it difficult to manage their own time properly. As such, inexperienced reporters in small newsrooms struggle to cover important breaking news stories without continuous guidance from managers. As a result, news managers have no choice but to leave cell phones on at all times or go to the office at night or over weekends to guide inexperienced staff. They also need to allocate more time to complete a specific assignment than necessary, despite already tight deadlines (e.g. see Pather, 2002; Katopodis, 2002);

- Changed labour legislation. This aspect seems to have a bigger impact on time management in a newsroom context than when fieldwork for Audit 1 was conducted. Largely, interviewees for this study indicated that legislation protects staff from working overtime. As such, interviewees indicated that they deliberately give staff time off when they have worked on a project for a long period of time. Their main motivation is that staff can not continue to deliver quality work if they are overworked. Some pointed towards staff's reluctance to take time off, as they would continue to work regardless of the overtime they have already put in. Interviewees mainly attributed this attitude to the fact that staff enjoy their work. As a result, they do not expect news managers to give them time off for overtime. Other interviewees, however, described how staff members abuse changed legislation. They would insist to have time off, even if they have only worked overtime for a short period. Others described how staff would "pretend" to work on an assignment, while actually spending time on personal responsibilities or sitting in their cars waiting for the time to pass;
- Increased cultural and ethnic diversity in newsrooms. As Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:101) point out, people's orientation towards time differ. Whereas the majority of Westerners believe that "time is money", other cultures regard time as an unlimited resource. As a result, they would approach deadlines and appointments in a much more lenient fashion. This inevitably presents potential tension among news managers and staff; and
- Generation gaps among newsroom staff. Many interviewees for Audit 1 outlined the management dilemmas associated with a younger generation of newsroom

staff (also see section 2.5.1.3). As such, colleagues often perceive younger reporters as oblivious to time and deadline restrictions. Moreover, they would hand in an incomplete or inaccurate story and leave the office to go home (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:45). This situation puts additional pressure on more experienced reporters and/or managers to fill in gaps or correct mistakes. As a result, it becomes difficult for those staff members to adhere to time management schedules. This, in turn, creates newsroom tension and frustration.

Despite these factors, some interviewees who participated in this research outlined that they have succeeded in properly managing their time. As such, they described a deliberate decision to work overtime less often. Many were of the opinion that they enjoy a better quality of life as a result. It should be emphasised, however, that these managers are all appointed in higher organisational levels.

5.3.4 Budgeting and financial management

According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:19) the elements of budgeting and financial management as dimensions of the planning and administration competency refer to managers' ability to:

- Understand budgets, cash flows, financial reports and annual reports;
- Keep accurate and complete financial records; as well as
- Create and use budget guidelines in the course of their daily activities.

As such, budgeting assists managers with efficient planning; ensuring effective and efficient allocation of available resources; and monitoring how resources are utilised throughout the budgeted period (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:281).

5.3.4.1 *The media's challenge to balance financial and other objectives*

As a rule, media enterprises (but specifically mainstream media as included in this research) are profit oriented entities. However, as Campbell (2000:55) states, the media is "radically different from most businesses because the future of democracy depends on an unencumbered free press". This is probably one of the most contentious issues within modern-day journalism (see section 1.3.2). As such, media enterprises are criticised for focusing so much effort on financial success that they lose sight of their responsibility to also inform and entertain a diverse media audience in a fair and balanced manner (e.g. see The Pew Research Centre, 2004:1; Beam, 2004:2; Meyer, 2004:55). As Underwood (1995:169), for instance, states:

... there is built into journalism the possibility of inducing change and helping to create a world that is more just and more peaceful; it is this possibility that has fired and continues to fire the imagination of journalists everywhere on earth. Political and especially economic reality, however, severely circumscribes these possibilities.

The South African media does not escape this controversy. Addison (2003a:26), for instance, raises criticism that the country's media lack social responsibility and do not fulfil its rightful role in democratisation initiatives. Or as Von Bormann (2004a:29) states, "the strategy remains, particularly for listed media companies, the shortest route to the greatest profits. The triple bottom line – economic, social and environmental – is not a priority" (also see Berger, 2004c:3). However, one might rather argue that the economic bottom line is currently too much of a priority, and that the media actually needs to increase its social and environmental responsibility. Moerdyk (2005:7) supports this perspective by referring to the potential danger facing the media if it does not acquire a more socially responsible role. He bases this argument on the increasing need among readers and listeners for trustworthy providers of information.

Over and above this, many media enterprises are accused that they deliberately seek and please customers. In more instances than not, these customers represent the more

affluent and influential communities in society (Herrick, 2003:228; Von Bormann, 2004a:31). As a result, it is argued that the media neglects issues relevant to minority communities (Gade, 2004:5). Ultimately, these voices maintain that journalism is subject to “commercial exploitation” (Powers, 2004:74). Counteracting these arguments, owners of large and profitable media enterprises assert that “diminished journalism is better than no journalism” (Herrick, 2003:228).

Given the above-mentioned accusations, critics call on media enterprises to improve their public responsibility role and plough back some of their profit into improved wages, improved technology and other resources for staff to do their work, or increased involvement in public service projects. However, critics claim that media enterprises often fail to fulfil these roles, as owners lack insight into the intricate nature of the media industry. Interviewees for this research specifically voiced these concerns (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:26; also see section 4.3.3).

5.3.4.2 *The need for proper financial management skills among news managers*

Given the above debate, news managers need to master financial management skills. In order to implement these properly, they need sound financial information. If this is not the case, “organisations would have poorly defined goals, if they were to have goals at all; and managerial learning and organisational growth might never occur” (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:261). In fact, without proper financial information enterprises or departments will find it almost impossible to take informed decisions.

Flatter hierarchical structures (as found to be the trend at many media enterprises) imply that more employees and managers will probably contribute towards financial decisions than was the case in the past (Valoyi, Lessing & Schepers, 2000:33). As a result, employees on lower organisational levels should also be skilled to understand and interpret financial information. If this were the case, they would be in a better position to contribute to financial decision making processes. In an increasingly integrated and converged media environment, Underwood (1995:33) emphasises the importance that

media managers also coordinate financial planning activities with colleagues in other departments (e.g. advertising, circulation). However, he warns that managers should not become so involved with budgeting and planning processes that they fail to focus sufficient attention on the journalistic side of their positions.

However, financial management and budgeting are complex issues. As a result, many managers do not intuitively have the skills to grasp the related concepts. They therefore need training and guidance to perform the tasks associated with financial management properly (Masitsa, 2005:192). Fortunately, technological developments (e.g. computerised software) make it easier for managers to gain confidence in budgeting and financial management activities (see Herrick, 2003:238).

The previous four sections of this chapter provided a theoretical context on the dimensions of planning and administration as a managerial competency. The next part focuses on research results pertaining to the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency among first-line news managers and reporters in South Africa's mainstream media. The quantitative results are based on the importance first-line news managers and reporters attach to management tasks related to this competency. It also provides first-line news managers' view on how well they currently implement these tasks, as well as reporters' experience thereof.

5.4 Results – the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 display quantitative results on the following issues:

- The difference between the importance first-line news managers attach to each management task related to the planning and administration competency and their perception of how well they currently implement it. This is compared with the difference between the importance reporters attach to each management task and their experience of first-line news managers' implementation thereof; and

- The difference between first-line news managers' view on how well they implement each management task and reporters' experience thereof.

The aggregate effect size of planning and administration as a managerial competency (without dividing it into different management tasks or comparing it on the basis of media type or media ownership type) shows that:

- First-line news managers indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) between the importance they attach to the planning and administration competency and their current implementation thereof; and
- Reporters agreed with this perception. A moderately significant difference ($d=0.63$) was subsequently calculated between the importance they attach to this competency and their experience of first-line news managers' current implementation thereof.

This implies that first-line news managers and reporters experience a gap between the importance they attach to this competency and the current implementation thereof. The somewhat larger effect size calculated for reporters (compared to first-line news managers) indicates that they experience a bigger gap between importance and current implementation by first-line news managers.

5.4.1 Comparing the importance of management tasks related to planning and administration as a managerial competency with the implementation thereof

Table 5.1 outlines the following with regard to each management task related to planning and administration as a managerial competency.

Table 5.1: Comparing the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Planning and administration as a managerial competency								
Management task	First-line news managers				Reporters			
	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)
13.2.1 Taking well-informed decisions despite deadline pressure	73	0.52	0.85	0.46	172	0.72	1.31	0.69
13.2.2 Anticipating consequences of risks taken to deliver news product	70	0.39	0.84	0.42	175	0.75	1.42	0.54
13.2.3 Defending consequences of risks taken	68	0.40	0.95	0.77	173	0.71	1.33	0.54
13.2.4 Pro-actively developing plans to improve output	70	0.69	0.89	0.80	174	0.98	1.41	0.70
13.2.5 Pro-actively scheduling plans to achieve set goals	65	0.82	1.01	0.54	171	0.91	1.50	0.60
13.2.6 Prioritising tasks to deliver the desired news product	70	0.44	0.83	0.61	172	0.97	1.31	0.74
13.2.7 Delegating responsibility for tasks	67	0.37	0.92	0.41	172	0.48	1.34	0.36
13.2.8 Delegating authority to perform tasks	67	0.46	0.84	0.55	170	0.57	1.32	0.43
13.2.9 Identifying resources to deliver news product	67	0.67	0.88	0.77	171	0.83	1.41	0.59
13.2.10 Obtaining resources to deliver the news product	64	0.97	1.14	0.85	173	1.05	1.38	0.76
13.2.11 Organising resources obtained	66	0.62	0.94	0.66	174	0.91	1.38	0.66
13.2.12 Keeping accurate and complete financial documentation	45	0.64	1.26	0.51	151	0.36	1.45	0.25
13.2.13 Budgeting for activities in the department/section	48	0.60	1.09	0.56	151	0.36	1.50	0.24
13.2.14 Using financial information to plan activities	51	0.57	1.06	0.54	148	0.43	1.56	0.27
13.2.15 Using financial information when taking decisions	52	0.58	1.07	0.54	150	0.35	1.50	0.24
13.2.16 Using financial information when performing control activities	49	0.69	1.03	0.68	146	0.25	1.56	0.16
13.2.17 Handling a variety of incidents at once	70	0.24	0.69	0.35	173	0.64	1.47	0.43

5.4.1.1 *Taking well-informed decisions despite deadline pressure*

Both first-line news managers ($n=73$; $d=0.46$) and reporters ($n=172$; $d=0.69$) indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to this management task and the former group's current implementation thereof. Both groups thus admit that first-line news managers do not implement this task as well as they should, given the importance they attach to it.

By admitting their lack of skills in this area, first-line news managers call for improved skills or newsroom conditions to facilitate their performance. Reporters, on the other hand, signal that they are not satisfied with the way in which superiors take decisions and that media enterprises should address this issue. As was the case during Audit 1 (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:45), both first-line news managers and reporters therefore experience that deadline pressure influences newsroom activities. As was indicated in section 5.2.2, the unexpected nature of the news industry could put news managers in a position where they need to take important decisions in a short period of time or on short notice. Despite this, sections 5.3.2.1 and 5.3.3 underscored the need for news managers and reporters prioritise thorough (yet flexible) planning.

5.4.1.2 *Anticipating consequences of risks taken to deliver the news product*

Reporters ($n=175$) indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' current ability to implement it. First-line news managers ($n=70$), on the other hand, indicated a practically insignificant difference ($d=0.42$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof.

On the one hand, this result might show a perception among reporters that first-line news managers are too cautious or unwilling to take risks. On the other hand, however, it could also highlight a perception among reporters that first-line news managers take irresponsible risks without thoroughly considering the potential consequences thereof.

Irrespective of which perception truly reflects the current newsroom situation, inexperience among first-line news managers could be an important contributing factor. As such, this could leave managers overly cautious to take risks (also see section 1.7.4.1).

5.4.1.3 *Defending consequences of risks taken*

Reporters ($n=173$) only indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their experience of how well first-line news managers currently perform on this area. First-line news managers ($n=68$), on the other hand, experience a bigger gap between the importance they attach to it and their current implementation thereof. As a result, they indicated a practically significant effect size ($d=0.77$).

This result can be linked to the discussion in section 5.4.1.2. It might also tie in with first-line news managers' acknowledgement that they lack the ability to develop relationships with superiors or exercise influence within higher management levels (see sections 4.6.1.8 and 4.6.1.9). Improved communication and better relationships between these two management tiers might address this situation. Moreover, more management experience and improved skills related to this managerial competency might equip first-line news managers with skills and boldness to properly defend the consequences of risks taken properly to top management.

In a newsroom environment characterised by increased pressure to beat the competition (despite more limited human and financial resources), this management task might become even more important in future. Apart from this, section 4.3.3 outlined how media owners diversify their business interests across various industries. As a result, first-line news managers should have the skills to defend the consequences of risks taken to top management and owners. This might especially be the case when financial success is at stake.

5.4.1.4 *Pro-actively developing plans to improve the level of professional output*

This was another area in which first-line news managers ($n=70$) experience a bigger gap between the importance and their current implementation of the management task. As such, a practically significant effect size ($d=0.80$) was calculated. Reporters ($n=174$), however, seem somewhat less aware of this gap. As such, they only highlighted an (*albeit* high) moderately significant effect size ($d=0.70$) on this issue. This could be attributed to the fact that reporters consider this management task somewhat less important ($x_1=4.24$) than first-line news managers ($x_1=4.29$) who participated in the study.

The dilemma of pro-active planning in a newsroom context was discussed in section 5.2.2. However, failure to do so might differentiate media enterprises from their competition. Whereas inability to plan often results in crisis management, well devised plans would present media enterprises with a choice of options to implement when they need to take quick decisions.

Qualitative data from this research support this perspective. Interviewees underlined the importance of pro-actively developing plans, given the challenges associated with this management task in a newsroom context. Their view is that this could improve professional output, while it could also alleviate first-line news managers' burden of constantly having to take rush decisions and then defend the outcome to superiors.

5.4.1.5 *Pro-actively scheduling plans to achieve set goals*

The inability to pro-actively schedule plans to achieve set goals and objectives flows from the above. While first-line news managers ($x_1=4.31$) and reporters ($x_1=4.06$) consider this management task important, they both acknowledged that the former group does not currently implement it optimally. As a result, both first-line news managers ($n=65$; $d=0.54$) and reporters ($n=171$; $d=0.60$) indicated a moderately

significant difference between the importance and current implementation of this management task.

Interviewees across the country described daily newsroom planning sessions during which they schedule plans. The nature of these sessions differs, but the majority consists of conferences and meetings (morning/afternoon or more often in the case of daily newspapers, morning conferences in the case of weekly newspapers, or weekly meetings in the case of magazines). In cases where (for instance broadcast) media enterprises have regional offices, conferences include telephonic discussions (line talks) to get regional input. During these meetings, managers hand out assignments, staff discuss ideas and compile diaries. While some media titles prefer that only specific staff attend these meetings, interviewees at others indicated that they try to make these meetings as inclusive as possible. As such, they extend an open invitation to all staff members to attend meetings.

However, these conferences mainly focus on the day-to-day activities (and feedback from staff) in order to produce the desired news product. Many interviewees emphasised that these are not the platform to pro-actively plan for the medium to long-term and that little time is actually available to do this type of planning (also see section 5.2.2).

5.4.1.6 *Prioritising tasks to deliver the desired news product*

Both reporters ($n=172$; $d=0.74$) and first-line news managers ($n=70$; $d=0.61$) indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance and current implementation of this management task. Despite the bigger effect size, reporters consider this management task less important ($x_1=4.39$) than first-line news managers ($x_1=4.58$).

As was indicated in section 5.3.2.1 the ability to prioritise tasks is an important management skill. It does not only make life easier for managers, but also provides subordinates with a clearer view of the sequence in which they should address tasks assigned to them. By indicating a larger gap between the importance and

implementation of this management task, reporters highlighted a need for improvement in this area. First-line news managers will also benefit from improving prioritising skills. This will address haphazard approaches to work and clearly inform all newsroom staff about the issues they need to prioritise during the course of the day. It will ultimately also reduce the need for crisis management.

5.4.1.7 Delegating responsibility for tasks

First-line news managers ($n=67$; $x_1=4.29$) consider this management task more important than reporters ($n=172$; $x_1=4.07$). Despite this, neither group of respondents experience a practically significant difference between the importance they attach to this task and the current implementation thereof ($d=0.41$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.36$ for reporters).

5.4.1.8 Delegating authority to perform tasks

In contrast with the results in section 5.4.1.7, first-line news managers ($n=67$) indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.55$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof. Reporters ($n=170$), on the other hand, highlighted no practically significant difference ($d=0.43$). This indicates that the level of importance they attach to it equals their experience of first-line news managers' implementation thereof.

The findings in sections 5.4.1.7 and 5.4.1.8 indicate that first-line news managers find it easy to delegate responsibility for tasks to reporters given the importance they attach to this management task. However, they admit that they are not always prepared to delegate the authority for completing tasks. Given the importance of delegating responsibility and authority to subordinates (see sections 2.4.2; 2.4.3.5; 2.4.4.3), media enterprises should address this issue. Failure to do so could leave reporters frustrated and demotivated to complete tasks effectively and efficiently. Moreover, a lack of proper delegation skills will increase first-line news managers' responsibilities. This, in turn, will

leave them with less time to spend on other (possibly more important) management tasks. Eventually this poses the threat that first-line news managers' stress levels increase, leaving them prone to suffer workplace burnout (also see section 9.2.3.1).

5.4.1.9 *Identifying resources to deliver the news product*

Both groups of respondents highlighted discrepancies between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' current ability to perform it. First-line news managers ($n=67$), however, seem more aware of their inability in this area than reporters ($n=171$). As such, a practically significant effect size ($d=0.77$) was calculated, while reporters highlighted a moderately significant difference ($d=0.59$).

First-line news managers' acknowledgement of this dilemma should communicate to superiors and owners that newsroom decision makers have trouble to do what media enterprises expect of them, given the available resources. As was found by Rosentiel and Mitchell (2004:86) media enterprises (obviously also those in South Africa) should realise that disinvesting in (especially human) resources could put decision makers in a difficult position to address an expanding workload. Failure to do this might, in turn, lead to a decline in quality of journalism, circulation figures, and ultimately revenue.

5.4.1.10 *Obtaining resources to deliver the news product*

First-line news managers ($x_1=4.01$) and reporters ($x_1=4.21$) agree on the importance of obtaining resources needed to deliver the news product. Reporters ($n=173$), however, consider this management task more important than first-line news managers ($n=64$). Given this, both groups indicated a practically significant difference between the importance and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof ($d=0.85$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.76$ for reporters). In this case, first-line news managers experience a bigger gap between the importance they attach to it and their ability to perform this task.

This finding can be linked directly to the above issue, as an inability to identify resources could make it more difficult to obtain them. Interviewees emphasised this frustration. As was highlighted in section 4.3.3 some interviewees explained the difficulty they have to obtain (especially financial) resources. They attribute this difficulty to owners' lack of insight into the media industry, and subsequently the difficulties media managers face. As a result, they sometimes hesitate to address newsroom needs within the expected time frame.

5.4.1.11 Organising resources obtained

Despite the importance both first-line news managers ($n=66$; $x_1=4.15$) and reporters ($n=174$; $x_1=4.20$) attach to this management task, they experience a moderately significant difference with regard to the current implementation thereof ($d=0.66$ for first-line news managers and reporters respectively).

First-line news managers indicated in the above sections that they have trouble to identify and obtain resources needed to deliver news products. Adding to this, they also acknowledge a lack of skills to organise resources in such a manner that media enterprises can achieve organisational goals and objectives. Managers probably need more clarity on why they are trying to identify and obtain resources (e.g. they need human resources to cover a specific news event, and they need financial resources to cover the costs associated with it). This knowledge might enable them to know how they should optimally utilise resources obtained. Based on a finding by Berryman-Fink (1985:309) one can argue that appointing more female managers as part of media enterprises' gender equity initiatives might address this situation. Berryman-Fink found that women's ability to organise equips them to be more effective managers.

5.4.1.12 Budgeting and financial management

First-line news managers are aware of the importance of budgeting and financial

management in a newsroom management context. Despite this, they indicated moderately significant differences between the importance and their current ability to implement these tasks. More specifically, they experience gaps with regard to:

- Keeping accurate and complete financial documentation (n=45; d=0.51);
- Budgeting for activities in the department/section (n=48; d=0.56);
- Using financial information to plan activities (n=51; d=0.54);
- Using financial information when taking decisions (n=52; d=0.54); and
- Using financial information when performing control activities (n=49; d=0.68).

It is thus clear that first-line news managers lack the skills to properly perform the management tasks associated with financial management and budgeting given the importance they attach to it. Again, one can contribute this inability to management inexperience. This situation could pose serious challenges to newsroom management, especially since first-line news managers indicated that they experience difficulty to defend the consequences of risks to top management (see section 5.4.1.3). If first-line news managers keep proper financial records of activities, plan and make decisions based on available funds and use financial information to control newsroom activities, top management might also be less critical of financial risks.

Interestingly, reporters indicated no practical significance between the importance they attach to these management tasks and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. This could reflect a lack of understanding among reporters on the importance of these management tasks in a newsroom environment. Given the emphasis on profitability and the financial considerations of newsroom activities (see section 5.3.4.1) one would expect this situation to be different.

Table 5.2: Comparing the implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Management task	First-line news managers			Reporters			Effect size (d)
	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_1$)	Std deviation	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_2$)	Std deviation	
Taking well-informed decisions	77	4.16	0.84	190	3.40	1.26	0.60
Anticipating consequences of risks taken	74	3.95	0.76	187	3.45	1.17	0.43
Defending consequences of risks taken	72	3.88	0.95	187	3.44	1.27	0.34
Pro-actively planning to improve output	73	3.62	1.04	190	3.26	1.29	0.27
Pro-actively scheduling plans	67	3.55	1.05	189	3.15	1.23	0.33
Prioritising tasks	74	4.18	0.77	190	3.40	1.21	0.65
Delegating responsibility for tasks	71	4.07	0.82	187	3.58	1.14	0.43
Delegating authority to perform tasks	71	3.87	0.86	189	3.50	1.25	0.30
Identifying resources	71	3.70	0.80	186	3.39	1.24	0.26
Obtaining resources	68	3.21	1.02	189	3.16	1.20	0.03
Organising resources	70	3.59	0.99	190	3.28	1.21	0.25
Accurate/complete financial documentation	50	2.94	1.38	169	3.50	1.25	0.40
Budgeting for activities	51	2.86	1.20	168	3.43	1.26	0.45
Using financial information to plan activities	55	2.86	1.25	165	3.32	1.26	0.37
Using financial information to take decisions	55	3.02	1.16	166	3.40	1.20	0.32
Using financial information to control	52	2.90	1.26	160	3.36	1.25	0.36
Handling a variety of incidents at once	75	4.17	0.80	188	3.47	1.29	0.54

5.4.2 Implementation of management tasks related to planning and administration as a managerial competency

Results in Table 5.2 indicate that first-line news managers in general perceive themselves better implementers of the management tasks related to the planning and administration competency than reporters. The only area in which this perspective is reversed relates to financial management and budgeting tasks. As outlined in section 5.4.1.12, first-line news managers perceive themselves worse implementers of these tasks than reporters experience it to be the case. Over and above this, results in Table 5.2 highlight four areas where first-line news managers differ from reporters on the implementation of management tasks associated with the planning and administration competency. These are subsequently discussed.

5.4.2.1 *Taking well-informed decisions despite deadline pressure*

A moderately significant difference ($d=0.60$) was calculated between first-line news managers' ($n=77$) view of how well they implement this management task and reporters' ($n=190$) experience thereof. As indicated above, first-line news managers perceive themselves better implementers than reporters experience it to be the case.

5.4.2.2 *Prioritising tasks to deliver the desired news product*

A moderately significant difference ($d=0.65$) was also calculated in terms of first-line news managers' ability to perform this task and reporters' perception thereof. Again, first-line news managers ($n=74$) consider themselves better at this task than reporters ($n=190$) experience it in day-to-day newsroom situations.

5.4.2.3 *Budgeting for activities in the department/section*

As indicated above, reporters ($n=168$) perceive first-line news managers better at budgeting for activities than first-line news managers ($n=51$) themselves perceive it to be the case. As a result, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.45$) was calculated between the two groups of respondents.

5.4.2.4 *Handling a variety of incidents at once*

Finally, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) was highlighted between first-line news managers' view of this management task and that of reporters. As was the case with the implementation of the above two management tasks, first-line news managers ($n=75$) consider themselves better at implementing this task than reporters ($n=188$) experience it to be the case.

5.4.3 Comparing the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency across media types

In order to obtain a more detailed view of the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among reporters and first-line news managers across media types.

Table 5.3: Importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of reporters

Media type	Reporters									
	Importance – Planning and administration									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	43	3.97	0.68		0.02	0.07	0.48	0.12	0.07	0.73
Weekly newspaper	51	3.95	1.04			0.06	0.35	0.10	0.07	0.49
Magazine	9	4.02	0.62				0.42	0.06	0.01	0.72
Television	18	4.31	0.72					0.34	0.40	0.21
Radio	44	4.06	0.74						0.05	0.54
On-line media	11	4.03	0.72							0.61
News agency	8	4.46	0.38							
	Implementation – Planning and administration									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	46	3.47	0.83		0.31	0.27	0.21	0.04	0.36	0.14
Weekly newspaper	51	3.12	1.14			0.51	0.10	0.28	0.57	0.42
Magazine	9	3.70	0.86				0.41	0.28	0.07	0.12
Television	18	3.23	1.15					0.18	0.46	0.31
Radio	50	3.43	0.96						0.34	0.17
On-line media	11	3.76	0.74							0.19
News agency	8	3.59	0.92							

Table 5.4: Importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media type	First-line news managers									
	Importance – Planning and administration									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_1$)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	26	4.00	0.73		0.02	0.12	0.03	0.47	0.12	0.06
Weekly newspaper	21	4.01	0.81			0.10	0.05	0.41	0.10	0.04
Magazine	2	4.09	0.12				0.12	0.57	0.00	0.05
Television	3	3.96	1.06					0.36	0.12	0.08
Radio	8	4.34	0.44						0.31	0.33
On-line media	8	4.09	0.80							0.05
News agency	5	4.05	0.88							
Media type	Implementation – Planning and administration									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_2$)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	26	3.63	0.50		0.02	0.32	0.24	0.17	0.38	0.19
Weekly newspaper	22	3.61	0.73			0.20	0.25	0.14	0.29	0.21
Magazine	2	3.47	0.17				0.39	0.49	0.12	0.37
Television	3	3.88	1.06					0.16	0.45	0.08
Radio	11	3.71	0.49						0.52	0.10
On-line media	8	3.40	0.60							0.45
News agency	5	3.80	0.88							

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 highlight the following results.

5.4.3.1 Importance of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.48$) on the importance of the planning and administration competency was highlighted between reporters working at

daily newspapers ($n=43$) and television ($n=18$). A similar (*albeit* higher) difference ($d=0.73$) was found between reporters working at daily newspapers ($n=43$) and those at news agencies ($n=8$). Television reporters ($x_1=4.31$) and those at news agencies ($x_1=4.46$) regard this competency more important than their peers do at daily newspapers ($x_1=3.97$).

The roots of this finding could be traced to both television and news agencies operating with smaller newsroom staff components than daily newspapers. As a result, reporters at these media realise that planning and administration is vital if they want to effectively compete with larger media enterprises (of which daily newspapers often form part). Another explanation (also see section 5.3.4.2) could be that television and news agency newsrooms tend to have flatter structures. As a result, planning and administration might be easier than within larger media enterprises (of which newspapers form part); and

- When comparing the importance attached to planning and administration among reporters at news agencies ($n=8$) with that of reporters employed by other media types, moderately significant differences were again found. These reporters perceive planning and administration more important ($x_1=4.46$) than peers at weekly newspapers ($n=51$; $d=0.49$; $x_1=3.95$). They also perceive it more important than peers at magazines ($n=9$; $d=0.72$; $x_1=4.02$); radio ($n=44$; $d=0.54$; $x_1=4.06$) and on-line media ($n=11$; $d=0.61$; $x_1=4.03$). In this instance, the above arguments about smaller newsrooms and flatter organisational structures at news agencies are not valid, as news agencies seem to have equally small newsrooms than on-line media and some radio stations. It could, however, be valid with regard to the difference between news agencies and weekly newspapers and some magazines.

5.4.3.2 *Implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) on the implementation of the planning and administration competency was found between reporters at weekly newspapers ($n=51$) and peers at magazines ($n=9$). Magazine reporters ($x_2=3.70$) perceive their first-line news managers better implementers of this management task than their colleagues at weekly newspapers ($x_2=3.12$). Again, the above arguments could be valid. Since magazine newsrooms are often smaller than that of weekly newspapers, first-line news managers realise the value of proper planning and administration and implement it as such. Less bureaucracy at magazines might also facilitate proper planning and administration (compared to weekly newspapers). However, both media types operate on a weekly schedule. Subsequently an argument that magazine deadlines are more lenient than those at weekly newspapers would be invalid;
- Similarly, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.57$) on the implementation of this competency exists between reporters at on-line media ($n=11$) and colleagues at weekly newspapers ($n=51$). The same moderate significant difference ($d=0.46$) was found between reporters at on-line media ($n=11$) and those at television ($n=18$). In both cases, reporters at on-line media ($x_2=3.76$) perceive first-line news managers better implementers of this competency than colleagues at weekly newspapers ($x_2=3.12$) and television ($x_2=3.23$).

Many on-line media titles obtain news reports electronically from other sources (e.g. other websites, news agencies). This implies that they need not assign reporting teams to cover breaking news stories. To some extent, part of the work involved in covering a news story has thus already been done. As one interviewee at an on-line media title put it: "News dictates our planning". This might allow more time for first-line news managers at these sites to plan properly for the short, medium and long-term. Nevertheless, an interviewee at an on-line media title associated with a weekly newspaper expressed her concern and

dissatisfaction with the level of daily planning at the site. Despite various methods to monitor reporters' progress on assigned tasks, she expressed a need for better planning. She highlighted that staff come in at different times of the day, as they work in shifts. As a result, it is difficult to have daily planning sessions where all staff members are involved.

5.4.3.3 *Importance of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers' view of the importance of planning and administration differ moderately significantly across different media types. As such, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.47$) was calculated between first-line news managers at radio ($n=8$) and those at daily newspapers ($n=26$). A moderately significant difference ($d=0.57$) was also found between first-line news managers at radio ($n=8$) and the sample of magazine respondents ($n=2$). In both cases, first-line news managers at radio consider planning and administration more important ($x_1=4.34$) than their counterparts at daily newspapers ($x_1=4.00$) and magazines ($x_1=4.09$).

With regard to independent radio stations, one can again argue that they operate with smaller newsrooms, with the first-line news manager often also forming part of the reporting team (see section 5.2.2). As a result, they are highly aware of the importance of proper planning, as a lack thereof could negatively affect the news product. With regard to radio stations associated with the public service broadcaster, qualitative data from interviews highlighted a lack of proper planning between the head office in Johannesburg and regional offices. This could result in higher awareness among first-line news managers at regional offices that newsrooms need proper planning to perform as is expected of them.

5.4.3.4 *Implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.49$) on the implementation of planning and administration was calculated between first-line news managers at radio stations ($n=11$) and those at magazines included in the sample ($n=2$). Again, first-line news managers at radio stations consider themselves better implementers ($x_2=3.71$) than those at magazines ($x_2=3.47$). This finding is in line with the above. Because first-line news managers at radio perceive planning and administration more important, they attempt to implement it properly. Interestingly, however, radio station reporters do not perceive their first-line news managers to be significantly better at the implementation of this competency than those working at other media titles;
- Likewise, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.45$) on the implementation of this competency was found when comparing the view of first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) and their colleagues at on-line media ($n=8$). The former group considers themselves better at implementing this competency ($x_2=3.88$) than the latter ($x_2=3.40$). The same difference was also calculated between first-line news managers at news agencies ($n=5$) and those at on-line media ($n=8$). The former group again perceives themselves better implementers of this competency ($x_2=3.80$) than the latter ($x_2=3.40$). Despite the fact that first-line news managers at on-line media realise the importance of proper planning, they experience a need to improve on their implementation thereof; and
- Finally, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.52$) on the implementation of this competency was calculated between first-line news managers at radio stations ($n=11$) and those at on-line media ($n=8$). The former group considers their skills in this area better ($x_2=3.71$) than the latter ($x_2=3.40$). A similar difference ($d=0.45$) was found between managers at on-line media ($n=8$) and those at news agencies ($n=5$). As was the case above, the former group considers themselves worse implementers ($x_2=3.40$) than the latter ($x_2=3.80$).

5.4.4 Comparing the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency across media ownership types

In order to obtain a more detailed perspective on the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among media titles operating on different ownership structures.

Table 5.5: Importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of reporters

Media ownership type	Reporters						
	Importance – Planning and administration						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	75	4.13	0.64		0.14	0.27	0.06
Unlisted companies	49	3.98	1.06			0.07	0.10
Public service mandate	31	3.91	0.82				0.22
Foreign ownership	29	4.09	0.68				
	Implementation – Planning and administration						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	80	3.52	0.98		0.16	0.52	0.00
Unlisted companies	47	3.34	1.13			0.29	0.16
Public service mandate	37	3.01	0.89				0.57
Foreign ownership	29	3.52	0.78				

Table 5.6: Importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media ownership type	First-line news managers						
	Importance – Planning and administration						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	39	4.11	0.75		0.29	0.41	0.36
Unlisted companies	12	3.84	0.90			0.64	0.01
Public service mandate	9	4.41	0.47				1.01
Foreign ownership	13	3.83	0.57				
	Implementation – Planning and administration						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	39	3.68	0.52		0.22	0.36	0.44
Unlisted companies	13	3.50	0.81			0.46	0.14
Public service mandate	12	3.88	0.55				0.75
Foreign ownership	13	3.39	0.65				

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 highlight the following results.

5.4.4.1 Importance of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

No practical significant difference was calculated between the importance reporters at different media attach to planning and administration as a managerial competency. Irrespective of the ownership structure, reporters regard planning and administration an important managerial competency ($x_1=4.03$).

5.4.4.2 *Implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- Irrespective of the ownership model, reporters overall rated the implementation of planning and administration lower than the importance they attach to it ($x_2=3.35$). However, they consider their first-line news managers better at implementing this competency than the communication competency ($x_2=3.25$ see section 4.6.4.2);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.52$) on the implementation of this competency was calculated between reporters working at JSE listed companies ($n=80$) and those employed by the public service broadcaster ($n=37$). As was the case with the implementation of the communication competency (see section 4.6.4.2) the latter group of respondents perceive first-line news managers worse at implementing planning and administration ($x_2=3.01$) than the former ($x_2=3.52$);
- Similarly, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.57$) on the implementation of this competency was calculated between reporters employed by the public service broadcaster ($n=37$) and those employed by foreign owned media companies ($n=29$). In this instance, the former group of respondents consider their first-line news managers worse implementers ($x_2=3.01$) than the latter group ($x_2=3.52$);
- Looking at this finding in more detail, SABC reporters perceive their first-line news managers worst at implementing the following management tasks associated with planning and administration:
 - Taking well-informed decisions despite pressures posed by tight deadlines ($n=36$; $x_2=2.56$);
 - Pro-actively developing plans to improve the level of professional output ($n=36$; $x_2=2.64$);
 - Properly scheduling these plans in order to achieve the set goals ($n=36$; $x_2=2.69$);

- Defending the consequences arising from these risks to top management (n=35; $x_2=2.74$);
- Prioritising tasks in order to deliver the desired news product (n=37; $x_2=2.78$);
- Delegating authority to reporters to perform tasks (n=36; $x_2=2.92$);
- Organising resources (human and otherwise) obtained (n=37; $x_2=2.92$); and
- Handling a variety of incidents at once (n=36; $x_2=2.92$).

To a certain extent, qualitative data from interviewees provide a different perspective to the above results. Some interviewees described several mechanisms to properly plan for the short, medium and long-term. These include face-to-face planning sessions, line talks with head office and workshops. Despite these, some interviewees described reporters' hesitance to cooperate and put these plans into action. As one interviewee stated: "People have no responsibility. Editors end up having to find stories. There is not enough initiative on journalists' side". He emphasised that they encourage reporters to give their line managers an indication of story ideas and the budget they need to cover the story. Nevertheless, some reporters refuse to do even that. However, at other SABC regional offices managers praised reporters for taking initiative on story ideas, making it easier for newsroom managers to plan and stick to planning schedules.

5.4.4.3 *Importance of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the ownership structure applicable) consider planning and administration a very important competency ($x_1=4.05$). They even consider it more important than reporters indicated in section 5.4.4.1;
- When comparing the importance of this competency across different ownership models, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.64$) was calculated between first-

line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) and those employed by unlisted companies ($n=12$). The former group considers this competency more important ($x_1=4.41$) than the latter ($x_1=3.84$); and

- Finally, a practical significant difference ($d=1.01$) on the importance of this competency was calculated between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) and those employed by a foreign owned company ($n=13$). Again, SABC managers consider this competency more important ($x_1=4.41$) than their colleagues at foreign owned companies ($x_1=3.83$).

The above indicates that first-line news managers at the SABC are most aware of the importance of this competency. They are much more aware than peers at other media enterprises. The above results also indicate that these managers are more aware of the importance of this competency than reporters who participated in the study. As was the case with the communication competency, these findings contradict reporters' perspective on the implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency (see section 4.6.4.2). These findings therefore indicate that despite the importance first-line news managers at the SABC attach to this competency, subordinates experience that they do not implement it optimally.

5.4.4.4 *Implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the ownership structure applicable) consider their implementation of this competency better than their subordinates ($x_2=3.61$);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.46$) was calculated on the implementation of this competency between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) and their colleagues employed by unlisted companies ($n=13$). Again, the former group considers themselves better implementers ($x_2=3.88$) than the latter ($x_2=3.50$); and

- Finally, a practically significant difference ($d=0.75$) was found on the implementation of this competency between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) and those at foreign owned companies ($n=13$). Again, the former group considers themselves better at implementing planning and administration ($x_2=3.88$) than the latter ($x_2=3.39$).

When looking at individual management tasks associated with planning and administration, first-line news managers at the SABC consider themselves best at:

- Prioritising tasks in order to deliver the desired news product ($n=11$; $x_2=4.64$);
- Taking well-informed decisions despite pressures posed by tight deadlines ($n=12$; $x_2=4.33$);
- Delegating responsibility for tasks to reporters ($n=12$; $x_2=4.25$);
- Handling a variety of incidents at once ($n=12$; $x_2=4.25$);
- Anticipating consequences of risks (financial and otherwise) taken in order to deliver the news product ($n=12$; $x_2=4.17$);
- Pro-actively developing plans to improve the level of professional output ($n=12$; $x_2=4.09$);
- Identifying resources (human and otherwise) needed to deliver the news product ($n=12$; $x_2=4.08$); and
- Organising resources (human and otherwise) obtained ($n=12$; $x_2=4.00$).

One can conclude from the above that many of the management tasks first-line news managers at the SABC consider themselves best implementers of are also those reporters rated as their biggest weaknesses. These relate to first-line news managers' ability to take well-informed decisions despite tight deadline pressures; their skills to pro-actively develop plans to improve professional output; anticipate consequences of risks taken in an attempt to deliver the news product; and their skills to handle a variety of incidents at once. It is thus obvious that a discrepancy

exists between first-line news managers' perspective and reporters' experience. It is not possible from this research to determine which perspective reflects the actual newsroom situation. However, these findings indicate that this situation should be addressed.

The conclusions and managerial implications of the above findings are discussed in chapter ten of this study.

5.5 Summary

This chapter focused on proper planning and administration as a managerial competency. Against the theoretical background on planning as a basic management function in section 2.3, this chapter departed from the importance of proper planning and administration in a changed business environment. These elements were also discussed within a South African newsroom context.

The second part of the chapter outlined the dimensions of the planning and administration competency. These relate to managers' ability to gather and analyse information aimed at proper problem solving; plan and organise projects; properly managing time; and properly performing budgeting and financial management functions. In each instance, the theory related to these dimensions was applied to a global and South African media context.

The final section of the chapter provided quantitative and qualitative research results on the importance and implementation of planning and administration as a managerial competency. As such, it was indicated that reporters who participated in the study are more aware than first-line news managers of the gaps between the importance and current implementation thereof. Despite this, first-line news managers in general perceive themselves better implementers of this competency than reporters experience it to be the case. The only difference was found with regard to budgeting and financial management activities. Reporters perceive their first-line news managers better

implementers of the management tasks related to these activities than first-line news managers rate themselves.

Data on the importance and implementation of planning and administration was also compared across different media types and media ownership types. As such, it was found that reporters at news agencies consider the planning and administration competency the most important. However, reporters at weekly newspapers consider their first-line news managers the worst implementers of this competency. When looking at first-line news managers' view on this issue, research results indicated that those at on-line media and magazines consider this competency most important. However, first-line news managers at on-line media perceive themselves the worst implementers thereof. Similarly, reporters employed by JSE listed companies indicated that they perceive this competency most important. Reporters at the SABC were, however, of the opinion that their managers are the worst implementers of this competency. Despite this view, first-line news managers at the SABC consider planning and administration most important of all first-line news managers who participated in the study. Their colleagues at foreign owned media enterprises perceive themselves worst in terms of implementing this competency.

The following chapter of this study focuses on strategic action as a managerial competency, with specific reference to the importance and implementation thereof in South African mainstream media newsrooms.

Chapter 6:

Strategic action as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management

What makes a radio station initiate an aggressive Internet venture to deliver its programming product online? ... What makes a broadcast television network merge with a movie studio?

Many of these managerial decisions are a result of the dynamic relationship between a media organisation, its environment, and its attempt to develop and implement activities that align its organisational resources with environmental changes.

– Chan-Olmsted (2006b:161)

Strategic management is considered a management approach that effectively aligns the organisation with the increasingly volatile business environment in which it operates.

To ensure long term survival and sustainable growth in this type of environment, it is imperative that pre-emptively planned change initiatives be implemented and controlled effectively – the essence of strategic management.

– Cronje and Neuland (2003:22)

Strategic choices made by a firm will affect its performance.

– Shrikhande (2001:148)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on strategic action as a managerial competency. Dimensions of the theoretical framework are firstly provided. These are subsequently applied to a newsroom management context, specifically given characteristics of the South African mainstream media. The theoretical framework is followed by research results on the

importance attached to and implementation of the strategic action competency among reporters and first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. These results highlight areas in which first-line news managers and reporter respondents experience gaps between the importance and current implementation of specific management tasks related to this competency.

6.2 Dimensions of strategic action as a managerial competency

According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:20-21) and Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:20-21) the strategic action competency refers to "understanding the overall mission and values of the organisation and ensuring that employees' actions match (these)". As such, this competency necessitates that staff understand both the industry and the enterprise in which they work, and have the skills needed to take strategic action. Being more specific, the dimensions of this competency require that employees have insight into, understand and commit themselves to the mission and vision of the enterprise. They should subsequently align every organisational activity accordingly. This requires managers to develop and implement new product development strategies, guide new business ventures, distribute profit, and increasingly also become involved in mergers, acquisitions and long-term planning (Valoyi *et al.*, 2000:33). In order to effectively and efficiently perform these tasks, managers need visionary leadership skills to assist them in taking and implementing decisions (Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:30).

Traditionally, management tasks associated with strategic thinking were the responsibility of top management (see Valoyi *et al.*, 2000:33). However, (as outlined with regard to the planning and administration competency in chapter five) the present-day tendency is to involve staff members up and down hierarchical structures in strategic management activities (e.g. Du Toit, 2003:25; Kim, 2002:233; Valoyi *et al.*, 2000:33). An organisational environment in which internal stakeholder concerns are increasingly important for organisational success or failure necessitates this approach (see section 6.2.2.1).

To achieve this, managers should especially become well versed in the following dimensions of strategic action as a managerial competency.

6.2.1 *Understanding the industry*

It was discussed earlier in this study (see sections 5.2 and 2.3.1.2) that modern-day enterprises face the challenge of constantly changing internal and external environments. It was also highlighted in sections 1.3.3, 1.3.4 and 5.2 that the international and South African media is confronted with similar ongoing change (also see Gade, 2004:5). This situation seems unlikely to change in future. This necessitates that staff across organisational levels, as well as business owners are informed and have a thorough understanding of the industries in which they work (see Peters, 2004:34). They specifically need insight into the following aspects.

6.2.1.1 *Past, current and future challenges facing the industry*

No manager can properly think and plan strategically if they are unaware of the history and current challenges facing the industry in which they work. Similarly, they also need the skills to anticipate potential future challenges their industry would need to address. This obviously also applies to media managers.

However, within a context of diversifying business interests, many business owners lack sufficient background and understanding of new industries they enter. As a result, they sometimes find it difficult to think and operate strategically, given the history and current industry trends. Again, this also applies to the media, and especially a developing media industry in South Africa. With the liberalisation of media interests (see section 1.3.4.2) many incoming media owners originally had interests in other business industries. As a result, they might lack insight into the history and current challenges facing the media. Interviewees who participated in this research expressed their view that many owners subsequently fail to understand strategic decisions taken by media managers.

Interviewees for both Audit 1 and Audit 2 expressed their concern about this issue. During Audit 1 interviewees attributed the situation to factors such as inexperience, lack of skills and juniorisation (e.g. see Jacobs, 2002; Heyl, 2002). More specifically, however, they contributed it to a lack of understanding about the craft, purpose and role of journalism in society. They emphasised that news managers should refocus their attention to understand journalism as an important pillar of democracy, instead of merely seeing it as a “money making corporate” (Jacobs, 2002; also see Gans, 2004:10).

These factors often also prevent business owners from successfully analysing industry related trends and the implications thereof (DuBrin, 2003:124; Lussier, 2003:136). Subsequently, they might fail to effectively position their businesses within an increasingly competitive market. Failure to achieve this was highlighted as one of the most important factors hampering success at some media titles included in this research (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:25-26; also see Addison, 2005:32).

6.2.1.2 *Current trends in the South African media environment*

In order to strategically position media enterprises in South Africa, media owners and managers should take cognisance of current trends affecting the industry. They should also be able to anticipate potential industry related changes in order to ascertain whether these hold threats or opportunities for media enterprises. Moreover, they should be informed of the activities among both their competition and strategic partners (see Küng-Shankleman, 2000:1-2; Rankin, 1986:34).

With this in mind, owners and managers of South African media enterprises should be informed about:

- An emerging black middle class who relies on the media for information, education, health advice, voter education, lifestyle tips (Addison, 2003a:26) and personal growth opportunities (Addison, 2005:34). If media enterprises can pro-

active position themselves to address the needs of this market, they will capture a growing audience in need of education, information and entertainment;

- The geographical distribution of newspaper readers, with the majority being situated in urban areas. These readers share communalities on the basis of age, language, culture, education and income rather than previous demarcations based on race (Addison, 2004:35). This trend, however, also highlights a potential need for information among readers in rural areas, given the challenge of low literacy rates. If the majority of newspaper distribution is focused on urban areas, community oriented newspapers could be instrumental to address the needs of readers in rural communities (also see Emdon, 2005:34-40);
- Daily newspaper circulation constantly increasing in the last 10 years. These figures are estimated at about 3.6 million, with weekly newspapers also showing an increase to more than 16 million readers (Addison, 2003a:28). This contrasts internationally declining annual circulation trends of around 2% (Accone, 2005a:22). While a large section of the upcoming market of black readers currently reads tabloid newspapers, it is anticipated that these readers will "mature" in their newspaper preferences and focus more on "serious" titles as source of information and entertainment;
- Linked to the above, the increasing importance of community and tabloid newspapers in capturing and expressing issues relevant to local communities. These titles also add to the diversity of interests portrayed in the media (Addison, 2003b:26; Capraro, 2003:19);
- Magazine circulation figures rising to around 12 million. This means that about one magazine is available for every four people in the country. It is estimated that the readership of women's interest magazines exceeds 9 million, compared to the more than 6 million readers of male interest magazines (Addison, 2003b:25). However, as Addison (2003c:21) points out, this might be much lower among rural black readers due to distribution challenges, illiteracy and cost. Again, this presents the media with an uncaptured reader market. Similarly, niche market publications (e.g. travel and outdoor, craft, and interior decorating publications)

pose new opportunities for media enterprises wanting to enter the magazine market (see Van der Linde, 2005:29);

- Radio listening patterns among South African adults. Recent figures show that more than 23 million people listen to the radio on a daily basis, representing almost 80% of the adult population in the country (Von Bormann, 2003:26). This market turns on their radios for 34 hours and 12 minutes per week, or 4 hours and 53 minutes per day (Accone, 2005a:23). This situation presents opportunities for both information and education, as radio does not require the listener to be literate. Moreover, it needs little and inexpensive infrastructure, and easily reaches more remote areas of the country. Given this, trends in radio revenue show increases of between 13% and 20% in recent years (Gous, 2004:9);
- The role played by regional and independent radio stations in identifying with listeners' needs and interests, and adding a community voice to radio broadcasts (Accone, 2004:30; Von Bormann, 2004a:32; Radmark, 2003:29). However, the number and variety of regional broadcasters is increasing. Radio stations should thus ensure that they continue to capture listener interests through innovative and interesting programming (Abrahams, 2004:48). This is again especially the case in urban areas where it is easier for listeners to switch to another radio station, should the existing one not satisfy their information and entertainment needs;
- Continued growth potential shown by the Internet. This is in line with international trends indicating that around 700 million people currently use the Internet as a source of information and entertainment (Accone, 2005b:23). However, trends also indicate that blogging¹⁷ is a strong media growth point, with increasing numbers of bloggers providing readers information on a variety of topics (Accone, 2005b:23). Within the framework of blogging it is anticipated that news will become more of a "conversation" between producers and consumers. As such, Stepp (2004:62) points out that the "lines will blur between producers and

¹⁷ "Blogging" can be defined as the act of interacting on an Internet weblog. "Weblog" refers to "a personal journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or reflect the purpose of the Web site that hosts the blog. ... The essential characteristics of the blog are its journal form, typically a new entry each day, and its informal style" (Whatis?com, 2006:1). As such, Accone (2005b:23) states that "Blogging is akin to a written version of reality TV – a glimpse into the mind, and often heart and soul, of a real individual".

consumers (of news), changing the role of both". Media enterprises should thus be aware of this trend and the impact thereof on their own position and activities. For instance, blogging adds additional pressure on media enterprises to be "on top of" news events and bring news stories to their audiences as quickly as possible. However, it also places additional responsibility on the media to be a reliable and accurate source of information;

- Similar challenges facing the broadcasting industry (locally and internationally). Digitisation of information, global networks and increased broadcasting and bandwidth capacity present new possibilities to reach more people with a wider variety and increased amount of information. These changes will most probably see increased competition for audiences and advertising (see Küng-Shankleman, 2000:1-2). As such, Gans (2004:12) and Singer (2004:842) point out that increased competition can have positive as well as negative implications for media enterprises. On the one hand, it might result in reporters having to produce more stories than would have been the case without competition. On the other, it might cause reporters to focus more on quantity than quality and depth of stories. Media managers should thus manage this opportunity in such a manner that audiences continue to benefit from good quality stories presented to them;
- Potential posed by synergy in new technology to package print media with radio, television and the Internet (Harris, 2005:10). This could present the SABC with a strategic advantage. At the moment it is the only broadcaster in South Africa operating national radio stations and television channels. These outlets could potentially be used in the above-mentioned packaging possibilities (Radmark, 2004:37). However, information obtained during qualitative interviews for this research suggests that the corporation is faced with internal challenges which could hamper these advantages (also see sections 6.3.4.1-6.3.4.4 with regard to quantitative results pertaining to these issues);
- Emerging new markets for television programming and advertising, especially in light of new technological developments and the potential posed by interactive marketing and communication (Von Bormann, 2004b:27-28). One of the newest trends in South Africa is Personal Video Recorders (PVR's) or Digital Video

Recorders (DVR's). This technology provides viewers with a personalised option of watching television, as broadcasts can be recorded digitally to a hard disk. This allows viewers different options of pausing live television, replaying scenes during a live broadcast or skipping advertisements (Dicey, 2006:30-31); and

- Perceived imbalance in coverage of rural areas and representation of marginalised groups (e.g. women and the less privileged). This presents media owners and enterprises with unique challenges to be first in addressing these inequalities and capturing a section of the market previously unaccounted for (Kupe, 2004:38).

The extent to which first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms are currently aware of these factors is discussed in sections 6.3.1.3 and 6.3.1.4.

6.2.2 *Understanding the enterprise*

While the above skills enable managers to be informed of challenges and trends related to a macro level of their working environment, they should also have a sound knowledge of factors affecting their micro management environment. As such, news managers should understand their enterprise. This relates to understanding the concerns of various stakeholders, strengths and weaknesses of different organisational strategies and structures, as well as the possibilities or limitations presented by their enterprises' particular corporate culture (DuBrin, 2003:124; Lussier, 2003:136).

6.2.2.1 *Understanding and balancing internal stakeholder concerns*

Human resources is widely considered the most important business resource (see Von Bormann, 2004a:28-34; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:5; Stamm & Underwood, 1993:528; also see section 1.3.1). It is also considered the "real source of wealth in the future" (Veldsman, 1996:13). Managers thus need to understand internal stakeholder concerns and strive to address these concerns as far as possible. However, as Fink (1996:151)

points out, managers should ensure that individual needs and concerns are aligned with the enterprise's overall needs and objectives (also see Michelman, 2003:1). This will not only contribute to a happy, satisfied and more productive workforce, but also a more successful enterprise (Chan, Pan & Lee, 2004:255; Burton, 2001:13). Despite this, employee morale has not traditionally been top priority in the media industry. News managers' first loyalty was often "to the corporation and their career within the corporation" (Underwood, 1995:35).

However, employee morale has probably not been more relevant than within modern-day enterprises – also the media. As such, Grimm (2000:34) describes the current employer-employee relationship: "employees are in the driver's seat as never before, and they are demanding much". Grimm (2000:34) mainly attributes this to two factors:

- Demographic attributes with an accompanying new mindset among employees. Employers and managers are challenged to understand the potential impact of demographic attributes on organisational activities. As such, managers should determine and understand what motivates their workforce. They should similarly determine and understand what causes employee frustration or defensive behaviour (see Kim, 2002:231; Ströh, 2001:59; Fink, 1996:152). An important aspect in this regard is generation gaps between employees. Depending on the generation in which employees were born, it is said that their needs, motives, expectations and values differ. This often causes organisational conflict. For instance, employees born between the 1920s and 1940s (the so-called "silent generation") tend to be hard working and prefer rules and formal structures. In comparison, the younger generation born between the 1960s and 1980s (the so-called "x-ers") tend to dislike supervision, prefer flexibility and thrive on change. In between these two generations, the so-called "baby boomers" are found. Born between the late 1940s and 1970s, this generation is characterised by a tendency to know all the answers and strive towards achieving high personal and professional goals. (Lowies, 2005:6; Codrington, 2004:36-37; Grimm, 2000:34). In many cases, baby boomers are currently appointed in management positions

and are challenged to effectively and efficiently manage staff from the so-called "x-ers".

The effect of generation gaps in media newsrooms was especially outlined during interviews for Audit 1. Older generation employees agreed that the present generation of reporters lost enthusiasm about and commitment to their jobs. A case in point is younger reporters' disinterest in "staying" with a story until it is completely and correctly done. Another example is young reporters' inability to follow the progress of their stories until it successfully passed through the different processes leading up to publication. As a result, they tend to leave the office as soon as they "dropped" their stories into the electronic system (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:54).

Interviewees who participated in Audit 1 subsequently explained that younger reporters should be treated differently than their predecessors. As such, they can not tell these reporters what to do anymore or how to do their work. Young reporters also want to work more independently than in the past – all characteristics of typical generation x-ers as described above. Older generation editors and news editors admitted that this posed the challenge of managing an emerging generation of reporters differently to not compromise the journalism output of their news enterprises; and

- Different job attitudes. This was especially prevalent during interviews for Audit 1. The majority of news managers stated that younger reporters believe media enterprises should "buy" their skills and expertise for a specific price. In turn, they will deliver a specific product (also see Nel, 2003:15; Burton, 2001:14). Reporters are thus not willing to work long hours under unacceptable working conditions without being properly paid for their skills, experience and contribution anymore. However, (younger) interviewees underlined that reporters who work in a give-and-take relation with their employers are not indifferent about their jobs or their profession (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:55). Older generation interviewees

differed. They interpret this attitude as an overall lack of commitment compared to that among previous generations of reporters.

Different job attitudes also imply that employees tend to seek better job opportunities elsewhere if they are dissatisfied with their working conditions. It is therefore not surprising to see many make more frequent job changes than was the case some decades ago (see Beam, 2004:4; Chang, 2004:2). Grimm (2000:34) supports this with regard to the US job market. He describes a recent study among US college students. This study found that 78% of respondents anticipate to stay in their first jobs for three years or less. Similarly, 57% indicated that they would probably move to their second job within two years.

In the South African media, high staff turnover implies that neither staff nor managers get the opportunity to “settle” in their new positions or with new superiors/subordinates. New people often fill vacant positions after staff leave the enterprise for greener pastures before this can happen (see Proctor Simms, 2002; Russel, 2002). This especially applies to black staff members. Due to the shortage of well-skilled and experienced black employees (or those with potential) (Russel, 2002), there is strong competition among the media (and other industries) to employ these candidates and keep them employed (see Pather, 2002). In addition, staff turnover also negatively affects other areas. For instance, remaining staff get additional responsibility, often lowering professional output. Moreover, enterprises need to invest financial resources to recruit, retrain and relocate new staff members (also see section 9.3.1.17).

Given these challenges, employee loyalty and commitment is probably more important now than ever before. Enterprises are thus obliged to seek alternatives through which loyalty can be increased. Brown (1992:42) describes this dilemma: “young people coming into companies today don’t have automatic loyalty. When they feel that they are contributing and have a voice, they are much more likely to become a part of that

organisation". As a result, enterprises should look beyond a monthly pay check to reward and motivate employees (see Underwood, 1995:34).

This can be done through:

- Opportunities for personal growth and development (e.g. training or retraining opportunities) (see Malinga, 2002 with regard to the need for mid-career training among newsroom staff);
- Support to address personal problems among staff (e.g. by providing day-care for employees' children or helping new employees obtain a mortgage to buy a house) (see Moerdyk, 2003:6; also see Herrick, 2003:87); and
- Employee involvement in decisions that affect their direct working environment (e.g. how work space should be structured, what kitchen and restroom facilities should look like and where it should be located) (see Valoyi *et al.*, 2000:33).

Looking at the South African mainstream media, the majority of data from interviews for Audit 1 and this research study indicate that media enterprises still need to do more to implement the above strategies (see Ley, 2002; More, 2002).

An exception, however, was found at an independent commercial radio station in KwaZulu-Natal included in the research sample for Audit 1. As part of the SABC's unbundling process in the early 1990s, this radio station was sold to private owners. As a result, it was challenged to attract and keep loyal staff members. Station owners and managers subsequently decided to deliberately involve employees in decision making processes. These even included the design and development of a new company building (Kahn, 2002). When the station was sold, employees lost all the benefits they enjoyed while being part of the SABC (e.g. medical aid schemes and pension funds). Owners and management therefore realised that they need to reward and motivate employees (mostly from a younger generation) differently. They subsequently introduced a scheme where all employees (from the news desk to the cleaning staff) have shares in the company. Staff members were also offered a thirteenth cheque,

performance bonus and inclusion into a company grading system that measures productivity. In return, the station witnessed the formation of a committed, involved, productive and cost-effective work force. In addition, staff bought into the vision and mission of the company, with a direct bearing on the quality of output delivered to its shareholders, audiences and owners (see Witepski, 2006:40; also see Kahn, 2002; Steyn & Steyn, 2003:18).

6.2.2.2 *Understanding and addressing business strengths and weaknesses*

To think strategically and address the challenges associated with managing internal stakeholder concerns, managers should understand the strengths and weaknesses of business strategies or structures. Focusing on specific competencies in the enterprise/department will facilitate this process (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:20-21). As such, managers should take cognisance of and aim to effectively address the following aspects (Michelman, 2003:2-3; Ströh, 2001:62-64; Grimm, 2000:34-35):

- Enterprises should take responsibility for employees. If employees experience that they can contribute meaningfully to organisational success, both parties will benefit (see Ali, Khaleque & Hossain, 1992:11). To achieve this, enterprises should identify and address strengths and weaknesses in business strategies and approaches. If businesses, for instance, experience that top-down management approaches leave employees demotivated and disloyal, they should consider adopting more participative management styles. Within the context of this study, this could apply to "traditional" news enterprises such as newspapers. These enterprises can learn from the success of other enterprises (e.g. independent radio stations) which successfully take responsibility for employees. These media titles experience the benefits of increased staff loyalty, motivation and productivity (see Steyn & Steyn, 2003:18);
- Enterprises should think more strategically about appointing or promoting managers. As Grimm (2000:34) points out, "people don't leave companies. They leave bad bosses". In an attempt to prevent this, enterprises should identify

potential weaknesses in human resources policies and address these to benefit the enterprise and its employees. One such initiative is to equip managers with the necessary training, skills and support to achieve their full management potential. As such, Burton (2001:17) describes training and development as “the critical link between the vision, goals, measures and improved performance of an enterprise”. However, she also states that South African companies lag behind their international counterparts when it comes to investing in proper training and development. Whereas overseas companies spend between 6 and 10% of their payroll on this aspect of employee development, South African companies only spend about 1% (on average). While they could reclaim this payment from the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) by investing in staff training, many do not utilise the opportunity. Small and inexperienced newsrooms also make it more difficult for media enterprises to send employees on skills improvement programmes (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:35). With this in mind, the role of newsroom mentoring, coaching and peer group support should not be underestimated (see Fedler, 2002:173; Peters, 1999:48; also see section 9.2.4.1). Given the impact of high staff turnover and juniorisation on South African media enterprises, this issue seems particularly important;

- Enterprises should adjust business structures and policies that employees are given a “piece of the action”. It was discussed in section 6.2.2.1 that involving staff in decision-making and other forms of strategic thinking is beneficial to both employees and enterprises (also see Valoyi *et al.*, 2000:33). This initiative communicates to them that the enterprise values their contribution. It will also give them a sense of achievement to see how their input contributes to organisational success (see Kim, 2002:231). Enterprises should thus equip employees with skills to understand organisational goals and objectives. Moreover, employees should understand how different departments/sections support each other (micro view) and where the enterprise fits into the broader environment (macro view) (Richardson, 1985:38).

A newsroom study by Peters (1999:16) found that first-line news managers consider “the chance ... to effect change” and the ability to shape the news agenda most appealing about their jobs. On the contrary, the same study found that a lack of vision among news managers was one of the biggest weaknesses preventing them from effectively doing their jobs (Peters, 1999:20). However, news managers themselves seemed oblivious about this shortcoming. They indicated that vision and insight into strategic activities should come from managers on higher organisational levels (also see Ford, 1996:5).

As Ali *et al.* (1992:11) point out, however, staff involvement in strategic thinking is often most difficult in developing countries. In these countries, management is characterised by centralisation of authority and control. Low educational levels often prevent employees from understanding the participative nature of these initiatives. This aspect need not be a problem in the South African mainstream media context. Data collected for this research study show that the majority of first-line news managers and reporters are well-educated and have tertiary qualifications (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:30; also see sections 1.7.4.1 and 1.7.4.2); and

- Given the characteristics of modern-day employees outlined in section 6.2.2.1, enterprises should also address strengths and weaknesses presented by conditions of employment and growth opportunities. Modern-day employees’ needs and expectations necessitate that conditions of employment are as flexible as possible (given the parameters of organisational goals and objectives). Enterprises should also allow for as many growth and development opportunities as possible (see Burton, 2001:15). This is especially important given the trend described in section 6.2.2.1 that staff easily leave employers for “greener pastures” if they are not satisfied with their conditions of employment. As was discussed in section 6.2.2.1, needs and expectations do not only relate to financial aspects, but increasingly also other conditions of employment (see Rankin, 1986:32).

6.2.2.3 *Understanding organisational competencies and culture*

To a certain extent, the above dimensions of the strategic action competency can be linked to two aspects inherent to any enterprise. These are organisational competencies and organisational culture.

6.2.2.3.1 *Organisational competencies*

Küng-Shankleman (2000:21) defines organisational competencies as “distinctive organisational attributes that create sustainable competitive advantage and, critically, a platform for future growth”. As such, managers should understand which organisational attributes give them a competitive advantage over their competition. If these competencies are known, managers should utilise it to the benefit of their enterprise. However, if this is not the case, enterprises and their decision making staff should:

- Look towards identifying and implementing individual skills and technical infrastructure available throughout the enterprise and which could present a competitive advantage. These are aspects lacking among or difficult for them to duplicate. In the South African media environment, managers and decision makers at the SABC should, for instance, realise the unique opportunity of combining radio and television infrastructure and expertise on a national basis (see section 6.2.1.2). This provides the corporation with a competitive advantage over other broadcasters who mainly operate on a regional basis (such as independent radio stations with a regional focus). Moreover, it gives also gives the SABC a competitive advantage over competitors who only have the expertise and infrastructure to broadcast radio or television programs on a national basis (e.g. independent television channels);
- Strive to coordinate organisational competencies throughout the enterprise. With regard to the above example, the SABC faces an important challenge. The current organisational structure with a head office in Johannesburg and regional

offices throughout the country makes it difficult for the corporation to properly communicate and coordinate activities, policies and skills (see sections 4.3.1 and 5.3.3.3). Again, the corporation should identify and focus on the competitive advantage this structure presents, instead of seeing it as a inhibiting factor (as is currently the case among many employees) (see the discussion in sections 5.4.4.2 and 5.4.4.4);

- Create a meaningful distinction regarding these competencies in the minds of internal and external stakeholders. With reference to the above example, the SABC should clearly communicate the advantages presented by national infrastructure, staff representation and related possibilities to staff. For instance, regional staff should realise the benefits to the SABC if regional offices provide different news angles on a news story. In this process, the interests of different communities are portrayed. Because its competition is not represented in all these communities, the SABC has a competitive advantage. Moreover, the corporation should clearly communicate this competitive advantage to regional and national audiences; and
- Indicate to internal and external stakeholders how these competencies could benefit them. For instance, these competencies enable staff members to develop technical skills needed to “file a news story” for both television and radio. Audiences, on the other hand, will benefit from receiving a wider variety of perspectives on a news story.

6.2.2.3.2 *Organisational culture*

Organisational competencies often extend back to the enterprise’s founding mission. As a result, these are closely linked to the organisational culture. According to Rankin (1986:25) organisational culture refers to “the rites and rituals of (organisational) life” or as “a system of shared values (what is important) and beliefs (how things work)”. Redmond (2006:130) expands on this view by referring to the role of organisational culture in times of change. As such, he states that organisational culture is:

basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems ... (and) which have worked well enough to be considered valid ... (This is) ... therefore ... taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Moving closer to the context of this study, Singer (2004:846) describes newsroom culture as “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices” that characterises the newsroom environment. For reporters, specifically, these refer to “professional values of expertise, ethics, public service, and autonomy, plus work routines that foster those values” (Singer, 2004:846).

According to Arumugam (2001:25) managers should be well versed in both forms of organisational culture, namely:

- Formal organisational culture reflected in written policies and guidelines. Within a newsroom context these include news angles on stories; legal and ethical elements relevant to news coverage; as well as policies guiding staff on whether to accept gifts from external stakeholders while covering a news story. Media enterprises’ news policies also form an important instrument that captures formal newsroom culture and conduct.

Interviewees who participated in this study highlighted a lack of formal news policies at many media enterprises (or newsrooms). In cases where news policies were in place, interviewees again expressed different views. Some described having formal news policies which news managers apply diligently. An interviewee at an independent radio station outlined their policy to provide new staff members with a copy of the policy when they join the station. These staff members are expected to work through the policy and implement it within a month. Other interviewees, however, described that the news policy either forms part of an ethical code of conduct or that it is unwritten. In one interviewee’s words: “journalism is a craft and is not determined by a formula. It should

therefore give people space to be creative. Formal news policies could hamper this creativity”.

The latter could be a negative trend in South African newsrooms, especially given high staff turnover rates and inexperienced newsroom staff. It could also make life more difficult for news managers (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:69). The extent to which these aspects influence newsroom management is discussed in section 6.3.1.5; and

- Informal organisational culture. This includes “unwritten” organisational rules related to dress code, organisational etiquette and taboos (see Singer, 2004:846; Peters, 2004:37).

For organisational culture to contribute positively to staff morale, it is important that informal and formal cultures match. This also ensures that policies and behaviour align. This was highlighted as a challenge facing many news managers in South Africa. During interviews for Audit 1, interviewees stressed that junior reporters often find it difficult to understand the importance of “unwritten” newsroom policies. These refer to dress code, general courtesy when dealing with sources or punctuality (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:52).

Leadership styles and management approaches are important instruments to establish and reinforce organisational culture (e.g. see Odendaal & Roodt, 1998:15; Visser, Roodt & Schepers, 1997:43). Within a broader organisational context, the role of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) becomes especially important. Porter *et al.* (2004:72) describe this role as “setting and communicating strategy, putting sound processes in place, selecting and monitoring key people ..., (setting) the tone and (defining) the organisational culture and values”.

Focusing on media enterprises specifically, Quinn (2002:25) states that newsroom culture is “heavily influenced by the people in charge”. Literature reveals that news

managers should be well aware of and experienced in the organisational culture of their media enterprises. This is especially important because “media organisations tend to be highly developed cultures with distinctive codes of behaviour” (Redmond, 2006:129). News managers should also be informed of the changes in organisational culture and adjust their management approaches accordingly. In the past, many enterprises (also in the media) considered it “appropriate, even beneficial” to control workers with fear (Burton, 2001:14). However, Burton (2001:14) states that it is now “generally regarded as old-fashioned”. Moreover, Odendaal and Roodt (1998:15) state that the change in social norms and attitudes (specifically in South Africa) rules out traditional autocratic management styles.

Organisational culture (and more specifically newsroom culture and newsroom policy) is said to play a role in the extent to which employees participate in strategic activities. It also determines their level of job satisfaction (Chang, 2004:6,16). As a result, news managers should grasp the challenges and opportunities presented by specific newsroom and organisational cultures.

6.2.3 Taking strategic action

The final dimension of strategic action as a managerial competency involves that managers implement operational plans translated from strategic plans devised during strategic thinking processes.¹⁸ As such, Kennedy (2002:9) refers to management expert Igor Ansoff's premise that managers should determine departmental goals and objectives and the extent to which departmental activities and products should be diversified. These elements assist the enterprise to develop and exploit its current market position.

¹⁸ Experts in strategic thinking would argue that strategic action entails the entire process of strategic planning and implementation (e.g. see Lussier, 2003:132; DuBrin, 2003:112). However, for the purposes of this study, taking strategic action implies that first-line news managers translate strategic and tactical plans into operational plans relevant for their specific department/section. This is done against the background of their knowledge about the industry and enterprise in which they work (see Hellriegel *et al.* 2005:22).

In this process, Campbell (2000:54) highlights the importance of cooperation across organisational divisions. This requires management to have knowledge and insight into the strategies and policies of different organisational departments. This interaction enables managers to devise and execute plans beneficial to the enterprise as a whole, and not only to the specific department (see Smolkin, 2004:30). With regard to newsroom management, news managers require sufficient insight into the activities of other media departments such as marketing, circulation and advertising. This equips them to balance the demands of informing audiences in a fair and balanced manner, while simultaneously cooperating to achieve organisational goals (Underwood, 1995:33).

Within the context of newsroom management in South Africa, it seems as if this issue still needs to be addressed. As such, a number of interviewees who participated in this research pointed out that their newsrooms often operate as “islands” in the broader media enterprise. More deliberate efforts are thus needed to integrate newsrooms with the rest of the enterprise in terms of activity, policy making and decision making.

Apart from aligning departmental strategies and policies, managers should also ensure that their decisions are coordinated with the enterprise's overall vision, mission and goals. On the one hand, this will ensure that organisational objectives are met. It will, however, simultaneously ensure that resources are allocated and utilised as effectively and efficiently as possible (Daft, 2003:247; Lussier, 2003:152). If employees are involved in this process, they will feel motivated to contribute to organisational success (see section 6.2.2.1). They will not only understand how they fit into organisational goals and objectives, but also how their skills and competencies can contribute to achieve these (Burton, 2001:14; also see section 7.3.1.1).

As such, Kennedy (2002:10) describes objectives as tools to measure performance and control resource utilisation. It furthermore enables managers to pro-actively identify challenges that could derail organisational success if not managed successfully (Peters, 2004:31). This is especially important in times of organisational change (Kennedy,

2002:12). Effective objectives should be so clear and specific that management and employees know exactly what is expected of them and how well they perform in this respect (Ströh, 2001:64). If not, staff members rely on the organisational grapevine to keep them informed of their objectives and performance. A number of interviewees who participated in this research study expressed the negative impact this has on newsroom activity.

Despite the above and management efforts to the contrary, many interviewees for this study complained about the difficulty they have to get employees involved in the above process. As such, interviewees at the SABC described efforts by top management to make the strategic thinking process as inclusive as possible. However, staff often fail to buy into this process. Interviewees at larger media enterprises, on the other hand, stated that staff are not necessarily able to recite the enterprise's vision, mission and goals. However, they are well aware of policies and strategies applicable to their specific newsrooms. This was especially the case at media enterprises with international interests and activities. As one interviewee indicated: "larger organisational activities are far removed from people's daily lives".

The importance of clearly communicating organisational goals and objectives to external stakeholders was specifically underlined during interviews for Audit 1. For instance, an editor at an on-line media title expressed her view that such a policy enables external stakeholders to question issues, policies and programmes they do not agree with. She was also of the opinion that such a culture will ultimately contribute towards reaching strategic and other organisational goals, while increasing accuracy in news output and strengthening news enterprises' credibility (Gallet, 2002).

The previous sections of this chapter outlined the dimensions of strategic action as a managerial competency. The discussion subsequently focuses on research results pertaining to this managerial competency. As such, elements regarding the importance and implementation of the strategic action competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms are outlined. These results specifically delineate the importance

reporters and first-line news managers attach to this competency. This is compared with the perception each of these respondent groups has about first-line news managers' current implementation of management tasks related to this competency.

6.3 Results – the importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 display quantitative results on the following issues:

- The difference between the importance first-line news managers attach to each of the management tasks related to strategic action as a managerial competency and their view on how they currently implement these tasks. This is compared with the difference between the importance reporters attach to each of these management tasks and their experience of first-line news managers' current implementation thereof; and
- The difference between first-line news managers' perspective of how they implement the management task described and reporters' experience thereof.

The aggregate effect size of strategic action as a managerial competency (without dividing it into different management tasks) shows that:

- First-line news managers indicated a practically significant difference ($d=0.81$) between the importance they attach to this competency and their current implementation thereof; while
- Reporters only indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.59$) between the importance they attach to this competency and their view on how first-line news managers currently implement it.

This implies that first-line news managers experience a bigger gap between the importance they attach to this competency and their current implementation thereof. They thus acknowledge that they need to improve their skills related to this management

competency, given the importance they attach to it. Reporters, however, only experience a moderately significant gap with regard to current implementation, given the importance they attach to it.

If media enterprises want to effectively and efficiently reach organisational goals and objectives (e.g. to survive, gain market share and improve competitiveness), management skills on this area should be improved. Media enterprises cannot consider first-line news managers too low on the organisational hierarchy to involve them in strategic thinking processes.

6.3.1 The importance of management tasks related to strategic action as a managerial competency compared to the implementation thereof

Table 6.1 outlines the following with regard to each management task related to strategic action as a managerial competency.

6.3.1.1 Monitoring changes in the department/section

Reporters ($n=166$) seem slightly more aware than first-line news managers ($n=66$) of the gap between the importance they attach to this management task and the current implementation thereof. First-line news managers, however, consider this management task more important ($x_1=4.44$) than reporters ($x_1=4.17$). Despite this, they indicated a smaller effect size ($d=0.64$) than reporters ($d=0.65$).

Table 6.1: Comparing the importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Strategic action as a managerial competency									
Management task	First-line news managers				Reporters				
	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	
13.3.1 Monitoring changes in the department/section	66	0.57	0.90	0.64	166	0.92	1.41	0.65	
13.3.2 Monitoring changes in the media enterprise	62	0.74	1.44	0.65	161	0.69	1.47	0.47	
13.3.3 Monitoring changes in the media environment	65	0.74	1.14	0.65	165	0.78	1.44	0.54	
13.3.4 Monitoring changes in the broader South African context	63	0.70	1.00	0.71	164	0.73	1.45	0.51	
13.3.5 Monitoring changes in the international context	60	0.62	1.09	0.57	159	0.52	1.45	0.36	
13.3.6 Knowing the national news agenda	68	0.31	0.72	0.43	171	0.47	1.16	0.41	
13.3.7 Knowing the international news agenda	63	0.33	0.80	0.42	169	0.46	1.23	0.38	
13.3.8 Playing a role in setting the news agenda	64	0.64	1.10	0.58	167	0.55	1.47	0.37	
13.3.9 Knowing the enterprise's news policy	67	0.49	0.98	0.51	169	0.46	1.25	0.37	
13.3.10 Implementing the enterprise's news policy	67	0.52	0.88	0.60	171	0.40	1.37	0.29	
13.3.11 Being informed on the activities of other media enterprises	68	0.53	1.07	0.50	170	0.54	1.25	0.43	
13.3.12 Being informed on the activities of strategic partners	60	0.83	1.24	0.67	164	0.60	1.35	0.44	
13.3.13 Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders	65	0.68	0.97	0.70	169	1.11	1.62	0.68	
13.3.14 Understanding the concerns of external stakeholders	67	0.66	1.23	0.54	161	0.61	1.44	0.42	
13.3.15 Knowing the enterprise's vision, mission and goals	70	0.66	1.01	0.65	167	0.48	1.22	0.39	
13.3.16 Making decisions in line with organisational vision and mission	68	0.56	1.06	0.53	170	0.47	1.35	0.35	
13.3.17 Ensuring that operational goals support organisational strategy	64	0.63	1.12	0.56	164	0.39	1.32	0.30	
13.3.18 Realising organisational goals	65	0.63	0.99	0.64	167	0.39	1.32	0.30	
13.3.19 Developing human resources	65	1.05	1.18	0.89	171	0.95	1.58	0.60	
13.3.20 Understanding nature of news product vis-à-vis target audience	68	0.47	0.94	0.50	171	0.73	1.18	0.61	

6.3.1.2 *Monitoring changes in the media enterprise*

First-line news managers (n=62) also seem more aware than reporters (n=161) of the difference between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof. First-line news managers again perceive this management task more important ($x_1=4.13$) than reporters ($x_1=4.01$). Given this importance, both groups highlighted a moderately significant effect size with regard to managers' current implementation of this task ($d=0.65$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.47$ for reporters).

6.3.1.3 *Monitoring changes in the media environment*

First-line news managers (n=65) consider this management task more important ($x_1=4.21$) more important than reporters (n=165; $x_1=4.16$). They also experience a bigger practically significant difference between the importance they attach to it and their current implementation thereof ($d=0.65$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.54$ for reporters).

6.3.1.4 *Monitoring changes in the broader South African context*

As was the case above, first-line news managers (n=63) consider it more important ($x_1=4.19$) than reporters (n=164; $x_1=4.14$) to monitor changes in the broader South African context. Given the importance they attach to it, first-line news managers indicated a much higher moderately significant effect size ($d=0.71$) than reporters did ($d=0.51$). First-line news managers are therefore more aware than reporters that they do not implement this management task as they are supposed to.

6.3.1.5 *Monitoring changes in the international context*

In contrast with the previous management tasks, first-line news managers (n=60) consider it less important ($x_1=3.77$) than reporters (n=159) to monitor changes in the

international context ($x_1=3.86$). In fact, they consider this management task the least important of all management tasks related to monitoring change in the different contexts described. Nevertheless, they experience a moderately significant difference ($d=0.57$) between the importance they attach to it and their current implementation thereof. Reporters, on the other hand, highlighted no practically significant difference on this issue ($d=0.36$).

The results pertaining to first-line news managers' ability to monitor change in the different media contexts indicate that they are very aware of their shortcomings in this area. The finding that first-line news managers consider it most important to monitor changes in their department/section (see section 6.3.1.1) is encouraging. This indicates that they realise the importance of monitoring changes which could affect their immediate working environment and conditions. This is also a positive finding for reporters, as they consider it most important for managers to monitor newsroom changes (see section 6.3.1.1). This finding is also in line with theoretical aspects outlined in section 6.2.2.1.

A positive aspect related to the results described in sections 6.3.1.1-6.3.1.5 is that first-line news manager respondents are aware of the importance to monitor changes in order to anticipate subsequent opportunities and threats. As such, both respondent groups regard it more important to monitor changes in the national and local contexts (see sections 6.3.1.3 and 6.3.1.4) than in the international context (see section 6.3.1.5). As a result, one could argue that they are more focused on addressing the needs and expectations of their target audience (South African communities in different areas of the country). Their main objective is thus to reach these audiences with an informed message on events occurring in their immediate and national environments rather than focusing on international events that could have a less immediate impact on their lives.

This can also be linked to the discussion on planning and administration as a managerial competency and the results outlined in section 5.4.1. A lack of skills among first-line news managers to properly monitor changes in the different organisational

contexts, could leave them unaware of the opportunities or challenges these changes present. This does specifically relates to:

- Internal changes (i.e. staff turnover);
- Changes in the media enterprise (e.g. change of ownership with subsequent changes in operational activities);
- Changes in the media environment (specifically brought about by technological developments which might severely impact on traditional media);
- Changes in the broader South African environment (e.g. changed legislation with regard to licensing, privatisation of media); and
- Changes in the international context (e.g. activities of multinational companies which might affect the South African media industry).

Given the increasingly competitive environment in which media enterprises operate, first-line news managers should ensure that they are informed of these issues in order to strategically position their media enterprises.

6.3.1.6 *Playing a role in setting the news agenda*

Neither first-line news managers ($n=68$) nor reporters ($n=171$) experience a gap between the importance of knowing the national news agenda and the former group's ability to do so. The same applies to their ability to know the international news agenda. However, first-line news managers ($n=64$) experience a moderately significant difference ($d=0.58$) between the importance of and their current ability to set the news agenda. Reporters ($n=167$) seem unaware of this difference, as they indicated a practical insignificant difference ($d=0.37$) between the importance and first-line news managers' ability to perform this management task.

First-line news managers thus experience that their role in setting the news agenda is overshadowed by other (more important) issues. These could relate to:

- Owners' financial agenda to mostly focus on news events that benefit circulation/audience figures and subsequently sales;
- Audience agendas, resulting in attention being focused on news stories which have higher news value to audiences; or possibly even
- A political agenda requiring them to focus on specific news events rather than others which could portray certain political role players in a negative light.

Interviewees who participated in the study highlighted the influence of these agendas on setting the news agenda for different media titles.

6.3.1.7 *Knowing the news enterprise's news policy and implementing it*

First-line news managers (n=67) also highlighted a moderately significant difference (d=0.51) between the importance they attach to and their current knowledge of the enterprise's news policy. Moreover, they experience a moderately significant difference (d=0.60) between the importance they attach to implementing this policy and their ability to do it. Reporters (n=169 and n=171), on the other hand, seem unaware of this gap. As such, they highlighted no practical significant difference (d=0.37 and d=0.29) between the importance of these management tasks and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof.

First-line news managers' response to these issues could be a "plea" for media enterprises to formalise their news policies and prevent misunderstanding on editorial issues. Reporters' response to these issues might display their own ignorance that first-line news managers do not properly know about or implement these policies.

This finding is in line with qualitative data obtained during interviews (see section 6.2.2.3).

6.3.1.8 *Being informed about the activities of other media enterprises and strategic partners*

First-line news managers ($n=68$ and $n=60$) also indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to these management tasks and their current knowledge about the activities of other media enterprises ($d=0.50$) as well as strategic partners ($d=0.67$). Again reporters ($n=170$ and $n=164$) experience no practically significant gaps on the implementation of these issues given the importance they attach to it ($d=0.43$ and $d=0.44$ respectively). Interestingly enough, both groups considered it equally important for first-line news managers to be knowledgeable on the activities of other media enterprises ($x_1=4.18$ for reporters and $x_1=4.17$ for first-line news managers). Reporters, however, considered it more important ($x_1=4.05$) than first-line news managers ($x_1=3.93$) for the latter to be knowledgeable about the activities of strategic partners.

The role of competition and the trend to form strategic alliances was discussed in section 6.2.1. This necessitates that first-line news managers are aware of the activities and performance of both competitors and strategic partners. Given different management levels (and the concomitant roles of each) it is true that first-line news managers do not necessarily play a key role to position their enterprises in the market. This would traditionally be the role of middle and top management. Nevertheless, given the trend to more inclusive management frameworks and approaches, first-line news managers can play a meaningful role in these decisions.

Some interviewees who participated in the research confirmed that first-line news managers are not always aware of issues such as the circulation figures of other media titles. They are, however, well aware of their own titles' circulation figures, products and publications. This indicates that their main concern remains their own news product and how they can align this against their competition. At on-line media titles, however, a deliberate effort was witnessed to regularly inform staff on the performance of their competition. Efforts were also witnessed to inform staff on the financial performance of

their own site. Interviewees at these sites emphasised the importance of this exercise *vis-à-vis* other editorial newsroom functions.

6.3.1.9 *Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders*

First-line news managers (n=65) highlighted a moderately significant difference (d=0.70) between the importance they attach to and their current understanding of internal stakeholder concerns. Reporters (n=169) also experience a moderately significant difference (d=0.68) between the importance they attach to managers' understanding of internal stakeholder concerns and their current ability to do so. Interestingly, first-line news managers ($x_1=4.41$) consider this management task more important than reporters ($x_1=4.25$).

These effect sizes outline an acknowledgement on the part of first-line news managers that they are less able to understand internal stakeholder concerns than external ones (see section 6.3.1.10 below). They thus admit a need to improve their understanding of staff members' concerns. Given the discussion in section 6.2.2.1, this issue needs to be addressed. Improvement in this area could enable first-line news managers to better serve the needs and expectations of their staff. Interviewees at, for instance independent radio stations, seem highly aware of this need. They indicated how knowledge of staff needs and expectations benefits the enterprise on a number of areas. These include increased motivation, commitment and loyalty to the company (also see section 6.2.2.1).

6.3.1.10 *Understanding the concerns of external stakeholders*

First-line news managers (n=67) indicated a moderately significant difference (d=0.54) between the importance and their ability to understand the concerns of external stakeholders. Reporters (n=161), on the other hand, indicated no practical significant difference on this issue (d=0.42).

Some interviewees described measures through which media enterprises strive to address the needs and expectations of audiences. They also underlined that audiences are considered their most important external stakeholders. This necessitates the media to remain accurate, credible and trustworthy in the eyes of their audience. However, media enterprises need staff to buy into this approach. The interviewee at an independent television channel outlined their strategy to achieve this. As such, specific knowledge of the station's audience provides all staff (i.e. reporters, managers and technical crew) with knowledge on what appeals to audience members. All strategic activities, decisions and efforts are subsequently aligned to achieve this. The interviewee described the benefits the channel already enjoys in the form of increased staff loyalty and commitment, as well as increased audience numbers (also see section 6.3.1.16).

6.3.1.11 Knowing the media enterprise's vision, mission and goals

Both first-line news managers ($n=70$) and reporters ($n=167$) consider it important to know the media enterprise's vision, mission and goals. First-line news managers consider this management task slightly more important ($x_1=4.31$) than reporters ($x_1=4.29$). A number of interviewees also underlined the efforts made by their media enterprises to clearly communicate these aspects to all employees. Despite this, first-line news managers indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.65$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their current awareness thereof. Reporters, on the other hand, seem less aware of this shortcoming. They highlighted no practical significant difference between the importance they attach to this management task and their experience of how well first-line news managers implement it ($d=0.39$).

Despite many efforts, the above results seem to confirm some interviewees' perspective that staff often know little about the media enterprises' overall vision, mission and goals. This became especially evident at, for instance, broadcast media or print publications with regional offices (also see section 6.2.2.3.1). In spite of formal and informal efforts to inform staff (see section 4.3.1) interviewees stated that many staff members remain

ignorant about these issues. This results in an inability to align individual and organisational goals accordingly (see section 6.3.1.2). Apart from this, managers can also become demotivated if they lack clarity on individual and organisational expectations and the extent to which they live up to these.

6.3.1.12 Making decisions in line with the organisational vision and mission

The above shortcoming also hampers first-line news managers' ability to align decisions to the organisational vision and mission. Both groups of respondents regard this management task important. As such first-line news managers ($n=68$) consider it slightly less important ($x_1=4.14$) than reporters ($n=170$; $x_1=4.16$). However, they seem more aware of their inability to implement this task accordingly. Given this, first-line news managers indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.53$) between the importance and their current implementation of this management task. Reporters seem less aware that first-line news managers struggle with this issue. They highlighted no practically significant difference ($d=0.35$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their experience of managers' implementation thereof.

6.3.1.13 Ensuring that operational goals support organisational strategy

Given the above, first-line news managers ($n=64$) also indicated that they find it difficult to align operational goals to support the organisational strategy, despite the importance they attach to it ($d=0.56$). Reporters ($n=164$) again seem unaware of this shortcoming, as they indicated no practically significant gap ($d=0.30$) between the importance they attach to this task and managers' current implementation thereof.

6.3.1.14 Realising organisational goals

Flowing from the above, first-line news managers ($n=65$) seem uncertain about the role they play in realising organisational goals. As a result, they highlighted a moderately significant difference ($d=0.64$) between the importance they attach to this management

task and their current implementation thereof. As was the case with the previous two management tasks described, reporters ($n=167$) again seem unaware of first-line news managers' struggle in this area. They subsequently highlighted no practical significant difference ($d=0.30$) between the importance and implementation of this task.

As was discussed in section 6.2.3, the final dimension of the strategic action competency requires that managers align operational goals to organisational goals and objectives. This can only be done successfully if managers are cognisant of and successful in implementing the management tasks outlined in sections 6.3.1.11-6.3.1.14. If this is not the case, managers can not be expected to effectively take strategic action. The results that reporters seem satisfied with first-line news managers' current implementation of these tasks could indicate their own ignorance on the importance of these issues. It could also highlight a perception that these tasks are something beyond the scope of their organisational activities. Given the trend to involve more people in strategic activities, this situation should be rectified. Such a step will not only benefit the enterprise, but also individual newsrooms and staff members working in those newsrooms.

6.3.1.15 *Developing human resources*

Quantitative data collected with regard to the attitudes first-line news managers and reporters have about different aspects of their working environment highlighted a general negative attitude about human resource development (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:45). Results on the implementation of this management task (given the importance attached to it) confirm this sentiment. First-line news managers ($n=65$) consider this management task slightly more important ($x_1=4.25$) than reporters ($n=171$; $x_1=4.19$). As a result, first-line news managers indicated a practically significant difference ($d=0.89$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof. Reporters support this perspective and indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.60$) between the importance and current implementation thereof.

Given the importance both groups attach to this task, the current perceptions should be addressed. This is even more important given the role internal stakeholders play in modern-day enterprises (see section 6.2.2.1). Failure to properly develop human resources could leave first-line news managers frustrated, as reporters might experience that the media enterprise does not consider them important enough to develop their capabilities. This, in turn, might leave them demotivated and disloyal or might result in them leaving the enterprise for better employment opportunities elsewhere.

6.3.1.16 Understanding the nature of the news product vis-à-vis the target audience

Both first-line news managers ($n=68$) and reporters ($n=171$) indicated that they regard this management task very important. In fact, they rated it among the most important management tasks related to strategic action ($x_1=4.52$ for first-line news managers and $x_1=4.45$ for reporters). Given this, both first-line news managers ($d=0.50$) and reporters ($d=0.61$) indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to this task and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof.

This finding can be linked to the earlier result (see section 6.3.1.10) that first-line news managers lack insight into external stakeholder concerns. Given the increasingly competitive media environment, they should make a deliberate effort to understand their target audience, know what their needs and concerns are and how the news product can address these.

A number of interviewees described strategies to rectify this situation:

- Radio stations deliberately invite listeners to call in, host politicians on talk shows who might address listeners' questions and concerns, and openly invite positive and negative feedback. These initiatives are all aimed at aligning their news product with audience needs and expectations;

- Other radio stations have the benefit that they primarily employ staff who live or grew up in communities that form part of their target audience. Their knowledge of the community enables them to choose news angles or news stories relevant to their needs and interests;
- On-line media implement a system of feedback and opinion polls encouraging audience members to raise their opinion on an issue published on the site. Given the immediacy of this media type, feedback and comments are almost instant. These enable them to rectify cases where their news products do not align with the needs of their target audience; and
- An independent television channel developed their organisational strategy around a fictitious audience member who displays the characteristics of their target market (also see section 6.3.1.10). The channel introduced this “audience member” to all staff members during a workshop. Staff thus know who/what to focus on in order to achieve the channel’s goals and objectives. As the interviewee put it: “all staff members became compliant” to the strategic plan they developed. From then onwards, the channel aims to improve their understanding of their audience and shapes its editorial policy and strategic plan around this focus.

Table 6.2: Comparing the implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Management task	First-line news managers			Reporters			Effect size (d)
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	
Monitoring changes in the department	70	3.84	0.83	182	3.37	1.19	0.39
Monitoring changes in the enterprise	66	3.41	1.05	179	3.39	1.20	0.02
Monitoring changes in the media context	70	3.51	1.05	183	3.42	1.24	0.08
Monitoring changes in the SA context	68	3.57	1.00	179	3.48	1.21	0.08
Monitoring changes in international context	65	3.20	1.14	176	3.40	1.21	0.17
Knowing the national news agenda	73	4.29	0.70	188	3.97	1.11	0.29
Knowing the international news agenda	68	4.03	0.79	189	3.75	1.18	0.24
Playing a role in setting the news agenda	70	3.43	1.12	182	3.67	1.22	0.20
Knowing the enterprise's news policy	72	4.10	0.92	187	3.89	1.07	0.20
Implementing the news policy	73	4.07	0.96	188	3.81	1.11	0.23
Being Informed on activities of other media	73	3.63	1.03	188	3.65	1.15	0.02
Being Informed on activities of strategic partners	67	3.18	1.09	180	3.47	1.18	0.24
Understanding internal stakeholders	70	3.73	1.02	186	3.20	1.28	0.41
Understanding external stakeholders	72	3.43	1.07	180	3.49	1.15	0.05
Knowing organisational vision, mission, etc.	75	3.63	1.18	185	3.81	1.14	0.15
Making decisions within this vision etc.	73	3.62	1.10	185	3.67	1.14	0.04
Goals support organisational strategy	69	3.44	1.14	182	3.65	1.07	0.19
Realising organisational goals	71	3.49	1.07	183	3.66	1.14	0.14
Developing human resources	70	3.24	1.15	186	3.26	1.26	0.02
Understanding product vis-à-vis audience	73	4.11	0.81	187	3.74	1.14	0.32

6.3.2 Implementation of management tasks related to strategic action as a managerial competency

In contrast with the implementation of previous managerial competencies (see Tables 4.2 and 5.2) neither group of respondents perceive first-line news managers to be better implementers of management tasks related to the strategic action competency. In some areas, reporters perceive first-line news managers better implementers than managers perceive themselves. In other areas, the opposite was found. On average, however, first-line news managers consider themselves slightly better at implementing these tasks ($x_2=3.65$) than reporters experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.59$). Over and above this, results in Table 6.2 highlight no area displaying a moderate or significant difference between managers' view of implementing the management task and reporters' experience thereof.

6.3.3 Comparing the importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency across media types

In order to obtain a more detailed view of the importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among reporters and first-line news managers across media types.

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 highlight the following results.

Table 6.3: Importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of reporters

Media type	Reporters									
	Importance – Strategic action									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	42	4.06	0.68		0.04	0.19	0.57	0.09	0.34	0.41
Weekly newspaper	50	4.10	1.00			0.09	0.35	0.02	0.20	0.24
Magazine	9	4.20	0.64				0.40	0.10	0.15	0.23
Television	17	4.45	0.61					0.46	0.22	0.17
Radio	44	4.13	0.70						0.24	0.31
On-line media	10	4.30	0.69							0.07
News agency	8	4.34	0.50							
Media type	Implementation – Strategic action									
	Effect size (d)									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	46	3.64	0.76		0.31	0.07	0.26	0.05	0.26	0.44
Weekly newspaper	52	3.28	1.14			0.37	0.09	0.35	0.49	0.65
Magazine	9	3.71	1.04				0.31	0.02	0.13	0.30
Television	19	3.39	0.97					0.31	0.47	0.65
Radio	49	3.68	0.89						0.17	0.38
On-line media	11	3.84	0.50							0.21
News agency	8	4.02	0.86							

Table 6.4: Importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media type	First-line news managers									
	Importance – Strategic action									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	25	4.24	0.81		0.05	0.55	0.23	0.59	0.05	0.30
Weekly newspaper	21	4.20	0.75			0.51	0.19	0.70	0.00	0.26
Magazine	2	3.80	0.78				0.14	1.19	0.51	0.26
Television	3	3.97	1.20					0.63	0.19	0.03
Radio	8	4.72	0.42						1.06	0.94
On-line media	8	4.20	0.49							0.26
News agency	5	4.00	0.76							
Media type	Implementation – Strategic action									
	Effect size (d)									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	26	3.77	0.70		0.26	1.70	0.48	0.35	0.59	0.40
Weekly newspaper	21	3.58	0.65			1.56	0.24	0.67	0.36	0.27
Magazine	2	2.58	0.18				2.27	2.30	1.82	0.44
Television	3	3.43	0.38					0.94	0.18	0.16
Radio	11	4.02	0.63						1.06	0.57
On-line media	8	3.35	0.43							0.11
News agency	5	3.20	1.43							

6.3.3.1 Importance of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- A moderately significant difference (d=0.57) was calculated between the importance reporters at daily newspapers (n=42) attach to strategic action as a managerial competency compared to colleagues at television channels (n=17).

The latter group considers this managerial competency more important ($x_1=4.45$) than the former ($x_1=4.06$). Given this, top management and owners at daily newspapers should ensure that reporters are involved in strategic action activities as much as possible. This will contribute to keep them motivated and give more meaning to their daily work-related activities; and

- Reporters at television channels ($n=17$) consider strategic action more important ($x_1=4.45$) than their colleagues at radio stations ($n=44$) ($x_1=4.13$). Subsequently, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.46$) on the importance of this competency exists between reporters at these two media types. This finding could indicate a need for more strategic planning in television newsrooms, resulting in reporters considering it more important.

6.3.3.2 *Implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- Reporters at different media types indicated a moderately significant difference on the implementation of strategic action. A moderately significant difference was calculated between reporters at weekly newspapers ($n=52$) and those at both on-line media ($n=11$; $d=0.49$) and news agencies ($n=8$; $d=0.65$). Reporters at weekly newspapers also consider their managers worse implementers of this competency ($x_2=3.28$) than peers at on-line media ($x_2=3.84$) and news agencies ($x_2=4.02$). This finding corresponds with qualitative data obtained at these sites. Interviewees at on-line media as well as news agencies outlined how they strive to involve employees from different organisational levels in strategic action activities. These media titles probably both have smaller newsrooms and flatter organisational structures than weekly newspapers. As a result, it is probably easier to implement these initiatives; and
- Television reporters ($n=19$) indicated a moderately significant difference on the implementation of the strategic action competency compared to peers at on-line media ($n=11$; $d=0.47$) and news agencies ($n=8$; $d=0.65$) respectively. The former group again rates their first-line news managers worse at implementing this

competency ($x_2=3.39$) than their counterparts at on-line media ($x_2=3.84$) and news agencies ($x_2=4.02$). This relates to the above result that television reporters regard strategic action more important than those at other media such as weekly newspapers. As a result, they might have higher expectations on how this competency should be implemented. If these expectations are not met, reporters might be left disappointed. Again, this correlates with qualitative data obtained at these sites. Managers at on-line media titles explained their deliberate focus to perform strategic responsibilities as well as possible. One such interviewee underscored that they have little choice in this if these ventures want to survive and prosper.

6.3.3.3 *Importance of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers at radio stations ($n=8$) indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to strategic action compared to the view held by colleagues at daily newspapers ($d=0.59$), weekly newspapers ($d=0.70$) and television stations ($d=0.63$). These managers also indicated a practically significant difference ($d=1.19$) on the importance of this competency compared with the sample of first-line magazine managers ($n=2$). They perceive this competency more important ($x_1=4.72$) than peers at daily newspapers ($n=25$; $x_1=4.24$); weekly newspapers ($n=21$; $x_1=4.20$); magazines ($n=2$; $x_1=3.80$) and television channels ($n=3$; $x_1=3.97$).

When comparing the views of broadcast and print media managers, it could be argued that those at independent radio stations realise the impact proper strategic thinking could have on the survival of their business entities. The possibility exists that first-line news managers at print media (forming part of larger media enterprises) lack this vision. Strategic action activities at these enterprises are most likely limited to higher management levels. As a result, first-line news manager respondents might be unaware of the importance or impact

these activities have on the business ventures' future. The extent to which this perspective differs across ownership structures is outlined in section 6.3.4.3;

- First-line news managers at on-line media ($n=8$) also perceive the strategic action competency much more important ($x_1=4.20$) than their peers at magazines ($n=2$; $x_1=3.80$). As a result, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) was calculated between these groups; and
- Finally, a practically significant difference ($d=1.06$) on the importance of this competency was calculated between first-line news managers at on-line media ($n=8$) and those at radio stations ($n=8$). A practically significant difference ($d=0.94$) was also calculated between first-line news managers at news agencies ($n=5$) and those at radio stations. First-line news managers at radio stations consider strategic action more important ($x_1=4.72$) than their counterparts at on-line media ($x_1=4.20$) and news agencies ($x_1=4.00$).

6.3.3.4 *Implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers at daily newspapers ($n=26$) perceive themselves better implementers of this competency ($x_2=3.77$) than colleagues at magazines ($n=2$; $x_2=2.58$), television channels ($n=3$; $x_2=3.43$) and on-line media ($n=8$; $x_2=3.35$). Magazine managers perceive themselves especially bad implementers of the strategic action competency. One reason for this view could be that all the magazines included in the research sample form part of large media enterprises. As a result, they could experience a lack of opportunity to properly implement their strategic action ideas. Practically significant ($d=1.70$) and moderately significant ($d=0.48$ and $d=0.59$) differences were subsequently calculated between the above media types;
- Similarly, a practically significant difference ($d=1.56$) on the implementation of this competency was calculated between the sample of first-line news managers at magazines ($n=2$) and those at weekly newspapers ($n=21$). Managers at weekly

newspapers again perceive their implementation of this competency better ($x_2=3.58$) than those at magazines ($x_2=2.58$);

- A moderately significant effect size ($d=0.67$) on the implementation of this competency also exists between first-line news managers at weekly newspapers ($n=21$) and those at radio stations ($n=11$). The latter group perceives themselves better implementers of this competency ($x_2=4.02$) than the former ($x_2=3.58$) (also see section 6.3.3.2);
- First-line news managers at radio ($n=11$) and television ($n=3$) regard themselves good implementers of the strategic action competency ($x_2=3.43$ for television and $x_2=4.02$ for radio). As a result, some of the highest practically significant differences were calculated between first-line news managers at these media and those at magazines ($d=2.27$ for television channels and $d=2.30$ for radio stations). This result can also be linked to the perspective among first-line magazine managers ($n=2$) that they are not particularly good at implementing strategic action activities. They also perceive themselves practically significantly worse ($d=1.82$) than their colleagues at on-line media ($n=8$);
- First-line news managers at radio stations ($n=11$) also highlighted a practically significant difference ($d=0.94$) when compared with colleagues at television channels ($n=3$). As a result, they perceive themselves better implementers of this competency ($x_2=4.02$) than peers at television channels ($x_2=3.43$);
- First-line news managers working at on-line media ($n=8$) indicated a practically significant difference ($d=1.06$) between their implementation of this competency and that of colleagues at radio stations ($n=11$). The latter perceive themselves better implementers ($x_2=4.02$) than their colleagues at on-line media ($x_2=3.35$); and
- Finally a moderately significant difference ($d=0.57$) on the implementation of this competency was also calculated between managers at news agencies ($n=5$) and those at radio stations ($n=11$). The latter again perceive themselves better implementers of this competency ($x_2=4.02$), their peers at news agencies ($x_2=3.20$) (also see section 6.3.3.4).

6.3.4 Comparing the importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency across media ownership types

In order to obtain a more detailed perspective on the importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency, comparisons were also made among media titles operating on different ownership structures.

Table 6.5: Importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of reporters

Media ownership type	Reporters						
	Importance – Strategic action						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	74	4.24	0.63		0.18	0.32	0.01
Unlisted companies	47	4.06	1.03			0.05	0.18
Public service mandate	30	4.02	0.70				0.33
Foreign ownership	29	4.25	0.69				
	Implementation – Strategic action						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	80	3.73	0.89		0.29	0.46	0.10
Unlisted companies	48	3.41	1.13			0.08	0.21
Public service mandate	37	3.32	0.85				0.38
Foreign ownership	29	3.65	0.79				

Tables 6.5 and 6.6 highlight the following results.

6.3.4.1 Importance of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- No practical significant difference was found on the importance reporters at different media attach to strategic action as a managerial competency. Irrespective of the relevant ownership structure, reporters regard strategic action an important managerial competency ($x_1=4.14$).

Table 6.6: Importance and implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media ownership type	First-line news managers						
	Importance – Strategic action						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	38	4.17	0.79		0.23	0.78	0.14
Unlisted companies	12	3.97	0.85			0.96	0.36
Public service mandate	9	4.79	0.31				1.07
Foreign ownership	13	4.28	0.48				
	Implementation – Strategic action						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	38	3.58	0.69		0.13	0.64	0.04
Unlisted companies	13	3.45	1.00			0.57	0.10
Public service mandate	12	4.03	0.56				0.76
Foreign ownership	13	3.55	0.62				

6.3.4.2 *Implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- Irrespective of the relevant ownership model, reporters overall rated the implementation ($x_2=3.53$) of strategic action lower than the importance ($x_1=4.14$) they attach to it. However, they consider their first-line news managers better implementers of this competency than the communication competency ($x_2=3.25$ see section 4.6.4.2) or the planning and administration competency ($x_2=3.35$ see section 5.4.4.2);
- As was the case with the implementation of planning and administration, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.46$) was calculated on the implementation of this competency between reporters at JSE listed companies ($n=80$) and those at the SABC ($n=37$). The latter perceive their first-line news managers worse at implementing strategic action ($x_2=3.32$) than the former ($x_2=3.73$);
- These findings indicate that reporters at the SABC perceive their first-line news managers worse implementers of the strategic action competency than colleagues at listed companies. They also experience their supervisors to be worse than reporters at unlisted companies ($x_2=3.41$) and companies with foreign ownership interests ($x_2=3.65$) perceive it to be the case. According to SABC reporters, their supervisors are worst at:
 - Monitoring changes in the media environment ($n=36$; $x_2=2.94$);
 - Monitoring changes in the media enterprise ($n=36$; $x_2=2.94$);
 - Monitoring changes in the department/section ($n=34$; $x_2=2.97$);
 - Monitoring changes in the international context ($n=35$; $x_2=3.06$);
 - Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders ($n=36$; $x_2=3.06$);
 - Developing human resources ($n=36$; $x_2=3.06$);
 - Monitoring changes in the broader South African context ($n=34$; $x_2=3.09$);
 - and
 - Being informed on the activities of other media enterprises ($n=36$; $x_2=3.19$).

These results indicate that SABC reporters regard their first-line news managers worst in terms of monitoring changes in the corporation's micro and macro environments. As a result, they also perceive superiors unable to identify the possible opportunities and threats presented by these changes. Given the increased importance of interrelationships and interdependency between media enterprises and other environments, this issue needs to be addressed urgently.

To a certain extent, these results differ from qualitative data obtained from interviewees at the SABC. The majority of these managers described the corporation's focus on the impact of changes in its micro and macro environments. As such, they expect newsroom staff to read (complimentary copies of) newspapers, use the Internet, and watch national and international television broadcasts. Given this, they perceive newsroom staff to be well aware of the local and international news agenda. However, from reporters' perspective, awareness does not necessarily translate into the ability to pro-actively deal with the consequences of these changes.

The above quantitative findings also indicate reporters' view that first-line news managers at the SABC are unable to understand the concerns of internal stakeholders and develop human resources. This highlights a perception that staff members' needs and expectations are not sufficiently addressed.

To some extent, this correlates with qualitative data. Interviewees at the SABC described staff as unmotivated and doing less than is expected of them. However, they also emphasised that these employees would often be the first to claim benefits associated with, for instance, working overtime. Moreover, interviewees outlined how some staff members abuse facilities and equipment for personal benefit (see section 2.4.3.4). This poses a serious challenge for SABC news managers. Moreover, observation and informal interaction with reporters at some regional offices made it clear that many staff members are unhappy with

their working conditions and working environment. Some reporters were openly hostile towards and negative about their managers, the way work is being done and the extent to which their needs and expectations are addressed. If the SABC wants to fulfil its public service broadcasting role to the diverse range of audiences in the country, this issue should be resolved. Given increasing competition for revenue and audiences, the corporation can not afford to see internal matters hampering its responsibility to audiences.

6.3.4.3 Importance of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the relevant ownership structure) consider strategic action a very important managerial competency ($x_1=4.30$). They consider it more important than reporters indicated in section 6.3.4.1. Despite the discussion in section 6.3.4.2, first-line news managers at the SABC regard this managerial competency most important ($x_1=4.79$). They deem it more important than peers at other media titles operating on different ownership structures;
- More specifically, practically significant differences were calculated among managers in three of the four ownership categories. In the first instance, a practically significant difference ($d=0.78$) on the importance of this competency was found between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) and their peers at JSE listed companies ($n=38$). As indicated above, the former group considers this competency more important than the latter;
- Similarly, a practically significant difference ($d=0.96$) on the importance of strategic action was also calculated between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) and colleagues at unlisted companies ($n=12$). Again the former group considers this competency more important than the latter;
- Finally, the biggest practically significant difference ($d=1.07$) on the importance of this competency was calculated between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) and peers at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$);

- In contrast with the image reporters have of their first-line news managers, these results thus indicate that first-line news managers at the SABC are most aware that strategic action is an important managerial competency. They are much more aware of this than colleagues employed by media enterprises operating on different ownership models. These managers also consider this competency more important than reporters who participated in the study (see section 6.3.4.1).

6.3.4.4 *Implementation of strategic action as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the media enterprises' ownership structure) consider their implementation of the strategic action competency better ($x_2=3.65$) than their subordinates experience it to be the case. Again first-line news managers at the SABC perceive themselves best at implementing this competency ($x_2=4.03$);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.64$) on the implementation of this competency was thus calculated between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) and their colleagues at JSE listed companies ($n=38$). Again, the former perceive themselves better at implementing this competency ($x_2=4.03$) than the latter ($x_2=3.58$);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.57$) on the implementation of this competency was also calculated between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) and their colleagues at unlisted companies ($n=13$);
- A practically significant difference ($d=0.76$) on the implementation of strategic action was found between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) and those at foreign owned companies ($n=13$); and
- The above results indicate that first-line news managers at the SABC perceive themselves very good at implementing the strategic action competency. When focusing on individual management tasks, these managers perceive themselves best when it comes to:

- Knowing the national news agenda (n=12; $x_2=4.58$);
- Knowing the enterprise's news policy (n=12; $x_2=4.50$);
- Implementing the enterprise's news policy (n=12; $x_2=4.50$);
- Knowing the enterprise's vision, mission and goals (n=12; $x_2=4.42$);
- Understanding the nature of the news product *vis-à-vis* the target audience (n=12; $x_2=4.33$);
- Monitoring changes in the department/section (n=12; $x_2=4.25$);
- Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders (n=12; $x_2=4.25$); and
- Making decisions in line with organisational vision and mission (n=12; $x_2=4.25$).

This indicates that first-line news managers and reporters at the SABC generally agree on the management tasks the former are good at. To some extent this is a positive finding, as discrepancies between first-line news managers' and reporters' perspectives are not as big as with the communication and planning and administration competencies (see sections 4.6.4.4 and 5.4.4.4). Only two exceptions were found. In the first instance, first-line managers consider themselves fairly good at monitoring departmental changes and anticipating the potential impact thereof. Reporters, on the other hand, identified this as the management task they perceive superiors second worst at. Similarly, first-line news managers rate their skills to understand the concerns of internal stakeholders fairly well, while reporters consider these skills as some of the worst (see section 6.3.4.2). It is clear from these discrepancies that reporters should either change their perception of how well first-line news managers implement these management tasks or first-line news managers should realise that they are not as good at these tasks as they think.

The conclusions and managerial implications of the above findings are discussed in chapter ten of this study.

6.4 Summary

This chapter focused on strategic action as a managerial competency. As such, the chapter firstly provided a broad theoretical background to the dimensions of strategic action. These related to the need for first-line news managers to understand the past and current challenges facing their industry. This aspect was specifically applied to current trends in the South African media environment. It was argued that if first-line news managers are aware of and understand these trends, they would be able to better position their media enterprises within a competitive South African media environment. This was followed by an outline of the importance that first-line news managers understand the enterprise in which they work. As such, they should understand the needs of internal stakeholders; business strengths and weaknesses; and organisational competencies and culture. Given these two dimensions, it was indicated that first-line news managers would be in a better position to take strategic action and align operational goals and objectives with organisational ones.

The latter part of the chapter outlined qualitative and quantitative research results on the importance and implementation of this competency by first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. As such, it was indicated that first-line news managers currently experience a bigger gap between the importance they attach to this competency and their implementation thereof. In this regard, they consider their inability to properly develop human resources as their biggest shortcoming. Reporters, on the other hand, are also aware of the gap between the importance they attach to this competency and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. However, they seem less critical of the current situation than first-line news managers. They indicated that first-line news managers need the most significant improvement when it comes to understanding internal stakeholder concerns.

When comparing the research results on this competency across media types, it was found that reporters at television channels regard it most important. However, those employed by weekly newspapers consider their first-line news managers the worst

implementers thereof. Similarly, first-line news managers at radio stations highlighted that they perceive this competency most important across the industry. In contrast, their colleagues at magazines perceive themselves to be the worst implementers thereof.

In the final instance, research results were also compared across media types operating on different ownership structures. As such, it was found that reporters at companies with a majority of foreign ownership consider this competency most important. Their peers at the SABC, however, indicated that they perceive their first-line news managers as being worst at implementing it. This is despite the finding that these first-line news managers are the group of respondents who perceive this competency most important. While they also perceive themselves best at implementing strategic action, their colleagues at unlisted companies rated themselves the worst implementers thereof.

The following chapter of the study focuses on teamwork as a managerial competency. Dimensions of this competency are outlined in order to discuss the importance and implementation thereof in South African mainstream media newsrooms.

Chapter 7:

Teamwork as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management

Teamwork is essential to success (but) does not come easy.

– Akande (1992:10)

The basic principle of setting up teams is not that they should be able to operate independently, but that all members of a team share responsibility for the team's performance and consequently share in the team's decision-making. This is a far cry from the traditional and aged management model that bestows exclusive decision-making authority on a single manager who is expected to be all-knowing and all-capable.

– Northrup (1996:5)

Teams require a "new breed" of journalist with different personality traits and skills than the "lone wolf" who worked well alone and often produced breakthrough stories.

– Gade (2004:10-11)

We need to work better in teams.

– Ken Merrigan, Sections Editor, *The Age* in Melbourne, Australia (Quinn, 2002:51)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines aspects related to teamwork as a managerial competency. In the first instance the theoretical dimensions of the teamwork competency are outlined. These are described with specific reference to teamwork as an element of newsroom management. While some descriptions relate to the international context, the study

focuses on the mainstream media context in South Africa in particular. Theoretical dimensions are followed by research results with regard to the importance and implementation of teamwork among first-line news managers and reporters in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. These results aim to identify areas in which respondents (reporters and first-line news managers) perceive gaps between the importance they attach to specific aspects of this competency and the current implementation thereof by first-line news managers.

7.2 Workplace teams

Given the position attributed to workplace teams within modern-day working environments (see section 7.2.2), elements related to this concept are subsequently outlined.

7.2.1 Workplace teams defined

According to Thill and Bovée (2002:25) and Thompson (2001:8) teams can be defined as units or groups of people who work together and interdependently to achieve specific performance related goals. According to Covey (1999:186) real interdependence between groups or individuals can only be achieved among people with a truly independent character. Covey (1999:187) argues further that interdependence enables people to enter into meaningful interaction with others. In an organisational context, this refers to interaction with team members, other internal stakeholders and customers (see Daft, 2003:25-26). This, in turn, results in increased productivity, as well as opportunities for learning and development.

Apart from interdependence, team members also share responsibility for the outcome of their assignments. To achieve this, effective teams need (Gade, 2004:21; Wicks *et al.*, 2004:33; Moerdyk, 2003:6; Thill & Bovée, 2002:28; Smith, 2001:5):

- Clearly defined goals, principles and specified roles according to which they perform their individual and team responsibilities (see section 7.3.1.1 for a more detailed discussion of this issue; also see sections 7.4.1.4; 7.4.1.9 and 7.4.1.10 for the extent to which respondents in this study perceive this to be the case in South African mainstream media newsrooms);
- A prominent leader who displays the required leadership skills;
- Trusting relationships that enable open and honest communication (see sections 4.4.5 and 4.6.1.5 for a more detailed discussion of these issues);
- Creative thinking and initiative; and
- A shared sense of rewards and/or setbacks following consensus in decision making (see section 7.4.1.16 for the extent to which this currently applies in South African mainstream media newsrooms).

These elements tie in with the “fox versus hedgehog” approach described by Ilbury and Sunter (2005:35). Whereas the latter relates to the process of applying individual efforts to achieve organisational goals, “foxes” tend to realise the need for and challenges related to an interdependent workplace environment. They also realise that “knowledge of the system as a whole (enables them to) optimise decisions about the future” of their businesses (Ilbury & Sunter, 2005:35-36).

As Ahles and Bosworth (2004:44) point out, these factors also distinguish workplace teams from work groups. The latter often lack commitment or the responsibility to achieve set objectives (e.g. committees, councils or task forces).

7.2.2 Increased tendency to incorporate workplace teams

Already in the early 1990s, Peter Drucker indicated that the information technology revolution will oblige enterprises to “re-engineer themselves” (Drucker, 1993:80). One outcome of this re-engineering process is to organise staff members into workplace teams (also see Henricks, 1997:38). A study conducted towards the end of the 1990s (Daft, 1997:338) found that 83% of US enterprises have already implemented workplace

teams or were moving towards implementing it. A case in point is the international travel agency and provider of global financial services, American Express. According to Thill and Bovée (2002:25) this company has entrenched the teamwork approach in both internal and external business strategies. Subsequently, employees are required to collaborate as effectively and efficiently as possible to the benefit of customers. As Ahles and Bosworth (2004:43-44) indicate, successful enterprises increasingly realise that “high performing organisations start with high performing teams”. As a result, this approach seems likely to remain the preferred method of organising human resources in future (also see Eyles, 2005:48).

7.2.2.1 Implementing a teamwork approach in the media

As is the case among the enterprises described above, newsroom teams are but one element characterising the newsroom management revolution (see Gade, 2004:7; Gade, 2003:1; Quinn, 2002:51). As such, these teams usually consist of 6-10 staff members collaborating in reporting, writing, editing and packaging activities (Gade, 2004:8). In order to achieve the most professional results, efforts are made to combine the knowledge and experience of senior staff members with creative and technical skills especially found among younger colleagues.

However, for many media enterprises the move away from traditional newsroom structures to the team approach is not easy. As discussed in section 1.2.1.4, media newsrooms were traditionally characterised by “lone ranger” or “lone wolf” type employees. These employees (in many cases introverts) (see Peters, 2004:5) predominantly relied on their own skills and abilities to perform their professional duties (see Gade, 2004:10-11; Quinn, 2002:51). Newsroom staff therefore find it challenging to adjust an individualist work approach to accommodate a more interdependent and dynamic work environment. Given this (and other newsroom trends such as juniorisation and high staff turnover), Neuzil, Hansen and Ward (1999:3) point out that it might take three to five years to introduce and establish an atmosphere in which colleagues feel comfortable to implement and adhere to teamwork principles. Given these challenges,

“most media companies converting to team management ... hire a consultant to guide managers in the early stages of conversion” (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:33). The end result is often that resources (human, financial and technological) are combined more effectively and efficiently to improve the quality and professionalism of journalism output.

However, introducing and utilising newsroom teams has not been without failure. The above-mentioned aspects, linked with a fear of change, organisational policies, staff relationships and attitudes all contribute towards poor implementation of the team approach (e.g. see Gade, 2004:10; Thompson, 2001:7; Neuzil *et al.*, 1999:2). As Thompson (2001:7) points out, failure in this area can “sap morale, decrease productivity and squelch the creative potential of one of the (media’s) most important resources, the reporter”. The extent to which this applies to South Africa’s mainstream media newsrooms is discussed in section 7.4.1.

7.3 Dimensions of teamwork as a managerial competency

According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:18) and Hellriegel *et al.* (2004:18) the teamwork competency entails that tasks are accomplished through small groups of people (teams) who are collectively responsible, and who work interdependently. Given this, the dimensions of the teamwork competency entail that managers (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:18; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:18; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:31):

- Properly design teams;
- Create an environment supportive of teamwork; and
- Properly manage team dynamics.

Each of these dimensions is discussed in more detail in sections 7.3.1-7.3.3. In each instance the discussion specifically focuses on the relevance of these dimensions within the media and newsroom management contexts.

7.3.1 Team design

The first challenge facing managers/team leaders is to design teams in such a manner that team members' skills, expertise and experience contribute towards achieving organisational goals as effectively and efficiently as possible. For instance, Thill and Bovée (2002:25) refer to an international study amongst more than 200 enterprises in almost 20 countries towards the end of the 1990s. Results from this study indicated that companies that operate in teams experience the highest performance improvement.

This tendency was first witnessed during the so-called Hawthorne experiments conducted by Elton Mayo at the Hawthorne plant of the General Electric Company during the late 1920s and early 1930s (Albarran, 2006:4; Herrick, 2003:86; Kennedy, 2002:158-163). During these experiments the size of female work teams was reduced from 100 to 5. Researchers found that the improvement in team design resulted in increased productivity among employees. Moreover, workers also improved interpersonal relationships and established support groups outside the work environment.

A more recent example where improved team design resulted in improved performance and output was demonstrated at the Chevrolet motoring plant in Fremont California. After the company introduced a system of self-managing teams, it witnessed ordinary staff members taking responsibility to stop the assembly line once they witnessed manufacturing mistakes. Subsequently, the company experienced better cooperation between plant workers, union leaders and management, with concomitant improvement in performance and organisational output (Simmons, 1990:54).

Research by Gade (2004:24) also confirmed this change in terms of improved newsroom productivity. With regard to the South African newsroom context, smaller newsrooms (especially those at independent radio stations) experienced similar improvement in productivity and interpersonal relationships (see section 6.2.2.1). Moreover, interviewees at these media titles described improved relations among

newsroom staff outside of the office. As such, they were of the opinion that colleagues often serve as a “family” or support group for staff who might be new or unfamiliar to a specific city or community (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:54).

Given the important role properly designed teams can play in organisational success, managers/team leaders should focus on the following aspects when designing teams.

7.3.1.1 *Establish clearly defined objectives*

This element refers to managers’ (or team leaders’) ability to formulate clear objectives that inspire team members, foster commitment towards their jobs and their enterprises, and ultimately result in improved performance (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:21; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:20; Flanagan, 2003:26). This will, in turn, result in improved organisational performance (Minty & Bennett, 2001:22; also see section 6.2.3).

As such, managers/team leaders should define objectives that (DuBrin, 2003:131; Kroon & Van Zyl, 1995:131):

- Are clear, concise and objective – team members should have no doubt about what individual and team objectives entail. As such, Wicks *et al.* (2004:33) state that objectives should be set out so visibly that individual team members are able to independently give corresponding recollections thereof. If this is the case, employees will be inspired to achieve (individual and organisational) goals and objectives and take responsibility for their decisions and behaviour (Dinkmeyer, 1991:504). This, in turn, will motivate them to improve their performance and contribute towards organisational success (Burton, 2001:13, 15);
- Are accurate in terms of what the final performance outcome should be. Team members should thus be clear on what their ultimate purpose is. In order to achieve this, objectives should also be measurable;
- Are achievable by competent team members whose skills and expertise are combined in such a manner that objectives are reached with little difficulty;

- Challenge team members to think innovatively and come up with alternatives through which the final goal can be achieved more efficiently;
- Require participation from team members to set and achieve objectives. As such, Ströh (2001:62) indicates that enjoyment of the work itself; pride in good performance; belief in the importance of the work they do; and the desire to exceed previous performance levels all contribute to improve employees' performance and achievements;
- Focus on smaller accomplishments that contribute towards the final goal. In this regard, constant motivation, encouragement, praise and monitoring is important to keep team members focused on what the eventual outcome of their efforts is; and
- Are specific in terms of what the final goal is, who will be responsible to achieve it, when it should be achieved, and how the outcome should be reached. These expectations should preferably be set out in writing, in order to avoid any misunderstanding between team leaders and team members.

The essence of team management therefore lies in managers' ability to set out the goals and objectives team members are expected to achieve. Moreover, team members should be mobilised to achieve these as effectively and efficiently as possible (Herrick, 2003:56; Anon, 1998:52). However, results from this research study indicate that this is not yet the case in South African mainstream media newsrooms (see sections 7.4.1.4; 7.4.1.9 and 7.4.1.10).

7.3.1.2 Staffing teams

This element of the teamwork competency refers to the challenge to put the right people with the right combination of skills in a team with the aim to achieve the above-mentioned objectives (DuBrin, 2003:7). This is, however, not always an easy task, given characteristics of modern-day workforces described in section 6.2.2.1. Managers are therefore challenged to compile teams in such a manner that diversity in skills,

backgrounds and ideas facilitates effective teamwork rather than hamper it (see Heriz-Smith, 1998:40).

According to Northrup (1996:5) the purpose of workplace teams is often misunderstood. Instead of aiming to create autonomous working groups, these teams should be staffed in such a manner that “the broadest possible number of staff members and the broadest range of talents” are combined. While this allows for increased creativity (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:21), it also ensures that each staff member’s skills and expertise are utilised to the benefit of optimal decision making (Thill & Bovée, 2002:26; Henricks, 1997:38). However, as Wicks *et al.* (2004:33) underline, team members should remain mindful that they are part of a team and that they should utilise their skills and ideas in such a manner that the team benefits from their contribution (also see White, 2003). Managers should also be mindful of this aspect when staffing teams. Instead of merely “plug(ging) people into old roles”, managers should ensure that team members are utilised in areas where their skills and expertise are most useful (Moses, 2002:12).

This dimension of the teamwork competency thus requires managers to know staff and their existing technical, creative or educational skills. They should also be aware of the role these skills play in individual performance, as this would ultimately influence team performance and organisational success (Adams, 1989:37). As such, managers should keep in mind that effectively combining a variety of skills is more important than the contribution made by individual members (Ahles & Bosworth, 2004:54).

Applying this to a newsroom management context, Davis and Dunlap (2000:21) underline that editors need improved skills in this area. Graham (2001:16-17) also applies this aspect to newsroom management, by describing the transformation process at *The Wichita Eagle* in the process of implementing a teamwork system. This newspaper in the US state of Kansas is the largest news-gathering operation in the state. However, due to declining circulation figures, the newsroom was transformed in the beginning of 1995 to create an organisational culture conducive to creativity and experimentation. In this process, teams were staffed in such a manner that members’

interests, skills and needs were accommodated optimally. One reporter described the advantages of this approach as allowing “those with ideas and motivation to explore brave new worlds” (Graham, 2001:24). However, although management included the entire newsroom in the above process, the teamwork approach was not met positively by all newsroom staff.

Given increasing diversity in South African newsrooms (in terms of race, gender and representation of other minority groups) as outlined in section 1.3.4.2, properly staffing teams poses an important newsroom management challenge. The extent to which news managers live up to this challenge is explored in section 7.4.1.2.

7.3.1.3 The need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities

Irrespective of how well teams are staffed, managers are responsible to ensure that team members are clear on the individual as well as team roles and responsibilities needed to optimise team performance (see Gade, 2004:16). These should, in turn, be linked to individual, team and organisational goals and objectives (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:33). However, as Henricks (1997:38) states, establishing these roles and responsibilities is a two-way process. On the one hand, managers should inform team members of their roles and responsibilities. On the other, team members should also have the opportunity to communicate their (individual and group) expectations to managers. Unfortunately, it seems as if proper two-way communication does not always take place in a teamwork environment. Neuzil *et al.* (1999:6) found that almost 25% of participants in their research were of the opinion that communication under a team system decreased compared to a previous, more individualistic working environment.

Properly defined roles and responsibilities in a teamwork environment become even more important in a media environment where “newsroom convergence” is becoming the rule rather than the exception (Singer, 2004:839). As such, media technologies, newsroom functions, as well as strategic activities between departments and often also different industries become increasingly intertwined (see Wirth, 2006:447). This

necessitates an increasing focus on teamwork – not only across departments, but also across industries. As such, staff from television and radio or from print and on-line media may, for instance, be required to cooperate in a single team. Within this context, individual team members and teams as a whole should be absolutely clear about their roles and responsibilities and the expectations related to compiling and distributing a professional news product.

Interviewees at the SABC who participated in this research described the challenges they face to address this issue. Reporters and technical crew (especially in regional offices) are often expected to “file” (produce) news stories for both radio and television. As a result, interviewees underlined the need for constant communication between managers and staff to ensure that the two parties agree on the *modus operandi*. This situation also enforces the need for newsroom staff to be more multi-skilled, as they are increasingly required to perform a variety of activities in the news gathering, production and distribution process.

7.3.1.4 Roles within a teamwork context

The implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency can probably improve if managers are aware of the eight roles applicable to a teamwork context. Meredith Belbin identified these roles as part of research on “Management teams: why they succeed or fail” (Kennedy, 2002:24). In a newsroom context, it is possible, however, that team members do not necessarily perform all eight roles. On the other hand, it is possible that some team members portray a number of the roles described below. This could especially be the case in smaller newsrooms. Nevertheless, knowledge of these roles might improve teamwork in a newsroom context. In short, team roles comprise of (Kennedy, 2002:24-25):

- The company worker. This person is conservative, hard working and has good management skills. This role is often portrayed by someone with an inflexible personality and who is sceptical to “new” ideas. As a result, this team member

becomes a stabilising factor in teams, preventing them from wasting resources on unachievable ideas;

- The chairperson. This team member is calm and controlled and has the ability to treat all people and ideas on merit. The chairperson also has strong creative abilities. As a result, he/she weighs every “new” idea on merit before deciding whether it is feasible or not;
- The shaper is an extrovert who challenges ineffectiveness or complacency. Although this team member might be irritable and impatient, his/her approach might encourage less diligent team members to improve their performance. The shaper’s dynamic personality thus acts as a driving force to improve team effectiveness and performance;
- The planter. This person is individualistic with a strong intellect and imagination. As a result, this team member could originate ideas on how to approach a project, although these ideas might not always be viable due to practical considerations. Nevertheless, “planting” these ideas in the minds of team members could see someone devising a way of bringing it to life;
- The resource investigator is enthusiastic and prone to investigate new ideas due to his/her curious nature. Subsequently, he/she is usually the team member with an extensive list of contacts. These enable him/her to succeed in locating financial or information resources needed to cover a news event. However, team leaders face the challenge to keep this person interested in projects after the initial excitement has passed;
- The monitor-evaluator is a team member with soberness, lack of emotion and good discretion/judgement. This person often dampens team enthusiasm because of his/her inability to motivate others. However, the sober nature of this team member often sees him/her timeously identifying potential difficulties related to unattainable ideas;
- The team worker is probably one of the key role players in a teamwork context. This person establishes and maintains a friendly and trusting teamwork environment and a positive team spirit. The team worker is aware of team members’ needs and expectations and has the ability to address challenging

situations. However, the team worker should constantly be reminded of the team's anticipated goals and objectives; and

- The completer-finisher. This person is painstaking, conscientious and somewhat of a perfectionist. He/she will only be satisfied once the final touches are put to an assignment. Unfortunately, team members who are less focused on detail might get irritated or demotivated when they perceive the completer-finisher to "delay" progress on a project. This role can not be underestimated in a newsroom environment. Given the focus on detail, factual accuracy, fairness and balance that needs to characterise news reports (irrespective of the medium used), each newsroom team needs a completer-finisher. This person plays an especially valuable role to ensure that news reports display the above characteristics given factors such as increased deadline pressure, staff shortages and inexperience, and a lack of general knowledge among reporters (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:54).

7.3.1.5 *Monitoring performance*

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities enable team leaders to monitor individual and team progress towards attaining predetermined goals and objectives (DuBrin, 2003:391). This necessitates that team members' output is measured continuously and systematically (Fink, 1996:154). In this process, team leaders will be able to identify strengths to expand on and weaknesses to address in an attempt to improve performance (see Pretorius, 1996:21). As such, team leaders can determine whether team members are doing what they are supposed to do. Moreover, they can determine whether team members are performing to their best ability and how this performance affects that of other team members (see Peters, 2004:14-15).

However, monitoring performance does not only apply to supervisors monitoring subordinates' work. As Dinkmeyer (1991:506) suggests, team structures should also accommodate instances where subordinates want to give feedback on supervisors' performance. Unfortunately, this approach was not welcomed in South African

newsrooms pre-1994. The non-consultative and authoritarian management approaches made it almost impossible for newsroom staff to “speak their minds” with regard to monitoring supervisors’ performance.

The nature of the news industry also makes it difficult to monitor performance in the traditional sense of the word. On the one hand, staff performance can not be measured purely on a quantitative basis (see Thompson, 2001:11; Neuzil *et al.*, 1999:3). Producing more news stories does not necessarily equate good quality news stories. Similarly, pure qualitative measurement can also be problematic, due to the partial subjective nature of this approach. Rosentiel and Mitchell (2004:85) underscore this dilemma: “the best journalists are often those who bring the indefinable, the intangible, to their work ... In modern business, we tend to value what we count. And what is not counted tends to be devalued”. Peters (2004:22) supports this by stating that the US media industry “can claim among the most ineffectual” when it comes to monitoring and evaluating employee performance. News managers are often also not trained to realise the importance of this management task or to implement it properly.

Interviewees for this study seem aware of this difficulty. Some newsrooms follow a more quantitative route to measure performance by monitoring the number of news stories published or broadcasted. Others, however, perceive this impractical. They argue that newsrooms should measure input rather than output. From their perspective factors such as a changed news agenda or available space/time often determine which news items will be used and which not. As a result, two reporters can spend equal amounts of time and effort to produce a news story, with the one story being published and the other not. Their perception is that it would be unfair to “count” the published/broadcasted story but “ignore” the effort that went into the other one.

7.3.2 *Creating a supportive teamwork environment*

The second dimension of the teamwork competency requires managers to create a supportive teamwork environment. As such, they should provide team members with the

opportunity to perform optimally, assist them in identifying and obtaining resources, and continuously mentor and coach them.

7.3.2.1 *Creating an environment characterised by empowerment*

Managers are required to ensure that team members work in an environment where they are empowered to perform as expected of them. This environment should also provide managers the opportunity to reward, praise and recognise teamwork (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:21). As such, Odendaal and Roodt (1998:14) explain that team members should be given the “authority to take decisions within (their) area of work without having to get approval from anyone else”. If this is the case, they will experience a more equal distribution of power and control among all team members (Neuzil *et al.*, 1999:2). Importantly, however, is that shared power also implies increased responsibility and the need for team members to think differently about their work (see Gade, 2004:20). However, distributing power to subordinates is considered one of the most difficult things managers had to accept in recent years (see Henricks, 1997:38). As such, it is important that top management support line managers in this process (see Thompson, 2001:8; Simmons, 1990:55; Richardson, 1985:43).

A case study on *The Oregonian* newspaper in the US illustrates the value of empowerment within a newsroom team context. This paper introduced newsroom teams towards the middle of the 1990s. According to a first-line news manager the change towards managing smaller newsroom teams enabled her to listen to staff members and empower them to solve their own problems. In her view, she adopted the approach that staff members should leave her office feeling “smarter, stronger, and more able” to resolve the issue discussed (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:34).

However, management expert Meredith Belbin warns that a culture of empowerment requires thorough assessment and proper implementation. As such, empowerment should not be seen as a convenient way for managers to shift their responsibility onto subordinates (Kennedy, 2002:24). If employees experience that managers are not

sincere in their empowerment initiatives, they will become reluctant to participate in future teamwork activities (Herrick, 2003:88). This will forfeit the whole idea behind a teamwork approach.

In an attempt to prevent the above, managers need (Geisler, 2004:4; Akande, 1992:11; Dinkmeyer, 1991:505):

- Skills to identify and address negative perceptions that could hamper a positive teamwork environment. Team leaders should consistently practice these skills. They also need skills to identify and address negativity about teamwork issues among themselves;
- True encouragement skills. These entail that they listen actively to team members' needs and concerns (see section 4.5.5 for more detail on this issue); and
- Skills, experience and the inclination to recognise and reward good team or individual performance. Within the South African media environment, this activity sometimes seems to fall by the wayside. Managers often have too little time to properly praise and reward team members on a job well done. This is brought about by increased deadline pressure, competition, staff shortages and a lack of skills among staff (also see section 7.4.1.11 for a discussion of the research results pertaining to this issue).

7.3.2.2 Assisting teams to identify and acquire necessary resources

Team leaders' responsibility towards the team goes beyond creating a supportive teamwork environment. Teams will not be able to operate optimally if they lack resources (Flanagan, 2003:27). Burton (2001:16) warns that a lack of resources might leave team members depressed and demotivated, as they experience that they are expected to perform without the means to do so. Despite the need for proper resources, Rosentiel and Mitchell (2004:88) point out that "more newsroom resources do not

guarantee a better product. Good management is the essential link. Bad leadership can squander more resources".

The responsibility to identify and acquire resources extends beyond the role of team leaders or managers on lower organisational levels (see Wicks *et al.*, 2004:32). Top management should especially be committed to perform this management task. While resources mostly relate to money, in a newsroom context it also includes (also see section 2.2):

- Information (see Peters, 2004:8, 37; Herrick, 2003:114). Given experience in and contact with the industry, more seasoned team members can be vital to assist inexperienced colleagues with information needed to properly cover a news event. In many cases, unfortunately, experienced team members feel that they had to learn the hard way and that junior reporters should establish their own information networks. As Quinn (2002:21) puts it, newsroom staff are often guilty of not effectively utilising the "collective news judgement and expertise" of trained and experienced reporters. This attitude does not benefit team spirit. Moreover, the increasingly inexperienced character of many South African newsrooms often sees this resource being lost;
- Time available to properly complete the assignment given (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:33). Due to the worldwide trend to downsize newsroom staff (e.g. see Gade, 2004:7), this resource becomes increasingly scarce. In the process, remaining staff members are challenged to fill an expanding news agenda. This leaves many with more work than they can effectively do, and increasingly less time to do it in (Edmonds, 2004:100; Rosentiel & Mitchell, 2004:86); and
- Up to date and sufficient infrastructure to cover news events in a competitive and effective manner. However, interviewees for this research expressed their view that owners expect media managers to cut costs as far as possible and subsequently increase profit margins. They experience that this attitude results in a lack of investment in adequate infrastructure, leaving newsroom teams to operate with outdated, inadequate or insufficient infrastructure (also see section

4.3.3). Apart from this perception, instances were also highlighted where newsroom staff are guilty of abusing newsroom infrastructure and equipment for their personal benefit (see section 2.4.3.4).

7.3.2.3 *Managers as coaches, counsellors and mentors*

As was set out in section 1.3.1, several aspects related to human resource management in the twenty first century differ considerably from traditional management approaches. Former management styles implied that structures of authority were set out (and applied) in a non-negotiable manner. The new approach, on the contrary, focuses on multilevel support, involvement, acknowledgement, respect and active participation in order to motivate and manage employees (see Abraham, 2002; Claassen, 2002; Els, 2002; Leballo, 2002; also see sections 1.3.3 and 1.3.4 with regard to changed approaches in the South African media environment).

Changed management approaches have inevitably also changed managers' roles. Heriz-Smith (1998:40) illustrates this change as follows:

Managers (had) the skills necessary to herd sheep. A lot of nagging and worrying at the ankles while keeping a sharp look out for defaulters and wanderers as well as the odd wolf while, at the same time, keeping a wary eye on the shepherd to check that everyone was going in the direction *he* wanted. (Today's managers are required to) ... be curious and perceptive, independent in thought and action, energetic and task driven, able to deal with complexities and ambiguities, given to broad and lateral interests, open to new experiences and motivated towards high standards and improvement.

As this illustrates, managers' role has changed from being "micromanagers" to becoming leaders (Boone, 2005:2; Eyles, 2005:46; Underwood, 1995:117;) with the ability to guide, coach and mentor staff (Cronje & Neuland, 2003:26; Daft, 2003:26; DuBrin, 2003:290-291, 387; Ford, 1996:7). Effective managers are also required to

facilitate workplace activities and encourage staff members to perform as is expected of them (see Neuzil *et al.*, 1999:2; Dinkmeyer, 1991:508).

This also applies to newsroom management, as the information age demands new newsroom management skills (Quinn, 2002:21). However, being coaches, counsellors and mentors requires that managers have good leadership skills. As discussed in section 10.1, managers often lack these skills (also see Fink, 1996:77). In many cases, they lack the understanding of human relationships and the motivational skills to lead themselves and others; get people interested in completing a project and see to it that they succeed in this endeavour (see Geisler, 2004:1; Peters, 2004:36; Peters, 1999:20).

This area also needs attention in South African mainstream media newsrooms. Results from Audit 1 indicated that senior staff members often lack the time to coach junior reporters in reporting and writing activities (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:44). Given inexperience among the majority of newsroom staff (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:35-36; also see sections 1.7.4.1 and 1.7.4.2) this inevitably affects the level of professional media output. Given this, news managers should improve on their coaching and mentoring skills. As such, they should develop skills to effectively listen to ideas/concerns (see section 4.5.5). They also need to question and challenge ideas in order to ensure that team members have contemplated ideas and that these are viable. If not, managers need skills to guide staff towards introducing an idea on which resources can be utilised more effectively and efficiently (see Ford, 1996:8).

News managers also need to improve their coaching skills (also see section 9.2.4). Given the challenges described above, media newsrooms can introduce a system through which star performer employees are given the opportunity to coach peers. While this will acknowledge staff who exceed job-related expectations, it will also address the current lack of coaching. Two media titles were identified during Audit 1 where a similar approach was already introduced or about to be introduced (see Claassen, 2002; Sibanda, 2002).

7.3.3 Managing team dynamics

In order for the above-mentioned dimensions of the teamwork competency to succeed, managers need the skills to manage both positive and negative team dynamics. As such, team leaders should understand and utilise individual strengths and weaknesses, and have the ability to resolve individual and team conflict.

7.3.3.1 Understanding and utilising individual strengths and weaknesses

Probably some of the most important principles regarding this dimension of teamwork were set out by Meredith Belbin (Kennedy, 2002:22). The premise of these principles is that teams consist of people with strengths and weaknesses. Managers are thus challenged to compile teams in such a manner that strengths and weaknesses balance and complement each other (see Wicks *et al.*, 2004:33). As such, Belbin refers to so-called “allowable weaknesses” affording “imperfect people” the opportunity to form part of “perfect teams” (Kennedy, 2002:23).

This argument is based on the principle that the strengths of some team members accommodate the weaknesses in others. Given the requirement that managers need to compile teams with the ability to effectively achieve organisational goals and objectives (Lussier, 2003:173), they need thorough knowledge and understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses. Davis and Dunlap (2000:20) take this argument further. They are of the opinion that news managers should also be mindful of superiors’ strengths and weaknesses. This will enable them to accommodate these aspects when interacting with superiors (also see section 4.6.1.8).

7.3.3.2 Resolving individual and team conflict

Because teams consist of people, conflict is inevitable. Team leaders thus require skills to address and resolve conflict and direct individual and team energy into a positive direction. Thill and Bovée (2002:29) underline the need for these skills: “functioning

effectively in teams requires many skills. However, none is more important than the ability to handle conflict".

Team and individual conflict can be caused by (Fink, 1996:173-174):

- Uncertainty among team members about tasks, roles and responsibilities (see Wicks *et al.*, 2004:32);
- Disagreement on how and when tasks should be performed;
- A lack of communication and trust among team members (see Minty & Bennett, 2001:22);
- Irreconcilable interests and attitudes. It was outlined in section 7.3.1.2 that teams should be compiled in such a manner that diversity and creativity are accommodated optimally. However, managers should be cautious, as too much diversity can cause conflict;
- Competition for limited resources (Thill & Bovée, 2002:29; Thompson, 2001:9; also see section 7.3.2.2). Managers/team leaders should guard to avail more resources (such as infrastructure or time) to some team members than to others; or differentiate when financial or other incentives are distributed; and
- Competition for recognition. In this regard, news managers should, for instance, guide against having two teams who cover the same newsbeat (e.g. crime, sport, environment, entertainment). If this is the case, both groups would strive to achieve the same goal and getting recognition from supervisors, resulting in conflict.

Conflict is, however, not always negative. As such, Cilliers (1995:398) and Plunkett and Attner (1994:483) indicate that individuals/teams can also experience "functional conflict". This refers to increased creative thinking and innovation as a result of conflict. Conflict can thus inspire team members to think and act more resourcefully. As a result, organisational goals and objectives can be achieved more effectively and efficiently because of improved performance.

During negative team conflict, team managers can implement the following guidelines to resolve conflict:

- Recognise conflict and tension as quickly as possible and resolve differences through negotiation and consensus (Wicks *et al.*, 2004:33);
- Facilitate clear and honest communication between conflicting parties (Thill & Bovée, 2002:30; Thompson, 2001:10);
- Get parties to “speak their minds” and present their feelings and emotions to each other (Thill & Bovée, 2002:30);
- Encourage team leaders to share vulnerabilities and shortcomings with team members and learn from team members (Gade, 2004:21). However, due to traditional management roles, this is not always an easy task;
- Actively strive to identify relevant facts and arrive at workable solutions. In this process, consider all potential solutions to the problem and implement the one that benefits most parties (Thill & Bovée, 2002:30); and
- Encourage team members to “stick together” in difficult times and confront external conflict as a team. Inability to do this will see team members fighting among each other to the detriment of the team (Thill & Bovée, 2002:30).

In order to implement these guidelines, managers can introduce a number of conflict management styles, namely (Daft, 2003:632-633; Lussier, 2003:281-285; Plunkett & Attner, 1994:486-487):

- Competing style, which perceives one person’s perspective as the solution to the problem. This style is often implemented when quick decisions are needed (e.g. in emergencies or when newsrooms must decide on the coverage of a natural disaster or an occurrence such as the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US). Team members must then realise that negotiation and democratic decision making will not form part of the conflict resolution process and that the team leader is responsible to take the best decision as quickly as possible;

- Avoiding style, where parties neither confront each other, nor agree to cooperate in an attempt to solve the problem. As such, parties might consider the situation too trivial to address or they might “buy time” to gather more information. Within any context, however, this conflict management style can be detrimental to open communication and trust, as the situation is likely to remain unresolved;
- Compromising style (or negotiating conflict style). In this approach, both parties agree to compromise some of their power, expectations or views to accommodate each other. This approach applies when parties need temporary solutions to a problem. It is important that both parties enter the agreement with a positive outcome in mind, instead of focusing on what they compromised in the process;
- Confrontation, forcing conflicting parties to voice their concerns and disagreements. The idea is to determine what causes conflict, and address the problem accordingly;
- Accommodating style, characterised by high levels of cooperation. This style works best where parties realise that they were wrong or when parties decide that sound relationships are more important than the conflicting issue; and
- Collaborating style, where the focus is to find a solution that will benefit both parties. This implies, however, that parties negotiate in order to arrive at the best possible solution. The knowledge that one party is not favoured at the cost of the other facilitates this process.

Interviewees who participated in this research study indicated that direct confrontation is the most commonly used conflict resolution method in their newsrooms. While literature warns that confrontation often “ends in hurt feelings and no resolution” (Piunkett & Attner, 1994:487), interviewees highlighted their success with applying this method. At some titles, conflicting individuals or teams confront each other directly in a specially allocated area (e.g. a balcony at one media title, or a specific room at other media titles). They then try to resolve the conflict themselves first. If this is not successful, news managers have the responsibility to invite both parties into their office to state their perspective on the issue. It is only when this strategy fails that people in higher

management positions become involved in conflict resolution processes. However, in general, interviewees described that they experience little newsroom conflict and that staff generally get along very well (see the discussion on research results pertaining to this issue in section 7.4.1.15).

The previous three sections of this chapter provided a theoretical context for the dimensions of teamwork as a managerial competency. The next part focuses on qualitative and quantitative research results pertaining to the importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. Quantitative results are based on the importance first-line news managers and reporters attach to this competency. This is compared with how well both groups perceive first-line news managers to implement management tasks related to the teamwork competency.

7.4 Results – the importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 display quantitative results on the following issues:

- The difference between the importance first-line news managers attach to each of the management tasks related to teamwork as a managerial competency and their view of how they currently implement it. This is compared with the difference between the importance reporters attach to the same management tasks and their experience of first-line news managers' current implementation thereof; and
- The difference between first-line news managers' view of their current implementation of the teamwork competency compared to reporters' experience thereof.

The aggregate effect size of teamwork as a managerial competency (without dividing it into different management tasks or comparing it on the basis of media type or media ownership type) shows that:

- First-line news managers indicated a practically insignificant difference ($d=0.43$) between the importance they attach to the teamwork competency and their current implementation thereof; while
- Reporters indicated a practically significant difference ($d=0.75$) between the importance they attach to this managerial competency and their experience of the current implementation thereof by superiors.

The difference between first-line news managers' perception of this issue and that of reporters implies that the proper implementation of teamwork in South African mainstream media newsrooms should be addressed. This can be done by determining whether first-line news managers are not implementing teamwork properly or whether reporters have unrealistically high expectations. If this issue is resolved properly, teamwork can play an important role to improve the media's professional output. If not, reporters will become frustrated and perceive their contribution to the news process as insignificant. Moreover, first-line news managers might become frustrated, as they will not see proper progress among newsroom teams. This, in turn, will leave top management and owners frustrated because their business operations will probably not effectively and efficiently achieve organisational objectives.

7.4.1 The importance of management tasks related to teamwork as a managerial competency compared to the implementation thereof

Table 7.1 outlines the following with regard to each management task related to teamwork as a managerial competency.

Table 7.1: Comparing the importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Teamwork as a managerial competency								
Management task	First-line news managers				Reporters			
	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)
13.4.1 Structuring the department to implement teamwork	61	0.62	1.14	0.55	162	1.01	1.41	0.72
13.4.2 Organising reporters into teams	51	0.55	1.24	0.44	157	0.75	1.42	0.53
13.4.3 Assisting reporters in acquiring knowledge to work in teams	53	0.45	1.37	0.33	160	0.99	1.50	0.66
13.4.4 Formulating teamwork objectives	58	0.47	1.25	0.37	157	0.85	1.34	0.64
13.4.5 Motivating reporters to perform satisfactorily in teamwork situations	58	0.40	1.09	0.36	161	0.84	1.55	0.54
13.4.6 Sharing the responsibilities associated with teamwork	62	0.57	1.17	0.48	158	0.95	1.43	0.66
13.4.7 Compiling teams to accommodate diverse ideas	60	0.53	1.26	0.43	158	0.92	1.56	0.59
13.4.8 Compiling teams to effectively utilise technical skills	57	0.44	1.17	0.38	160	0.92	1.55	0.59
13.4.9 Defining team objectives	61	0.28	1.27	0.22	157	0.74	1.45	0.51
13.4.10 Defining individual objectives	61	0.31	1.07	0.29	160	1.09	1.41	0.77
13.4.11 Creating an environment where teamwork is rewarded	55	0.71	1.56	0.46	159	1.11	1.53	0.73
13.4.12 Coaching/mentoring/counselling reporters through team projects	57	0.60	1.43	0.42	155	1.06	1.57	0.68
13.4.13 Supporting teams in identifying resources needed	53	0.47	1.37	0.35	157	0.91	1.49	0.61
13.4.14 Supporting teams in obtaining resources needed	52	0.54	1.35	0.40	156	0.92	1.45	0.63
13.4.15 Understanding individual strengths and weaknesses in a team	61	0.18	1.27	0.14	162	1.02	1.48	0.69
13.4.16 Managing team conflict	58	0.52	1.33	0.39	158	1.04	1.52	0.68
13.4.17 Sharing recognition and credit with members of the team	62	0.27	1.03	0.27	164	0.95	1.42	0.66
13.4.18 Praising reporters in the department	62	0.32	0.92	0.35	165	0.88	1.48	0.60

7.4.1.1 *Structuring the department to implement teamwork*

Both first-line news managers (n=61) and reporters (n=162) indicated a moderately significant difference (d=0.55 for first-line news managers and d=0.72 for reporters) between the importance they attach to this management task and the current implementation thereof. First-line news managers are thus aware that they can improve their departmental structures to properly accommodate teamwork. Reporters, on the other hand, seem more aware of this shortcoming.

This finding somewhat contradicts qualitative data. In the majority of cases interviewees voiced their opinion that the media environment and newsroom structures have changed to such an extent that teamwork is inevitable. However, interviewees were of the opinion that this approach facilitates learning and developing additional skills among team members. They also gave examples (e.g. national elections or sports events such as the Olympic Games) in which they deliberately staff a team with the aim to improve team members' skills. In this process, they hope to present their audiences with the best possible news coverage ahead of the competition.

7.4.1.2 *Organising reporters into teams*

Although first-line news managers (n=51) perceive insignificant difference (d=0.44) between the importance of this management task and their current implementation thereof, reporters differ. As such, reporters (n=157) indicated a moderately significant difference (d=0.53) between the importance they attach to this issue and the current implementation thereof. First-line news managers also consider this management task less important ($x_1=3.54$) than reporters ($x_1=3.78$).

The need for team leaders to know individual team members (and their strengths and weaknesses) was outlined in section 7.3.3.1. Section 6.2.2.1 also described the need for managers to address internal stakeholder concerns and expectations. Findings indicated, however, that a gap exists between the importance managers attach to this

task and their implementation thereof (see section 6.3.1.9). These factors might all play a role in first-line news managers' inability to properly organise reporters into teams.

7.4.1.3 Assisting reporters in acquiring knowledge to work in teams

This seems to be another problem area in managers' teamwork armour. Whereas first-line news managers ($n=53$) indicated a practically insignificant difference ($d=0.33$) between the importance of this management task and their current implementation thereof, reporters ($n=160$) highlighted a moderately significant difference ($d=0.66$). Reporters also consider this management task more important ($x_i=3.94$) than managers ($x_i=3.70$). This implies that reporters are part of a team expected to accomplish specific tasks. However, they lack guidance from superiors to properly perform these tasks. This might leave reporters feeling unfocused, negative or unenthusiastic about the work they need to do.

7.4.1.4 Formulating teamwork objectives

Reporters ($n=157$) again indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.64$) between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' implementation thereof. First-line news managers ($n=58$), however, again perceive little difference between the importance and current implementation of this task ($d=0.37$). Given the importance of setting clear objectives and guidelines to direct team activities (see section 7.3.1.1), this issue needs to be addressed.

7.4.1.5 Motivating reporters to perform satisfactorily in teamwork situations

The importance of motivation as an additional management function was outlined in section 2.5.2. However, as was the case with previous management tasks related to teamwork, this issue needs improvement. Again, first-line news managers ($n=58$) seem less concerned that a difference exists between the importance of motivation and the extent to which they currently motivate team members ($d=0.36$). In contrast, reporters

($n=161$) indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) between the importance of and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. Despite these results, managers consider proper motivation more important ($x_1=4.04$) than reporters ($x_1=3.90$).

Qualitative data again contradict these findings. Interviewees described first-line news managers' efforts to motivate staff, increase loyalty towards their jobs, and improve performance. These included an initiative by a radio station to display a monthly graph in the newsroom. This graph illustrates the number of times a reporter's outputs (news stories) reached the national or regional news agenda. Some newspaper newsrooms have implemented similar graphs comparing current and previous sales and circulation. Despite this, interviewees indicated that some reporters still lack motivation for their jobs. This perspective correlates with qualitative data provided during Audit 1 in which managers highlighted reporters' lack of commitment and enthusiasm to their work (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:53).

7.4.1.6 *Sharing the responsibilities associated with teamwork*

Although managers are increasingly required to empower team members with the skills to operate in a team, they remain ultimately responsible for newsroom decisions (see section 7.3.2.1). Despite this, both first-line news managers ($n=62$) and reporters ($n=158$) experience a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to this management task and the current implementation thereof. Reporters, however, seem more aware of this difference ($d=0.66$) than first-line news managers ($d=0.48$). This result illustrates a perception that first-line news managers could share more responsibilities with reporters than is currently the case. However, given qualitative data provided by interviewees for both Audit 1 and this research study, one could understand why first-line news managers might be reluctant to do this. If reporters fail to take proper responsibility for their own work (and doing it according to managers' expectations) it would be difficult to motivate why managers should give them additional responsibility. The opposite might also be true. Because reporters experience that

managers give them too little responsibility, they are more reluctant to perform as is expected of them.

7.4.1.7 Compiling teams to accommodate diverse ideas

First-line news managers (n=60) indicated little difference between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof (d=0.43). Reporters, on the other hand (n=158) differ. They perceive a moderately significant gap (d=0.59) between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' implementation thereof. Reporters are therefore of the opinion that more diverse newsroom teams would perform better.

7.4.1.8 Compiling teams to effectively utilise technical skills

Similar results were obtained on this management task than described in section 7.4.1.7. Whereas first-line news managers (n=57) again perceive a practically insignificant difference (d=0.38) between the importance of this task and their implementation thereof, reporters differ. As such, reporters (n=160) indicated a moderately significant difference (d=0.59) between the importance and current implementation thereof. As was the case above, they again experience that managers could do more to utilise the range of technical skills available among newsroom staff.

Improvement in this area could avoid duplication of work (by different teams) or duplication of skills among team members in one team. This, in turn, can prevent that resources are wasted. From qualitative data it seems as if this situation is especially applicable in broadcasting, where one team of reporters and technical crew could cover a news event for both radio and television.

7.4.1.9 *Defining team objectives*

Once organised into teams, reporters (n=157) seem unclear about team objectives. As a result, they indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' implementation thereof. First-line news managers (n=61) again seem unaware that they lack skills in this area, as they indicated a practically insignificant effect ($d=0.22$) on this issue. First-line news managers also perceive this management task less important ($x_1=3.62$) than reporters ($x_1=3.94$). Given the importance of clearly defined objectives to enable proper team performance (see section 7.3.1.1), this issue needs to be addressed.

7.4.1.10 *Defining individual objectives*

Quantitative results further indicate uncertainty among reporters with regard to individual objectives within a teamwork context. As such, reporters (n=160) indicated a practically significant difference ($d=0.77$) between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. The need to rectify this situation becomes even more important given that first-line news managers (n=61) indicated a practically insignificant difference ($d=0.29$) between the importance they attach to and their current implementation of this management task. First-line news managers therefore experience that they perform well to set out individual objectives ($x_2=3.48$), while reporters differ ($x_2=3.08$). These findings correlate with an earlier newsroom study (see Neuzil *et al.*, 1999:6) in which reporters also indicated uncertainty about individual objectives within newsroom teams.

Being uncertain about objectives makes it difficult (if not impossible) for individuals to perform as expected. Through these results, reporters therefore expressed the need to be briefed and debriefed more on what is expected of them, how they perform, how they can improve their performance and how they contribute (or not) towards reaching organisational goals and objectives. A number of interviewees underlined the

importance of briefing and debriefing reporters. However, they simultaneously highlighted the difficulty first-line news managers experience given issues such as deadline pressure and reporters reacting negatively to briefing and debriefing sessions.

7.4.1.11 Creating an environment where teamwork is rewarded

Both first-line news managers ($n=55$) and reporters ($n=159$) indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance of this management task and the former group's ability to properly implement it ($d=0.46$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.73$ for reporters). Reporters, however, seem much more aware of gaps related to the implementation of this management task than their superiors. However, first-line news managers acknowledged that they can do more to reward teamwork. As was expected, reporters also consider this management task much more important ($x_1=4.03$) than first-line news managers ($x_1=3.77$).

7.4.1.12 Coaching, mentoring and counselling reporters through a team project

This management task can be linked to properly defining team and individual objectives (see sections 7.4.1.9 and 7.4.1.10). Reporters ($n=155$) indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.68$) between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. First-line news managers, on the other hand ($n=57$), again indicated a practically insignificant difference ($d=0.42$) on this issue. They are thus fairly satisfied that the importance they attach to this management task correlates with their implementation thereof. Given this result, media enterprises should determine whether first-line news managers implement this management task poorly (although they perceive themselves to be good at it) or whether reporters expect too much from superiors.

7.4.1.13 *Supporting teams in identifying and obtaining resources needed*

The importance of access to adequate resources was discussed in section 7.3.2.2. Despite this, reporters (n=157) highlighted a moderately significant difference (d=0.61) between the importance they attach to support in identifying resources needed and first-line news managers' abilities in this area. First-line news managers, on the other hand (n=53), are of the opinion that they implement this management task properly, given the importance they attach to it. As a result, a practically insignificant difference (d=0.35) was calculated. Despite this, the two groups consider this management task almost equally important ($x_1=3.99$ for reporters and $x_1=3.78$ for first-line news managers).

Similar to the above, reporters (n=156) also perceive a moderately significant difference (d=0.63) between the importance they attach to support in obtaining resources and first-line news managers' ability to do so. First-line news managers (n=52) again perceive a smaller gap between the importance they attach to it and their current implementation thereof. As such, a practically insignificant difference (d=0.40) was calculated.

Given the results outlined in this and previous sections (e.g. sections 7.4.1.9 and 7.4.1.10) reporters indicated a feeling of uncertainty about their role in newsroom activities. As such, they are uncertain about what is expected of them, how they should approach tasks, and where they should get the necessary resources to perform these tasks. To a certain extent, these findings contradict qualitative data. During interviews for Audit 1 and this research study, interviewees described how first-line news managers (and sometimes also managers on higher organisational levels) go further than the extra mile to assist reporters in these activities. As such, they outlined how superiors support reporters in getting a story, getting a fresh angle on a story, getting sources, and including diverse sources when producing a news story.

For the purposes of proper newsroom management, it is again important to determine which perspective truly reflects newsroom activities. While it might be that reporters are

not properly guided in the above process, it might also be that they have unrealistic expectations of their first-line news managers.

7.4.1.14 Understanding individual strengths and weaknesses in a team

First-line news managers (n=61) who participated in this study experience little difference between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof (d=0.14). Reporters, on the other hand (n=162) experience a moderately significant gap (d=0.69) between the implementation of this management task and the importance they attach to it.

As outlined in section 7.3.3.1, this management task forms an important part of managing team dynamics. The fact that first-line news managers seem unaware of their inability in this regard indicates that attention should be paid to this issue.

7.4.1.15 Managing team conflict

The research results in sections 4.6.1.10 and 4.6.1.11 indicated that managers struggle to effectively handle difficult reporters and manage newsroom conflict. Quantitative results related to managing team conflict support these findings. However, when it comes to effectively managing team conflict, it was found that reporters (n=158) are especially aware of the gap between the importance they attach to this management task and managers' implementation thereof. As such, a moderately significant difference (d=0.68) was calculated. Again, first-line news managers (n=58) only highlighted a practically insignificant difference (d=0.39) between the importance they afford this management task and their current implementation thereof. As discussed in section 7.3.3.2, these findings differ from qualitative data provided by interviewees. The latter indicated that they rarely experience newsroom conflict at their media titles.

7.4.1.16 Sharing recognition and credit with members of the team

Given the importance they attach to this management task, reporters (n=164) again seem more aware of first-line news managers' (n=62) inabilities in this area than managers themselves. As such, first-line news managers indicated a practically insignificant difference (d=0.27) on this issue. Reporters, on the other hand, highlighted a moderately significant difference (d=0.66). Despite this finding, the two groups perceive this management task almost equally important ($x_1=4.15$ for reporters and $x_1=4.13$ for first-line news managers).

Sharing recognition and credit with reporters will leave them feeling part of organisational activities. However, it seems as if this is not the case in all newsrooms. Yet, interviewees outlined different initiatives to share recognition and credit with team members. These included adding the names of technical staff in rolling credits following a television news bulletin, sharing financial rewards on commissioned work according to reporters' contribution to the piece, and praising individual team members informally and/or formally during newsroom meetings. At on-line media, for instance, reporters' names are published at the bottom of an article. This indicates that the story was "edited by ...". While this gives reporters recognition for their work, it also adds the responsibility to be accurate and responsible in reporting and editing.

7.4.1.17 Praising reporters in the department

This management task can be linked to the above. However, first-line news managers seem to again disappoint subordinates in the extent to which they praise them for work well done. As such, reporters (n=165) indicated a moderately significant difference (d=0.60) between the importance they attach to this task and their view of how well first-line news managers currently implement it. Again, first-line news managers (n=62) seem oblivious about their shortcomings in this area, as they highlighted a practically insignificant difference (d=0.35) between the importance they attach to this management task and their current implementation thereof.

Table 7.2: Comparing the implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Management task	First-line news managers			Reporters			Effect size (d)
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	
Structuring department for teamwork	64	3.36	1.17	179	3.14	1.26	0.17
Organising reporters into teams	55	3.07	1.32	172	3.10	1.25	0.02
Assisting reporters to work in teams	57	3.30	1.12	174	2.99	1.27	0.24
Formulating teamwork objectives	62	3.19	1.11	176	2.98	1.23	0.18
Motivating reporters to work in teams	63	3.71	1.02	177	3.11	1.29	0.47
Sharing the responsibilities of teamwork	66	3.55	1.10	177	3.16	1.28	0.30
Compiling teams with diverse ideas	64	3.50	1.04	174	3.12	1.32	0.29
Compiling teams to utilise technical skills	61	3.48	1.15	176	3.15	1.32	0.24
Defining team objectives	64	3.44	1.14	174	3.24	1.26	0.16
Defining individual objectives	65	3.48	1.19	177	3.09	1.34	0.29
Rewarding teamwork	59	3.14	1.25	175	2.96	1.33	0.13
Coaching/mentoring/counselling teams	61	3.40	1.19	170	2.94	1.33	0.34
Supporting teams in identifying resources	58	3.38	1.17	175	3.08	1.30	0.23
Supporting teams in obtaining resources	56	3.32	1.08	172	3.13	1.28	0.15
Understanding strengths/weaknesses	65	3.82	1.01	179	3.12	1.26	0.55
Managing team conflict	62	3.48	1.05	176	2.97	1.36	0.38
Sharing recognition and credit in teams	66	3.92	1.01	183	3.26	1.31	0.51
Praising reporters in the department	67	4.16	0.86	180	3.35	1.37	0.59

7.4.2 Implementation of management tasks related to teamwork as a managerial competency

Results in Table 7.2 indicate that first-line news managers in general perceive themselves better implementers ($x_2=3.48$) of the management tasks related to teamwork than reporters experience this to be the case ($x_2=3.11$). Over and above this, results in Table 7.2 highlight four areas where first-line news managers differ from reporters on the implementation of management tasks associated with the teamwork competency. These are subsequently discussed.

7.4.2.1 Motivating reporters to perform satisfactorily in teamwork situations

A moderately significant difference ($d=0.47$) was calculated between first-line news managers' ($n=63$) view of how well they implement this management task and reporters'

($n=177$) experience thereof. As indicated in above, managers perceive themselves better implementers ($x_2=3.71$) than reporters experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.11$).

7.4.2.2 Understanding individual strengths and weaknesses within a team

A moderately significant difference ($d=0.55$) was again calculated between the two respondent groups. As such, first-line news managers ($n=65$) perceive themselves better implementers ($x_2=3.82$) of this management task than reporters experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.12$).

7.4.2.3 Sharing recognition and credit with members of the team

First-line news managers ($n=66$) and reporters ($n=183$) again differ on how well the former group implements this management task. As a result, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.51$) was again calculated. As was the case with the previous two management tasks, reporters again perceive their managers worse implementers ($x_2=3.26$) of this management task than managers themselves perceive their performance ($x_2=3.92$).

7.4.2.4 Praising reporters in the department

The biggest difference between the two groups of respondents was calculated on this management task ($d=0.59$). This can be ascribed to first-line news managers' ($n=67$) view that they are better at implementing this task ($x_2=4.16$) than reporters ($n=180$) experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.35$).

7.4.3 Comparing the importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency across media types

In order to obtain a more detailed view of the importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among reporters and first-line news managers across media types.

Table 7.3: Importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of reporters

Media type	Reporters									
	Importance – Teamwork									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	41	3.70	0.94		0.37	0.44	0.65	0.27	0.37	0.85
Weekly newspaper	48	4.11	1.11			0.00	0.19	0.14	0.05	0.35
Magazine	9	4.11	0.70				0.23	0.20	0.08	0.55
Television	17	4.31	0.87					0.41	0.30	0.21
Radio	45	3.95	0.78						0.13	0.69
On-line media	10	4.05	0.76							0.59
News agency	8	4.50	0.43							
	Implementation – Teamwork									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	41	3.33	0.93		0.44	0.16	0.31	0.16	0.18	0.01
Weekly newspaper	49	2.76	1.31			0.58	0.22	0.31	0.31	0.44
Magazine	9	3.52	1.12				0.42	0.32	0.31	0.14
Television	19	3.04	0.91					0.11	0.14	0.24
Radio	50	3.16	1.07						0.01	0.14
On-line media	11	3.17	0.78							0.14
News agency	8	3.34	1.26							

Table 7.4: Importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media type	First-line news managers									
	Importance – Teamwork									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	23	3.83	1.15		0.06	0.93	0.06	0.51	0.25	0.04
Weekly newspaper	21	3.76	1.18			0.85	0.11	0.56	0.30	0.10
Magazine	2	2.76	0.92				0.78	1.80	1.47	1.12
Television	3	3.92	1.49					0.34	0.13	0.03
Radio	8	4.42	0.62						0.48	0.54
On-line media	8	4.11	0.64							0.23
News agency	5	3.88	1.00							
	Implementation – Teamwork									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily newspaper	Weekly newspaper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	21	3.43	0.87		0.02	1.18	0.22	0.34	0.05	0.59
Weekly newspaper	22	3.45	0.99			1.06	0.21	0.28	0.02	0.50
Magazine	2	2.40	0.02				0.94	1.92	1.64	1.93
Television	3	3.24	0.89					0.55	0.26	0.79
Radio	11	3.73	0.69						0.37	0.27
On-line media	8	3.47	0.65							0.59
News agency	4	3.94	0.80							

Tables 7.3 and 7.4 highlight the following results.

7.4.3.1 Importance of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.65$) was calculated on the importance reporters attach to the teamwork when comparing staff at daily newspapers

($n=41$) with those at television channels ($n=17$). The latter group regards teamwork more important ($x_1=4.31$) than their colleagues at daily newspapers ($x_1=3.70$);

- However, a practically significant difference ($d=0.85$) was calculated between reporters at daily newspapers ($n=41$) and peers at news agencies ($n=8$). The latter consider this managerial competency much more important ($x_1=4.50$) than reporters at daily newspapers ($x_1=3.70$). This result can be attributed to smaller newsrooms at news agencies included in the study compared to those at daily newspapers. As a result, reporters are highly aware of the role proper teamwork plays to achieve organisational goals and objectives; and
- Moderately significant differences on the importance of this competency were also calculated between reporters at news agencies ($n=8$) and those at magazines ($n=9$; $d=0.55$); radio ($n=45$; $d=0.69$); and on-line media ($n=10$; $d=0.59$). In all three instances, reporters at news agencies consider this managerial competency more important ($x_1=4.50$) than peers at magazines ($x_1=4.11$); radio ($x_1=3.95$) and on-line media ($x_1=4.05$). This finding contrasts qualitative data outlining the strong emphasis interviewees at radio stations put on proper teamwork.

7.4.3.2 *Implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.58$) on the implementation of the teamwork competency was calculated between reporters at weekly newspapers ($n=49$) and colleagues at magazines ($n=9$). The latter group perceives their first-line news managers better implementers of this competency ($x_2=3.52$) than the former ($x_2=2.76$).

7.4.3.3 *Importance of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers at radio stations ($n=8$) indicated that they perceive the teamwork competency more important ($x_1=4.42$) than their colleagues at daily newspapers ($n=23$; $x_1=3.83$). As a result, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) was calculated between these two groups of respondents;
- A similar difference ($d=0.56$) was calculated between first-line news managers at radio stations and those at weekly newspapers ($n=21$). As was the case above, first-line news managers at radio stations again perceive this competency more important ($x_1=4.42$) than their peers at weekly newspapers ($x_1=3.76$). These findings can be related to the size of (especially independent) radio newsroom teams in comparison with newsroom teams at daily and weekly newspapers. Due to fewer human resources, first-line news managers at radio are utterly aware of the importance of teamwork;
- However, practically significant differences on the importance of teamwork were calculated between first-line news managers at daily newspapers ($n=23$) and magazines ($n=2$; $d=0.93$), as well as between first-line news managers at daily newspapers and weekly newspapers ($n=21$; $d=0.85$). In both cases, first-line news managers at magazines consider this competency less important ($x_1=2.76$) than their counterparts at daily ($x_1=3.83$) and weekly ($x_1=3.76$) newspapers;
- Apart from this, practically significant differences on the importance of teamwork were also found between first-line news managers at magazines ($n=2$) and their counterparts at television ($n=3$; $d=0.78$), radio ($n=8$; $d=1.80$), on-line media ($n=8$; $d=1.47$) and news agencies ($n=5$; $d=1.12$). Managers employed by magazines regard this competency less important ($x_1=2.76$) than their colleagues at any of the other four media types ($x_1=3.92$ for television; $x_1=4.42$ for radio; $x_1=4.11$ for on-line media; and $x_1=3.88$ for news agencies); and
- Finally, moderately significant differences were also calculated between the importance first-line news managers at radio stations ($n=8$) attach to teamwork compared to the view held by colleagues at on-line media ($n=8$; $d=0.48$) and

news agencies ($n=5$; $d=0.54$). Radio station managers indicated that they perceive this competency more important ($x_1=4.42$) than colleagues at on-line media ($x_1=4.11$) and news agencies ($x_1=3.88$).

7.4.3.4 *Implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers at daily ($n=21$; $x_2=3.43$) and weekly newspapers ($n=22$; $x_2=3.45$) consider themselves practically significantly better ($d=1.18$ for daily newspapers and $d=1.06$ for weekly newspapers) implementers of teamwork than their colleagues at magazines ($n=2$ $x_2=2.40$);
- Managers at daily ($x_2=3.43$) and weekly newspapers ($x_2=3.45$), however, consider themselves worse at implementing this competency than their counterparts at news agencies ($n=4$; $x_2=3.94$). As a result, moderately significant differences were calculated between respondents at daily newspapers and news agencies ($d=0.59$) as well as those at weekly newspapers and news agencies ($d=0.50$);
- It was indicated in section 7.4.3.3 that first-line news managers at magazines regard teamwork far less important than their counterparts at television channels, radio stations, on-line media and news agencies. This perspective was reinforced when the same group of respondents rated their implementation of this competency. As such, they consider themselves far less effective ($x_2=2.40$) than their colleagues at the above-mentioned media types. This implies that practically significant differences were calculated between managers at magazines and colleagues at television ($d=0.94$); radio ($d=1.92$); on-line media ($d=1.64$); and news agencies ($d=1.93$);
- When comparing the perspective of first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) with those employed by radio stations ($n=11$) and news agencies ($n=4$), the former group considers themselves worse at implementing the teamwork competency ($x_2=3.24$) than the latter groups ($x_2=3.73$ for radio stations and $x_2=3.94$ for news agencies respectively). In line with this, a moderately

significant difference ($d=0.55$) was calculated between managers at television channels and those at radio stations, while a practically significant difference ($d=0.79$) was calculated between television managers and peers at news agencies (also see section 7.4.4.4); and

- In the final instance, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.59$) was found between the perception first-line news managers at on-line media ($n=8$) have about their teamwork skills compared to those at news agencies ($n=4$). As was the case with earlier comparisons, the latter regard themselves better at implementing this competency ($x_2=3.94$) than the former ($x_2=3.47$).

7.4.4 *Comparing the importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency across media ownership types*

In order to obtain a more detailed perspective on the importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency, comparisons were also made among media titles operating on different ownership structures.

Tables 7.5 and 7.6 highlight the following results.

7.4.4.1 *Importance of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- No practically significant difference was found on the importance reporters at different media attach to teamwork as a managerial competency. Irrespective of the ownership structure applicable, reporters regard teamwork a fairly important managerial competency ($x_1=3.97$).

Table 7.5: Importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of reporters

Media ownership type	Reporters						
	Importance – Teamwork						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	72	4.12	0.76		0.04	0.44	0.18
Unlisted companies	46	4.07	1.11			0.30	0.13
Public service mandate	31	3.74	0.85				0.18
Foreign ownership	29	3.93	1.03				
	Implementation – Teamwork						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	75	3.27	1.10		0.14	0.51	0.01
Unlisted companies	47	3.09	1.26			0.31	0.13
Public service mandate	38	2.70	0.89				0.55
Foreign ownership	27	3.25	0.99				

7.4.4.2 Implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- Irrespective of the relevant ownership structure, reporters rated the implementation of teamwork slightly better ($x_2=4.00$) than the importance they attach to it ($x_1=3.97$). They also consider their first-line news managers better implementers of this competency than the communication competency ($x_2=3.25$ see section 4.6.4.2); planning and administration competency ($x_2=3.35$ see section 5.4.4.2); or the strategic action competency ($x_2=3.53$ see section 6.3.4.2);

Table 7.6: Importance and implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media ownership type	First-line news managers						
	Importance – Teamwork						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	37	3.70	1.19		0.12	0.78	0.20
Unlisted companies	12	3.84	1.00			0.79	0.10
Public service mandate	9	4.63	0.40				0.82
Foreign ownership	12	3.94	0.84				
	Implementation – Teamwork						
	Effect size (d)						
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	35	3.37	0.92		0.40	0.43	0.11
Unlisted companies	12	3.73	0.84			0.04	0.56
Public service mandate	12	3.76	0.65				0.61
Foreign ownership	12	3.27	0.82				

- As was the case with the implementation of previous competencies (e.g. planning and administration in section 5.4.4.2 and strategic action in section 6.3.4.2), a moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) on the implementation of this competency was calculated between reporters employed by JSE listed companies ($n=75$) and those at the SABC ($n=38$). The latter perceive their first-line news managers worse at implementing teamwork ($x_2=2.70$) than those employed by JSE listed companies ($x_2=3.27$);

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.55$) on the implementation of teamwork was also calculated when the views of reporters at the SABC ($n=38$) were compared with that of reporters at companies with predominantly foreign ownership ($n=27$). Again, reporters at the SABC regard their superiors worse at implementing this competency ($x_2=2.70$) than those at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($x_2=3.25$);
- Overall, reporters at the SABC ($n=38$) thus consider their managers the worst implementers of this competency across the mainstream media industry ($x_2=2.70$). Looking at specific management tasks related to the teamwork competency, reporters rated the following tasks the lowest:
 - Managing team conflict ($n=37$; $x_2=2.38$);
 - Coaching/mentoring/counselling reporters through team projects ($n=35$; $x_2=2.40$);
 - Assisting reporters in acquiring knowledge to work in teams ($n=36$; $x_2=2.50$);
 - Formulating teamwork objectives ($n=37$; $x_2=2.57$); and
 - Creating an environment where teamwork is rewarded ($n=37$; $x_2=2.62$).

The above indicates that reporters at the SABC perceive their first-line news managers worst when it comes to managing team conflict. This result is in line with earlier industry-wide findings that first-line news managers struggle to handle difficult reporters decisively (see sections 4.6.1.10 and 7.4.1.15). Qualitative data obtained from interviewees at the SABC support this finding. As such, one interviewee highlighted the openly hostile newsroom environment he entered when joining the corporation. He also described feelings of suspicion and antagonism between managers and reporters at the time. At another regional office of the SABC qualitative data and observation made it clear that reporters are unhappy with the current state of newsroom management and that newsroom conflict is a reality. Because the scheduled interviewee did not turn up for the

interview, it was impossible to determine the extent to which observations correlate with reality.

Another weakness in SABC managers' teamwork skills (from the perspective of reporters) is their inability to coach, mentor and guide reporters through team projects. Interviewees, however, disagreed. One outlined the mentoring and coaching processes in place at the corporation. However, he indicated that reporters are often unwilling to perform basic tasks related to their jobs, let alone additional tasks aimed at improving their skills. Another interviewee described a briefing and debriefing process through which senior staff members mentor reporters. However, he admitted that many reporters are negative about this initiative, as they perceive it as condescending, with mentors "intruding" on reporters' professional territory.

As was indicated in section 7.4.1.16, it can be difficult to acknowledge the contribution of every individual involved in a newsroom team project. Reporters at the SABC perceive this management task one of the most important weaknesses among first-line news managers. Despite attempts to address this situation (see section 7.4.1.16) this finding indicates that reporters are still dissatisfied with the way in which first-line news managers implement this management task.

7.4.4.3 Importance of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the relevant ownership structure) consider teamwork an important managerial competency ($x_1=4.03$). They also consider it slightly more important than reporters indicated in section 7.3.4.1. First-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) (compared with colleagues at other media enterprises) again perceive this competency most important ($x_1=4.63$); and

- Practically significant differences on the importance of this competency thus exist between first-line news managers at the SABC and those at listed companies ($n=37$; $d=0.78$); unlisted companies ($n=12$; $d=0.79$); and companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=12$; $d=0.82$). As stated above, first-line news managers at the SABC perceive the teamwork competency more important than peers at listed companies ($x_1=3.70$); unlisted companies ($x_1=3.84$); and companies with a majority of foreign ownership structures ($x_1=3.94$).

7.4.4.4 *Implementation of teamwork as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Reporters and first-line news managers who participated in the study rated the implementation of teamwork exactly the same ($x_2=4.00$). As was the case with other managerial competencies (e.g. communication in section 4.6.4.4; and strategic action in section 6.3.4.4) first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) again consider themselves best at implementing the teamwork competency ($x_2=3.76$);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.61$) on the implementation of this competency was subsequently calculated between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) and their colleagues at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=12$);
- Similarly, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.56$) on the implementation of teamwork exists between first-line news managers at unlisted companies ($n=12$) and those at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=12$). The former group regards themselves slightly better at implementing this competency ($x_2=3.73$) than the latter ($x_2=3.27$);
- When looking at individual management tasks first-line news managers at the SABC perceive themselves best at, the following stands out:
 - Praising reporters in the department ($n=12$; $x_2=4.58$);
 - Sharing recognition and credit with members of the team ($n=12$; $x_2=4.25$);

- Sharing the responsibilities associated with teamwork ($n=12$; $x_2=4.25$);
 - Motivating reporters to perform satisfactorily in teamwork situations ($n=12$; $x_2=4.17$);
 - Defining individual objectives ($n=11$; $x_2=4.09$); and
 - Understanding individual strengths and weaknesses in a team ($n=12$; $x_2=4.08$).
- As was the case with other competencies (e.g. strategic action in section 6.3.4.4), the above indicates that first-line news managers at the SABC generally perceive themselves best at implementing those management tasks reporters rated them bad at (see section 7.4.4.2);
 - As such, this group of respondents perceive themselves good at praising reporters and sharing recognition and credit with team members. These were also the two areas in which reporters gave managers the most credit for their performance. However, from reporters' point of view, first-line news managers implement one or two other management tasks better (see section 7.4.4.2);
 - First-line news managers at the SABC also perceive themselves good at sharing the responsibilities associated with implementing tasks in a teamwork context. Reporters, however, have a different perspective. As a result, they rated it one of their managers' worst abilities ($x_2=2.73$);
 - While first-line news managers regard themselves good team motivators, reporters regard first-line news managers' skills in this area low ($x_2=2.76$);
 - First-line news managers also rated themselves better with defining individual objectives than reporters did. Whereas reporters regard their first-line news managers worst at defining team objectives, first-line news managers themselves indicated their strength in defining individual objectives. It is not possible to determine from this research which of the two perceptions is a true reflection of the day-to-day implementation of these management tasks in newsrooms; and
 - First-line news managers at the SABC rated their skills to understand individual strengths and weaknesses fairly good ($x_2=4.08$). Reporters, however, regard this as one of first-line news managers biggest weaknesses ($x_2=2.76$).

The conclusions and managerial implications of the above findings are discussed in chapter ten of this study.

7.5 Summary

This chapter focused on the dimensions of teamwork as a managerial competency. In the first instance, managers' responsibility to properly design teams was discussed. Attention was then focused on managers' role in setting out clear individual and team objectives in order to foster commitment and enthusiasm among team members. Subsequently, team members should be given the responsibility and authority to perform the tasks assigned to them. In the process of coaching and mentoring team members, managers should also assist them to identify and obtain the resources they need to perform their duties. The final dimension of the teamwork competency entails that team leaders should effectively manage individual strengths and weaknesses within a team. This is especially important, as these factors often cause tension and conflict among team members. Obviously, managers also need the expertise and insight to effectively address conflict situations.

In the latter part of the chapter the discussion specifically focused on quantitative and qualitative research results relevant to this part of the study. As such, it was found that reporter respondents are much more aware of the gaps between the importance they attach to teamwork as a managerial competency and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. While they highlighted important gaps on all the management tasks listed, first-line news managers only perceive themselves performing below their expectations on a few of these tasks.

When research results were applied to specific media types, it was found that reporters at news agencies regard teamwork most important. However, reporters at magazines consider their first-line news managers best when it comes to implementing this competency. When comparing the perspective of first-line news managers across the

industry, it was found that those at radio stations value this competency most. As a result, they also perceive themselves good at implementing it. However, results indicated that colleagues at news agencies perceive themselves best implementers of the teamwork competency.

When these results were compared across different ownership types, a different picture evolved. Reporters at listed companies regard the teamwork competency most important. Hence, they also regard their first-line news managers good at implementing this competency. Reporters at the SABC, however, consider this competency least important, while also perceiving their first-line news managers worst at implementing it. First-line news managers at the SABC, however, rated teamwork by far the most important across the industry. They also perceive themselves best at implementing it. It is evident from these results that the perceptions between reporters and first-line news managers at the SABC differ and that the issue should be addressed before SABC newsroom teams can function optimally.

The following chapter focuses on global awareness as a managerial competency, with specific reference to the importance and implementation thereof in South African mainstream media newsrooms.

Chapter 8:

Global awareness as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management

The corollary of media industry growth, concentration, and convergence has been the emergence of an imperfect oligarchy, comprised of globally reaching, multilayered, and multiplatformed information and entertainment corporations ... operating within the cultural practices and sensibilities of numerous (different communities).

– **Andrews** (2003:236)

(South Africans) come from different experiences, and newsroom cultures and values need to reflect this difference and diversity, not silence it ... Our journeys, routes and roots (are) different. Our experiences (are) different. And we need to bridge that gap.

– **Ranchod** (2003:10)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter demarcates the dimensions of global awareness as a managerial competency. In the first instance the theoretical dimensions of the global awareness competency are outlined and applied to newsroom management in a South African and international context. This is followed by research results on the importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. The intention is to highlight areas in which respondents (reporters and first-line news managers) perceive gaps between the importance they attach to this competency and first-line news managers' current implementation thereof.

8.2 Challenges associated with a globalised business environment

Changes in local and international business approaches see enterprises entering an environment characterised by (see Cronje & Neuland, 2003:24):

- Increased competition;
- Increasing numbers of and increasingly versatile markets that need to be served with more versatile products; and
- An overall shortening of physical and time distances.

These elements characterise a phenomenon known as globalisation (see section 8.2.1). Similar to businesses in other industries, media enterprises are challenged to address a number of internal and external challenges resulting from this phenomenon. Internally, this relates to an increasingly diverse social and cultural workforce. From an external perspective, media enterprises are expected to satisfy the diverse needs and expectations of audiences in different geographical locations (and often from diverse backgrounds). These audiences expect to receive information on breaking news events and new products available in different markets (Ranchod, 2003:8). Over and above this, the media is also required to entertain audiences in a variety of areas. These issues inevitably impact on the way in which media enterprises are staffed and managed, as well as the way in which they operate (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006:464; also see Shrikhande, 2001:147-168 with regard to how CNN International and BBC World in Asia have adjusted their competitive strategies in an attempt to address these challenges).

8.2.1 *Threats and opportunities presented by global activities*

Over recent decades, globalisation has become one of the most salient characteristics of business activity worldwide. Some consider it a threat to communities and cultures on the periphery (i.e. minorities). Other, however, are of the opinion that it presents a number of benefits to marginalised groups, as it exposes them to a wider variety of products and services. Sánchez-Tabernero (2006:471), however, probably summarises

the issues surrounding globalisation best by stating that it does not necessarily present threats or opportunities. It rather presents a challenge that needs to be managed properly in order to capitalise on the opportunities it offers.

8.2.1.1 *The impact of globalisation on the media industry*

Compared to industries responsible for producing and distributing consumer products, globalisation might affect media enterprises differently. Chan-Olmsted and Chang (2003:217) ascribe this to the following differences between media products and other consumer products:

- Media products are dual and complementary in nature. As such, different media products complement each other or provide an alternative perspective on an issue or event. For instance, a television news bulletin only provides the most salient information on a breaking news story. Weekly newspapers, however, can cover the same event in more depth or from a different news angle;
- The majority of media enterprises rely on diverse (and some would argue incompatible) sources of revenue. These include:
 - Owners, often from different industries in different countries and with different cultural backgrounds than the target market;
 - Consumers, such as viewers paying to watch a television programme via pay per view television or subscribers paying a certain amount of money to receive a specific bouquet of programmes; and
 - Advertisers, who pay to have their products and services promoted via different media channels.
- More than one person (often millions of people) can simultaneously use media products without it becoming depleted or unavailable to other consumers. In fact, increased acceptance and consumption of media products contributes to improved economies of scale;

- Many media products (such as television programmes or movies) are marketed and distributed to consumers via different communication channels and at different times. Movies are, for instance, screened at movie theatres, but it might (at different times) also be available through cable or satellite television broadcasts; or by means of pay per view television in hotel rooms; and
- The nature of media products (and the acceptance thereof) is often influenced by the cultural preferences of the target market. As such, Reza (2006:185) states that “media product content displays ... a cultural and symbolic nature, ... (it thus) also have socio-cultural value ... (and it) can never be dissociated (thereof)”.

8.2.1.2 *Challenges presented by globalisation*

Despite the above differences, media and other enterprises face similar challenges related to doing business in a globalised context. These include:

- Cultural imperialism. During the late 1970s, researchers indicated that culturally strong countries (such as the US) threaten the cultural diversity of weaker countries and regions. The latter are mostly situated in the developing world. However, similar concerns have also been expressed with regard to the impact of US media products on neighbouring Canada (see Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006:471);
- Concentration of media ownership. Critics argue that media concentration could result in a concentration of economic, cultural and political power in the hands of fewer individuals/enterprises (Singer, 2004:839). Because media owners subsequently aim to protect similar interests, the likelihood is that news products are compiled in such a manner that these interests would not be harmed (Angwin, 2004a:B1). Critics argue that this could see diversity in news coverage becoming obsolete (e.g. see Bagdikian, 1990), depriving media consumers from getting as many sides of the news story as possible (see Omar, 1999:2). Critics also argue that owners' primary knowledge of and experience in other industries often exaggerates this situation (see Herrick, 2003:305; also see section 4.3.3).

Owners of media conglomerates, on the other hand, argue that expanding interests on a global scale are merely attempts to ensure “business survival” (Herrick, 2003:328). In a somewhat unexpected comment, Ted Turner (CNN founder, Time Warner board member and generally considered one of the “fathers” of media ownership concentration) disagreed. He called on the US government to “break up big media companies ... which have grown too large and too powerful” (Angwin, 2004b:B6) and which have become “detrimental to the survival of small, emerging companies” (Angwin, 2004a:B1). Through these statements, Turner probably strengthened the position of critics against media concentration to the detriment of his own media interests; and

- Technological innovation. To a certain degree, the advent of new communication media (such as the Internet) addresses these concerns. The nature of Internet communication affords any person/institution the opportunity to become both sender and receiver of information (e.g. see section 6.2.1.2 with regard to blogging). This media characteristic disperses the power commonly associated with concentration of media ownership into the hands of more role-players. Moreover, it increases the information and entertainment options available to media audiences (see Herrick, 2003:308). Apart from this, technological innovation also provides media enterprises with the opportunity to improve the quality and professionalism of media output (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006:471).

8.2.1.3 Knowledge as a core competency in a globalised environment

The realities of and challenges associated with global business activity have transformed knowledge into a core competency (Quinn, 2002:23). As such, knowledge is considered the primary tool that enables managers to take quick, reliable and informed decisions. As Herrick (2003:328) states, “going international ... carries unexpected perils for ... companies ... because they are not nearly as familiar with the politics and policies of foreign nations as they are of their own”. This does not only relate

to managing the needs and expectations of external markets (e.g. audiences; advertisers; government and other regulatory bodies) (see Andrews, 2003:235). It specifically also relates to managing the needs and expectations of a culturally diverse internal market. Adding to this dilemma is the tendency that staff are often distributed across large geographical areas, their only link being mediated communication channels (Quinn, 2002:53). Diverse backgrounds and the lack of interpersonal communication increase the potential for communication problems and misunderstanding.

Given this, knowledge and insight into these aspects becomes critical for organisational success. This can be facilitated if managers are aware of and skilled in the dimensions of the global awareness competency. These dimensions are subsequently discussed.

8.3 Dimensions of global awareness as a managerial competency

Global awareness as a managerial competency refers to managers' ability to draw resources from multiple countries and serve markets across multiple cultures (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:22; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:21; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:21). As such, managers need cultural knowledge and understanding, and display characteristics of cultural openness and sensitivity.

This definition evidently also applies to newsroom management in South Africa. However, to a certain extent challenges related to the global awareness competency present itself in a different guise within the South African media environment. As Berger (2004a:36) states, the South African media has been slow to expand across national borders. The exception is satellite television, available in Africa, Greece, Cyprus, China and Thailand through the DStv network (Harris, 2005:11; Van der Linde, 2005:28) and some activities into Africa by Media24. Apart from this, a number of international media companies (e.g. from Nigeria, Ireland and the US) have also invested in South Africa.

However, characteristics of South Africa's domestic market present news managers with distinctive micro management challenges related to the global awareness competency.

On the one hand, the media is obliged to employ a workforce that is representative of the country's ethnic, language and other minority groups (e.g. see Berger, 2004a:36; Kupe, 2004:38). On the other, it also needs to serve a culturally and linguistically diverse audience (see Addison, 2003d:21) despite increasing exposure to global news, information and entertainment (see Anon, 2004:15). As a result, news managers must narrow down their interpretation of the global awareness competency to focus on the requirements of their micro management environments. As newsroom management is the focal point of this study, the subsequent discussion on the global awareness competency highlights aspects relevant to this context.

8.3.1 Cultural knowledge and understanding

As Herrick (2003:328) indicates, entering international markets presents enterprises with potential pitfalls in terms of cultural knowledge and understanding. Hellriegel *et al.*, (2005:22) support this perspective by explaining how growing up in a certain country equips an individual with knowledge and understanding of social/cultural norms and traditions applicable to that country. This process also provides individuals with knowledge and experience about geography, climate, politics, economic history and values relevant to their surroundings. This knowledge almost becomes second nature. In many cases, however, foreigners lack this insight when entering international markets. This could be detrimental to the success of their activities in those markets.

In an attempt to address the above-mentioned shortcomings, managers need to improve their skills and expertise in the following areas (see DuBrin, 2003:46; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:31; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:21-24).

8.3.1.1 *Being informed of political, social and economic trends and recognising the impact thereof*

Thill and Bovée (2002:48) describe market globalisation as the tendency for various international markets to operate as one. As a result, political, social and economic

events impact on business activities across national borders. Business owners and managers thus have little choice but to remain informed of these events and the impact thereof on their business activities. This knowledge enables them to strategically position their businesses within changing environments (also see section 6.3.1.5). As outlined in sections 4.2.1 and 8.2.1.2, improved communication technology contributes to, but also facilitates, these processes.

Interviewees who participated in this research study outlined ways in which their media enterprises strive to improve newsroom staff's knowledge and awareness of changing political, social and economic conditions (e.g. see section 6.3.4.2 with regard to these efforts by the SABC). Apart from these initiatives, interviewees also described the role played by research offices or libraries at some media titles to assist staff in obtaining additional information when compiling news stories.

Despite these efforts, interviewees gave the impression that one of their biggest challenges is to persuade staff members to utilise these facilities. Some attributed it to a lack of time and tight deadlines, while others ascribed it to staff's lack of interest to get as much information as possible when compiling a news story. The result is that many news stories lack context, especially given low general knowledge skills (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:12-20).

As outlined in section 6.3.1.5, first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media consider it least important to monitor changes in the international context in order to identify the potential impact thereof on their media enterprises. Qualitative data supported this finding. Given the intertwined nature of national and international events in the global market (see section 8.2) managers can not afford to lack insight into these issues and the extent to which it impacts on their media enterprises' activities.

Despite this finding, both managers and reporters who participated in this research indicated that they place a high premium on being informed about changes in their local and national contexts (see sections 6.3.1.3 and 6.3.1.4). This implies a tendency to be

aware of and properly reflect on issues relevant to regional and national audiences. These include:

- Cultural and language issues;
- Economic activity;
- Infrastructure; and
- Social issues such as HIV/Aids, poverty and unemployment.

This finding is particularly positive in terms of addressing the needs and expectations of a diverse South African media audience. Qualitative data again confirmed this finding. For instance, interviewees at the SABC's regional offices described efforts to cooperate with colleagues in different regions when covering a news event. Their view is that this process provides audiences with a more accurate and representative news story (also see Nsidi, 2002).

8.3.1.2 Understanding, reading and speaking more than one language fluently

The role of language to facilitate effective communication was outlined in sections 4.3.2.1 and 4.4.1. This role seems even more prevalent to promote understanding between parties during intercultural communication (Kennedy, 2002:99). The original intention with this element of the global awareness competency was probably to equip managers with skills to communicate on an international level. However, returning to the micro management environment of South African news managers, the language situation in South Africa necessitates that they are well versed in the country's indigenous languages.

As elsewhere in the world (e.g. see Thill & Bovée, 2002:49) cultural and language diversity increasingly characterises the workforce in South African businesses – also the media (see sections 4.2.2 and 8.3; also see Farr, 2005:48; Von Bormann, 2004a:34). As such, research results for Audit 2 indicated that all eleven official South African languages are represented to some extent in mainstream media newsrooms (see Steyn

et al., 2005a:32). While this is positive in terms of representation, it also poses the potential for misunderstanding and ineffective newsroom communication. This potential is confirmed by other findings from Audit 2 that 80.82% of first-line news managers predominately communicate in English, even though it is the mother tongue of only 50.65% (see Steyn, Steyn & De Beer, 2005b:13). The situation looks even worse among reporters, as 72.49% of them indicated that they predominantly communicate in English at work, even though it is the mother tongue of only 28.26% (Steyn *et al.*, 2005b:13). Research by the Pan South African Language Board confirms the danger posed by this situation. The Board found that more than 40% of South Africans do not understand messages communicated to them in English (Anon, 2004:14).

Adding to the difficulties presented by the above situation is interviewees' apparent lack of insight into the potential threat posed by language diversity in newsrooms. The majority of them described multilingualism as a unifying factor in newsrooms (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:56). However, quantitative data from reporters and first-line news managers showed that the latter lack sufficient language skills to promote newsroom communication (see section 4.6.1.13).

8.3.2 Cultural openness and sensitivity

Apart from cultural knowledge and understanding, the global awareness competency also requires managers to be open to cultural diversity and display sensitivity towards cultural differences. As such, managers need to address the following elements (see DuBrin, 2003:46; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:31; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:21-24).

8.3.2.1 *Insight into national, ethnic and cultural differences and the ability to examine these openly and objectively*

People born and raised in a particular environment grow accustomed to and subsequently belong to a particular culture (see section 8.3.1). As a result, they share symbols, beliefs, and norms that guide their behaviour. Moreover, they share

“assumptions about how people should think, behave, and communicate and they will act on those assumptions in much the same way” (Thill & Bovée, 2002:50).

However, cultural differences (increasingly within the same country) abound. In a business environment, this aspect especially necessitates that parties are sensitive towards these differences, understand it and react appropriately to it. Because this inclination will cultivate mutual trust and respect, cooperation will improve with subsequent improvement in organisational output (see Badenhorst, 2003:62).

Probably one of the most important research studies on cultural diversity (Kennedy, 2002:97) was done by the Dutch engineer and psychologist Geert Hofstede (1983). Through research among IBM staff in more than 70 countries in the 1980s, Hofstede developed a framework to explain cultural diversity on the basis of four dimensions (Hofstede, 1983:75-89). South African managers also participated in Hofstede's research. However, the survey was done at a time when cultural diversity was not such a prominent characteristic of South African businesses as is currently the case. The majority of South Africans included in the study would thus have been white male respondents. Nevertheless, the framework developed from Hofstede's research remains useful to understand workplace diversity in South African businesses. In the context of this study, this applies to South African mainstream media newsrooms in particular.

According to Hofstede, the following aspects can explain cultural diversity in the workplace (see Cole, 2004:129; Kennedy, 2002:98).

8.3.2.1.1 Uncertainty avoidance

This aspect of Hofstede's framework refers to the level of comfort people experience in ambiguous or uncertain situations. Within a low avoidance culture, individuals tolerate uncertainty and adjust their behaviour accordingly. However, in high avoidance cultures, individuals perceive uncertainty as a threat. As a result, they tend to avoid it (Hill, 2001:99). In Hofstede's study South African managers were typified as displaying low

uncertainty avoidance characteristics (see Johansson, 2003:72; Ball & McCulloch, 1999:294).

At the time of Hofstede's study the South African society displayed characteristics of certainty and stability. During the apartheid years white male employees, for instance, enjoyed high levels of job security. However, a new dispensation post-1994 brought about uncertainty for the same group of employees due to affirmative action and gender equity programmes. As a result, these employees might display characteristics typical of high avoidance cultures. South African managers are thus required to adjust human resource management approaches in light of this uncertainty. Affirmative action and black economic empowerment (BEE) initiatives are especially prevalent on higher media management levels (Von Bormann, 2004a:34; Berger, 2004a:36; Addison, 2003a:25). As a result, black managers should be sensitive towards characteristics of high avoidance cultures among white colleagues and manage their fears and frustrations accordingly. Ignorance of this tendency could result in misunderstanding and conflict.

Another aspect currently characterising South African newsrooms is high staff turnover (see section 1.3.4.5). This was already identified during Audit 1 (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:25) and again confirmed during the current research (see sections 1.7.4.1 and 1.7.4.2; also see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:38-39). This aspect inevitably impacts on newsroom stability, as newsrooms are often expected to deliver professional news products with fewer and less experienced staff. Managers who display characteristics of high avoidance cultures could struggle to handle the instability associated with these situations. This, in turn, might increase their stress levels and impact negatively on newsroom efficiency and professionalism.

8.3.2.1.2 *Power distance*

This element relates to people's ability to accept that power (in society, business or even interpersonal relationships) is unequally distributed between the parties involved. As such, high power distance cultures accept power imbalances easier than low power

distance cultures. The latter perceives the gap between those with power and those without as much smaller (see Keegan & Green, 2003:149). In Hofstede's study, South African respondents were classified as displaying characteristics of high power distance cultures (see Doole & Lowe, 2001:82). As a result, they were more comfortable with the reality that organisational and social power is distributed unevenly. As Hill (2001:99) states, such an inclination is prevalent in societies where members "let inequalities (in physical and intellectual capabilities) grow over time into inequalities of power and wealth".

However, people in management positions, management styles and conditions are all different post-1994 than during Hofstede's study. Affirmative action and BEE policies, as well as changes in management styles across the South African media (see section 1.3.3), potentially impact on the power distance dimension. This, in turn, could challenge effective newsroom management.

Section 1.3.1 described the transformation from top-down management styles towards more open, democratic and participative approaches. Interviewees who participated in both Audit 1 and the current research study confirmed that the latter is the preferred management style and that it has been implemented successfully in the majority of newsrooms. However, some interviewees described how this management style has decreased the power distance between themselves and subordinates. When autocratic management styles applied, all staff members were highly aware of the power distance between themselves and their superiors. However, interviewees outlined that a more relaxed power distance also implies a more relaxed relationship between superiors and subordinates. As a result, some subordinates take liberties with regard to their work responsibilities. This creates additional responsibilities for managers and increases tension, while it lowers their productivity and professionalism.

8.3.2.1.3 *Masculinity-femininity*

This dimension of Hofstede's framework refers to the tendency in some cultures to have specific expectations about gender roles. Whereas masculine cultures prefer assertiveness, feminine cultures prefer flexibility and focus more on the welfare of and relationships with others (see Hollensen, 2001:173). South African managers who participated in Hofstede's study were characterised as displaying more masculine traits (Johansson, 2003:72). This finding corresponds with the notion to apply top-down management styles. However, this tendency has changed in post-apartheid South African society.

With reference to newsroom management in South Africa, the tendency towards masculinity-femininity can, for instance, be distinguished among different generations of staff (see section 6.2.2.1; also see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:56). As such, older employees often prefer a masculine approach to work responsibilities (i.e. highly structured and assertive). Younger employees, on the other hand, display a more feminine approach. As a result, they are more relaxed about their work responsibilities and focus more on establishing relationships rather than destroying them by being too task-oriented. The newsroom management challenges flowing from these differences were discussed in section 6.2.2.1.

8.3.2.1.4 *Individualism-collectivism*

The final dimension of Hofstede's framework refers to the preference among people or societies for individual action or collective efforts. Members of individualistic cultures tend to focus their responsibilities on themselves and their immediate family. In the collectivist cultures, however, people are expected to be loyal to and responsible for a wider group of dependents (see Cateora & Graham, 2002:109). South African managers in Hofstede's study predominantly displayed characteristics of an individualist culture (Doole & Lowe, 2001:82). As such, they were probably more focused on themselves and the needs of their immediate relatives rather than the needs of a wider society.

However, managers employed by South African enterprises post-1994 do not necessarily display these characteristics. This is also the case among newsroom staff in the country.

The stronger emphasis on collectivism in some African cultures may directly contrast the more individualistic approach found in many Western cultures. However, interviewees described how black reporters who belong to more collectivist cultures often face unrealistic financial and social responsibilities. These cultures expect members to distribute financial resources among an extended family. Once they have lived up to these responsibilities, many struggle to meet their own financial needs. On a social level members of a collectivist culture are also faced with various responsibilities. Events such as weddings or funerals could result in staff being absent from the office for long periods of time. Members of individualistic cultures might become frustrated if this situation is not addressed. As a result, news managers are required to be sensitive towards and manage these differences without compromising professional quality, while also preventing newsroom tension and conflict (e.g. see Frense, 2003:28).

8.3.2.2 *Sensitivity towards cultural cues and skills to avoid stereotyping*

Unfortunately, it is not sufficient to merely understand cultural differences. Managers (and staff) should also be sensitive towards signals that indicate cultural differences. Insensitivity towards these cues could result in poor performance among those who experience that they are not understood or that their cultural preferences are not acknowledged and accommodated (Arumugam, 2001:25).

Cues on cultural differences can, for instance, be provided nonverbally (see section 4.4.8). Although many aspects of nonverbal communication correspond across cultures (see Beall, 2004:19-20) the degree of expression often differs. This especially relates to facial expression, eye contact, physical proximity and gestures. Parties should be sensitive towards these differences and react accordingly.

Sensitivity towards cultural differences also prevents ethnocentrism and stereotyping. The former describes people's tendency to believe that their own culture and cultural traits is superior to that of others (Thill & Bovée, 2002:56). Subsequently, they expect others to change their customs in order to facilitate effective communication. They also lack sensitivity to factors that could cause misunderstanding and lapse in communication, as they judge people (or their arguments) before they have sufficient information (Romano, 2002:14). This easily results in stereotyping and an inability to establish proper relationships (Thill & Bovée, 2002:56).

8.3.2.3 Ability to adjust behaviour when communicating with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds

One of the first challenges related to the above is the awareness that people's culture and background could affect behaviour and attitudes. This implies flexibility on the part of both parties. In addition, communicators can adjust their behaviour during intercultural communication by keeping the following in mind (Thill & Bovée, 2002:60-62):

- Look for common ground, but assume that differences exist and be aware of potential implications thereof;
- Take responsibility to establish effective communication. Do not consider it the other party's responsibility;
- Do not judge people or their perspectives before having sufficient information;
- Identify and develop techniques that demonstrate respect in different cultures;
- Empathise with the other party and try to communicate accordingly;
- Develop skills to tolerate differences and control frustration in confusing situations;
- Look beyond people's appearance to discover the true person you are interacting with;
- Be conscious to send clear verbal and nonverbal messages; and

- Implement feedback on communication in order to establish how effective the message reached the other party.

Given the multicultural nature of South African newsrooms, news managers and reporters need to increase their awareness of the above-mentioned issues. They also need to implement as many of these as possible in order to facilitate intercultural communication. If this is the case, multiculturalism could become a strength in media newsrooms rather than a dividing factor (see More, 2002; Katopodis, 2002; Omar, 1999:3).

The previous sections of this chapter outlined the dimensions of global awareness as a managerial competency. The discussion subsequently focuses on research results, specifically pertaining to the importance and implementation of the global awareness competency in South Africa's mainstream media. Quantitative results are based on how important first-line news managers and reporters regard the management tasks associated to this competency. In addition, it provides both groups' perspective on the current implementation of these tasks by first-line news managers.

8.4 Results – the importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency

Tables 8.1 and 8.2 display quantitative results on the following issues:

- The difference between the importance first-line news managers attach to each of the management tasks related to the global awareness competency and their perception of the current implementation thereof. This is compared with the difference between the importance reporters attach to each of the management tasks and their perception of first-line news managers' implementation of each task; and
- The difference between the implementation of these management tasks from the perspective of reporters and first-line news managers.

The aggregate effect size of global awareness as a managerial competency (without dividing it into different management tasks or on the basis of media type or media ownership type) shows that:

- First-line news managers are highly aware of the difference between the importance they attach to this competency and their current implementation thereof. As a result, they indicated a practically significant effect size ($d=0.96$); and
- Reporters are also aware of the difference between the importance of this competency and first-line news managers' implementation thereof. However, they experience a smaller gap than news managers. A moderately significant effect size ($d=0.73$) was therefore calculated.

Given these results, top management and owners should realise that first-line news managers perceive themselves unable to optimally perform the management tasks associated with the global awareness competency. Due to the reality of multiculturalism and multilingualism in newsrooms, first-line news managers should be equipped with skills to harness these as unifying rather than dividing factors.

8.4.1 The importance of management tasks related to global awareness as a managerial competency compared to the implementation thereof

Table 8.1 outlines the following with regard to each management task related to global awareness as a managerial competency.

Table 8.1: Comparing the importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Global awareness as a managerial competency								
Management task	First-line news managers				Reporters			
	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)
13.5.1 Being informed about social, political changes in SA	71	0.45	0.71	0.63	170	0.61	1.16	0.53
13.5.2 Being informed about international social, political changes	71	0.54	0.86	0.69	170	0.61	1.12	0.55
13.5.3 Recognising the impact of these changes on the media	69	0.61	0.86	0.71	165	0.62	1.15	0.54
13.5.4 Developing multilingual skills	67	1.10	1.10	1.00	165	0.95	1.51	0.63
13.5.5 Confidence in handling ethnic/cultural differences	70	0.79	0.96	0.82	167	0.87	1.41	0.62
13.5.6 Gaining understanding in ethnic and cultural differences	69	0.48	0.74	0.65	167	0.92	1.31	0.70
13.5.7 Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues	71	0.56	0.77	0.73	167	0.79	1.29	0.61
13.5.8 Being able to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues	71	0.58	0.89	0.65	168	0.89	1.35	0.66
13.5.9 Adjusting behaviour when interacting with different cultures	70	0.49	0.76	0.64	169	0.78	1.34	0.58

8.4.1.1 *Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa*

Both first-line news managers ($n=71$) and reporters ($n=170$) are aware that this management task is not currently implemented optimally, given the importance they attach to it. As a result, moderately significant differences were calculated for both groups of respondents ($d=0.63$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.53$ for reporters). This effect size shows that first-line news managers are slightly more aware of their shortcomings in this regard than reporters.

8.4.1.2 *Being informed about international social, political and economic changes*

As was the case above, both first-line news managers ($n=71$) and reporters ($n=170$) are aware that this management task is not implemented optimally either, given its importance. Moderately significant effect sizes were subsequently calculated ($d=0.69$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.55$ for reporters). First-line news managers therefore again indicated that they do not perform well enough on this area, and that they should pay more attention to international changes.

The findings outlined in sections 8.4.1.1 and 8.4.1.2 correlate with earlier findings related to the strategic action competency (see section 6.3.1.5). Both sets of results indicate that newsroom staff (especially first-line news managers) are less aware of changes in the international context than they think they should be. Qualitative data (especially from interviews for Audit 1) confirm this situation (see section 8.3.1.1; also see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:12-20).

Given the trends associated with globalisation outlined in section 8.2.1, media enterprises have little choice but to stay competitive. In order to achieve this, they need to stay abreast of changes in their micro and macro environments. As such, ignorance about changes in these environments should be addressed urgently. Inability to address this situation could see media audiences choosing alternative sources of information (e.g. on-line media, a variety of television channels and radio stations). This could lead

to media enterprises losing their competitive advantage in a market characterised by tight competition (see section 8.2).

8.4.1.3 Recognising the impact of these changes on the media

Because first-line news managers are ill-informed about changes in the above-mentioned news contexts, respondents highlighted an inability among this group to recognise the impact of these changes on the media industry. As such, first-line news managers ($n=69$) highlighted a moderately significant difference ($d=0.71$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their ability to implement it. Reporters ($n=165$) again seem less aware of this gap, although they also highlighted a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) between the importance and implementation thereof.

As discussed in section 8.3.1.1, managers across business industries are required to recognise the impact of national and international changes on global business activity. An inability among media managers to perform this management task might detrimentally affect media enterprises. As such, the media could be unable to adjust their news agenda or story angles to address the impact of these events. On the other hand, media titles might consider it unnecessary to adjust their news coverage of events, because they are unaware of the impact these changes have on their business activities.

8.4.1.4 Developing multilingual skills

The discussion in section 4.2.2 outlined how South African newsrooms are becoming increasingly multilingual and multicultural. It also highlighted specific consequences for the media and media management. Despite the reality of these changes, quantitative results from this section of the research indicate that newsrooms are not yet reaping the full benefits of multilingualism and multiculturalism. Whereas the majority of interviewees consider multilingualism a unifying factor in newsrooms, first-line news managers and

reporters disagree. First-line news managers ($n=67$) seem especially aware of the difference between the importance they attach to having multilingual skills and their current ability to develop these skills. As such, a practically significant effect size ($d=1.00$) was calculated. Reporters ($n=165$) are moderately aware of this gap. However, they regard it less significant than first-line news managers ($d=0.63$).

Through these findings, first-line news managers thus acknowledge that they do not yet possess sufficient multilingual skills to effectively interact with newsroom staff from different language backgrounds. This might, in turn, negatively affect effective newsroom communication. Media enterprises should address this situation given the role multilingualism can play to facilitate effective communication (see section 8.3.1.2; also see Addison, 2003d:21).

8.4.1.5 *Confidence in handling ethnic/cultural differences*

Linked to the above is first-line news managers' ability to handle ethnic and cultural differences. Again managers on higher organisational levels seem ignorant about the true state of affairs in newsrooms, or tried to paint a more positive picture during interviews. As such, a number of interviewees indicated that multiculturalism might have been a problem during Audit 1, but that they now hardly ever experience newsroom conflict due to cultural differences. They also pointed out that newsroom staff are more relaxed about cultural and ethnic differences. They ascribe this situation to staff members being more informed about and accommodating towards each others' political, cultural or even religious differences than in the past.

First-line news managers and reporters, on the other hand, again differ. As such, first-line news managers ($n=70$) indicated a practically significant difference ($d=0.82$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their ability to currently perform it. Reporters ($n=167$) again seem aware of this difference, but do not perceive it as such a significant shortcoming among news managers. As a result, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.62$) was calculated between the importance they

attach to this management task and their experience of managers' current implementation thereof.

Multiculturalism currently characterises South African newsrooms and is likely to become even more prevalent in future in light of employment equity and affirmative action initiatives (see section 8.3.2.3). This necessitates that mechanisms are implemented through which newsroom staff (especially news managers) are equipped to accommodate ethnic and cultural differences more satisfactorily.

8.4.1.6 Gaining understanding in ethnic and cultural differences

The importance of understanding ethnic and cultural differences was outlined in section 8.3.2.1. With regard to this management task, both groups of respondents highlighted a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to it and first-line news managers' current skills in this area. Other than in the previous management tasks, reporters ($n=167$) seem more aware of this gap than first-line news managers ($n=69$). As a result, a bigger moderately significant difference ($d=0.70$) was calculated among this group than among first-line news managers ($d=0.65$).

This shortcoming can again be linked to an earlier finding that first-line news managers lack proper relationships with newsroom staff (see section 4.6.1.5). As a result, they do not know staff well enough to gain insight into specific issues that could lead to ethnic and cultural differences.

Qualitative data, once again, provided a different picture. Interviewees emphasised the unifying role these elements play in newsroom activity. They contributed this to younger employees being less concerned about cultural differences than their counterparts were some years ago. As a result, they deliberately make an effort to understand ethnic and cultural differences and accommodate these in their interaction with colleagues. Interviewees' experience is that this contributes to a unified newsroom atmosphere.

Looking at the above quantitative results, however, it is not clear whether this is a true reflection of newsroom conditions.

8.4.1.7 Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues

Given the above finding, first-line news managers ($n=71$) and reporters ($n=167$) also indicated that they experience a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to this management task and the former group's current ability. First-line news managers, however, seem more aware of their shortcomings in this area, as a bigger effect size was calculated among them ($d=0.73$) than among reporters ($d=0.61$).

Given the importance of this management task (see section 8.3.2.2), first-line news managers should deliberately focus to improve their skills in this area.

8.4.1.8 Being able to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues

Apart from the above, news managers also need the skills to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues. With regard to his management task, first-line news managers ($n=71$) and reporters ($n=168$) seem equally aware of the difference between the importance and current implementation thereof. As a result, a similar moderately significant effect size was calculated between these groups ($d=0.65$ for first-line news managers and $d=0.66$ for reporters).

8.4.1.9 Adjusting behaviour when interacting with different cultures

First-line news managers ($n=70$) again seem more aware of the gap between the importance of this management task and their current ability to properly perform it. As a result, a higher moderately significant effect size ($d=0.64$) was calculated among them than among reporters ($n=169$; $d=0.58$). A lack of skills in this area might convey a negative message to reporters from other cultures or language backgrounds. Inability to

adjust behaviour when interacting with people from different cultures might communicate to reporters that superiors are not interested in gaining a better understanding of their culture.

These results again contradict qualitative data. Interviewees highlighted that staff are sensitive towards these differences and that newsrooms devote time and effort to accommodate these as much as possible.

Table 8.2: Comparing the implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Management task	First-line news managers			Reporters			Effect size (d)
	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_2$)	Std deviation	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_2$)	Std deviation	
Informed about social, political changes in SA	76	4.09	0.77	191	3.87	1.10	0.20
Informed about international social/political changes	76	3.86	0.91	190	3.67	1.19	0.16
Recognising the impact thereof on the media	74	3.76	0.79	184	3.72	1.19	0.03
Developing multilingual skills	74	2.80	1.22	184	2.95	1.23	0.12
Confident in handling ethnic/cultural differences	75	3.63	1.04	188	3.36	1.24	0.21
Gaining understanding of these differences	76	4.08	0.86	187	3.45	1.26	0.50
Being sensitive to ethnic/cultural cues	76	3.91	0.96	189	3.51	1.21	0.33
Being able to adapt to ethnic/cultural cues	76	3.86	0.92	189	3.40	1.22	0.37
Adjusting behaviour when interacting with different cultures	75	3.91	0.90	191	3.51	1.22	0.33

8.4.2 Implementation of management tasks related to global awareness as a managerial competency

Results in Table 8.2 indicate that first-line news managers in general perceive themselves better implementers of the management tasks related to global awareness than reporters experience it to be the case. Moreover, no practically significant difference on the implementation of this competency was calculated between the two groups of respondents ($d=0.14$). As was the case with the teamwork competency (see section 7.4.2) reporters consider their managers slightly worse at implementing the

global awareness competency ($x_2=3.49$ for reporters and $x_2=3.77$ for first-line news managers).

Looking at results in Table 8.2, only one area displays a moderately significant difference between managers' view of how they implement it and reporters' experience thereof. This is subsequently discussed.

8.4.2.1 Willingness to gain understanding of ethnic and cultural differences

A moderately significant difference ($d=0.50$) was calculated between first-line news managers' ($n=76$) willingness to gain understanding of ethnic and cultural differences and reporters' ($n=187$) experience thereof. As indicated in above, managers perceive themselves better implementers ($x_2=4.08$) of this management task than reporters experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.45$).

The implications of this finding have already been discussed above (see section 8.4.1.6).

8.4.3 Comparing the importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency across media types

To obtain a more detailed view of the importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among reporters and first-line news managers across media types.

Table 8.3: Importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of reporters

Media type	Reporters									
	Importance – Global awareness									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	41	4.14	0.75		0.00	0.38	0.26	0.11	0.31	0.70
Weekly newspaper	48	4.14	0.96			0.29	0.20	0.09	0.24	0.55
Magazine	9	4.42	0.65				0.12	0.24	0.08	0.38
Television	17	4.33	0.75					0.13	0.05	0.45
Radio	44	4.22	0.83						0.17	0.53
On-line media	10	4.37	0.59							0.51
News agency	8	4.67	0.36							
Media type	Implementation – Global awareness									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	46	3.56	0.77		0.29	0.05	0.10	0.10	0.31	0.23
Weekly newspaper	51	3.20	1.25			0.33	0.22	0.37	0.50	0.09
Magazine	9	3.62	1.09				0.14	0.04	0.19	0.27
Television	18	3.47	0.90					0.19	0.40	0.14
Radio	51	3.66	1.01						0.17	0.31
On-line media	11	3.83	0.84							0.47
News agency	8	3.32	1.10							

Table 8.4: Importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media type	First-line news managers									
	Importance – Global awareness									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	24	4.47	0.65		0.23	0.21	0.30	0.06	0.75	0.14
Weekly newspaper	21	4.28	0.82			0.06	0.47	0.28	0.36	0.12
Magazine	2	4.33	0.47				0.71	0.30	0.54	0.09
Television	3	4.67	0.33					0.28	1.05	0.58
Radio	8	4.51	0.57						0.80	0.22
On-line media	8	3.98	0.65							0.61
News agency	5	4.38	0.49							
	Implementation – Global awareness									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	25	3.98	0.59		0.52	1.11	0.54	0.22	0.94	0.38
Weekly newspaper	22	3.59	0.76			0.33	0.21	0.69	0.20	0.13
Magazine	2	3.33	0.31				0.00	1.75	0.18	0.45
Television	3	3.33	1.20					0.65	0.08	0.30
Radio	11	4.11	0.44						1.27	0.54
On-line media	8	3.43	0.54							0.33
News agency	5	3.69	0.78							

Tables 8.3 and 8.4 highlight the following results.

8.4.3.1 Importance of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.70$) exists between the importance reporters at news agencies ($n=8$) and those at daily newspapers ($n=41$) attach to

the global awareness competency. The former group considers this competency more important ($x_1=4.67$) than the latter ($x_1=4.14$). Reporters at news agencies ($n=8$) also consider global awareness more important ($x_1=4.67$) than reporters ($n=48$) at weekly newspapers ($x_1=4.14$). As a result, a moderately significant difference was calculated between these two groups ($d=0.55$); and

- Apart from this, reporters at news agencies ($n=8$) also consider global awareness more important ($x_1=4.67$) than reporters at television channels ($n=17$; $x_1=4.33$); radio stations ($n=44$; $x_1=4.22$) and on-line media ($n=10$; $x_1=4.37$). Moderately significant differences were subsequently calculated between reporters at news agencies and those at television channels ($d=0.45$); radio stations ($d=0.53$) and on-line media ($d=0.51$).

8.4.3.2 Implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- Reporters at on-line media ($n=11$) consider the implementation of global awareness better ($x_2=3.83$) than any other reporters included in the study. Reporters at weekly newspapers ($n=51$) regard their first-line news managers worst at implementing this competency ($x_2=3.20$). As a result, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.50$) was calculated between reporters at weekly newspapers and on-line media; and
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.47$) on the implementation of global awareness was also calculated between reporters at on-line media ($n=11$) and their counterparts at news agencies ($n=8$).

8.4.3.3 Importance of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers

- First-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) regard this competency most important ($x_1=4.67$) of all first-line news managers who participated in the

study. Their colleagues at on-line media ($n=8$) consider it least important ($x_1=3.98$);

- Given this, practically significant differences on the importance of this competency were calculated between first-line news managers at on-line media and their colleagues at other media types. These differences apply to daily newspapers ($n=24$; $x_1=4.47$; $d=0.75$); television channels ($n=3$; $x_1=4.67$; $d=1.05$) and radio stations ($n=8$; $x_1=4.51$; $d=0.80$). In all instances, first-line news managers at on-line media consider this competency less important ($x_1=3.98$) than their colleagues at the other media types;
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.47$) was also calculated between first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$; $x_1=4.67$) and those at weekly newspapers ($n=21$; $x_1=4.28$) and magazines ($n=2$; $x_1=4.33$; $d=0.71$); and
- Finally, moderately significant differences on the importance of this competency exist between first-line news managers at magazines ($n=2$) and those at on-line media ($n=8$; $d=0.54$); first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) and those at news agencies ($n=5$; $x_1=4.38$; $d=0.58$); as well as managers at on-line media ($n=8$) and their colleagues at news agencies ($n=5$; $d=0.61$).

8.4.3.4 *Implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers employed by radio stations ($n=11$) perceive themselves best at implementing the global awareness competency ($x_2=4.11$). Their colleagues at magazines ($n=2$) and television channels ($n=3$), however, consider themselves worst ($x_2=3.33$ for both). Results in section 8.3.3.3, in contrast, indicated that first-line news managers at television channels regard this competency most important of all managers who participated in this research. Despite the importance they thus attach to this competency, managers at these media titles experience that they lack the skills, time or opportunity to properly implement it;

- Given this finding, a number of moderately significant or practically significant differences were calculated across media types. Firstly, moderately significant differences on the implementation of this competency were calculated between first-line news managers at daily newspapers ($n=25$) and their colleagues at weekly newspapers ($n=22$; $d=0.52$) and television channels ($n=3$; $d=0.54$);
- First-line news managers at daily newspapers ($n=25$) also consider themselves better ($x_2=3.98$) at implementing this competency than those at on-line media ($x_2=3.43$). As a result, a practically significant difference ($d=0.94$) exists between these two groups;
- Because first-line news managers at radio stations ($n=11$) perceive themselves good at implementing the global awareness competency ($x_2=4.11$) compared to those at weekly newspapers ($n=22$; $x_2=3.59$), a moderately significant difference ($d=0.69$) was calculated between these two groups;
- The major difference in implementation of global awareness between managers at magazines ($n=2$) and those at radio stations ($n=11$) is confirmed by a practically significant effect size ($d=1.75$). As such, radio station managers perceive themselves significantly better implementers of this competency ($x_2=4.11$) than those at magazines ($x_2=3.33$). They also consider themselves better at implementing these tasks than managers at on-line media ($n=8$; $x_2=3.43$). This was again illustrated by a practically significant effect size ($d=1.27$);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.45$) on the implementation of global awareness was calculated between managers at magazines ($n=2$) and those at news agencies ($n=5$). The latter group does, however, not consider themselves much better at implementing this competency than the former ($x_2=3.69$ for news agencies, compared to $x_2=3.33$ for magazines);
- Different perspectives on the implementation of global awareness between managers at television channels ($n=3$; $x_2=3.33$) and radio stations ($n=11$; $x_2=4.11$) resulted in a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.65$); and
- Finally, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) on the implementation of global awareness exists between managers at radio stations and those at news

agencies. This can be due to the perception among managers at radio stations ($n=11$) that they implement this competency better ($x_2=4.11$) than their colleagues at news agencies ($n=5$; $x_2=3.69$).

8.4.4 Comparing the importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency across media ownership types

In order to obtain a more detailed perspective on the importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency, comparisons were also made among media titles operating on different ownership structures.

Table 8.5: Importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of reporters

Media ownership type	Reporters						
	Importance – Global awareness						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	73	4.37	0.69		0.26	0.33	0.19
Unlisted companies	46	4.07	0.89			0.03	0.13
Public service mandate	30	4.07	0.89				0.19
Foreign ownership	28	4.24	0.61				
	Implementation – Global awareness						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	79	3.68	0.96		0.28	0.40	0.20
Unlisted companies	48	3.36	1.15			0.08	0.12
Public service mandate	38	3.27	1.04				0.22
Foreign ownership	29	3.49	0.90				

Table 8.6: Importance and implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media ownership type	First-line news managers						
	Importance – Global awareness						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	37	4.38	0.71		0.24	0.41	0.22
Unlisted companies	12	4.21	0.63			0.74	0.02
Public service mandate	9	4.68	0.44				0.63
Foreign ownership	13	4.22	0.72				
	Implementation – Global awareness						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	38	3.76	0.69		0.07	0.24	0.10
Unlisted companies	13	3.71	0.73			0.30	0.02
Public service mandate	12	3.94	0.74				0.33
Foreign ownership	13	3.69	0.62				

Tables 8.5 and 8.6 highlight the following results.

8.4.4.1 Importance of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- No practically significant difference on the importance reporters attach to this managerial competency was found between media operating on different ownership models. Reporters overall regard this an important managerial competency ($x_1=4.19$). As such, reporters at listed companies ($n=73$) regard it

most important ($x_1=4.37$), with those at unlisted companies ($n=46$) and those at the SABC ($n=30$) perceiving it least important ($x_1=4.07$ respectively). This finding could be attributed to listed companies operating on a more global scale than unlisted companies or even the SABC. As a result, reporters are aware of the importance of global awareness with regard to their enterprises' activities.

8.4.4.2 *Implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- No practical significant difference on the implementation of global awareness exists between reporters at different media ownership types. Irrespective of the ownership model, reporters in general rated the implementation of this competency worse ($x_2=3.45$) than the importance they attach to it ($x_1=4.19$). Reporters are therefore of the opinion that first-line news managers should improve their skills on this competency, given the importance they attach to it;
- Despite the above, reporters in general consider their first-line news managers better implementers of this competency than the communication competency ($x_2=3.25$ see section 4.6.4.2); or the planning and administration competency ($x_2=3.35$ see section 5.4.4.2). However, they perceive their managers worse at implementing global awareness than strategic action ($x_2=3.53$ see section 6.3.4.2); or teamwork ($x_2=4.00$ see section 7.4.4.2); and
- Reporters at the SABC again perceive their first-line news managers the worst implementers of this competency. They are of the opinion that their superiors should especially improve in terms of their:
 - Multilingual skills ($n=36$; $x_2=3.06$);
 - Confidence in handling ethnic/cultural differences ($n=37$; $x_2=3.11$); and
 - Ability to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues ($n=37$; $x_2=3.16$).

These results indicate that reporters expect managers to be more fluent in the languages spoken in SABC newsrooms. However, the corporation's structure of

regional offices complicates this situation. On the one hand, regional offices are instrumental to broaden the corporation's scope and serve as many communities, cultures and languages as possible. Interviewees emphasised that this is only possible if newsrooms employ a diverse team of employees. However, this implies that staff might represent any of eleven official language groups in the country. These staff members could also come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Given this situation, one could empathise with managers who face a difficult task to properly understand and react to cultural differences.

8.4.4.3 Importance of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers

- Overall, first-line news managers (irrespective of the ownership structure applicable) consider global awareness an important managerial competency ($x_1=4.37$). They also consider it slightly more important than reporters indicated in section 8.4.4.1 ($x_1=4.19$); and
- As was the case with other competencies, first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) perceive this competency most important ($x_1=4.68$). Given this, moderately significant differences were calculated between themselves and colleagues at unlisted companies ($n=12$; $d=0.74$) as well as those employed by companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$; $d=0.63$). Managers at the SABC also perceive global awareness more important than those at unlisted companies ($x_1=4.21$) and companies with majority of foreign ownership ($x_1=4.22$).

8.4.4.4 Implementation of global awareness as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers

- First-line news managers in general indicated that they perceive their implementation of global awareness better ($x_2=3.78$) than reporters consider it to be the case ($x_2=3.45$). As was the case with other managerial competencies discussed (e.g. communication [see section 4.6.4.4]; strategic action [see section

6.3.4.4]; and teamwork [see section 7.4.4.4]) first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) again consider themselves the best implementers of this competency ($x_2=3.94$). However, they only consider themselves slightly better than colleagues elsewhere in the industry.

As such, first-line news managers at the SABC perceive themselves best at implementing the following management tasks related to global awareness:

- Adjusting their behaviour when interacting with different cultures ($n=12$; $x_2=4.25$);
- Being informed about social and political changes in South Africa ($n=12$; $x_2=4.17$);
- Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues ($n=12$; $x_2=4.08$);
- Gaining understanding in ethnic and cultural differences ($n=12$; $x_2=4.08$); and
- Being able to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues ($n=12$; $x_2=4.08$).

A positive aspect of the above findings is that first-line news managers and reporters at the SABC more or less agree on the global awareness tasks the former group performs well (see section 8.4.4.2). Reporters indicated that managers display a lack of skills when handling difficult situations or differences between different cultural groups. However, both groups agree that first-line news managers interact well with people from different cultural backgrounds. Interviewees also confirmed this finding by emphasising sound social relationships between staff from different cultures;

- First-line news managers employed by companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$) perceive themselves worst at implementing global awareness ($x_2=3.69$). This is the case despite the importance they attach to it (see section 8.4.4.3); and

- Apart from this, no practically significant difference on the current implementation of global awareness was calculated between first-line news managers at the different media titles.

8.5 Summary

This chapter focused on the dimensions of global awareness as a managerial competency. Background on the phenomenon of globalisation and the management implications thereof for businesses in the twenty first century provided the context for the subsequent discussion. This specifically focused on the implications for media management in an information age.

With regard to the dimensions of global awareness as a managerial competency, the need was highlighted for managers to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of different cultural and ethnic groups and their customs. This aspect is mainly facilitated by managers' ability to speak/understand more than one language. Given the global marketplace in which businesses operate, the discussion indicated how important it is for managers to be aware of changes in both the immediate and international context. They also need the ability to recognise the impact thereof on the different business contexts. In doing so, they will be able to pro-actively position their enterprises accordingly.

Managers' openness and understanding of the differences between cultures and nationalities facilitates this process. These differences were discussed by using Hofstede's framework and applying it to the South African newsroom context. It was argued that managers' cognisance of the dimensions in Hofstede's framework might assist them to understand differences among staff members and optimise newsroom interaction. Apart from Hofstede's framework, guidelines were also provided according to which managers can adjust their own behaviour during intercultural communication.

The latter part of the chapter focused on the empirical research results relevant to this managerial competency. Findings indicated that first-line news managers are more aware of their inability to properly implement management tasks related to global awareness given the importance they attach to it. While reporters also seem aware of some gaps in implementation, these were less significant given the importance they attach to these tasks.

When comparing results on the importance and implementation of the global awareness competency across media types, it was found that reporters at news agencies consider this competency most important. However, they experience current implementation thereof the second lowest of reporters throughout the industry. Results indicate that reporters at on-line media experience their managers best at implementing global awareness, given the importance they attach to it. As far as first-line news managers are concerned, those at television channels indicated that they consider this competency most important. However, they perceive themselves worst at implementing it. Their colleagues at radio stations perceive themselves best at implementing the management tasks related to global awareness.

When research findings were compared across different ownership types, reporters at listed companies indicated that they perceive global awareness most important of all reporters who participated in the research. They also perceive their first-line news managers best at implementing the management tasks related to it. Reporters at the SABC consider this competency least important, and also perceive their first-line news managers worst at implementing it. First-line news managers' perspective, however, differs. While those employed by the SABC perceive this competency most important, they also perceive themselves best at implementing it. Again, it became evident that reporters and first-line news managers at the SABC differ on the current implementation of the global awareness competency in their newsrooms. If the corporation truly wants to meet its public service mandate and bring information and entertainment to the whole spectrum of local and (to a lesser extent) international audiences, this issue needs to be addressed.

The next chapter focuses on self-management as a managerial competency, with specific reference to the importance and implementation of this competency in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms.

Chapter 9:

Self-management as a managerial competency within the context of newsroom management

Self-management ... means persistence, self-knowledge, willingness to take risks, commitment and challenge. Above all, it means willingness to go on learning, and in particular to learn from adversity and failure.

– Kennedy (2002:31)

Only by maintaining a personal balance and staying grounded can (managers) achieve the perspective required to make decisions in the interest of the company and its long-term prosperity.

– Porter *et al.* (2004:72)

Even long before the advent of modern, market-driven journalism, newspaper reporting, with its stresses, deadlines, and the constant risk of burnout, wasn't a profession where it was easy to grow old gracefully.

– Underwood (1995:162)

9.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the final of the six managerial competencies relevant to this study, namely self-management. At first, it provides a framework for discussing the dimensions of self-management within a newsroom management context. Applications specifically focus on the extent to which dimensions of this competency could facilitate or hamper newsroom management in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms. Qualitative and quantitative research results on the importance and implementation of self-management in the above-mentioned newsrooms are discussed in the second part

of the chapter. These discussions aim to provide insight into the gaps between the importance reporters and first-line news managers attach to this competency and the current implementation thereof by the latter group.

9.2 Dimensions of self-management as a managerial competency

The nature of business activity across various industries and areas of specialisation requires managers to be well skilled in terms of the self-management competency. In a media context it becomes even more important, given fewer resources and an increasing workload (Rosentiel & Mitchell, 2004:86). In research among township secondary schools, Masitsa (2005:192) found that principals need good self-management skills to address the challenges related to their working environment. It was found that a lack of these skills is likely to increase frustration, stress and ultimately burnout among principals.

When experiencing difficult personal or professional situations, individuals tend to fall into the trap of blaming external circumstances or other individuals for their dilemmas (Dinkmeyer, 1991:504). However, this does not address these problems. Individuals should rather develop skills to take responsibility for and control over the situations that cause tension, frustration and stress (see De Klerk, 1998:143). This requires that they hone the skills related to the self-management competency.

Self-management as a managerial competency can be defined as managers' ability to take responsibility for their private and professional lives (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:24; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:24). Focusing this definition closer to the object of this study, Peters (2004:33) explains that self-management in a newsroom context does not merely relate to activities associated with day-to-day newsroom management. It specifically also includes managers' ability to manage their careers and career paths, both with regard to daily activities and longer term futures.

Based on the above definitions, the next part of this chapter discusses the basic dimensions of the self-management competency (see Hellriegel *et al.*, 2005:24-26; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2004:24-26). These elements are applied to management in general (e.g. see Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:31-32; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:24-26), but more specifically also to newsroom management.

9.2.1 Integrity and ethical conduct

In order for managers to act ethically and with integrity, they require the following traits.

9.2.1.1 Clear personal standards

Managers especially need this characteristic at times when they experience pressure to compromise standards. They also need it in cases where situations obligate them to violate their personal values/beliefs for the sake of the enterprise or other causes. The media environment is characterised by a "race" among media titles to be "first" to cover a news event or to cover it from a different (often more sensational) angle. In many instances, the ultimate aim is to meet or improve the financial bottom line (Pew Research Centre, 2004:2; Campbell, 2000:56). These situations challenge news managers to sacrifice personal values. Another area in which this often occurs relates to plagiarism in the media. This is a salient issue among local media (e.g. see Somerville, 2003:9), as well as internationally. The most predominant recent example is probably the Jayson Blair incident at the *New York Times* earlier this decade (e.g. see Colford, 2003:14, 16; Jenkins, 2003:14-16; also see section 2.4.3.3).

In an attempt to address these situations, managers need the skills and responsibility to identify instances in which their personal values are challenged and address it timeously. Failure to do this might damage media enterprises' credibility. More importantly, however, it might contribute that critics question managers' own skills and abilities. Unfortunately, this is not always an easy task. Media managers would often justify a lapse in ethical conduct by arguing that they "must put into newspapers what

people want to read and onto television what people want to see" (Accone, 2005b:23). They also blame other factors (as outlined in section 9.2) for their actions. Truth is, however, that the media is responsible to inform its target audience about as many news events in the fairest and balanced manner possible. This does not allow for propaganda or sensationalism. Unfortunately, increased competition tempts media enterprises to downplay this responsibility. Or as Accone (2005b:24) phrases it, the news media is easily tempted to favour "news values that place spectacle over substance".

However, Campbell (2000:56) argues that none of the above circumstances justify media enterprises or newsroom staff to concede ethical standards to be successful. As such, both parties should strive to enforce high ethical standards, integrity and trust and deliver a professional product (Mageni & Slabbert, 2005:399; Quinn, 2002:18). News managers have an additional responsibility to play a leading role and "set the tone" for subordinates to follow (Fink, 1996:89). This becomes especially important given research findings that subordinates are acutely aware of their managers' ethical lapses (Daft, 2003:155-156). As such, news managers can, for instance, implement guidelines related to sound ethical conduct as outlined in the King II report on corporate governance in South Africa (see Du Toit, 2006:411-416).

Importantly, however, is that integrity and high ethical standards can not be imposed on newsroom staff through formalised policies or codes. It needs to be inherent to the make-up of individual news managers and reporters and based on clear personal standards. As such, these are generally considered characteristics of good news managers (Peters, 1999:32). As Underwood (1995:170) argues, these characteristics can only be nurtured if newsroom staff are "unfettered, acting on the basis of (their) own reason, sensitivity and commitment".

From qualitative data obtained during both Audit 1 and this research it seems as if media ethics is a problematic issue in South African mainstream media newsrooms. Conclusions from Audit 1 indicated that media enterprises should pay attention to improve reporters' basic media ethics and media law skills. While interviewees

highlighted a lack of insight in this area, reporters themselves acknowledged that they are not adequately proficient in these skills (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:62).

Current research results indicate that media enterprises still do not pay enough attention to address this issue. Both quantitative and qualitative data supported this argument (see section 9.3.1.1 for quantitative results). From a qualitative point of view, some interviewees acknowledged that a code of ethics exists, while others admitted that their newsrooms fail to implement these codes. Others, fortunately, emphasised the important role ethics play in their newsroom activities (see section 9.3.1.3).

Ethical conduct and clear personal values do not only apply when newsroom teams produce and distribute a news product. It also applies to business/workplace ethics and managers should clearly communicate principles to employees. This relates to issues surrounding sexual harassment, a hostile work environment, and conflict of interest (Potter, 2004:64; Zieman, 2003). Given the finding from Audit 1 that reporters in South African mainstream media newsrooms lack sufficient life skills training (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:52, 62), news managers should also address this aspect of the self-management competency.

9.2.1.2 *Admit to mistakes made*

No person is perfect, and it is inevitable that people (in their personal and professional capacities) make mistakes. For managers to stay credible and generate esteem in the eyes of their subordinates (and their external audiences), they must admit to mistakes. This does not only relate to managers on lower organisational levels, but specifically also to those on higher management levels – even CEO's. As such, managers should be open towards subordinates if they struggle with personal and professional fears and limitations. This will make it easier for themselves and subordinates to accept that they are not perfect, and that they sometimes err (Porter *et al.*, 2004:71). If managers succeed in this area of their professional lives, they will most probably enforce ethical conduct among subordinates. They will also encourage them to react similarly in

situations where they are at fault. From an external communication point of view this inclination will indicate to media audiences that media enterprises are serious about providing them with a truthful message (Pew Research Centre, 2004:6).

9.2.1.3 Take responsibility for individual actions by being honourable, steadfast and self-assured

According to management expert Warren Bennis (Kennedy, 2002:29), managers can only display true leadership characteristics if they take responsibility for their own actions (i.e. manage themselves). In a study among 90 successful public figures in the US conducted during the mid-1980s, Bennis found that this ability is one of the four key talents his respondents shared. From a newsroom management perspective, this ability will enable managers to be more self-confident. This, in turn, will reduce frustration and prevent aggressive reaction in difficult situations (Geisler, 2004:4; Rankin, 1986:35).

Over and above this, self-assured managers could facilitate a more participative working environment and increase the level of professional output. As such Visser *et al.* (1997:43) found that managers with more positive self-attitudes feel less threatened by their subordinates. As a result, they are more willing to request input and feedback from them (also see Ströh, 2001:72). A newsroom study by Peters (1999:31) also highlighted self-assurance as a characteristic displayed by the best news managers.

9.2.2 Personal drive and resilience

In order for managers to successfully achieve this dimension of the self-management competency, it is important that they achieve the following.

9.2.2.1 *Seek responsibility, are innovative, ambitious and motivated to achieve personal and organisational goals*

As such, Ford (1996:5) states that modern-day business and management environments do not have room for managers who lack the desire to achieve their best potential. Bennis' research (Kennedy, 2002:29) echoes this sentiment, indicating that leadership requires managers to provide staff members with direction and a sense of purpose. They also need to take risks and be innovative. Unfortunately, as Ford (1996:6) indicates, research over two decades has shown that managers' inability to take responsibility for personal and professional shortcomings often hampers management efficiency.

Managers are not the only staff members who need these skills. It also applies to subordinates. They can not expect managers to be motivated and provide them with good mentoring, training and management if they lack personal drive and motivation themselves (see Zieman, 2003). Unfortunately, editors and news editors are increasingly challenged to address this dilemma when working with unmotivated employees.

As such, many editors and news editors interviewed for Audit 1 highlighted this dilemma (e.g. see Geldenhuys, 2002; Van Wyk, 2002; Sibanda, 2002). Interviewees attributed this difficulty to uncertainty about the potential role media staff can play in a developing society. In addition, they contemplated the possibility that a younger generation of employees has a more fatalistic approach towards work than their predecessors (see Geldenhuys, 2002; Sibanda, 2002; Russel, 2002).

9.2.2.2 *Work diligently*

Achieving the above dimension of the self-management competency requires managers and staff to work diligently. As Fink (1996:89) states, "there is no substitute for disciplined, effectively organised hard work". While hard work enables managers to be

more effective (resulting in less work-related frustration and stress), it also sets the example for subordinates to follow. In a newsroom study in the US (Peters, 1999:31) respondents described the best managers as those with the ability to work hard. Respondents on different newsroom levels (subordinates, middle managers and top editors) who participated in Peters' (1999:35) study agreed that laziness is a common characteristic among poor managers.

Having said this, balance remains an important prerequisite. Constantly increasing workloads can also render staff ineffective. As such, top editors who participated in Peters' (1999:26) study believed that news managers on lower organisational levels were ineffective because they have too much work and too many professional responsibilities. As a result, they are unable to perform even their basic responsibilities. Given the trend that many news managers become "hybrid editors" (Beam, 2004:7) it becomes even easier to fall into this trap. As Underwood (1995:29) states, "fifteen years ago, editors were editors. Today they are editor-managers" editing newspapers, while simultaneously being involved with the business management side thereof. As a result, they are expected to uphold both professional journalism standards and manage the media enterprise on a profitable basis. Undoubtedly, these additional responsibilities lead to additional stress.

Almost across the board and throughout the media industry interviewees who participated in this research study indicated that their newsroom staff are generally hard working. While some acknowledged that a number of staff members work too hard, others described isolated instances of individuals not pulling their weight. They also highlighted the negative impact of this situation, as colleagues are often required to perform additional tasks. In an attempt to prevent newsroom staff from working too hard for long periods of time, some interviewees stated that they would interfere and oblige staff to take time off to regain their focus and energy (also see section 9.3.1.12).

To a certain extent this contradicts qualitative data interviewees provided during Audit 1. During these interviews, a number of respondents highlighted that (especially junior)

reporters are sometimes perceived as lazy, with a “different” work and professional attitude. In their defence, younger interviewees emphasised that young employees are not lazy. They are rather less clamped down by political and emotional baggage (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:45, 53).

Despite the importance of working hard to obtain professional success, Ford (1996:5) warns that it does not guarantee management success. Nevertheless, many managers (also news managers) are promoted to management level because of their ability to work hard. If this is the case, managers’ lack of management skills is often ignored, while managers themselves are ignorant about their inabilities in this regard (Peters, 2004:26).

9.2.2.3 Persevere when facing obstacles and have the ability to recover after failure

Finally, managers need to persevere when facing obstacles and have the ability to recover after failure. Again, Bennis’ research findings among US public figures indicate that these people “simply don’t think about failure, don’t even use the word”. However, as indicated in section 9.2.1.2, failure is synonym to human nature. As a result, managers need the ability to accept failure and learn from it.

9.2.3 *Balanced professional and personal life*

Managers are still human with all the complexities associated with any human being. A reasonable balance should thus be struck between work and private activities for mental and physical well-being. However, this is not an easy task, especially because it is difficult to completely separate these two aspects. As Arumugam (2001:25) states, a thin line exists between managers’ personal and professional psyche. As a result, managers’ personal lives impact on their professional performance, and *vice versa*. This necessitates balance between these two spheres of life. For managers to be successful in this area of the self-management competency, they should address the following issues.

9.2.3.1 *Balance work and other responsibilities in a way that neither is neglected*

In the words of Redmond (2006:136), "One of the most difficult things for any leader or manager to achieve is life balance. ... It is not uncommon for a person to be swept up by a career and see it as an end in itself". Many cultures value work ethic and performance driven employees. However, people's personal lives are equally challenging (especially given the increase in issues such as substance abuse and divorce) (see Mageni & Slabbert, 2005:393; De Klerk, 1998:146). According to Drucker (1993:156) the latter is an important characteristic that distinguishes modern-day marriages from that of a century or more ago. Whereas in the past marriages were mostly ended through death, modern-day marriages are mostly dissolved through divorce. The challenge therefore remains for managers to lead balanced professional and private lives.

Being aware of the factors that trigger stress (inside and outside the workplace) can assist managers in the above. These include (Cole, 2004:383-384):

- External issues (e.g. a downslide in economic activity, political uncertainty);
- Organisational issues (e.g. management culture, prospects [or the lack thereof] for career development);
- Work issues (conflict at the office, pressure to perform better);
- Relationships at work (with customers, colleagues, supervisors);
- Domestic issues (e.g. social life, or the lack thereof, marital problems); or
- Personality issues (e.g. perceptions about work, a person's ability to adapt to change, motivation).

Stress created by any of these factors influences individuals' private and professional lives. In order to perform optimally, staff need to resolve this stress. Redmond (2006:136-137) subsequently suggests that managers ought to divide their day into 3 equal parts of 8 hours each. As a result, they would spend 8 hours working, 8 hours resting or relaxing and 8 hours sleeping. Stress caused by an imbalance between work,

relaxation and sleep might cause managers to suffer from depression, alcohol or drug abuse, or see their marriages and other personal relationships fail. People who reach this point are also more likely to suffer from burnout, ruining their professional and private lives.

The above issues present specific dangers for black and female employees in a post-apartheid South African media environment. Despite affirmative action and employment equity initiatives, reality is that only a small pool of qualified and experienced (black and female) employees is available to be “writers, speakers, thinkers, leaders (and news managers) in a multitude of spaces” (Boezak & Ranchod, 2003:1). As a result, a handful of people is expected to perform an increasing number of tasks. This often leaves them over-extended, lacking time, and ultimately balance in their lives. Research findings that female newsroom employees are more likely to experience job burnout due to work related stress and work dissatisfaction (Chang, 2004:4) necessitate that South African media enterprises address this situation.

Adding to this dilemma is that the above-mentioned group of spokespeople are increasingly younger and more inexperienced. Interviewees who participated in Audit 1 confirmed this trend. As such, they stated that in some newsrooms the “staff component almost solely consisted of female employees, often under 30 years of age and in management positions” (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:24). These employees are often also “thrown into the deep end” and expected to work on major news events without the necessary skills and experience. Adding to this dilemma is that staff shortages prevent media enterprises from having adequate support systems to assist junior staff and relieve some of the pressure they face.

While the above discussion highlighted some of the professional challenges South African newsroom staff face, their personal and/or family lives are often equally challenging. A recent international study among 69 newspaper managers (Montgomery *et al.*, 2003:195-211) found that respondents increasingly experience conflict between work and family responsibilities. It concluded that those with well-established work and

home resources are less likely to suffer from disengagement and work burnout than those without it. In a South African context newsroom staff from African cultures are often required to take care of and resolve matters related to an extended family.

The above underscores the importance of establishing and nurturing ways in which managers' physical and mental health can be taken care of. These are subsequently discussed.

9.2.3.1.1 Taking care of oneself

Farr (2005:48) states that the extent to which companies support staff in coping with stressful situations is indicative of a wider vision – for the companies and the countries in which they operate. However, despite the assistance employers provide, individuals should take primary responsibility for their mental and physical well-being themselves. Inability to do so might leave them emotionally imbalanced, resulting in additional stress due to strained personal and professional relationships (see Masitsa, 2005:181; Peters, 2004:10; Cronje & Neuland, 2003:24; Romano, 2002:14).

Managers can take better care of themselves by:

- Determining how family structures influence their work satisfaction and professional performance (Kim, 2002:237). While supportive family structures can support and improve professional performance, a lack thereof can have the opposite effect. If managers experience the latter to be the case, they should address the situation. One interviewee who participated in this research described his realisation that his work takes up too much of his family time. Moreover, work-related stress negatively influenced his family life. As a result, he scaled down on his work activities, and made deliberate efforts to separate work and family time/responsibilities. Similarly, single parents or unmarried employees might lack support from family structures. If this is the case, they need to establish such a support system in the form of colleagues, extended family

members, friends or peers (Davis & Dunlap, 2000:65). Some interviewees for this research described how this already happens among (especially) younger reporters in South African newsrooms;

- Receiving counselling to address personal and professional difficulties. Counselling programs can assist employees to discover deeper issues effecting their efficacy and self-esteem (Arumugam, 2001:25). The South African business environment (including the media) is characterised by uncertainty in terms of job security and potential for promotion (see section 8.3.2.1.1) for many employees (see Mageni & Slabbert, 2005:395). For many years the media has also been characterised by conditions in which (especially reporters) were exposed to conflict situations, unsafe working conditions and subsequent trauma. While these conditions undoubtedly affect reporters' professional lives, it also impact on the lives of news managers. In managing the trauma experienced by reporters, managers can potentially also be traumatised. In order to address this, counselling services are probably more of a necessity than a luxury in media enterprises. These services can also prove valuable to address personal and other professional concerns, such as increased work pressure, newsroom conflict or inexperience. Nevertheless, very few interviewees who participated in this research mentioned that counselling services are available to staff;
- Rekindling relationships with friends and family. Through their New CEO Workshops, members of the Harvard Business School established that changed relationships with family and friends are one of the most significant changes newly appointed CEOs experience (Porter *et al.*, 2004:71). The same probably goes for managers on different organisational levels. Given this, managers should actively work to rekindle relationships. Apart from providing managers with much needed support, friends and family can also play a meaningful role to connect managers with a world outside of their business responsibilities. However, this is not always easy, given time constraints and other professional responsibilities; and
- Participating in regular social activities. Regular exercise can for instance, be a way in which managers can take mental and physical care of themselves. Other

activities, such as family vacations or hobbies, can also provide managers with constructive outlets to relieve work-related tension (see De Klerk, 1998:149). Upon retirement, professionals often complain that work responsibilities have consumed their time to such an extent that they were unable to undertake relaxing social activities. Keeping up such activities while being professionally employed will assist managers to adjust easier to the changes related to retirement (see Porter *et al.*, 2004:71).

While the above guidelines may help managers to live more balanced personal and professional lives, it can also provide them with a clearer perspective on their personal and professional goals. This could increase their professional and personal satisfaction, leaving them feeling more motivated, less stressed and more productive (Kim, 2002:232).

9.2.4 Self-awareness and development

Managers can only reach their personal and professional goals if they have a clear understanding of their abilities and shortcomings. They can achieve this by taking the following into account.

9.2.4.1 *Being cognisant of their strengths and weaknesses and ways through which these can be utilised or improved*

As Davis and Dunlap (2000:64) state, news managers are often promoted to management positions without proper preparation of what awaits them. In many cases, this aspect does not emerge until they encounter serious difficulty. Until then, many managers struggle to keep up with professional demands, resulting in increased stress and feelings of incompetence. This situation implies that managers are ignorant about their strengths and weaknesses and how these could affect their performance. In order to implement the self-management competency properly, news managers should thus

establish ways to identify strengths and weaknesses. The following can assist them in this process.

9.2.4.1.1 Finding a mentor/mentors

News managers should find a mentor with the skills, ability, experience and inclination to guide them in discovering strengths and weaknesses. Respondents who participated in Peters' (1999:47) newsroom study supported this need. News managers confirmed that mentors play an important role in improving their skills – "I think two hours of coaching from my boss would be better than 10 hours with these *experts* they bring in" (Peters, 1999:48; also see Brooks, 2005:42). However, Davis and Dunlap (2000:65-66) emphasise that media enterprises should not introduce mentoring systems in a top-down fashion. Instead, news managers should take the responsibility themselves to find mentors who can assist them in personal development. Whereas inexperienced managers could easily experience the former system as patronising or interfering, mentors could be truly valuable to them.

Interviewees who participated in Audit 1 as well as the current research confirmed the danger related to introducing a (perceived) top-down mentoring system. They described that (especially younger) personnel are often critical of older colleagues scrutinising their work, even though the intension is to assist them in developing strengths and weaknesses (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:38, 44, 47).

Apart from the above, a lack of time and work overload also challenge the successful implementation of mentoring systems in South African media newsrooms (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:30). In addition, news managers' own inexperience hampers the success of these initiatives (Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:35).

9.2.4.1.2 *Getting input from peers and subordinates*

News managers constantly find themselves in the presence of fellow employees. As a result, input from peers and subordinates is probably one of the easiest ways to obtain feedback on strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, by inviting input from a variety of newsroom staff, managers will get a 360 degree view on where they do well or where they can improve (Simmons, 1990:57). Important, however, is that managers are receptive to the input they receive. While they should judge comments for fairness and accuracy, they should not dismiss negative input outright on the basis that it is unfair or inaccurate. They should also be aware that feedback indicates the way in which colleagues experience them. As such, those colleagues with a negative attitude towards managers are likely to also provide negative feedback. Still, managers should see feedback as a way in which they can identify and address strengths and weaknesses.

Many factors may hamper effective input and feedback from peers in a South African newsroom context. Among these are a lack of time and experience, as well as a lack of commitment. Results from Audit 1 identified a lack of commitment from reporters to stay with their stories throughout the different news processes, including receiving input from peers as one of the major shortcomings in South African newsrooms. The increased use of technology to facilitate this process reduces interpersonal interaction and feedback even more (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:48).

9.2.4.2 *Learning from work and life experience and be willing to adjust learning in light of changed situations*

Quinn (2002:21) underscores the important role learning plays in an information society. As such, he argues that managers should benefit from "life-long learning combined with learning from experience". They should therefore initiate personal development programmes that can improve their personal and professional performance (Arumugam, 2001:25). However, it is not enough that managers are willing to learn. Organisational environments that facilitates learning should support this willingness (Quinn, 2002:31).

Unfortunately, many media enterprises traditionally considered the cost of training more important than the benefits associated with improved skills. In this process, they ignored the advantages properly trained personnel can present to overall company performance and progress. As such, Thompson (2001:12) states that the biggest barrier to proper newsroom training is probably budgetary constraints. Fortunately, this perspective seems to be changing. To quote a news manager at *The Wichita Eagle* in the US: "Train and train again. Any cost involved will be minimal compared to the price you'll pay for insufficient training" (Graham, 2001:27).

Research for this study and Audit 1 identified that interviewees at different media enterprises have different views on this issue. During Audit 1 interviewees described a number of mechanisms their media enterprises have introduced across organisational levels to facilitate skills improvement. While these included external training and development programmes (for instance through the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism [IAJ] in Johannesburg, as well as through various tertiary training institutions), some internal initiatives were also described. As such, interviewees at Media24, for instance, explained how the company uses intranet technology to provide staff with additional, internal training (see Els, 2002; also see sections 2.6; 4.2.1).

However, a number of factors negatively affect the potential contribution these efforts make towards training and development. On the one hand, smaller newsroom staffs, increased competition and deadlines, as well as juniorisation make it increasingly difficult for media enterprises to send staff on external training programmes. This is especially the case among media titles located further away from metropolitan areas (such as Johannesburg or Cape Town) where the majority of training courses are presented. In an attempt to address this situation, media enterprises have entered into agreements with training providers to present regional courses over a shorter period. Through these agreements, staff benefit from attending training courses closer to home, while media enterprises need not lose staff for long periods of time.

Unfortunately, despite all these efforts, interviewees highlighted an overall lack of interest among staff to utilise training opportunities and improve their skills (see Ley, 2002). This relates to both external and internal training opportunities. While this tendency hampers self-development, it also hampers the extent to which media enterprises can improve professional output.

However, as section 10.4.4.2 indicates, formal training is not necessarily and in all cases the answer to improve management skills and professional performance among newsroom staff. A number of interviewees for this research supported this view. As such, they indicated that formal business training does not necessarily equip news managers with the knowledge and experience to perform optimally. The ongoing lack of common ground between media professionals and media trainers/educators exacerbates this dilemma. This is not only the case in South Africa, but also internationally. As Lepre and Bleske (2005:191) point out, a long-ranging debate exists with regard to which aspects of professional or conceptual media training should receive the most attention in training curricula. South African interviewees emphasised that a combination of experience, talent, inclination, coaching, mentoring and ongoing training probably provides a more workable solution to this problem. Probably most important, however, is staff's willingness to improve their skills, learn from work and life experience and unlearn obsolete skills given changed circumstances.

The previous four sections of this chapter provided a theoretical context on the dimensions of self-management as a managerial competency. The next part thereof focuses on research results, specifically pertaining to the importance and implementation of this managerial competency in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms.

9.3 Results – the importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 display quantitative results on the following issues:

- The difference between the importance first-line news managers attach to each of the items related to self-management as a managerial competency and the extent to which they perceive themselves implementing these tasks. This is compared with the difference between the importance reporters attach to each management task and their experience of first-line news managers' implementation thereof; and
- The difference between the implementation of these management tasks from the perspective of reporters and first-line news managers.

The aggregate effect size of self-management as a managerial competency (without dividing it into individual management tasks or on the basis of media types or media ownership types) shows that:

- First-line news managers are highly aware of the difference between the importance they attach to self-management as a managerial competency and their current implementation thereof. As a result, a practically significant effect size ($d=0.82$) was calculated; and
- Reporters also seem aware of this difference, although to a smaller extent than first-line news managers. As such, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.66$) was calculated between the importance they attach to this competency and their experience of first-line news managers' implementation thereof.

This implies that first-line news managers perceive their ability to implement self-management worse than reporters experience it. First-line news managers' inability to properly implement the management tasks related to self-management, could negatively affect both subordinates and managers themselves. While reporters could

become demotivated, managers could experience feelings of failure. This situation could subsequently affect both groups' private lives negatively. The opposite could also be the case. If first-line news managers lead unfulfilled personal lives, feelings of discontent could spill over into their professional lives, with negative consequences.

9.3.1 The importance of management tasks related to self-management as a managerial competency compared to the implementation thereof

Table 9.1 outlines the following with regard to each management task related to self-management as a managerial competency.

9.3.1.1 Conduct based on clearly defined personal values

First-line news managers ($n=70$) perceive a moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) between the importance of basing their conduct on clearly defined personal values and their ability to achieve it. Reporters ($n=162$) share this sentiment. As a result, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.47$) was also calculated between the importance they attach to this management task and their experience of first-line news managers' ability to accomplish it. Both groups of respondents thus acknowledge that professional situations arise in which managers are obliged to sacrifice their personal values. If reporters are aware of their managers' inability to uphold personal values in difficult situations, it might indicate that this has become common newsroom practice.

Table 9.1: Comparing the importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Self-management as a managerial competency									
Management task	First-line news managers				Reporters				
	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	n	Mean $\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)	
13.6.1 Conduct based on clear personal values	70	0.37	0.73	0.51	162	0.59	1.24	0.47	
13.6.2 Accommodating different personal values	70	0.50	0.85	0.59	163	0.96	1.37	0.70	
13.6.3 Upholding the news enterprise's ethical code	70	0.26	0.70	0.37	168	0.67	1.24	0.54	
13.6.4 Admitting to personal mistakes	71	0.38	0.93	0.41	164	1.02	1.51	0.67	
13.6.5 Working diligently	71	0.20	0.77	0.26	170	0.69	1.22	0.57	
13.6.6 Being conscious of a healthy lifestyle	69	0.48	1.11	0.43	154	0.35	1.55	0.23	
13.6.7 Being able to lead a healthy lifestyle	70	0.80	1.33	0.60	154	0.30	1.49	0.20	
13.6.8 Taking responsibility	69	0.26	0.68	0.38	168	0.85	1.30	0.65	
13.6.9 Being ambitious/motivated to achieve set objectives	71	0.59	1.05	0.56	168	0.63	1.31	0.48	
13.6.10 Persevering under conditions of failure and stress	70	0.46	0.85	0.54	168	0.69	1.26	0.54	
13.6.11 Coping with secondary trauma	61	0.44	0.89	0.50	156	0.81	1.39	0.59	
13.6.12 Balancing private life and work responsibilities	69	0.99	1.30	0.76	161	0.75	1.43	0.52	
13.6.13 Taking reporters' physical state into account	62	0.44	0.88	0.50	161	0.68	1.47	0.46	
13.6.14 Taking reporters' mental state into account	61	0.49	0.92	0.53	160	0.95	1.52	0.63	
13.6.15 Being able to clearly define personal and professional goals	69	0.62	1.06	0.59	162	0.70	1.36	0.51	
13.6.16 Maximising individual strengths	71	0.52	0.79	0.66	167	0.91	1.35	0.68	
13.6.17 Addressing individual weaknesses	71	0.80	1.05	0.76	165	1.02	1.41	0.72	
13.6.18 Being able to learn from mistakes and past experience	71	0.44	0.81	0.54	168	1.02	1.43	0.72	

This poses an important dilemma to both groups of respondents. On the one hand, first-line news managers might feel unable to stand up to superiors (or owners) if they are expected to ignore unethical or inaccurate activities aimed to promote circulation or increase profit margins. On the other hand, this tendency might also entice reporters to sacrifice personal values in difficult professional situations. Both these attitudes could harm the professional standard and credibility of journalism in the country. Extending this argument to newsroom staff's personal lives, such an attitude could also see them sacrificing personal values in difficult personal situations.

9.3.1.2 *Accommodating different personal values*

Linked to the above, first-line news managers ($n=70$) also indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.59$) between the importance they attach to accommodating differing personal values and their current ability to do so. Reporters ($n=163$) are also aware of this flaw. Consequently, they perceive a bigger difference ($d=0.70$) between the importance of this management task and first-line news managers' ability to implement it.

Managers' inability in this regard could be detrimental to newsroom relationships and effective newsroom communication. The finding that reporters are significantly aware of this situation might reflect managers' lack of concern for subordinates' personal values. If this is the case, reporters could get the impression that managers do not value their views and that they are merely workers who are expected to complete the tasks managers delegate to them.

With regard to this management task, quantitative results contradict qualitative data. The majority of interviewees stated that they could not recall a recent incident in which staff's personal values clashed with professional expectations. They also emphasised that, should such a situation occur, newsroom management would generally be accommodating towards reporters' values. Other interviewees, however, disagreed. Their opinion was that newsroom managers would expect reporters to compromise

personal values should these clash with professional requirements. They justified this by stating that reporters' professional responsibilities are more important than their personal values. Some interviewees were of the opinion that a clash between personal values and professional responsibilities is integral to the journalism profession.

9.3.1.3 *Upholding the news enterprise's code of ethics*

First-line news managers ($n=70$) apparently do not experience much difference between the importance of upholding news enterprises' code of ethics and their ability to do so. As a result, they indicated practically insignificant effect size on this issue ($d=0.37$). Reporters ($n=168$), on the other hand, differ. Given the importance they attach to this issue, they experience a moderately significant difference ($d=0.54$) on first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. This might again increase newsroom conflict and stress. Reporters might easily get the impression that managers expect them to uphold ethical codes, while managers themselves fail to do so. In an attempt to prevent this, superiors should keep a watchful eye on first-line news managers' ethical conduct (or lack thereof).

However, qualitative data indicates that some managers on higher organisational levels are equally ignorant about media enterprises' code of ethics and the extent to which newsroom staff uphold this (see section 4.5.7).

Fortunately, this does not seem to be the case throughout the industry. Other interviewees emphasised the importance that newsroom staff do not sacrifice ethics in order to get a better story. Their main motivation was that this could see audiences losing trust in the newsroom and the credibility of their news products (see section 4.5.7).

9.3.1.4 *Admitting to personal mistakes*

Reporters (n=164) also perceive first-line news managers poor at admitting to personal mistakes, given the importance they attach to it. As a result, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.67$) was calculated on this issue. First-line news managers (n=71), however, seem ignorant of their inability in this regard. Given the importance they attach to this management task, they indicated practically insignificant effect size ($d=0.41$) on their current implementation thereof.

This situation might again affect newsroom morale and relationships negatively. If reporters experience (and managers acknowledge) that it is not important to admit when you err, they might decide to follow superiors' example. In this process, professional relationships will suffer, as reporters will lose respect for first-line news managers. Subsequently, they might become reluctant that first-line news managers mentor them on other personal or professional issues. In all, none of these situations can benefit participative and open management styles said to be the preferred management approach in South African newsrooms (see section 1.3.1).

9.3.1.5 *Working diligently*

Reporters (n=170) also perceive their first-line news managers as being lazy and irresponsible (see section 9.3.1.8). Given the importance they attach to managers working hard, they indicated a moderate significant difference ($d=0.57$) on their ability to do so. First-line news managers (n=71) again seem ignorant of this issue. Given the importance they attach to this management task, they indicated a practically insignificant effect size ($d=0.26$) on their current implementation thereof.

Reporters' experience also differs from that of interviewees. Section 9.2.2.2 outlined that interviewees across the industry regard their newsroom staff as hard working. First-line news managers (like reporters) are responsible to work hard and contribute towards newsroom output. In fact, their leadership positions increase this responsibility. If this

discrepancy is not clarified, reporters might experience that they are required to work harder, while they consider their first-line news managers to be lazy. This could increase negativity among reporters.

9.3.1.6 *Being conscious of a healthy lifestyle*

Neither group of respondents perceive a practically significant difference between the importance they attach to first-line news managers being conscious of leading a healthy lifestyle and the extent to which they succeed in doing so. As such, first-line news managers ($n=69$) seem more aware of the gap between the importance they attach to it and their ability to implement this management task. They highlighted a bigger effect size ($d=0.43$) on this issue than reporters ($n=154$; $d=0.23$).

9.3.1.7 *Being able to lead a healthy lifestyle*

Results on managers' ability to lead a healthy lifestyle reinforce their perspective that they work very hard. As such, first-line news managers ($n=70$) highlighted a moderately significant difference ($d=0.60$) between the importance they attach to this management task and their ability to implement it. In line with the above results reporters ($n=154$) do not perceive this to be a problem among first-line news managers, given the importance they attach to it. Subsequently, they highlighted a practically insignificant effect size ($d=0.20$).

When interviewees were asked about newsroom staff's lifestyles, some (jokingly) remarked that newsroom staff are much healthier now than they were some decades ago. One interviewee stated that newsroom staff do not drink, smoke or socialise as much as they used to in the past. Others, however, emphasised that their staff are under enormous stress and that many do not lead a healthy lifestyle. In some cases, staff members' personal problems also have a negative impact on their professional lives.

9.3.1.8 *Taking responsibility*

Given the importance they attach to this management task, reporters ($n=168$) experience a moderately significant difference ($d=0.65$) in terms of first-line news managers' current implementation thereof. As was the case in section 9.3.1.5, first-line news managers ($n=69$) again differ. Given the importance they attach to this management task, they perceive themselves to implement it well. As a result, a practically insignificant effect size ($d=0.38$) was calculated.

9.3.1.9 *Being ambitions/motivated to achieve set objectives*

Both first-line news managers ($n=71$) and reporters ($n=168$) identified a lack of ambition/motivation among the former group to achieve set objectives, given the importance they attach to it. As a result, moderately significant effect sizes were calculated for both groups. However, first-line news managers seem more aware of their inability in this regard, as a bigger effect size was calculated ($d=0.56$) than for reporters ($d=0.48$). If media enterprises do not address this situation satisfactorily, reporters could become equally demotivated to achieve set objectives. This will negatively affect newsroom performance and output.

9.3.1.10 *Persevering under conditions of failure and stress*

The two groups of respondents seem equally aware of first-line news managers' inability to persevere under conditions of failure and stress, given the importance they attach to it. As such, the same effect size ($d=0.54$) was calculated for first-line news managers ($n=70$) and reporters ($n=168$). This result can be linked to results in section 9.3.1.1 that first-line news managers find it difficult to uphold personal values in difficult work situations. Over and above this, it can also be linked to their perception that they work hard and that they can subsequently not lead a healthy lifestyle.

These results indicate that first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media perceive themselves to operate under relatively high levels of professional strain, resulting in high stress levels. Findings that first-line news managers are already demotivated and negative about their working conditions increase the risk that this could affect newsroom activity negatively (see Steyn *et al.*, 2005a:44). A lack of motivation among first-line news managers could easily influence reporters to also become more negative. If this is the case, media enterprises might struggle to meet organisational goals and objectives.

9.3.1.11 *Coping with secondary trauma*

Section 9.2.3.1.1 referred to unsafe conditions and conflict situations in which South African reporters often have to perform their jobs. When reporters return to the office after covering such news events, first-line news managers need to address secondary trauma (experienced through the eyes of reporters). This places an additional burden on them to resolve stressful situations and maintain a positive newsroom atmosphere.

When asked to rate this management task, both reporters ($n=156$) and first-line news managers ($n=61$) indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to it and the latter group's implementation thereof. Again, reporters seem more aware of managers' inability in this area, as they highlighted a larger effect size ($d=0.59$) than first-line news managers ($d=0.50$). If this result is linked to findings discussed in section 9.3.1.2, it again describes reporters' perception that first-line news managers are less concerned with them as people. As a result, they fail to adequately deal with reporters' trauma and stress. It might also be the case that first-line news managers would like to address these issues, but that they are ill-equipped or lack the time to do so.

Only in a very few instances did interviewees indicate that their media enterprises have structures and/or programmes in place through which staff are assisted to cope with work related stress or trauma. Given the conditions under which reporters and other

newsroom staff sometimes operate, more should probably be done to put such mechanisms in place.

9.3.1.12 Balancing private life and work responsibilities

In line with earlier findings that first-line news managers ($n=69$) operate under serious work pressure, they again indicated a bigger difference between the importance they attach to this management task and their ability to implement it. Again, reporters ($n=161$) seem less aware of this gap. This is based on the finding that first-line news managers indicated a practically significant effect size ($d=0.76$) on this issue, while reporters only highlighted a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.52$). If this is a true reflection of newsroom conditions, media enterprises should address first-line news managers' working conditions in order to prevent burnout. Results from this study indicate that first-line news managers probably experience too much stress and have more responsibility than is healthy for them.

When asked to rate the balance between staff members' personal and professional lives, interviewees had different opinions. Some considered their employees too relaxed about their work and too focused on their private lives. This group of employees is said to use private issues as excuses for not being able to perform properly (e.g. female employees having to fetch children from school or having to attend to ill children with subsequent absenteeism from work). Other interviewees stated that the majority of their employees are workaholics and that they often have to obligate them to take time off from work. This group of interviewees was also of the opinion that employees' professional lives often become their private lives. This was especially the case among younger staff members who do not have a family and might not be familiar with conditions in a specific city. In order to prevent loneliness, they stay at the office for longer.

9.3.1.13 *Taking reporters' physical state into account*

Reporters (n=161) and first-line news managers (n=62) both indicated a moderately significant difference between the importance of taking reporters' physical state into account and first-line news managers' ability to do so. Unlike previous results, first-line news managers seem slightly more aware of their inability in this regard. As such, a bigger effect size ($d=0.50$) was calculated for first-line news managers than for reporters ($d=0.46$).

9.3.1.14 *Taking reporters' mental state into account*

In contrast, reporters (n=160) experience a bigger difference between the importance of this management task and first-line news managers' ability to consider their mental state. While moderately significant effect sizes were calculated for both first-line news managers (n=61; $d=0.53$) and reporters ($d=0.63$), the former seem more satisfied with their current performance, given the importance they avail to this management task. Reporters' dissatisfaction with this issue might relate to their perception that managers are unaware of their level of motivation, job satisfaction and incompetence to perform as employers expect them to. Moreover, they might experience that managers expect them to perform well, despite possible physical or mental constraints.

Given the relative ease with which employees seem to exchange negative working conditions for greener pastures (see Steyn & De Beer, 2002:54; Grimm, 2000:35) media enterprises should address this situation. Moreover, given the high level of self-interest among a younger generation of staff, reporters who do not feel valued could seek alternative employment opportunities. Such a move would benefit them in the sense that they might enjoy increased job satisfaction and a better quality of life. However, it would negatively affect media enterprises, as the gap left by reporters leaving newsrooms puts additional pressure on remaining staff. From a financial point of view, media enterprises also need to spend additional resources to replace staff.

9.3.1.15 *Being able to clearly define personal and professional goals*

Section 7.3.1.1 outlined the importance of clearly defined individual and group objectives when staff operate in teams. However, sections 7.4.1.9 and 7.4.1.10 indicated that South African newsroom staff are not always clear on individual or group objectives in a teamwork context. As a result, they struggle to perform as news managers expect of them.

Results on first-line news managers' ability to define personal and professional goals within a self-management context again confirm the above. Both first-line news managers ($n=69$) and reporters ($n=162$) seem moderately significantly aware of the difference between the importance they attach to this management task and the former group's ability to implement it. First-line news managers, however, seem more aware of their inability in this regard, as a bigger effect size ($d=0.59$) was calculated for them than for reporters ($d=0.51$).

Failing to define personal goals could leave both managers and reporters feeling meaningless and unfocused. Inability to define professional goals might create the impression that staff can not perform optimally on this area either. This might leave them feeling demotivated and unfocused, resulting in a negative newsroom atmosphere and poor professional output.

However, first-line news managers can not be solely responsible to define reporters' personal goals. This remains reporters' own responsibility, although newsroom leaders should guide them in this process. Guiding reporters includes assistance in obtaining resources to achieve goals. However, as section 9.2.4.1.2 outlined, a lack of interest in self-development seems to characterise staff employed by many South African newsrooms.

9.3.1.16 *Maximising individual strengths*

Respondents agree that first-line news managers lack the management ability to maximise individual strengths and address individual weaknesses (see section 9.3.1.17), given the importance of these management tasks. As was the case with previous results, reporters ($n=167$) perceive first-line news managers slightly worse at this management task. As such, a bigger effect size was calculated for reporters ($d=0.68$) than for first-line news managers ($n=71$; $d=0.66$).

9.3.1.17 *Addressing individual weaknesses*

First-line news managers ($n=71$) seem acutely aware of their inability to address individual weaknesses, given the importance they attach to it. As a result, they highlighted a practically significant effect size ($d=0.76$) with regard to this management task. Reporters ($n=165$) are also aware of this inability, but only indicated a moderately significant difference ($d=0.72$) between the importance they attach to this management task and first-line news managers' implementation thereof.

If first-line news managers are unable to address either their own weaknesses or that of subordinates, they can neither guide themselves nor newsroom staff to improve shortcomings.

Interviewees in general were of the opinion that media enterprises have various initiatives in place to maximise individual strengths and address weaknesses. While some referred to formal training courses, others described methods to expose (especially junior) staff members to different sections of the industry in order to increase their experience and improve their skills. Other enterprises include study loans for staff in their annual budgets.

In addition to the above, bigger media enterprises often oblige managers to identify people who can be put through training courses. One interviewee stated that they are in

the process of very expensive personality tests aimed to identify people's personal development areas. They also obligate staff to complete specific training courses before they are considered for promotion to management positions. When they make an external staff appointment, that employee is required to complete specific training courses.

Interviewees at smaller media enterprises described the dilemma they face with regard to maximising strengths and addressing staff's weaknesses. They explained the amount of human and other resources they invest to thoroughly train inexperienced staff members. Because they can often not afford to send staff on formal training courses, they approach training from an interpersonal perspective instead. As such, experienced staff members spend time and energy to guide, mentor and coach inexperienced staff through the different aspects of their jobs. Their frustration sets in when bigger media enterprises "poach" junior staff (through financial and other offers) just as they show progress and potential. In this process, smaller media enterprises lose between 30-40% of their staff to bigger media enterprises annually. Interviewees explained that they become the "training ground" for bigger media enterprises. One interviewee subsequently suggested that a model should be developed through which smaller and bigger media enterprises can cooperate in this respect to the benefit of both.

9.3.1.18 Being able to learn from mistakes and past experience

In line with an earlier finding that reporters perceive first-line news managers unable to admit personal mistakes (see section 9.3.1.4) they are also of the opinion that managers are unable to learn from these mistakes and past experience. As a result, reporters (n=168) highlighted a (high) moderately significant difference ($d=0.72$) between the importance they attach to this management task, and first-line news managers' implementation thereof. First-line news managers (n=71) also admitted that they do not properly implement this management task given the importance they attach to it. However, they are more satisfied with their performance than reporters are. As a result, a smaller effect size ($d=0.54$) was calculated among this group of respondents.

This result indicates that first-line news managers should develop the ability to learn from mistakes made in the past. If they fail to do this, they will also struggle to guide reporters in learning from their mistakes. This could negatively affect media enterprises' performance and the level of journalism output presented to audiences.

Table 9.2: Comparing the implementation of self-management as a managerial competency between first-line news managers and reporters

Management task	First-line news managers			Reporters			Effect size (d)
	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_2$)	Std deviation	n	Mean ($\bar{x}_2$)	Std deviation	
Conduct based on clear personal values	76	4.28	0.72	185	3.57	1.15	0.62
Accommodating different personal values	75	3.91	0.90	185	3.24	1.25	0.53
Upholding ethical code of news enterprise	75	4.39	0.77	188	3.76	1.13	0.56
Admitting to personal mistakes	76	4.25	0.93	187	3.34	1.43	0.64
Working diligently	76	4.42	0.70	192	3.79	1.27	0.50
Being conscious of a healthy lifestyle	74	3.68	1.12	174	3.47	1.24	0.17
Being able to lead a healthy lifestyle	75	3.40	1.21	173	3.51	1.23	0.09
Taking responsibility	74	4.45	0.60	189	3.58	1.28	0.68
Ambitious/motivated to achieve objectives	76	3.97	0.94	188	3.69	1.21	0.24
Persevering despite failure and stress	76	4.24	0.83	188	3.65	1.21	0.48
Coping with secondary trauma	67	3.93	0.84	176	3.44	1.23	0.39
Balancing private life and work	74	3.58	1.15	182	3.50	1.30	0.07
Taking reporters' physical state into account	67	4.10	0.87	181	3.42	1.28	0.53
Taking reporters' mental state into account	68	4.03	0.90	180	3.31	1.34	0.54
Clearly defining personal/professional goals	74	3.77	0.94	183	3.51	1.26	0.21
Maximising individual strengths	76	3.93	0.79	189	3.39	1.24	0.44
Addressing individual weaknesses	76	3.59	0.90	188	3.30	1.27	0.23
Learning from mistakes/past experience	76	4.21	0.77	191	3.49	1.31	0.55

9.3.2 Implementation of management tasks related to self-management as a managerial competency

Results in Table 9.2 indicate that first-line news managers in general perceive themselves better implementers of the management tasks related to self-management than reporters experience it to be the case. Moreover, no practically significant difference was calculated on the implementation of self-management between the two groups of respondents ($d=0.22$). As such, both groups consider the general implementation of this competency equally good. As was the case with the teamwork

competency (see section 7.4.2) and the global awareness competency (see section 8.4.2) reporters consider their managers slightly worse when it comes to the implementation of the self-management competency ($x_2=3.50$ for reporters and $x_2=4.01$ for first-line news managers).

Looking at results in Table 9.2, ten areas display a moderately significant difference between managers' view of how they implement it and reporters' experience thereof. These are subsequently highlighted.

9.3.2.1 *Taking responsibility*

A moderately significant difference ($d=0.68$) was calculated between first-line news managers' ($n=74$) ability to take responsibility and reporters' ($n=189$) experience thereof. As indicated in above, managers perceive themselves better implementers ($x_2=4.45$) of this management task than reporters experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.58$).

9.3.2.2 *Admitting to personal mistakes*

A moderately significant difference ($d=0.64$) was calculated between first-line news managers' ($n=76$) ability to admit to personal mistakes and reporters' ($n=187$) experience thereof. Managers again perceive themselves better at implementing this management task ($x_2=4.25$) than reporters perceive it to be the case ($x_2=3.34$).

9.3.2.3 *Basing conduct on clearly defined personal values*

As was the case with the above two management tasks, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.62$) was also calculated on the implementation of this management task. First-line news managers ($n=76$) perceive themselves better at basing their conduct on clearly defined personal values ($x_2=4.28$) than reporters ($n=185$) experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.57$).

9.3.2.4 *Upholding the news enterprise's code of ethics*

Although smaller than in the case of the above-mentioned management tasks, first-line news managers ($n=75$) and reporters ($n=188$) again experience the former group's ability to uphold news enterprises' codes of ethics differently. As such, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.56$) was calculated. First-line news managers again experience that they are more successful in this regard ($x_2=4.39$) than reporters experience them to be ($x_2=3.76$).

9.3.2.5 *Being able to learn from mistakes and past experience*

First-line news managers ($n=76$) perceive their ability on this management task far better ($x_2=4.21$) than reporters ($n=191$) experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.49$). As a result, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.55$) was calculated.

9.3.2.6 *Taking reporters' mental state into account*

The difference between first-line news managers' ($n=68$) view on their implementation of this management task and reporters' ($n=180$) experience was bigger than on other management tasks. The former group again perceive themselves better at taking reporters' mental state into account ($x_2=4.03$) than the latter group experiences it to be the case ($x_2=3.31$). As a result, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.54$) was calculated.

9.3.2.7 *Accommodating differing personal values between departmental/section managers and reporters*

First-line news managers ($n=75$) perceive themselves slightly better ($x_2=3.91$) at implementing this management task than reporters ($n=185$) experience it to be the case ($x_2=3.24$). As a result, a slightly smaller effect size was calculated ($d=0.53$).

9.3.2.8 *Taking reporters' physical state into account*

Section 9.3.2.6 outlined that reporters and first-line news managers differ on the latter group's ability to consider reporters' mental state. Similarly, results on this management task indicate that reporters experience their managers just above average in terms of considering their physical state. Whereas first-line news managers ($n=67$) perceive themselves good at implementing this management task ($x_2=4.10$), reporters ($n=181$) differ ($x_2=3.42$). Given this difference, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.53$) was calculated.

9.3.2.9 *Working diligently*

First-line news managers ($n=76$) consider themselves exceptionally good at implementing this management task ($x_2=4.42$). Reporters ($n=192$), on the other hand, experience that first-line news managers could work harder than is currently the case ($x_2=3.79$). Based on this result, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.50$) was again calculated between the two respondent groups.

9.3.2.10 *Persevering under conditions of failure and stress*

Despite the stressful conditions under which news managers operate, they ($n=76$) perceive themselves good at persevering under these conditions ($x_2=4.24$). Reporters ($n=188$) experience it differently, and are of the opinion that news managers could improve in this area ($x_2=3.65$). As a result, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.48$) was calculated.

9.3.3 Comparing the importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency across media types

To obtain a more detailed view of the importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency, comparisons were made among reporters and first-line news managers employed by different media types.

Table 9.3 Importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of reporters

Media type	Reporters									
	Importance – Self-management									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	41	4.23	0.65		0.00	0.40	0.04	0.17	0.03	0.13
Weekly newspaper	49	4.23	0.98			0.27	0.04	0.14	0.03	0.09
Magazine	9	4.49	0.54				0.23	0.48	0.44	0.30
Television	16	4.27	0.96					0.18	0.01	0.05
Radio	43	4.09	0.82						0.20	0.28
On-line media	10	4.25	0.48							0.12
News agency	8	4.32	0.56							
Media type	Implementation – Self-management									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	46	3.62	0.85		0.29	0.72	0.32	0.17	0.15	0.01
Weekly newspaper	50	3.27	1.23			0.79	0.03	0.14	0.39	0.30
Magazine	9	4.24	0.70				0.92	0.72	0.59	0.64
Television	19	3.30	1.02					0.13	0.44	0.33
Radio	43	3.44	1.11						0.28	0.18
On-line media	11	3.75	0.83							0.12
News agency	8	3.64	0.94							

Table 9.4 Importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency across media types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media type	First-line news managers									
	Importance – Self-management									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₁)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	24	4.48	0.68		0.08	0.07	0.52	0.27	0.19	0.19
Weekly newspaper	21	4.42	0.53			0.01	0.77	0.45	0.14	0.14
Magazine	2	4.42	0.82				0.51	0.30	0.08	0.08
Television	3	4.83	0.29					0.42	1.11	0.95
Radio	8	4.66	0.41						0.72	0.61
On-line media	8	4.35	0.43							0.00
News agency	5	4.35	0.50							
	Implementation – Self-management									
	Effect size (d)									
	n	Mean (x ₂)	Std deviation	Daily news-paper	Weekly news-paper	Magazine	TV	Radio	On-line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	25	4.06	0.53		0.32	0.19	0.86	0.29	0.65	0.01
Weekly newspaper	22	3.86	0.64			0.03	1.03	0.55	0.28	0.30
Magazine	2	3.89	0.94				0.67	0.35	0.22	0.18
Television	3	4.52	0.03					0.71	1.43	0.74
Radio	11	4.21	0.43						0.91	0.25
On-line media	8	3.68	0.58							0.60
News agency	5	4.06	0.62							

Tables 9.3 and 9.4 highlight the following results.

9.3.3.1 Importance of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- Reporters at the different media types consider self-management a very important managerial competency ($x_1=4.27$). As such, magazine reporters ($n=9$)

consider it most important ($x_1=4.49$), with those at radio stations ($n=43$) considering it least important ($x_1=4.09$). In light of this, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.48$) was calculated between the importance magazine reporters ($n=9$) attach to self-management compared to colleagues at radio stations ($n=43$).

9.3.3.2 *Implementation of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- While section 9.3.3.1 outlines that reporters generally regard self-management an important managerial competency, they consider the implementation thereof worse ($x_2=3.61$) than the importance they attach to it. However, magazine reporters ($n=9$) perceive their first-line news managers best at implementing this competency ($x_2=4.24$). Weekly newspaper reporters ($n=50$), on the other hand, consider their first-line news managers worst implementers of this competency ($x_2=3.27$);
- As a result, a number of moderately and practically significant differences were calculated across media types. Firstly, a (high) moderately significant difference ($d=0.72$) exists between reporters at daily newspapers ($n=46$) and their colleagues at magazines ($n=9$). The former group considers their first-line news managers worse at implementing this competency ($x_2=3.62$) than the latter ($x_2=4.24$). Daily newspaper newsrooms usually have more staff members among whom managers can distribute the workload. This is not always the case at magazines. However, daily newspapers operate on tighter deadlines than the magazines included in the research. This factor might leave managers at magazine newsrooms with less stress and more room for self-management than their colleagues at daily newspapers;
- However, when comparing the implementation of self-management between first-line news managers at weekly newspapers ($n=50$) and those at magazines ($n=9$), the above argument does not hold ground. A practically significant difference ($d=0.79$) on the implementation of this competency was calculated between

reporters at these sites. The former group ($n=50$) again considers their first-line news managers worse implementers of this competency ($x_2=3.27$) than the latter ($x_2=4.24$); and

- Finally, moderately significant differences and practically significant differences on the implementation of this competency were also calculated between magazine reporters ($n=9$) and their counterparts at television channels ($n=19$), radio stations ($n=43$), on-line media ($n=11$) and news agencies ($n=8$). The biggest of these differences was calculated between magazines and television channels ($d=0.92$) and magazines and radio stations ($d=0.72$). The differences between magazines and on-line media ($d=0.59$) and between magazines and news agencies ($d=0.64$) were moderately significant.

9.3.3.3 *Importance of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers across the industry regard self-management most important ($x_1=4.50$). They also regard it more important than reporters do ($x_1=4.27$ – see section 9.3.4.1). As such, first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) consider it most important ($x_1=4.83$), while peers at on-line media ($n=8$) and news agencies ($n=5$) consider it least important ($x_1=4.35$ respectively). Due to their perception that they operate under conditions of severe pressure, first-line news managers at television channels might regard this competency most important;
- In light of the above, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.52$) on the importance of this competency was found between managers at television channels ($n=3$) and their counterparts at daily newspapers ($n=24$). The former considers this competency more important ($x_1=4.83$) than the latter ($x_1=4.48$);
- Similarly, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.45$) was calculated between first-line news managers at weekly newspapers ($n=21$) and their counterparts at radio stations ($n=8$). In this case, the latter group considers this competency more important ($x_1=4.66$) than the former ($x_1=4.42$);

- Given the finding that managers at television stations regard this competency so important, a practically significant difference ($d=0.77$) was calculated between themselves and their counterparts at weekly newspapers ($n=21$), those at on-line media ($n=8$; $d=1.11$) and those at news agencies ($n=5$; $d=0.95$). Similarly, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.51$) was found between this group (television channel managers) and colleagues at magazines ($n=3$); and
- First-line news managers at radio stations ($n=8$) regard the self-management competency second most important across the industry ($x_1=4.66$). As a result, moderately significant differences were calculated between themselves and peers at on-line media ($n=8$; $d=0.72$) and at news agencies ($n=5$; $d=0.61$). One might argue that radio station managers regard this competency important given the emphasis independent radio stations put on it (as indicated during interviews). However, many on-line media and news agencies operate under similar pressure than independent radio stations, resulting in a situation where media titles pay equal attention to the proper development of self-management skills.

9.3.3.4 *Implementation of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Given the importance first-line news managers attach to the self-management competency ($x_1=4.50$, see section 9.3.4.3), they acknowledge that they do not implement it as well as they would like to ($x_2=4.04$). They therefore accept that there is room for improvement. Again, first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) consider themselves best at implementing this competency ($x_2=4.52$). This contrasts the perspective among reporters at these media titles. They do not regard their managers the best implementers of this competency ($x_1=3.30$, see section 9.2.4.2). On the other hand, first-line news managers at on-line media ($n=8$) consider themselves worst implementers of self-management ($x_2=3.68$). This again contrasts the views of subordinates who report to them. Reporters at these sites rated first-line news managers second best across the industry ($x_2=3.75$). To some extent, this indicates that first-line news managers at

on-line media titles put too much pressure on themselves when evaluating their self-management skills. Reporters perceive them to be well equipped to properly implement this competency;

- Given the above, a practically significant difference ($d=0.86$) was found between managers at daily newspapers ($n=25$) and their colleagues at television channels ($n=3$). The latter consider themselves better implementers of this competency ($x_2=4.52$) than the former ($x_2=4.06$). Moreover, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.65$) was calculated between managers at on-line media ($n=8$) and their colleagues at daily newspapers ($n=25$). This finding can be attributed to an earlier result that managers at on-line media rate themselves worse implementers of this competency than ($x_2=3.68$) than peers at daily newspapers ($x_2=4.06$);
- First-line news managers working at television channels ($n=3$) indicated that they consider their implementation of self-management better than colleagues at weekly newspapers ($n=22$). A practically significant effect size was subsequently measured ($d=1.03$). When comparing other media types on this issue, a moderately significant effect size ($d=0.55$) was found between weekly newspapers ($n=22$) and radio stations ($n=11$). Again, the former group considers themselves worse ($x_2=3.86$) than the latter ($x_2=4.21$);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.67$) was also calculated between first-line news managers at magazines ($n=2$) and those at television channels ($n=3$). First-line news managers at television channels perceive themselves better implementers ($x_2=4.52$) of this competency than colleagues at magazines ($x_2=3.89$);
- Due to the finding that first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) regard themselves better at implementing self-management than colleagues at other media types, high moderately significant and practically significant differences were calculated. Firstly, high moderately significant differences were calculated between first-line news managers at television channels ($n=3$) and their colleagues at radio stations ($n=11$; $d=0.71$) and at news agencies ($n=5$; $d=0.74$) respectively. Moreover, first-line news managers at television channels

consider themselves practically significantly better ($d=1.43$) at implementing this competency than their colleagues at on-line media ($n=8$);

- Respondents at on-line media ($n=8$; $x_2=3.68$) again rated themselves worse implementers of this competency than their colleagues at radio stations ($n=11$; $x_2=4.21$). As a result, a practically significant difference exists ($d=0.91$);
- A moderately significant difference ($d=0.60$) was found between first-line news managers at on-line media ($n=8$) and their counterparts at news agencies ($n=5$). Again, managers at on-line media rated themselves worse ($x_2=3.68$) than those at news agencies ($x_2=4.06$); and
- The above results all indicate that first-line news managers at on-line media should improve their perception of how well they perform in terms of implementing the self-management competency. If this is the case, they will probably perform better than they currently do, because their self-worth and self-esteem will improve. The opposite is, however, the case at television channels. Although they perceive themselves good implementers of this competency, subordinates differ. As a result, they should pay attention to align their own perception to subordinates' experience thereof.

9.3.4 Comparing the importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency across media ownership types

In order to obtain a more detailed perspective on the importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency, comparisons were also made among media enterprises operating on different ownership structures.

Table 9.5: Importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of reporters

Media ownership type	Reporters						
	Importance – Self-management						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	72	4.36	0.59		0.24	0.50	0.07
Unlisted companies	46	4.12	0.98			0.26	0.29
Public service mandate	30	3.86	1.00				0.54
Foreign ownership	28	4.40	0.58				
	Implementation – Self-management						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	78	3.67	0.94		0.19	0.79	0.16
Unlisted companies	48	3.44	1.22			0.43	0.32
Public service mandate	38	2.92	0.96				0.95
Foreign ownership	29	3.83	0.88				

Tables 9.5 and 9.6 highlight the following results.

9.3.4.1 Importance of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

- Irrespective of the ownership structure, reporters across the industry consider self-management an important managerial competency ($x_1=4.19$). When looking across media ownership structures, reporters at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=28$) regard this competency most important ($x_1=4.40$), with

those at the public service broadcaster (n=30) regarding it least important ($x_1=3.86$); and

- Given the above, moderately significant differences were calculated between reporters at the SABC (n=30) and those at listed companies (n=72; $d=0.50$) as well as those at companies with a majority of foreign ownership (n=28; $d=0.54$).

It is difficult to speculate on the factors that could influence the importance someone attaches to the self-management competency. In a South African newsroom management context, one could argue that reporters at companies with a majority of foreign ownership are aware of the effort that goes into newsroom management. They might also be aware of the pressures on newsroom staff to perform in light of a competitive international environment. As a result, they regard it more important for news managers to address their self-management skills to cope with professional demands. At the SABC, on the other hand, reporters might be so negative about their superiors (and the way in which they manage newsrooms) that they do not care much about these colleagues' self-management skills.

9.3.4.2 *Implementation of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of reporters*

- Irrespective of the relevant ownership model, reporters rated the implementation of self-management moderately worse ($x_2=3.47$) than the importance they attach to it ($x_1=4.19$). Those at companies with a majority of foreign ownership (n=29) again consider their subordinates best at implementing this competency ($x_2=3.83$). Those at the SABC (n=38) consider their managers worst implementers thereof ($x_2=2.92$). It might be the case that reporters at the SABC regard this competency so unimportant that they are not able to evaluate how well their managers implement it. The opposite could also be true for reporters at companies with a majority of foreign ownership, given the importance they attach to it;

Table 9.6: Importance and implementation of self-management as a managerial competency across media ownership types from the perspective of first-line news managers

Media ownership type	First-line news managers						
	Importance – Self-management						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_1)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	37	4.47	0.62		0.12	0.52	0.21
Unlisted companies	12	4.39	0.41			0.98	0.11
Public service mandate	9	4.80	0.34				0.87
Foreign ownership	13	4.34	0.53				
	Implementation – Self-management						
				Effect size (d)			
	n	Mean (x_2)	Std deviation	Listed companies	Unlisted companies	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership
Listed companies	38	4.03	0.54		0.10	0.51	0.69
Unlisted companies	13	4.08	0.48			0.46	0.77
Public service mandate	12	4.30	0.40				1.10
Foreign ownership	13	3.57	0.67				

- When looking at the specific management tasks reporters at the SABC perceive their first-line news managers poor at, the following was found:
 - Admitting to personal mistakes ($n=36$; $x_2=2.53$);
 - Addressing individual weaknesses ($n=36$; $x_2=2.64$);
 - Accommodating different personal values ($n=36$; $x_2=2.69$);
 - Being able to learn from mistakes and past experience ($n=36$; $x_2=2.71$);
 - and
 - Maximising individual strengths ($n=38$; $x_2=2.74$).

- In line with the results on the importance reporters attach to this competency (see section 9.3.4.1), practically significant differences were also calculated on the implementation thereof. This was the case between reporters at the SABC ($n=38$) and those at listed companies ($n=78$; $d=0.79$) as well as those at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=29$; $d=0.95$).

9.3.4.3 *Importance of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- Similar to reporters, first-line news managers across different media ownership structures regard self-management an important competency ($x_1=4.50$). They even regard it more important than reporters do ($x_1=4.19$, see section 9.3.4.1). As such, first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=9$) consider this competency most important ($x_1=4.80$). This correlates with an earlier finding that first-line news managers at television channels perceive this competency most important of all media types included in the research (see section 9.3.3.3).

First-line news managers employed by companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$) perceive this competency least important. Section 9.3.4.1 outlined that reporters at these companies consider self-management most important. Given these findings, different expectations are likely to arise between these respondent groups. Failure to meet these could result in newsroom conflict and damage the enterprises' professional output. Given the competitive and profit-oriented environment these media enterprises operate in, a decline in professional output could result in negative performance and profitability;

- The above indicates differences in opinion between first-line news managers at the SABC and their colleagues at companies with a majority of foreign ownership. As a result, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.52$) was calculated between managers at the SABC ($n=9$) and their colleagues at listed companies ($n=37$).

The former group regards this competency more important ($x_1=4.80$) than the latter ($x_1=4.47$); and

- This difference in opinion also results in practically significant differences between respondents at the SABC ($n=9$) and their colleagues at unlisted companies ($n=12$; $d=0.98$) as well as those at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$; $d=0.87$).

9.3.4.4 *Implementation of self-management as a managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers*

- First-line news managers across ownership types indicated that they perceive their implementation of self-management better ($x_2=4.00$) than reporters consider it to be the case ($x_2=3.47$; see section 9.3.4.2). As was the case with other managerial competencies discussed (e.g. communication [see section 4.6.4.4]; strategic action [see section 6.3.4.4]; teamwork [see section 7.4.4.4]; and global awareness [see section 8.4.4.4]) first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) again consider themselves best at implementing the self-management competency ($x_2=4.30$). Those at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$) consider themselves worst at implementing it ($x_2=3.57$). This again correlates with the above discussion in section 9.3.4.3.

As such, first-line news managers at the SABC perceive themselves best at implementing the following self-management tasks:

- Upholding the news enterprise's ethical code ($n=12$; $x_2=4.75$);
- Basing conduct on clear personal values ($n=12$; $x_2=4.67$);
- Working diligently ($n=12$; $x_2=4.58$);
- Being able to learn from mistakes and past experience ($n=12$; $x_2=4.58$);
- Admitting to personal mistakes ($n=12$; $x_2=4.50$);
- Persevering under conditions of failure and stress ($n=12$; $x_2=4.50$);
- Taking reporters' mental state into account ($n=12$; $x_2=4.50$);

- Taking responsibility ($n=12$; $x_2=4.42$);
- Taking reporters' physical state into account ($n=12$; $x_2=4.42$); and
- Maximising individual strengths ($n=12$; $x_2=4.42$).

When comparing these results with the management tasks SABC reporters rated their superiors worst at (see section 9.3.4.2), it is unfortunate that managers consider their strength to lie in many of these aspects. Again, these findings indicate that reporters and managers at the SABC are not on the same page with regard to the latter's management performance. In some instances, qualitative data obtained from interviews also contradict the above.

Managers' view on these issues is that they work hard, are responsible, persevere under difficult conditions, admit to personal mistakes and learn from it. Moreover, they are of the opinion that they function on clear personal standards and uphold the news enterprise's ethical code. They also see themselves considerate towards reporters' physical and mental state. Interviewees, however, differed on some of these issues.

Firstly, they highlighted the dilemma with first-line news managers who pretend to work hard, while they are "only trying to get as much from the media enterprise as possible". They described how managers would sit around without doing anything (often even outside of normal working hours) and eventually claim overtime from the corporation. Moreover, some first-line news managers are suspected of being dishonest with time sheets. They would, for instance, indicate that they came into the office at a certain time to cover a breaking news event, while the story would only become known later. This poses serious challenges for people on higher management levels at the corporation. Furthermore, other interviewees explained the ethical dilemmas (on personal and professional conduct) they experience (see section 2.4.3.4);

- In light of the above, a number of moderately and practically significant differences on the implementation of self-management tasks were calculated across media with different ownership structures. In the first instance, moderately significant differences were calculated between first-line news managers at listed companies ($n=38$) and their colleagues at both the SABC ($n=12$; $d=0.51$) and companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$; $d=0.69$). In both cases, those at the SABC consider themselves better implementers ($x_2=4.30$) than those at the other two groups ($x_2=4.03$ for listed companies and $x_2=3.57$ for companies with foreign ownership);
- Similarly, a moderately significant difference ($d=0.46$) exists between first-line news managers at unlisted companies ($n=13$) and their colleagues at the SABC ($n=12$). The latter again perceive themselves better at implementing self-management tasks ($x_2=4.30$) than the former ($x_2=4.08$); and
- As can be expected (given the different views on the implementation of this competency) a practically significant difference ($d=1.10$) exists between first-line news managers at the SABC ($n=12$) and their colleagues at companies with a majority of foreign ownership ($n=13$).

9.4 Summary

This chapter focused on the dimensions of self-management as a managerial competency. It was argued that managers especially need self-management skills due to increasingly competitive business environments. This does not only relate to increased competition for financial resources and profits, but specifically also to fewer human resources expected to handle an increasing workload. This situation often challenges staff to balance increased work stress and complex personal circumstances. These conditions are especially relevant to media staff.

By delineating the dimensions of the self-management competency, it was indicated that first-line news managers in the South African mainstream media environment need integrity and clear ethical standards. This provides them with a basis from which to

conduct their personal and professional lives. Moreover, it enables them to set an example through which they can lead, coach and mentor newsroom subordinates. In doing so, both groups could play a meaningful role in presenting media enterprises' audiences with truthful, balanced and ethically sound news reports.

In addition, first-line news managers should also be resilient, driven, motivated and able to learn from past experiences and mistakes. Once again, this will improve their job satisfaction, while it will also enable them to lead by example. If reporters witness that their superiors are motivated and focused on their professional responsibilities, they could be motivated to do the same. They will also be more open to approach their managers with problems if they experience that superiors learn from mistakes and adjust their behaviour accordingly. Again, this does not only relate to professional issues, but also to personal ones.

Most importantly, however, newsroom staff should also strive to lead balanced personal and professional lives. As such, they should ensure that they balance work and personal responsibilities in order to avoid stress and ultimately poor performance. Guidelines were provided according to which newsroom staff (especially first-line news managers) can arrange their individual responsibilities.

Finally, it was indicated how first-line news managers could address their individual weaknesses and expand on their individual strengths. Suggestions were made on how employees can identify these and attain the opportunity to learn new skills and unlearn outdated ones given changed professional expectations.

The latter part of the chapter focused on the empirical research results obtained from this study. Findings indicated that first-line news managers are more aware of their inability to properly implement self-management tasks given the importance they attach to it. While reporters also seem aware of some weaknesses in this area, these are less significant.

When comparing results on the importance and implementation of the self-management competency across media types, it was found that magazine reporters consider this competency most important. Their colleagues at weekly newspapers, however, experience their superiors to be the worst implementers thereof. As far as first-line news managers are concerned, those at television channels indicated that they consider this competency most important. They also perceive themselves best at implementing it.

When research findings were compared across different media ownership types, it was found that reporters at companies with a majority of foreign ownership perceive this competency most important. Although reporters at the SABC rate their managers worst at implementing self-management tasks, reporters at foreign ownership companies seem not entirely happy with the implementation thereof either. As was the case with other competencies, first-line news managers at the SABC again perceive themselves best at implementing self-management tasks, given the fact that they also consider it most important. In contrast with the importance reporters at foreign ownership companies attach to this competency, their superiors perceive themselves worst at implementing it. Quantitative results obtained from the two respondent groups at the SABC differed. Some of these results also differed from qualitative data provided by interviewees at the corporation. These findings made it evident that the SABC should attend to the issues highlighted in an effort to improve professional output.

The next chapter outlines the research conclusions for this study in light of the results on the six managerial competencies discussed in chapters four to nine. These are followed by recommendations aimed to provide solutions to newsroom management problems identified by this study.

Chapter 10:

Conclusions and recommendations

(It) is widely regarded as the worst job in journalism. The demands are relentless, the sacrifices many and the rewards few... (Managers) are moored between the buffeting of their subordinates on the one side and the constantly shifting winds of top management... (They) are portrayed by subordinates as ill-behaved automatons who have few skills and fewer journalistic convictions, by top managers as well-intentioned workhorses who get bogged down in the process and offer little in the way of initiative or strategic thinking, and by (themselves) as hapless victims caught in the crush of circumstances.

– **Peters** (1999:9)

New managers in newsrooms are ... like new supervisors in other industries ... promoted because they demonstrated talent in their craft. They were top reporters, designers, producers, or photojournalists. But they have moved into jobs that require a whole new set of competencies. Their journalism skills, no matter how superior, are not sufficient. Now they need to know how to teach, motivate, correct, inspire, and improve the work of others.

– **Geisler** (2004:2)

Final implementation of policy is in the hands of ...first-line supervisors, yet they often are the youngest, most inexperienced and least trained of all managers.

– **Fink** (1996:80)

It is easy to point out management failures, but it is difficult to suggest remedies.

– **Morton** (2003:76)

10.1 Introduction

The above four quotations summarise the dilemma investigated by this study. As outlined in section 1.5.1, enterprises across industries worldwide are realising the importance of properly addressing the human aspects of management in order to maximise organisational success. However, as the above quotations indicate, this responsibility often rests in the hands of well qualified, yet inexperienced managers (also see DuBrin, 2003:3). Neither the media in general, nor the South African media is an exception (see section 1.3.4.1).

Based on this predicament, the study set out to determine how important first-line news managers and reporters in South Africa's mainstream media consider six managerial competencies. These competencies are rooted in general management theory (see section 1.5.1). The study also aimed to ascertain how these two respondent groups currently experience first-line news managers' implementation of these competencies (see section 1.5.1).

Given the theoretical framework provided in chapter two and chapters four to nine, as well as the qualitative and quantitative research results discussed in chapters four to nine, this chapter provides:

- A synopsis of the study;
- Research conclusions based on research objectives (see section 1.5.2) and research hypotheses (see section 1.6); and
- Recommendations based on the research results. These recommendations culminate in a proposed framework for newsroom management in South Africa's mainstream media.

10.2 Synopsis of the study

Chapter one provided an introduction and orientation into the research approach. Firstly, operational definitions were outlined. This was followed by a background and motivation for investigating the research phenomenon under discussion. In the first instance, the focus fell on the shift towards a new management paradigm across enterprises. It then focused on media management in general and newsroom management within a post-apartheid South African media context. This discussion was followed by an outline of research objectives, research hypotheses and research methodology applicable to the study. In the final instance, suggestions were made with regard to possibilities for future research in this field.

In chapter two the broad theoretical framework for the study was provided. It focused on the dimensions of management, as well as basic and additional management functions managers perform to effectively and efficiently manage organisational resources. Chapter two formed the theoretical background for discussing the six managerial competencies in chapters four to nine.

Chapter three expanded on the brief methodological framework provided in chapter one. As such, it focused on the applicable research design and research instruments. It also outlined the research population and research sample, as well as the sampling procedure implemented. It finally provided detail with regard to the data analysis and interpretation procedures applied.

In chapters four to nine the theoretical dimensions of the six managerial competencies (i.e. communication; planning and administration; strategic action; teamwork; global awareness; and self-management) were outlined within the context of newsroom management. This was followed by research results pertaining to the importance and implementation of each competency in South African mainstream media newsrooms.

The present chapter draws this study to a close by providing conclusions and recommendations based on the research results discussed in chapters four to nine. Table 10.1 outlines the links between the study's research objectives and hypotheses, the questions in the questionnaires and sections in which research findings were discussed.

Table 10.1: Links between research objectives and hypotheses, questions in the questionnaire and discussion of research results

Research objectives and hypotheses	Sections and questions in the questionnaire	Discussion of research results
Research objective 1: To determine the importance reporters in South Africa's mainstream media attach to the six managerial competencies of communication, planning and administration, strategic action, teamwork, global awareness, and self-management <i>vis-à-vis</i> the general management theoretical framework	Questionnaire for reporters, Category C, Sections 13.1A – 13.6A	Sections 4.6.1; 5.4.1; 6.3.1; 7.4.1; 8.4.1 and 9.3.1
Research objective 2: To determine the perception among reporters with regard to the implementation of these managerial competencies by first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media	Questionnaire for reporters, Category C, Sections 13.1B – 13.6B	Sections 4.6.2; 5.4.2; 6.3.2; 7.4.2; 8.4.2 and 9.3.2
Research objective 3: To determine the importance first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media attach to these managerial competencies <i>vis-à-vis</i> the general management theoretical framework	Questionnaire for first-line news managers, Category C, Sections 13.1A – 13.6A	Sections 4.6.1; 5.4.1; 6.3.1; 7.4.1; 8.4.1 and 9.3.1
Research objective 4: To determine the extent to which first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media perceive themselves to implement these managerial competencies.	Questionnaire for first-line news managers, Category C, Sections 13.1B – 13.6B	Sections 4.6.2; 5.4.2; 6.3.2; 7.4.2; 8.4.2 and 9.3.2
Research hypothesis 1: First-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media do not consider the managerial competencies important for newsroom management.	Questionnaire for first-line news managers, Category C, Sections 13.1A – 13.6A	Sections 4.6.1; 5.4.1; 6.3.1; 7.4.1; 8.4.1 and 9.3.1
Research hypothesis 2: Due to the little importance they attach to these competencies, first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media do not implement them optimally either, with subsequent negative impact on newsroom activity.	Questionnaire for first-line news managers, Category C, Sections 13.1B – 13.6B	Sections 4.6.2; 5.4.2; 6.3.2; 7.4.2; 8.4.2 and 9.3.2
Research hypothesis 3: Reporters in South Africa's mainstream media, on the other hand, consider the managerial competencies essential to effective and efficient newsroom management. They consider it more important than news managers.	Questionnaire for reporters, Category C, Sections 13.1A – 13.6A	Sections 4.6.1; 5.4.1; 6.3.1; 7.4.1; 8.4.1 and 9.3.1

Research hypothesis 4: Given the importance reporters attach to these competencies, they do not consider their first-line news managers to implement these optimally, with subsequent negative implications for newsroom activity and professional media output.	Questionnaire for reporters, Category C, Sections 13.1B – 13.6B	Sections 4.6.2; 5.4.2; 6.3.2; 7.4.2; 8.4.2 and 9.3.2
Research hypothesis 5: Due to factors such as structure, audience characteristics and historical background associated with different media types, reporters and first-line news managers at individual media types attach different levels of importance to the six managerial competencies. As a result, they also perceive the optimal implementation thereof differently.	Questionnaires for reporters and first-line news managers, Category C, Sections 13.1A – 13.6A and Sections 13.1B – 13.6B	Sections 4.6.3; 5.4.3; 6.3.3; 7.4.3; 8.4.3 and 9.3.3
Research hypothesis 6: Based on advantages and challenges associated with different media ownership structures in the country, reporters and first-line news managers at media titles operating under different ownership frameworks perceive the importance of the six managerial competencies differently. As a result, they also perceive the optimal implementation thereof differently.	Questionnaires for reporters and first-line news managers, Category C, Sections 13.1A – 13.6A and Sections 13.1B – 13.6B	Sections 4.6.4; 5.4.4; 6.3.4; 7.4.4; 8.4.4 and 9.3.4

10.3 Conclusions based on research results

This section focuses on conclusions flowing from the research results discussed in chapters four to nine. These conclusions are drawn along the lines of the research objectives (see section 1.5.2) and research hypotheses (see section 1.6) initially set out. In each instance, conclusions are drawn on the basis of the six managerial competencies. The management implications of these conclusions within a South African newsroom management context are also debated.

10.3.1 Conclusions based on research objectives

10.3.1.1 *The importance reporters in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms attach to the six managerial competencies*

The study's first objective was to determine how important reporters in South Africa's mainstream media consider each of the six managerial competencies. The following conclusions are drawn:

- Reporters in South Africa's mainstream media (n=207) consider the six managerial competencies very important ($x_7=4.11$);

- As such, they rank these competencies (from most to least important) as follows:

- Global awareness ($x_1=4.23$; $n=177$);
- Self-management ($x_1=4.22$; $n=176$);
- Strategic action ($x_1=4.16$; $n=180$);
- Planning and administration ($x_1=4.05$; $n=184$);
- Teamwork ($x_1=4.01$; $n=178$); and
- Communication ($x_1=4.00$; $n=187$).

In terms of management tasks related to each competency, reporters consider the following most important, as indicated in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2: Most important management tasks related to each managerial competency from the perspective of reporters

Managerial competency	Most important management tasks
Global awareness	• Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa ($x_1=4.45$; $n=175$); • Willingness to gain understanding of ethnic and cultural differences ($x_1=4.33$; $n=174$); and • Being able to recognise the impact of local and international changes on the media industry ($x_1=4.29$; $n=176$).
Self-management	• Being able to learn from mistakes and past experiences ($x_1=4.51$; $n=173$); • Working diligently ($x_1=4.50$; $n=174$); and • Taking responsibility ($x_1=4.41$; $n=175$).
Strategic action	• Understanding the nature of the news product <i>vis-à-vis</i> the news enterprise's target audience ($x_1=4.45$; $n=179$); • Knowing the national news agenda ($x_1=4.40$; $n=179$); and • Knowing the news enterprise's news/editorial policy ($x_1=4.33$; $n=177$).
Planning and administration	• Prioritising tasks in order to deliver the desired news product ($x_1=4.39$; $n=178$); • Taking well-informed decisions despite pressures posed by tight deadlines ($x_1=4.38$; $n=183$); and • Pro-actively developing plans to improve the level of professional output ($x_1=4.24$; $n=182$).
Teamwork	• Praising reporters in the news department ($x_1=4.18$; $n=175$); • Defining individual objectives ($x_1=4.16$; $n=171$); • Sharing recognition and credit with team members ($x_1=4.16$; $n=173$); • Structuring department/section to implement teamwork principles ($x_1=4.10$; $n=175$); and • Understanding individual strengths and weaknesses to function within a teamwork situation ($x_1=4.10$; $n=173$).
Communication	• Originating formal communication (e.g. e-mail, memoranda, meetings) to inform reporters of relevant activities ($x_1=4.26$; $n=186$); • Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with colleagues ($x_1=4.25$; $n=183$); and • Soliciting interpersonal communication between managers and reporters (e.g. discussions, mentoring) ($x_1=4.21$; $n=183$).

The following conclusions are drawn based on the outline in Table 10.2.

10.3.1.1.1 Global awareness

Reporters regard it more important that news managers are informed about changes in a local and national context than in an international context. They thus perceive it more important that target audiences are informed about the intricacies in the South African news environment than events in the international context.

10.3.1.1.2 Self-management

Reporters consider the self-awareness and development dimension of self-management less important than other dimensions of this competency. This does not only relate to the self-development of first-line news managers, but also that of reporters themselves. This might indicate that reporters perceive their superiors as employees with specific organisational responsibilities rather than “people” with needs and expectations. They subsequently might lack compassion for the challenges facing superiors. Apart from this, reporters also regard it less important that managers focus on their (reporters’) self-awareness and development. As a result, they do not expect news managers to take responsibility for subordinates’ needs and expectations either. Qualitative data from interviews (especially during Audit 1) indicate that reporters often fail to take responsibility for this management task themselves. This issue should be addressed if media enterprises want to assist newsroom staff to reach their full personal and professional potential.

10.3.1.1.3 Strategic action

As was the case with the global awareness competency, reporters consider it most important that strategic action activities are aligned with target audiences’ needs and expectations, as well as news enterprises’ goals and objectives.

10.3.1.1.4 *Planning and administration*

Reporters perceive the level of professional output most important. As a result, they expect news managers to control resources in such a manner that the most professional news product can be produced and distributed to target audiences.

10.3.1.1.5 *Teamwork*

Reporters regard it most important that managers involve team members (reporters) in newsroom activity and encourage them throughout newsroom projects. This seems especially relevant in instances where decisions and activities affect their personal and professional lives.

10.3.1.1.6 *Communication*

Reporters place the highest premium on interpersonal contact and communication between themselves and superiors.

The general conclusion drawn from the above is that reporters consider the six managerial competencies very important for effective and efficient newsroom management.

Based on the above, and given research results from previous newsroom (and organisational) studies, the expectation was, however, that reporters would award more importance to two managerial competencies in particular.¹⁹ These are:

- **Communication**

Research and literature in general emphasise the need for proper communication in any relationship (whether interpersonal or professional). Chapter four also highlighted the implications of improper or ineffective communication. This is especially applicable in a multicultural and multilingual environment where differences potentially cloud effective communication.

Given this, one can conclude that newsroom management in the South African mainstream media can be more

¹⁹ Having said this, respondents were not expected to rate all six competencies equally important. Moreover, this statement does not underrate the importance of the other four managerial competencies.

effective and efficient if reporters regard communication more important. If this were the case, they would expect first-line news managers to improve their communication skills as well. This will not only improve interpersonal newsroom relationships, but reporters will also be more knowledgeable of newsroom developments and decisions. They will consequently feel more involved in decision making and accept more ownership for their actions and the contribution these efforts make to improve the news product in general; and

- **Teamwork**

Research and literature also outline the trend (in the media and elsewhere) to utilise teamwork as the preferred way of deciding on and implementing organisational plans, policies and activities. While teamwork does not necessarily guarantee organisational success, enterprises increasingly realise that it presents more benefits than previous individualistic and autocratic approaches.

The finding that reporters in the South African mainstream media award so little importance to teamwork might indicate that they are not fully aware of the benefits it presents. If this perspective is changed and reporters consider teamwork more important, they might also expect their superiors to implement it better. Improvement in this area will not only benefit news enterprises, but also target audiences.

10.3.1.2 The perception among reporters in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms with regard to the implementation of the six managerial competencies

The second research objective was to determine how well reporters perceive first-line news managers' current implementation of the six managerial competencies. This was in each instance compared with the importance reporters attach to it. The aim was to identify gaps between importance and implementation which could potentially affect effective and efficient newsroom management. The following conclusions are drawn:

- Reporters in South Africa's mainstream media (n=207) regard the implementation of the six managerial competencies just above average ($x_2=3.39$). This indicates that they experience first-line news managers slightly worse at implementing the competencies given the importance they attach to it (see section 10.3.1.1);
- In their view, first-line news managers implement the competencies as follows (from best to worst):
 - Strategic action ($x_2=3.56$; n=194);

- Global awareness ($x_2=3.49$; $n=194$);
- Self-management ($x_2=3.49$; $n=193$);
- Planning and administration ($x_2=3.38$; $n=193$);
- Communication ($x_2=3.29$; $n=196$); and
- Teamwork ($x_2=3.11$; $n=187$).

In terms of the implementation of management tasks related to each competency, reporters perceive their managers best at the tasks as indicated in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3: Management tasks related to each managerial competency reporters perceive first-line news managers to implement best

Managerial competency	Management tasks reporters perceive first-line news managers to implement best
Strategic action	• Knowing the national news agenda ($x_2=3.97$; $n=188$); • Knowing the news enterprise's news/editorial policy ($x_2=3.89$; $n=187$); • Implementing the news enterprise's news/editorial policy ($x_2=3.81$; $n=188$); and • Knowing the news enterprise's vision, mission and goals ($x_2=3.81$; $n=185$).
Global awareness	• Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa ($x_2=3.87$; $n=191$); • Being able to recognise the impact of local and international changes on the media industry ($x_2=3.72$; $n=184$); and • Being informed about social, political and economic changes within an international context ($x_2=3.72$; $n=184$).
Self-management	• Working diligently ($x_2=3.79$; $n=76$); • Upholding the news enterprise's code of ethics ($x_2=3.76$; $n=75$); and • Being ambitious/motivated to achieve set objectives ($x_2=3.69$; $n=76$).
Planning and administration	• Delegating responsibility for tasks to reporters ($x_2=3.58$; $n=187$); • Delegating authority to reporters to perform tasks ($x_2=3.50$; $n=189$); • Keeping accurate and complete financial documentation on activities within the department/section ($x_2=3.50$; $n=169$); and • Handling a variety of incidents at once ($x_2=3.47$; $n=188$).
Communication	• Originating formal communication (e.g. e-mail, memoranda, meetings) to inform reporters of relevant activities ($x_2=3.63$; $n=193$); • Possessing language skills that promote communication ($x_2=3.46$; $n=187$); and • Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with colleagues ($x_2=3.42$; $n=192$).
Teamwork	• Praising reporters in the news department ($x_2=3.35$; $n=180$); • Sharing recognition and credit with team members ($x_2=3.26$; $n=183$); and • Defining team objectives ($x_2=3.24$; $n=174$).

The following conclusions are subsequently drawn.

10.3.1.2.1 *Strategic action*

Reporters agree that first-line news managers are best at implementing the management tasks they regard most important (see section 10.3.1.1). Yet, they perceive the implementation thereof worse than the importance they attach to it.

10.3.1.2.2 *Global awareness*

Reporters are of the opinion that two of the three management tasks they regard important are also implemented well (see section 10.3.1.1). However, they perceive their managers unable to properly address the challenges presented by ethnic and cultural differences in newsrooms, despite the importance they attach to it. This inability might cause tension between reporters and managers, as a lack of understanding between them could hamper newsroom activity.

Managers' ability to successfully apply the global awareness competency in the South African context will play an important role in organisational success or failure. This does not only relate to local business activity, but also the ability to compete in the international market. However, one needs to have realistic expectations of South African managers. It is not possible for them to be experienced and educated in the traits and traditions of all cultural and language groups in the country. Subordinates can thus be instrumental to expand managers' knowledge and experience about different cultures. If not, ethnic and cultural differences will divide South African workplace environments rather than unite them.

10.3.1.2.3 *Self-management*

Reporters experience gaps between those management tasks they regard most important and those they perceive managers to implement best. The exception is managers' ability to uphold news enterprises' codes of ethics. Reporters did not highlight this management task as one of the three most important tasks related to self-

management. However, they perceive managers skilled at implementing it. Managers should note this perception and continue to act ethically, despite pressures to do otherwise. This will contribute that newsroom staff in general uphold sound ethical standards and provide audiences with fair and balanced news coverage.

10.3.1.2.4 Planning and administration

In reporters' view, first-line news managers do not optimally implement any of the management tasks they consider most important. This discrepancy might create newsroom tension if reporters' expectations related to planning and administration are not met. If circumstances require managers to address more important management tasks related to this competency, they should communicate this to reporters. Being informed might reduce tension between managers and subordinates, as the latter gain insight into managers' current priorities.

10.3.1.2.5 Communication

Reporters generally perceive first-line news managers best at implementing those management tasks related to communication they regard most important (see section 10.3.1.1). This can facilitate proper newsroom management.

10.3.1.2.6 Teamwork

Reporters also agree that news managers are best at implementing the management tasks related to teamwork they consider most important (see section 10.3.1.1). Despite this, reporters indicated a practically significant difference between the importance they attach to specific teamwork tasks and the extent to which first-line news managers currently implement it (see section 7.4.1).

One area in which first-line news managers can improve (given the importance reporters attach to it) is their ability to set objectives. While reporters consider it most important

that managers define *individual* objectives, they experience that superiors are better at defining *team* objectives. Although this is not a negative situation *per se*, insufficient briefing on individual responsibilities can leave reporters feeling "lost" about what managers expect of them. This situation might worsen among inexperienced and young reporters. First-line news managers are therefore obliged to properly guide and brief reporters on individual roles and responsibilities. However, if managers are young and inexperienced themselves, they might be unsure about team members' roles and responsibilities themselves. If South African newsroom teams want to function optimally to produce and distribute the most professional news products possible, this situation should be addressed.

The general conclusion drawn from the above is that reporters are dissatisfied with the implementation of the six managerial competencies, given the importance they attach to it. As a result, their expectations around proper newsroom management are potentially unmet. This might leave them disillusioned with newsroom management approaches. Given higher self-interest and job ideals among modern-day employees across business industries, staff find it easier to "sell" their skills and experience to the next employer if they feel disappointed with professional circumstances. This becomes even more likely when factors such as salary and working conditions seem more favourable. To a certain extent, this is already evident in the South African media. This study highlighted high staff turnover and (subsequently) inexperienced staff as predominant characteristics of mainstream media newsrooms.

While some might argue that poor salaries and difficult working conditions (e.g. long hours) are the main cause for the above, results from this study indicate that more factors are at play. In an attempt to foster long-term commitment and loyalty towards employers, media owners and managers need a different perspective on human resources management in a media context. It is argued in section 10.4.2 that the proposed newsroom management framework could address some of these challenges.

Having said this, one should also keep another factor in mind. Reporters' youth, inexperience and high self-interest might create unrealistically high expectations about proper newsroom management. It was found that the majority of reporters have tertiary education qualifications. However, these qualifications are most likely in communication, journalism or related fields. As a result, few reporters were exposed to management issues during the course of their studies. Subject matter on media management has only recently been introduced in some media training curricula. This initiative would probably better prepare graduates for the demanding media environment they enter as reporters. Subsequently, they are likely to develop more realistic expectations about the way in which their superiors address newsroom management challenges. If this is the case, they might also be more sympathetic towards the difficult task facing their (often equally young and inexperienced) news managers.

10.3.1.3 *The importance first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media attach to the six managerial competencies*

The study's third objective was to determine the importance first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media attach to the six managerial competencies. Results on this issue also provided the opportunity to compare perceptions between reporters and first-line news managers. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- First-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media (n=79) consider the six managerial competencies very important ($x_1=4.17$). They even consider it more important than reporters ($x_1=4.11$) (see section 10.3.1.1);
- As such, they rank the individual competencies (from most to least important) as follows:
 - Self-management ($x_1=4.47$; n=71);
 - Global awareness ($x_1=4.36$; n=71);
 - Strategic action ($x_1=4.24$; n=72);
 - Planning and administration ($x_1=4.05$; n=73);
 - Communication ($x_1=4.04$; n=74) and
 - Teamwork ($x_1=3.88$; n=70).

First-line news managers and reporters agree on the two competencies rated moderately important (i.e. strategic action and planning and administration). Although they also agree on the two most important (i.e. self-management and global awareness) and two least important (i.e. teamwork and communication) competencies, the exact order given to these competencies differs.

In terms of the most important management tasks related to each competency, first-line news managers highlighted the following as set out in Table 10.4.

Table 10.4: Most important management tasks related to each managerial competency from the perspective of first-line news managers

Managerial competency	Most important management tasks
Self-management	• Taking responsibility ($x_1=4.69$; $n=70$); • Persevering under conditions of failure and stress ($x_1=4.67$; $n=70$); • Conducting oneself according to clearly defined personal values ($x_1=4.63$; $n=70$); and • Being able to learn from mistakes and past experiences ($x_1=4.63$; $n=71$).
Global awareness	• Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa ($x_1=4.56$; $n=71$); • Willingness to gain understanding of ethnic and cultural differences ($x_1=4.54$; $n=69$); and • Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues ($x_1=4.44$; $n=71$).
Strategic action	• Knowing the news enterprise's news/editorial policy ($x_1=4.61$; $n=71$); • Knowing the national news agenda ($x_1=4.60$; $n=70$); and • Implementing the news enterprise's news/editorial policy ($x_1=4.56$; $n=70$).
Planning and administration	• Taking well-informed decisions despite pressures posed by tight deadlines ($x_1=4.67$; $n=73$); • Prioritising tasks in order to deliver the desired news product ($x_1=4.58$; $n=73$); and • Handling a variety of incidents at once ($x_1=4.39$; $n=72$).
Communication	• Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with colleagues ($x_1=4.45$; $n=74$); • Soliciting interpersonal communication between managers and reporters (e.g. discussions, mentoring) ($x_1=4.31$; $n=71$); • Taking colleagues' feelings and emotions into account when communicating with them ($x_1=4.28$; $n=74$); and • Handling difficult reporters fairly ($x_1=4.28$; $n=72$).
Teamwork	• Praising reporters in the news department ($x_1=4.45$; $n=67$); • Sharing recognition and credit with team members ($x_1=4.13$; $n=69$); and • Sharing in the responsibilities associated with the implementation of a teamwork approach ($x_1=4.09$; $n=68$).

The following conclusions are subsequently drawn.

10.3.1.3.1 Self-management

Similar to reporters (see section 10.3.1.1), first-line news managers also do not consider it that important to focus on the self-awareness and development dimension of this competency. This applies to their own development, as well as that of reporters. This might indicate a perception that managers' professional environment does not allow them to pursue personal goals and responsibilities. Moreover, it does not allow them to take responsibility for reporters' development either. As was the case with reporters, supervisors might subsequently also see subordinates as "instruments" responsible to

produce a professional news product. If managers succeed to focus more on reporters' development, they might witness staff becoming more committed to their professional responsibilities.

10.3.1.3.2 Global awareness

Reporters and first-line news managers agree on the two most important management tasks related to global awareness. However, first-line news managers consider these management tasks more important than reporters (see section 10.3.1.1).

10.3.1.3.3 Strategic action

Reporters and first-line news managers also agree on the most important management tasks related to strategic action. First-line news managers again perceive these tasks more important than reporters.

10.3.1.3.4 Planning and administration

First-line news managers are highly aware of the demanding working conditions they face and the impact these have on their management performance. Subsequently, they regard the management tasks associated with professional responsibilities very important – even more important than reporters (see section 10.3.1.1).

10.3.1.3.5 Communication

Both respondent groups agree on the importance of proper interpersonal contact and communication in a newsroom context (also see section 10.3.1.1). In fact, first-line news managers consider it more important than reporters to maintain sound interpersonal relationships with colleagues.

10.3.1.3.6 Teamwork

First-line news managers consider it even more important than reporters (see section 10.3.1.1) to involve subordinates in newsroom activities. Moreover, they consider it important to praise reporters and share recognition with them. Despite this view, research results in section 7.4.1 indicate that reporters experience a bigger gap between the importance they attach to management tasks associated with teamwork and the current implementation thereof.

The following general conclusion can be drawn from the above discussion: Like reporters, first-line news managers consider the six managerial competencies very important for effective and efficient newsroom management. In fact, they consider all the individual competencies except teamwork more important than reporters. However, as was the case with the reporter respondents, the expectation was that first-line news managers would rate communication and teamwork more important than they did. This expectation rests on the following arguments (also see section 10.3.1.1):

- **Communication**

Section 10.3.1.1 highlighted that newsroom management could improve if reporters regarded the communication competency more important. This seems even more applicable to news managers. Proper communication down organisational ranks, as well as communication with superiors on higher management levels could facilitate newsroom management. This relates to improved relationships between managers on different organisational levels. Additionally, it also implies that managers on lower organisational levels could be better informed about organisational activities, decisions and policies. Knowledge of and insight into these issues would, in turn, enable them to pass accurate information on to subordinates; and

- **Teamwork**

Given the preference for teamwork as an approach to reach organisational goals and objectives, the expectation is that first-line news managers would consider this competency more important. If this were the case, they might also focus more on properly implementing the teamwork approach. Improvement in this area would not only benefit reporters (as they would feel more involved in newsroom activities), but also managers themselves (as they would be able to share responsibilities with colleagues).

However, as with reporters, the finding that first-line news managers rank teamwork the least important managerial competency might indicate that they too prefer individual newsroom efforts above a teamwork approach. This might be the result of inexperience in the benefits of teamwork; an unwillingness or inability to properly organise and support staff members in teams; or the inclination to take credit for professional newsroom output themselves instead of sharing it with team members. Given the benefits of proper teamwork, it is important that this inclination is changed.

10.3.1.4 *The perception among first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms on their own implementation of the six managerial competencies*

The final research objective was to determine how first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media perceive their own implementation of the six managerial competencies. On the one hand, this was compared with the importance the two respondent groups attach to individual competencies. Moreover, it was compared with reporters' experience of the current implementation of these competencies. The aim was again to identify possible gaps between importance and implementation which could detrimentally affect effective and efficient newsroom management. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- First-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media (n=79) perceive their implementation of the six managerial competencies better than reporters experience it to be the case (see section 10.3.1.2). However, they still rate it lower ($x_2=3.68$) than the importance ($x_1=4.17$) they attach to it;
- First-line news managers therefore acknowledge that they are often unable to implement the competencies as well as they think they ought to. This is a positive finding, as managers admit that they need improved skills to facilitate more effective and efficient newsroom management;
- Against this background, first-line news managers rank their implementation of the six managerial competencies as follows (from best to worst):
 - Self-management ($x_2=4.00$; n=76);
 - Global awareness ($x_2=3.77$; n=76);
 - Strategic action ($x_2=3.63$; n=76);
 - Planning and administration ($x_2=3.63$; n=77);
 - Communication ($x_2=3.56$; n=78); and
 - Teamwork ($x_2=3.48$; n=71).

The above indicates that first-line news managers rank their implementation of the six competencies in the same order as the importance they attach to it (see section 10.3.1.3). They nevertheless rank their implementation thereof worse than the importance they attach to it (see section 10.3.1.3).

In terms of the implementation of management tasks related to each competency, managers perceive themselves best at the tasks indicated in Table 10.5.

Table 10.5: Management tasks related to each managerial competency first-line news managers perceive themselves to implement best

Managerial competency	Management tasks implemented best
Self-management	• Taking responsibility ($x_2=4.45$; $n=74$); • Working diligently ($x_2=4.42$; $n=76$); and • Upholding the news enterprise's code of ethics ($x_2=4.39$; $n=75$).
Global awareness	• Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa ($x_2=4.09$; $n=76$); • Willingness to gain understanding of ethnic and cultural differences ($x_2=4.08$; $n=76$); • Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues ($x_2=3.91$; $n=76$); and • Adjusting behaviour appropriately when interacting with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds ($x_2=3.91$; $n=75$).
Strategic action	• Knowing the national news agenda ($x_2=4.29$; $n=73$); • Understanding the nature of the news product <i>vis-à-vis</i> the news enterprise's target audience ($x_2=4.11$; $n=73$); and • Knowing the news enterprise's news/editorial policy ($x_2=4.10$; $n=72$).
Planning and administration	• Prioritising tasks in order to deliver the desired news product ($x_2=4.18$; $n=74$); • Handling a variety of incidents at once ($x_2=4.17$; $n=75$); and • Taking well-informed decisions despite pressures posed by tight deadlines ($x_2=4.16$; $n=77$).
Communication	• Taking into account colleagues' feelings and emotions when communicating with them ($x_2=4.03$; $n=78$); • Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with colleagues ($x_2=4.01$; $n=76$); and • Soliciting interpersonal communication between managers and reporters (e.g. discussions, mentoring) ($x_2=3.87$; $n=71$).
Teamwork	• Praising reporters in the news department ($x_2=4.16$; $n=67$); • Sharing recognition and credit with team members ($x_2=3.92$; $n=66$); and • Understanding the individual strengths and weaknesses to function within a teamwork situation ($x_2=3.82$; $n=65$).

The following conclusions are subsequently drawn.

10.3.1.4.1 *Self-management*

Despite the importance first-line news managers attach to certain self-management tasks (see section 10.3.1.3), they admit that they do not optimally implement these. Failure to do so might leave them with additional stress and frustration, as they experience inability to meet their own needs and expectations. Media enterprises could thus benefit from determining the conditions that contribute to this situation. They should also afford first-line news managers the opportunity to address these conditions. These might, for instance, relate to:

- Staff shortages and inexperience among reporters to perform the tasks allocated to them properly. This might add pressure and responsibility among first-line news managers to produce a professional news product;
- Unrealistically high expectations from owners. This could pressure first-line news managers to produce news products that would benefit circulation or audience figures, irrespective of whether they act ethically in the process or not. This might leave managers with the impression that they are expected to sacrifice personal values for the sake of their jobs;
- Deadline pressure and the pace against which news events are covered;
- A lack of proper mentoring and coaching, especially in light of the junior and inexperienced character of many first-line news managers;
- Inability to realise the benefits associated with proper self-awareness and development. Given the demanding newsroom management environment, first-line news managers probably have little opportunity to lead a healthy lifestyle or balance their private and professional lives. As a result, many are likely to suffer from professional burnout. This might cause them to leave their current employer for better employment opportunities elsewhere;
- The traditional perception that journalism is a tough profession characterised by stress and burnout. Given this character, balanced and healthy lives were not considered part of employee benefits. Some managers might subsequently accept these conditions because they want to live up to the expectations of the

profession. In the process of attracting, developing and keeping talented and loyal staff (see section 1.3.1) this perspective should be changed. This can either be done through training (specifically coaching and mentoring) or by introducing newsroom support systems. Legislation applicable to South African businesses can also facilitate this process;

- The inability, or lack of interest, to take care of reporters' mental and physical state. However, in the context of more open management approaches where a high premium is placed on people's needs and expectations, this inclination needs to change. If managers want to develop meaningful relationships with employees, they need to attend to subordinates' physical and mental well-being. This does not only relate to professional issues, but increasingly also to personal ones.

Having said this, literature indicates that self-management might be the most challenging of the six managerial competencies (see section 9.2.3.1). Results from this study show that this is also the case among first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media.

10.3.1.4.2 Global awareness

First-line news managers perceive themselves best at implementing the two management tasks they (and reporters) consider most important. This indicates that managers strive to acquaint themselves with the orientations, values, beliefs and customs of people from different South African cultures. While this will foster sensitivity towards people from other cultures, it will also enhance newsroom relations.

10.3.1.4.3 Strategic action

Both reporters (see section 10.3.1.1) and first-line news managers (see section 10.3.1.3) agree on the importance and implementation of specific management tasks related to strategic action. As such, both groups consider it important to develop news

products according to the needs and preferences of target audiences. New ways of categorising audiences (e.g. age, education, professional status, urban/rural location) necessitate that news managers know their audiences even better than before. It also necessitates that media enterprises address audience needs and strategically position themselves to achieve this, given tendencies in the South African media industry (see section 6.2.1.2).

Media enterprises would subsequently benefit to increasingly involve first-line news managers (and employees on other organisational levels) in strategic thinking and decision making. However, first-line news managers' inexperience often prevents them from regarding strategic thinking as a primary part of their jobs. The above results, however, indicate that South African news managers already realise the important role they can play in strategic thinking processes. Media enterprises should capitalise on this perspective to the benefit of their business activity. Importantly, however, they should remain cognisant of first-line news managers' professional shortcomings and address these to the benefit of internal and external stakeholders. Failing to do so will most probably prevent them from successfully operating their businesses.

10.3.1.4.4 Planning and administration

First-line news managers perceive themselves good at implementing the same management tasks related to planning and administration than the ones they perceive most important (see section 10.3.1.3). Reporters, however, disagree on the extent to first-line news managers perform the management tasks they consider most important. It is important that news enterprises determine whether reporters' expectations about what the planning and administration competency entails are skewed or whether managers should reassess their planning and administration priorities.

10.3.1.4.5 *Communication*

First-line news managers perceive themselves best at implementing those communication management tasks they consider most important (see section 10.3.1.3). While reporters agree to some extent on the importance of the management tasks listed (see section 10.3.1.1) they do not in all instances agree on the implementation thereof (see section 10.3.1.2). The media in general is notorious for poor internal communication (see section 4.2). Conclusions in sections 10.3.1.1 and 10.3.1.3 outlined the necessity that newsroom staff consider the communication competency more important and that media enterprises should implement measures to address this situation.

10.3.1.4.6 *Teamwork*

First-line news managers and reporters agree on the importance of some management tasks related to the teamwork competency. They also agree on first-line news managers' current implementation of these tasks (see section 10.3.1.2). However, respondents disagree on the importance and implementation of other management tasks. Given findings that reporters are more dissatisfied with first-line news managers' implementation of teamwork than managers seem to be themselves (see section 7.4.2), this issue needs to be addressed. It is therefore important that first-line news managers are equipped with the skills needed to promote teamwork. If this is the case, reporters will believe that their activities contribute towards the improvement of news products. Audiences will also benefit by receiving better quality news products (also see section 10.4.2).

Based on the above, the following general conclusion can be drawn: Given the importance first-line news managers attach to the six managerial competencies, they are less satisfied with their implementation thereof. They are nevertheless still more satisfied with their implementation of these than reporters are. Although poor implementation of the managerial competencies can leave reporters frustrated, it could cause first-line news managers to become despondent and disappointed in their management skills. This might especially be the case if managers are young and inexperienced. Moreover, findings from this research that first-line news managers are more negative about certain aspects of their working environment than reporters, might exaggerate this situation.

First-line news managers who participated in the study have good educational qualifications and some indicated that they completed additional training since joining the media. However, it was not determined whether these qualifications are in communication or journalism related fields or in management. This finding, linked with their lack of experience, might contribute that they lack knowledge of the six managerial competencies, and the way in which these fit into the management functions they perform. For newsroom management in South Africa to improve, media enterprises should address this situation.

The pool of skilled managers in the South African media is currently relatively small, especially as far as black and female managers are concerned. Media enterprises often also struggle to keep skilled managers employed, as other industries or government departments tend to poach them. This situation could worsen if managers are dissatisfied with their working environment or their performance. Given these factors, it seems inevitable that the media investigates the benefits associated with an alternative newsroom management framework as proposed in section 10.4.2.

10.3.2 *Conclusions based on research hypotheses*

10.3.2.1 *Research hypothesis 1: First-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media do not consider the managerial competencies important for newsroom management*

Based on the results from this study the conclusion is drawn that this research hypothesis can not be accepted. Section 10.3.1.3 outlined that first-line news managers regard the six managerial competencies very important ($x_1=4.17$). Section 10.3.1.3 delineated the extent to which this finding applies to each of the six competencies.

10.3.2.2 Research hypothesis 2: Due to the little importance first-line news managers attach to these competencies, first-line news managers in South Africa's mainstream media do not implement them optimally either, with subsequent negative impact on newsroom activity

In light of the results from this study, this hypothesis can not be accepted. Section 10.3.1.4 highlighted that first-line news managers perceive their implementation of the six competencies better than reporters experience it to be the case. However, managers also acknowledged that they often do not implement the competencies as well as they would like to, given the importance they attach to it. As such, they only consider implementation thereof slightly above average ($x_2=3.68$). Section 10.3.1.4 highlighted the extent to which this applies to each of the managerial competencies.

10.3.2.3 Research hypothesis 3: Reporters in South Africa's mainstream media, on the other hand, consider the managerial competencies essential to effective and efficient newsroom management. They consider it more important than news managers

Against the background of results from this study the conclusion is drawn that this research hypothesis can not be accepted. While reporter respondents regard the six managerial competencies very important ($x_7=4.11$), they do not regard it more important than first-line news managers (see sections 10.3.1.1 and 10.3.1.3). Section 10.3.1.1 outlined the extent to which this applies to each of the six competencies.

10.3.2.4 Research hypothesis 4: Given the importance they attach to these competencies, reporters do not consider their first-line news managers to implement these optimally, with subsequent negative implications for newsroom activity and professional media output

Given the results from this study, this hypothesis can be accepted. Section 10.3.1.2 indicated that reporters perceive the implementation of the six managerial competencies

just above average ($x_2=3.39$). They also perceive the implementation thereof worse than the importance they attach to it. Section 10.3.1.2 outlined the impact of this perception.

10.3.2.5 Research hypothesis 5: Due to factors such as structure, audience characteristics and historical background associated with different media types, reporters and first-line news managers at individual media types attach different levels of importance to the six managerial competencies. As a result, they also perceive the optimal implementation thereof differently

Based on research findings this hypothesis can be accepted. Table 10.6 highlights the extent to which this applies to each of the individual competencies.

Table 10.6: Importance and implementation of individual managerial competencies as perceived by reporters and first-line news managers at different media types

Managerial competency	Media type considering it most important	Media type considering it least important	Media type considering it implemented best	Media type considering it implemented worst
Reporters				
Communication	News agency ($x_1=4.34$; $n=8$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=3.90$; $n=50$)	On-line media ($x_1=3.62$; $n=12$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=3.04$; $n=51$)
Planning and administration	News agency ($x_1=4.46$; $n=8$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=3.95$; $n=51$)	On-line media ($x_1=3.76$; $n=11$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=3.12$; $n=51$)
Strategic action	Television ($x_1=4.45$; $n=17$)	Daily newspaper ($x_1=4.06$; $n=42$)	News agency ($x_1=4.02$; $n=8$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=3.28$; $n=52$)
Teamwork	News agency ($x_1=4.50$; $n=8$)	Daily newspaper ($x_1=3.70$; $n=41$)	Magazine ($x_1=3.52$; $n=9$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=2.76$; $n=49$)
Global awareness	News agency ($x_1=4.67$; $n=8$)	Daily newspaper ($x_1=4.14$; $n=41$) Weekly newspaper ($x_1=4.14$; $n=48$)	On-line media ($x_1=3.83$; $n=11$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=3.20$; $n=51$)
Self-management	Magazine ($x_1=4.49$; $n=9$)	Radio ($x_1=4.09$; $n=43$)	Magazine ($x_1=4.24$; $n=9$)	Weekly newspaper ($x_1=3.27$; $n=50$)

First-line news managers				
Communication	Radio ($x_2=4.36$; $n=8$)	On-line media ($x_2=3.86$; $n=8$)	Radio ($x_2=3.83$; $n=11$)	Magazine ($x_2=3.05$; $n=2$)
Planning and administration	Radio ($x_2=4.34$; $n=8$)	Television ($x_2=3.96$; $n=3$)	Television ($x_2=3.88$; $n=3$)	On-line media ($x_2=3.40$; $n=8$)
Strategic action	Radio ($x_2=4.72$; $n=8$)	Magazine ($x_2=3.80$; $n=2$)	Radio ($x_2=4.02$; $n=11$)	Magazine ($x_2=2.58$; $n=2$)
Teamwork	Radio ($x_2=4.42$; $n=8$)	Magazine ($x_2=2.76$; $n=2$)	News agency ($x_2=3.94$; $n=4$)	Magazine ($x_2=2.40$; $n=2$)
Global awareness	Television ($x_2=4.67$; $n=3$)	On-line media ($x_2=3.98$; $n=8$)	Radio ($x_2=4.11$; $n=11$)	Magazine ($x_2=3.33$; $n=2$) Television ($x_2=3.33$; $n=3$)
Self-management	Television ($x_2=4.83$; $n=3$)	On-line media ($x_2=4.35$; $n=8$) News agency ($x_2=4.35$; $n=5$)	Television ($x_2=4.52$; $n=3$)	On-line media ($x_2=3.68$; $n=8$)

10.3.2.6 Research hypothesis 6: Based on advantages and challenges associated with different media ownership structures in the country, reporters and first-line news managers at media titles operating under different ownership frameworks perceive the importance of the six managerial competencies differently. As a result, they also perceive the optimal implementation thereof differently

In light of the research results, this hypothesis can be accepted. Table 10.7 highlights the extent to which this applies to each of the individual competencies.

Table 10.7: Importance and implementation of individual managerial competencies as perceived by reporters and first-line news managers at media titles operating under different ownership frameworks

Managerial competency	Media ownership type considering it most important	Media ownership type considering it least important	Media ownership type considering it implemented best	Media ownership type considering it implemented worst
Reporters				
Communication	Foreign ownership ($x_1=4.12$; $n=30$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=3.91$; $n=33$)	Listed company ($x_1=3.52$; $n=81$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=2.88$; $n=37$)
Planning and administration	Listed company ($x_1=4.13$; $n=75$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=3.91$; $n=31$)	Listed company ($x_1=3.52$; $n=80$) Foreign ownership ($x_1=3.52$; $n=29$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=3.01$; $n=37$)
Strategic action	Foreign ownership ($x_1=4.25$; $n=29$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=4.02$; $n=30$)	Listed company ($x_1=3.73$; $n=80$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=3.32$; $n=37$)
Teamwork	Listed company ($x_1=4.12$; $n=72$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=3.74$; $n=31$)	Listed company ($x_1=3.27$; $n=75$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=2.70$; $n=38$)
Global awareness	Listed company ($x_1=4.37$; $n=73$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=4.07$; $n=30$) Unlisted company ($x_1=4.07$; $n=46$)	Listed company ($x_1=3.68$; $n=79$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=3.27$; $n=38$)
Self-management	Foreign ownership ($x_1=4.40$; $n=28$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=3.86$; $n=30$)	Foreign ownership ($x_1=3.83$; $n=29$)	Public service mandate ($x_1=2.92$; $n=38$)
First-line news managers				
Communication	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.44$; $n=9$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=3.91$; $n=13$)	Public service mandate ($x_2=3.96$; $n=12$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=3.37$; $n=13$)
Planning and administration	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.41$; $n=9$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=3.83$; $n=13$)	Public service mandate ($x_2=3.88$; $n=12$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=3.39$; $n=13$)
Strategic action	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.79$; $n=9$)	Unlisted company ($x_2=3.97$; $n=12$)	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.03$; $n=12$)	Unlisted company ($x_2=3.45$; $n=13$)
Teamwork	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.63$; $n=9$)	Listed company ($x_2=3.70$; $n=37$)	Public service mandate ($x_2=3.76$; $n=12$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=3.27$; $n=12$)
Global awareness	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.68$; $n=9$)	Unlisted company ($x_2=4.21$; $n=12$)	Public service mandate ($x_2=3.94$; $n=12$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=3.69$; $n=13$)
Self-management	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.80$; $n=9$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=4.34$; $n=13$)	Public service mandate ($x_2=4.30$; $n=12$)	Foreign ownership ($x_2=3.57$; $n=13$)

10.4 Recommendations based on research results: a proposed newsroom management framework

The previous section of this chapter delineated conclusions with regard to the research objectives and research hypotheses. These were derived from research results outlined in chapters four to nine of the study.

Research results and conclusions clearly indicate that current newsroom management practices in South Africa's mainstream media are neither effective nor efficient. Subsequently it can not be considered optimal either. Criticism about local and international news coverage from external media stakeholders such as the government and audiences (see section 1.3.4) further underlines this finding. In fact, staff members themselves suggested during research for Audit 1 that media enterprises need to address issues pertaining to newsroom management (see section 1.3.3).

In addition to the above, this research study particularly highlighted shortcomings in current newsroom management approaches. Effect sizes on the difference between the importance respondents attach to the six managerial competencies and the current implementation thereof support this argument. As such, first-line news managers themselves acknowledge that they fall short in implementing the managerial competencies as well as they ought to, given the importance they attach to it.²⁰ In their view the biggest gaps currently exist with regard to:

²⁰ Reporters also indicated that they perceive gaps between the importance they attach to each competency and their experience of the way in which first-line news managers currently implement it. One might argue that reporters' views are biased. Or that they saw the research as a way of expressing their frustration with news managers or their working conditions. Moreover, one could argue that they lack sufficient knowledge or experience to know which managerial competencies are important in a newsroom management context. Despite these arguments, reporters' views on this issue can not be dismissed, as they are the staff members who experience first-line news managers' implementation thereof first-hand. Given this, reporters indicated practically significant and moderately significant differences between the importance and implementation of all managerial competencies. They highlighted the following:

- Teamwork (d=0.75);
- Global awareness (d=0.73);
- Self-management (d=0.66);
- Communication (d=0.66);
- Planning and administration (d=0.63); and
- Strategic action (d=0.59).

- Global awareness (d=0.96);
- Self-management (d=0.82);
- Communication (d=0.81);
- Strategic action (d=0.81);
- Planning and administration (d=0.54); and
- Teamwork (d=0.43).

10.4.1 Premises for the proposed newsroom management framework

Results from this study indicate that media enterprises in South Africa should address the state of newsroom management. One way of doing this is to fit newsroom management into a competency-based paradigm. It is argued that the proposed framework could assist in this process. This framework is based on the following premises:

- All management functions are integral to successful business activity as they form part of a continuous management process. In order to perform these management functions effectively and efficiently, managers need managerial competencies comprising of specific management tasks. Section 2.2 outlined that the sequence in which managers implement these competencies and tasks might differ between business types. However, they must all be performed in some stage of the management process;
- Management in general is currently transformed into more open, democratic and participative management styles and approaches (see section 1.3.1);
- More importantly (for the purposes of this study) is the fact that media management undergoes similar changes in search of new management styles and approaches (see section 1.3.2). Changes in the macro management media environment (e.g. technological, political, economic and social) all necessitate this transformation;

- As a result, news managers need to rethink the importance and implementation of managerial competencies needed for effective and efficient newsroom management;
- Unfortunately, first-line news managers who are responsible to produce and distribute professional news products with the assistance of reporters (see section 1.2.2) are often least capable to do what is expected of them. As such, inexperience or a lack of skills are important contributing factors. Adding to this dilemma is the notion that first-line news managers are often ignorant about their management deficiencies.

10.4.2 Elements of the proposed newsroom management framework

Given the above arguments, the proposed newsroom management framework takes the six managerial competencies and uses these as building blocks towards more effective and efficient newsroom management. As such, the framework does not rank individual competencies in a specific order of importance. It is argued instead that each one is a prerequisite for the next to be introduced successfully in the newsroom management process.

The overriding motivation behind the above is that the effective implementation of each competency could facilitate more optimal newsroom management. As a result, motivation, ownership and loyalty among newsroom staff could improve. This might contribute towards improved productivity and job satisfaction among staff. It might ultimately lead to lower staff turnover and the opportunity for newsroom staff (especially managers) to gain more management experience than is currently the case. Ideally, all these factors will contribute towards producing and distributing a more professional news product to the benefit of media enterprises and external stakeholders. If the latter group's needs and expectations are met, they will be less likely to criticise the media, its activities and products.

Figure 10.1 illustrates the framework, after which each element is discussed in more detail.

The six managerial competencies support the proposed newsroom management framework in the following manner.

Figure 10.1: A proposed newsroom management framework



10.4.2.1 Self-management

Self-management should form the backbone of newsroom management. This derives from the assertion that:

- All employees (and especially managers responsible to manage resources) need clearly defined personal values;
- If this is the case, they will be motivated to work hard, be responsible, and have clearly defined personal and professional goals;
- They will have the skills to acknowledge differences between people and accommodate these;
- Because of clearly defined personal and professional values and goals, they will also be clear about their strengths and weaknesses. As such, they will aim to maximise the former, and improve on the latter;
- Self-managed employees will also find it easier to admit to mistakes and use incidents related to these to gain insight and prevent similar mistakes in future;
- They will also realise that *they* are responsible to advance their personal and professional lives. As such, they will be motivated to achieve personal and professional goals despite difficulties or failure;
- Employees with good self-management skills will also find it easier to uphold professional codes of ethics. As a result, they will less easily fall prey to situations in which personal or professional ethics are sacrificed; and
- Finally, they will focus more on the well-being of fellow employees. As such, news managers will focus more on the well-being of subordinates, and strive to address personal and professional problems.

The challenge is therefore for employees on different organisational levels (in this case higher level media managers, first-line news managers and reporters) to successfully establish the parameters for personal and professional conduct outlined above. Once they achieve this, they will be in a position to implement the other managerial competencies more effectively and efficiently. However, given acknowledgement in

literature and research studies that this is probably the most difficult managerial competency to fathom (see sections 9.2.3.1 and 10.3.1.4) this might be a challenging task.

Moreover, it is not something employers can impose on staff members. Each employee should take personal responsibility to establish, maintain and develop the dimensions of this competency. Individuals can draw from other managerial competencies in an attempt to successfully develop the self-management competency. These relate to proper interpersonal relationships (rooted in the communication competency); teamwork (found in the teamwork competency); and expanding their perspective wider than their own situation or knowledge (i.e. global awareness and strategic action competencies).

One also needs to accept, however, that media newsrooms (like any other enterprise) do not exist and operate in an ideal world. As such, physical and personal shortcomings will always be part of the environment in which the proposed framework is implemented. Nevertheless, managers and subordinates should both strive to implement the elements of the self-management competency as far as possible. Improvement on one or two of the areas outlined above could already result in improved newsroom management.

10.4.2.2 Global awareness

Once a well-established personal and organisational self-management framework is in place, first-line news managers can implement the global awareness competency. This competency becomes an instrument through which:

- Media enterprises explore their macro and micro environments to identify trends in the international, local/national and business environment. While the former is important in the South African media environment, the latter two components are probably more important. As such, technological, political, social and economic changes within post-apartheid South Africa can strongly impact on media enterprises' activities and success; and

- Managers utilise knowledge obtained from the above process to position their media enterprises as strategically as possible.

In a multicultural and multilingual South African society, it is specifically important for news managers to apply the global awareness competency in a more local sense. As such, they should be able to properly communicate in more than one language (preferably also an indigenous African language). They should also accept the reality of ethnic and cultural differences, recognise these differences and handle them effectively. Finally, news managers should be sensitive towards cues that might indicate the above differences and adjust their behaviour accordingly.

While well-developed global awareness skills will enable news managers to position their news enterprises and news products strategically, it will also enable them to interact effectively with colleagues from different cultural, language and ethnic backgrounds. This will foster sound interpersonal relationships, reduce conflict and contribute towards a more collaborative newsroom atmosphere. However, the social and political history of South African communities and business environments probably makes this process more challenging.

10.4.2.3 Strategic action

The perspectives gained from exploring the macro and micro environments can provide media enterprises with the insight they need to improve strategic decision making. By subsequently implementing the strategic action competency, media enterprises can:

- Be equipped with information on changes in the micro and macro contexts. This refers to changes in the department, media enterprise, media environment, broader South African and international environment;
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to these changes which might influence macro and micro management environments;

- Be well informed about the national and international news agenda and how the media enterprise should cover these events *vis-à-vis* the needs and expectations of its target audience and other external stakeholders (e.g. government);
- Develop clear strategies that support the enterprise's news/editorial policy;
- Be cognisant of other media enterprises' (i.e. competitors') and strategic partners' activities and plans. While the former will give them a competitive edge, the latter will ensure that activities and resources are not duplicated and that alliances are clearly understood; and
- Be especially mindful of the needs and expectations of its internal stakeholders (i.e. staff members) and how these can be utilised to the benefit of the media enterprise.

Strategic action must be positioned within the context of the media enterprise's vision, mission and goals. In contrast, these decisions (and the knowledge it is based upon) can also influence the enterprise's vision, mission and goals. The ultimate aim should, however, be to ensure that operational goals and objectives support the organisational strategy.

10.4.2.4 *Planning and administration*

The framework devised through strategic action subsequently forms the basis upon which the planning and administration competency is implemented. Proper strategic action will enable news managers to:

- Pro-actively devise plans to optimally identify, obtain and organise the resources needed to meet the organisational goals and objectives set in the previous phase;
- Use plans to budget for planned newsroom activities;
- Use budgets for decision making and monitoring activities;
- Anticipate risks based on plans, budgets and related decisions. Well-Informed news managers will also find it easier to defend the risks taken among superiors if they were involved in planning and decision making processes;

- Schedule plans to meet organisational goals and objectives and serve the needs and expectations of the various (internal and external) stakeholders;
- Prioritise tasks based on the above schedules. The skill to properly prioritise enables news managers to take better decisions despite pressures presented by tight deadlines, increased demands for higher profit margins, and realities of smaller and more inexperienced newsroom teams; and
- Delegate both responsibility and authority to newsroom subordinates, and reduce pressure on themselves. Well-informed news managers who were involved in planning and decision making will probably find it easier to delegate tasks to subordinates. This flows from the premise that informed and involved managers are less likely to fear losing control over newsroom activities when delegating tasks to subordinates.

It is unrealistic to expect first-line news managers to properly implement plans that were developed without their knowledge, input or ownership. The need therefore arises to involve these managers in the planning process as much as possible. Over and above this, involvement, insight and ownership will enable them to improve implementation of communication as the next managerial competency in the proposed framework.

10.4.2.5 *Communication*

No enterprise will benefit from well devised plans based on clear strategic action and thorough environmental analysis which are not implemented properly. This necessitates proper communication and requires news managers to:

- Muster formal and informal communication skills. As such, newsroom staff on all organisational levels need skills to express themselves and understand colleagues' verbal, nonverbal and written communication;
- Develop proper external communication skills. This relates to establishing and maintaining a network of contacts outside the media enterprise. More importantly (for the purposes of this study) they need sound internal communication skills. A

lack of these skills will prevent them from establishing and maintaining sound interpersonal relationships, handling conflict and addressing multilingual and multicultural differences. This, in turn, will hamper trust and openness, with subsequent negative impact on newsroom activity;

- Implement good motivational skills. Failure to do so will frustrate managers (if reporters do not perform tasks allocated to them). Moreover, it will elicit negative responses from reporters if assignments are forced upon them;
- Utilise improved communication technology (e.g. intranet, electronic bulletin boards, and electronic mail) to facilitate the above process. Managers should, however, guard against over-utilising technology. Personal interaction and informal discussions should remain a priority. Given the era of virtual offices, employees working with minimum supervision and a lack of interpersonal contact, the use of mediated communication might become inevitable;
- Develop communication skills that facilitate interaction with higher management levels. Open communication with superiors will foster interpersonal relationships and enable news managers to negotiate with superiors over resources and contribute during meetings and discussions; and
- Develop skills to acknowledge colleagues' feelings and emotions during interaction. In an environment characterised by potential misunderstanding and conflict as a result of various differences, these skills become invaluable.

Feedback is probably one of the most valuable instruments to facilitate the above process. On the one hand it gives subordinates the opportunity to ask questions and address uncertainties. On the other, it informs superiors about the extent to which subordinates understand the messages sent. This, in turn, allows for policies and decisions to be adjusted (if necessary) to benefit the enterprise and its various stakeholders. In addition, a culture of open feedback creates an environment where all employees feel valued and take ownership of decisions. This could prove an important prerequisite towards implementing the final competency in the proposed framework, namely teamwork.

10.4.2.6 Teamwork

Feelings of ownership, loyalty and commitment among staff will facilitate the proper implementation of the teamwork competency. In this process, first-line news managers should focus on:

- Structuring the newsroom and newsroom staff in such a manner that teamwork is facilitated. This implies that managers support teamwork and encourage staff to participate in such an approach;
- Individual strengths, weaknesses and technical skills when compiling teams. In this process, diversity becomes an important instrument to originate a variety of ideas and plans;
- Properly defining team and individual objectives. This will enable individuals to perform optimally, resulting in more optimal team performance;
- Assisting teams in identifying and obtaining the necessary resources. While these relate to financial resources, it also include resources such as time (to do what is expected of them) and infrastructure (e.g. technical equipment);
- Delegating responsibility to team members;
- Guiding, coaching and mentoring team members through projects. Unsympathetic or rude team leaders who make team members feel inferior easily discourage teams. Mentoring and coaching is, however, particularly challenging in South African newsrooms. The pool of experienced and skilled first-line news managers is small, given realities of high staff turnover, youth, inexperience and alternative employment opportunities;
- Praising reporters for work well done and sharing recognition with them. This will not only increase their motivation, but also encourage them to achieve organisational goals and objectives. This inclination will also promote team coherence to the benefit of news production and ultimately the media enterprise's different stakeholders; and
- Accepting the reality of conflict in any teamwork situation. As a result, they need skills to constructively resolve conflict.

Given all of the above, it seems necessary that the South African mainstream media expand its pool of skilled first-line news managers. However, this will probably be a long-term process, especially given demands to diversify media staff. Important, however, is that managers are skilled and experienced to make a real difference in newsroom management and that they are not merely appointed for the sake of window dressing.

10.4.3 Implementing the proposed newsroom management framework

To a certain extent, some media titles in the country (especially independent and commercial radio stations) have already implemented an approach similar to the above-mentioned framework. As a result, they already reap the benefits associated with this management approach. While this relates to improved news products, growing audience figures, increasing advertising revenue, increased profit and satisfied owners, these issues probably all stem from success on another area. These stations are successful in addressing the needs and expectations of their most important resource – staff. This implies that staff's job satisfaction increases, they are more motivated, take ownership of activities across organisational levels and are increasingly committed to their employers.

10.4.4 Aspects that facilitate the successful implementation of the framework

Based on literature, previous research and qualitative data provided by interviewees who participated in this research, the successful implementation of an alternative newsroom management framework relies on:

10.4.4.1 Involvement from top management and owners

Ownership, commitment and involvement from top management and owners are probably the most important aspects in the implementation process. If this lacks, managers on lower organisational levels will struggle to successfully implement the benefits presented by an alternative management framework. They will not only find it difficult to obtain the necessary resources (i.e. time, infrastructure, and money), but will also become frustrated if top management and owners do not support their initiatives.

10.4.4.2 Pro-active and well-planned initiatives aimed at transferring skills

These initiatives should focus to equip staff on all organisational levels (but especially first-line news managers responsible to implement the framework) with skills to successfully adjust newsroom management approaches. Most important is that these initiatives should not be an afterthought, but a deliberate attempt to improve newsroom management.

Moreover, traditional approaches to skills improvement (such as formal training programmes) will not necessarily be sufficient. This study found that news managers (and reporters) currently employed in South Africa's mainstream media have good educational qualifications. However, this does not imply that they automatically are effective managers.

Instead, skills transfer programmes should include the following initiatives as presented in Table 10.8 (see Starbuck, 2005:2; Cronje & Neuland, 2003:25; Peters, 1999:34; Fink, 1996:172 for a discussion on the importance of these initiatives and how the media and other enterprises have already successfully implemented it).

Table 10.8: Skills transfer initiatives to facilitate implementation of the proposed newsroom management framework

Skills transfer initiative	Practical application
Exposure to "real" management situations	Media enterprises should expose managers to situations in which they can apply the theoretical skills and knowledge obtained through formal education programmes. As such, newsrooms can link newly appointed managers with more experienced peers during an initial orientation period when first joining the enterprise. While new appointees should address practical management issues themselves, peers should guide them in these processes.
Establishing "informal", yet structured platforms to exchange skills	This could take the form of quality circles among peers to facilitate the exchange of best practices and guidelines for improved newsroom management. In cases where quality circles mainly consist of inexperienced managers, a more experienced manager (whom juniors trust) should be involved as mentor to guide managers in their discussions. While this initiative will improve their management skills, it will also foster interpersonal relationships between staff on different organisational levels.
Training in higher order skills	These include cognitive proficiency, self-knowledge, emotional capacity and determination. Improvement in these areas could assist managers in improving the human resource management responsibilities of their newsroom activities.
Cultivating insight into the rationale behind implementing the managerial competencies in newsroom management	Introducing participative coaching and mentoring programmes through which mentors assist inexperienced managers to understand the managerial competencies they need to apply. This is especially relevant in cases where formal training programmes did not address elements of these competencies.
Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the managerial competencies	Once managers understand the rationale behind the proposed framework, media enterprises should regularly monitor their implementation thereof. Evaluation can either take on the form of informal discussions (e.g. focus groups) or formal assessment (e.g. through questionnaires and/or interviews). As such, media enterprises can take responsibility for this monitoring process themselves or employ external researchers to do it on their behalf.

Given the above discussion, the conclusion can thus be drawn that the general research objective (see section 1.5.1) and the research objectives (see section 1.5.2) of this study

have been achieved. It can also be concluded that the applicable research hypotheses (see section 1.6) have been addressed. These culminated in the proposed newsroom management framework outlined in section 10.4.

Morton (2003:76) was quoted at the outset of this chapter stating that it is “easy to point out management failures, but it is difficult to suggest remedies”. It might even be more difficult to introduce and implement remedies that do come to mind.

As such, implementing the proposed newsroom management framework will undoubtedly not be an easy process or a quick fix to address criticism against the media. On the one hand, media enterprises operate in an environment characterised by tough competition – where “being first” to cover a news event can mean success or failure. As a result, the media can not afford to scale down or suspend its activities until all elements of the proposed framework are in place. However, the challenge for media owners and managers will be to realise the benefits associated with this framework, even though these will not become visible overnight. Once this is the case, implementing the proposed framework will be a gradual process. And even if media enterprises are not successful to implement all elements of the proposed framework, improving first-line news managers' skills in some of the managerial competencies might result in more effective and efficient newsroom management.

Addendum A: Sanef's South African National Skills Audit Phase 2 – 2004/5

Questionnaire for first-line news managers

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS COMPLETED ANONYMOUSLY. ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL AND YOUR IDENTITY WILL NOT BE LINKED TO IT IN ANY WAY

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

A: Ownership category:

Listed company	01
Unlisted company	02
Public service mandate	03

B: Geographical location:

Johannesburg	01
Cape Town	02
Durban	03
Port Elizabeth	04
Bloemfontein	05
Nelspruit	06

Category A: Professional profile

1. In which medium do you currently work?

Daily newspaper	01
Weekly newspaper	02
Magazine	03
Broadcasting (television)	04
Broadcasting (radio)	05
On-line media	06
News agency	07

2. What is your gender?

Male	01
Female	02

3. Your highest educational qualification is?

Completed secondary school	01
In-house training	02
Completed 1 year certificate	03
Completed 1 year diploma	04
Completed an advanced diploma	05
Completed a 3 year B degree	06
Completed a 4 year B degree	07
Completed an honours degree	08
Completed a Master's degree	09
Completed a PhD	10

4. What is your "mother tongue"?

Afrikaans	01
English	02
IsiXhosa	03
Ndebele	04
Pedi	05
Seswati	06
Southern Sotho	07
Tsonga	08
Tswana	09
Venda	10
Zulu	11
Other (please specify)	12

5. Indicate what percentage of the time spent at work you communicate in your mother tongue

6. In which of the following languages do you communicate most of the time at work?

Afrikaans	01
English	02
IsiXhosa	03
Ndebele	04
Pedi	05
Seswati	06
Southern Sotho	07
Tsonga	08
Tswana	09
Venda	10
Zulu	11
Other (please specify)	12

7. What journalism/media management training have you completed additional to the qualification in 3?

Name of training course	Institution	Year

8. How long have you been working in editorial management?

Less than 1 year	01
Between 1 year and 3 years	02
Between 3 and 5 years	03
Longer than 5 years	04

9. What is your position in the enterprise?

News editor	01
Night editor	02
Content or on-line editor	03
Assignment editor	04
Bulletin editor	05
Department/section editor	06
Other (please specify)	07

10. How long have you been in this position?

Less than 1 year	01
Between 1 year and 3 years	02
Between 3 and 5 years	03
Longer than 5 years	04

11. Which position did you hold before being appointed as a first-line news manager?

Junior reporter	01
Reporter	02
Senior reporter	03
Worked as reporter at another media enterprise	04
Worked at another enterprise (not media)	05
Other (please specify)	06

Category B: Attitudes

12. Rate your attitude about the following issues (as you experience them in your media enterprise) on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = extremely negative and 5 = extremely positive:

12.1	The structure of internal communication (e.g. verbal communication, written communication etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
12.2	The level of planning and administration	1	2	3	4	5
12.3	The way in which teamwork has been implemented in order to improve news gathering and news reporting	1	2	3	4	5
12.4	Strategic leadership within your enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.5	The level of sensitivity among managers with regard to industry related trends	1	2	3	4	5
12.6	The level of human resources development	1	2	3	4	5
12.7	Infrastructure available for managers to successfully perform the work expected of them	1	2	3	4	5
12.8	Infrastructure available for reporters to successfully perform the work expected of them	1	2	3	4	5
12.9	The remuneration policy implemented in your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.10	The overall management style applied in your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.11	The nature of employment (i.e. the level of job satisfaction you experience)	1	2	3	4	5
12.12	The opportunities you as a first-line news manager are given to be creative in the news gathering and news production processes	1	2	3	4	5
12.13	The opportunities to give input in terms of news management structures	1	2	3	4	5
12.14	Working conditions currently found in your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.15	Your loyalty towards the media enterprise in which you work	1	2	3	4	5
12.16	Your ability as first-line news manager to match your personal values with that of the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.17	Your willingness to be publicly associated with the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.18	Availability of funding to successfully perform the task at hand	1	2	3	4	5
12.19	Organisational structure of your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.20	The level of news output in your media enterprise compared to that of similar media enterprises in South Africa	1	2	3	4	5
12.21	The overall level of professional skills found within the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.22	The ethical code of your news enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.23	The level of ethics within your media enterprise (e.g. honesty and openness in terms of news gathering and news processes etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
12.24	Pressure from external stakeholders (e.g. owners, society, government, political parties) aimed at management	1	2	3	4	5
12.25	Pressure from external stakeholders (e.g. owners, society, government, political parties) aimed at reporters	1	2	3	4	5
12.26	The level of career development within the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.27	Management's knowledge about specific media policies (e.g. with regard to HIV/Aids; media law and media ethics)	1	2	3	4	5
12.28	Management's ability to transfer the above to first-line news managers (e.g. provision of and guidance in using the SA Ombudsman's ethical code of conduct)	1	2	3	4	5
12.29	Management's level of technical skills (e.g. computer, writing, reporting etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
12.30	The importance your media enterprise attaches to reporters' safety while covering a news event	1	2	3	4	5

Category C: Importance and implementation of managerial skills and competencies

A. Using the scale on the left-hand side of the statement, indicate the level of importance you attach to the task described within your line of duty as a first-line news manager (where 1 = not important and 5 = absolutely important).

B. Using the scale on the right-hand side of the statement, indicate the extent to which you implement the task described within your line of duty as a first-line news manager (where 1 = absolutely not and 5 = absolutely).

13.1 Communication – The ability of transferring information and facilitating understanding												
A						B						
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.1	Originating formal communication (e.g. e-mail, memoranda, meetings) to inform reporters of relevant activities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.2	Encouraging feedback and questions (from reporters) about formal communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.3	Using a variety of technological resources to accommodate individual communication needs	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.4	Soliciting interpersonal communication between myself and reporters (e.g. discussions, mentoring)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.5	Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.6	Taking into account colleagues' feelings and emotions when communicating with them	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.7	Negotiating over resources for reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.8	Developing relationships with higher levels of management	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.9	Exercising influence within higher levels of management	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.10	Decisively handling difficult reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.11	Handling difficult reporters fairly	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.12	Using hierarchical structures within the media enterprise to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.13	Aligning (personal and reporters') goals to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.14	Possessing language skills that promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.15	Handling multicultural differences to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.16	Handling multilingual differences to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA

13.2 Planning and administration – Planning, performing and controlling identified tasks												
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.1	Taking well-informed decisions despite pressures posed by tight deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.2	Anticipating consequences of risks (financial and otherwise) taken in order to deliver the news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.3	Defending the consequences arising from these risks to top management	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.4	Pro-actively developing plans to improve the level of professional output	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.5	Properly scheduling these plans in order to achieve the set goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.6	Prioritising tasks in order to deliver the desired news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.7	Delegating responsibility for tasks to reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.8	Delegating authority to reporters to perform tasks	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.9	Identifying resources (human and otherwise) needed to deliver the news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.10	Obtaining resources (human and otherwise) needed to deliver the news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA

1	2	3	4	5	13.2.11	Organising resources (human and otherwise) obtained	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.12	Keeping accurate and complete financial documentation on activities within my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.13	Budgeting for the activities to be performed in my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.14	Using financial information to plan activities in my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.15	Using financial information when taking decisions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.16	Using financial information when performing control activities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.17	Handling a variety of incidents at once	1	2	3	4	5	NA

13.3 Strategic action – Understanding and adapting to the media enterprise's vision, mission and goals												
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.1	Monitoring changes within my department/section to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.2	Monitoring changes within the media enterprise to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.3	Monitoring changes within the media environment to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.4	Monitoring changes within the broader South African context to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.5	Monitoring changes within the international context to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.6	Knowing the national news agenda	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.7	Knowing the international news agenda	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.8	Playing a role in setting the news agenda	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.9	Knowing your enterprise's news/editorial policy	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.10	Implementing your enterprise's news/editorial policy	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.11	Being informed about the activities of other media enterprises (i.e. competitors)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.12	Being informed about the activities of strategic partners	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.13	Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders (e.g. reporters)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.14	Understanding the concerns of external stakeholders (e.g. shareholders, society at large)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.15	Knowing the enterprise's vision, mission and goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.16	Prioritising and making decisions consistent with the enterprise's vision, mission and goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.17	Ensuring that operational goals (and objectives) support organisational strategy	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.18	Realising organisational goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.19	Developing human resources	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.20	Understanding the nature of the news product <i>vis-à-vis</i> the news enterprise's target audience	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Addendum A: Questionn

13.4 Teamwork – Organising reporters into small groups, facilitating shared responsibility and interdependency												
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.1	Structuring the department/section to implement teamwork principles	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.2	Organising reporters into teams	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.3	Assisting reporters in acquiring specialised knowledge of working within a teamwork structure	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.4	Formulating teamwork objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.5	Motivating reporters to perform satisfactorily within teamwork situations	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.6	Sharing in the responsibilities associated with the implementation of a teamwork approach	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.7	Compiling teams in such a way that diverse ideas are accommodated/promoted	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.8	Compiling teams in such a way that technical skills are utilised effectively	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.9	Defining team objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.10	Defining individual objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.11	Creating an environment within the newsroom where teamwork is rewarded	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.12	Coaching, mentoring and counselling reporters throughout a team project	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.13	Supporting teams in identifying resources necessary to achieve set goals/objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.14	Supporting teams in obtaining resources necessary to achieve set goals/objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.15	Understanding individual strengths and weaknesses to function within a teamwork situation	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.16	Managing team conflict optimally	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.17	Sharing recognition and credit with members of the team	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.18	Praising reporters in my department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
13.5 Global awareness – Level of cultural knowledge, understanding and cultural sensitivity												
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.1	Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.2	Being informed about social, political and economic changes within an international context	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.3	Being able to recognise the impact of local and international changes on the media industry	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.4	Developing multilingual skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.5	Being confident in handling ethnic and cultural differences	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.6	Willingness to gain understanding of ethnic and cultural differences	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.7	Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.8	Being able to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.9	Adjusting behaviour appropriately when interacting with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	NA
13.6 Self-management – Ability to take responsibility for your actions, performance and success in both private and professional life												
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.1	Conducting oneself according to clearly defined personal values	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.2	Accommodating differing personal values between departmental/section managers and reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.3	Upholding the news enterprise's code of ethics	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.4	Admitting to personal mistakes	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.5	Working diligently	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.6	Being conscious of a healthy lifestyle (e.g. diet, exercise)	1	2	3	4	5	NA

1	2	3	4	5	13.6.7	Being able to lead a healthy lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.8	Taking responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.9	Being ambitious/motivated to achieve set objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.10	Persevering under conditions of failure and stress	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.11	Coping with secondary trauma (experienced through the eyes of reporters within the department/section)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.12	Balancing private life and work responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.13	Taking reporters' physical state into account	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.14	Taking reporters' mental state into account	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.15	Being able to clearly define personal and professional goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.16	Maximising individual strengths	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.17	Addressing individual weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.18	Being able to learn from mistakes and past experiences	1	2	3	4	5	NA

14. In your view, state the three most important constraints facing you as first-line news manager, hindering the management of reporters

1.
2.
3.

15. In your view, state the three most important opportunities facing you as first-line news manager, facilitating the management of reporters

1.
2.
3.

Addendum B: Sanef's South African National Skills Audit Phase 2 – 2004/5

Questionnaire for reporters

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS COMPLETED ANONYMOUSLY. ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL AND YOUR IDENTITY WILL NOT BE LINKED TO IT IN ANY WAY

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

A: Ownership category:

Listed company	01
Unlisted company	02
Public service mandate	03

B: Geographical location:

Johannesburg	01
Cape Town	02
Durban	03
Port Elizabeth	04
Bloemfontein	05
Nelspruit	06

Category A: Professional profile

1. In which medium do you currently work?

Daily newspaper	01
Weekly newspaper	02
Magazine	03
Broadcasting (television)	04
Broadcasting (radio)	05
On-line media	06
News agency	07

2. What is your gender?

Male	01
Female	02

3. Your highest educational qualification is?

Completed secondary school	01
In-house training	02
Completed 1 year certificate	03
Completed 1 year diploma	04
Completed an advanced diploma	05
Completed a 3 year B degree	06
Completed a 4 year B degree	07
Completed an honours degree	08
Completed a Master's degree	09
Completed a PhD	10

4. What is your "mother tongue"?

Afrikaans	01
English	02
isiXhosa	03
Ndebele	04
Pedi	05
Seswati	06
Southern Sotho	07
Tsonga	08
Tswana	09
Venda	10
Zulu	11
Other (please specify)	12

5. Indicate what percentage of the time spent at work you communicate in your mother tongue

6. In which of the following languages do you communicate most of the time at work?

Afrikaans	01
English	02
isiXhosa	03
Ndebele	04
Pedi	05
Seswati	06
Southern Sotho	07
Tsonga	08
Tswana	09
Venda	10
Zulu	11
Other (please specify)	12

7. What journalism/media management training have you completed additional to the qualification in 3?

Name of training course	Institution	Year

8. How long have you been working in journalism?

Less than 1 year	01
Between 1 year and 3 years	02
Between 3 and 5 years	03
Longer than 5 years	04

9. What is your position in the enterprise?

Junior reporter	01
Reporter	02
Senior reporter	03
Other (please specify)	04

10. How long have you been in this position?

Less than 1 year	01
Between 1 year and 3 years	02
Between 3 and 5 years	03
Longer than 5 years	04

11. Who do you report to as first-line news manager?

News editor	01
Night editor	02
Content/on-line editor	03
Assignment editor	04
Bulletin editor	05
Department/section editor	06
Other (please specify)	07

Category B: Attitudes

12. Rate your attitude about the following issues (as you experience them in your media enterprise) on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = extremely negative and 5 = extremely positive:

12.1	The structure of internal communication (e.g. verbal communication, written communication etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
12.2	The level of planning and administration	1	2	3	4	5
12.3	The way in which teamwork has been implemented in order to improve news gathering and news reporting	1	2	3	4	5
12.4	The strategic leadership in your enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.5	The level of sensitivity among first-line news managers with regard to industry related trends	1	2	3	4	5
12.6	The level of human resources development	1	2	3	4	5
12.7	Infrastructure available for managers to successfully perform the work expected of them	1	2	3	4	5
12.8	Infrastructure available for reporters to successfully perform the work expected of them	1	2	3	4	5
12.9	The remuneration policy implemented in your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.10	The overall management style applied in your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.11	The nature of employment (i.e. the level of job satisfaction you experience)	1	2	3	4	5
12.12	The opportunities you as a reporter are given to be creative in the news gathering and news production processes	1	2	3	4	5
12.13	The opportunities to give input in terms of news management structures	1	2	3	4	5
12.14	Current working conditions in your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.15	Your loyalty towards the media enterprise in which you work	1	2	3	4	5
12.16	Your ability as a reporter to match your personal values with that of the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.17	Your willingness to be publicly associated with the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.18	Availability of funding within the media enterprise to successfully perform the task at hand	1	2	3	4	5
12.19	Organisational structure of your media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.20	The level of news output in your media enterprise compared to that of similar media enterprises in South Africa	1	2	3	4	5
12.21	The overall level of professional skills found within the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.22	The ethical code of your news enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.23	The level of ethics within your media enterprise (e.g. honesty and openness in terms of news gathering and news processes etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
12.24	Pressure from external stakeholders (e.g. owners, society, government, political parties) aimed at management	1	2	3	4	5
12.25	Pressure from external stakeholders (e.g. owners, society, government, political parties) aimed at you as a reporter	1	2	3	4	5
12.26	The level of career development within the media enterprise	1	2	3	4	5
12.27	First-line news managers' knowledge of specific media policies (e.g. with regard to HIV/Aids, media law and media ethics)	1	2	3	4	5
12.28	First-line news managers' ability to transfer this knowledge to reporters (e.g. provision of and guidance in using the SA Ombudsman's ethical code of conduct)	1	2	3	4	5
12.29	The level of technical skills among first-line news managers (e.g. computer, writing, reporting etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
12.30	The importance your media enterprise attach to reporters' safety while covering a news event	1	2	3	4	5

Category C: Importance and implementation of managerial skills and competencies

A. Using the scale on the left-hand side of the statement, indicate the level of importance you as a reporter attach to the management task described, as applicable to first-line news managers within your department/section (where 1 = not important and 5 = absolutely important).

B. Using the scale on the right-hand side of the statement, indicate the extent to which the first-line news manager within your department/section implements the management task described (where 1 = absolutely not and 5 = absolutely).

13.1 Communication – Managers' ability to transfer information and facilitate understanding												
A						B						
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.1	Originating formal communication (e.g. e-mail, memoranda, meetings) to inform reporters of relevant activities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.2	Encouraging feedback and questions (from reporters) on formal communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.3	Using a variety of technological resources to accommodate individual communication needs	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.4	Soliciting interpersonal communication between themselves and reporters (e.g. discussions, mentoring)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.5	Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.6	Taking into account reporters' feelings and emotions when communicating with them	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.7	Negotiating resources for reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.8	Developing relationships with higher levels of management	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.9	Exercising influence within higher levels of management	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.10	Decisively handling difficult reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.11	Handling difficult reporters fairly	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.12	Using hierarchical structures within the media enterprise to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.13	Aligning (personal and reporters') goals to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.14	Possessing language skills that promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.15	Handling multicultural differences to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.1.16	Handling multilingual differences to promote communication	1	2	3	4	5	NA

13.2 Planning and administration – Managers' ability to plan, perform and control identified tasks												
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.1	Taking well-informed decisions despite pressures posed by tight deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.2	Anticipating consequences of risks (financial and otherwise) taken in order to deliver the news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.3	Defending the consequences arising from these risks to top management	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.4	Pro-actively developing plans to improve the level of professional output	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.5	Properly scheduling these plans in order to achieve the set goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.6	Prioritising tasks in order to deliver the desired news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.7	Deflegating responsibility for tasks to reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.8	Delegating authority to reporters to perform tasks	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.9	Identifying resources (human and otherwise) needed to deliver the news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA

1	2	3	4	5	13.2.10	Obtaining resources (human and otherwise) needed to deliver the news product	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.11	Organising resources (human and otherwise) obtained	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.12	Keeping accurate and complete financial documentation on activities within the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.13	Budgeting for the activities to be performed in the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.14	Using financial information to plan activities in the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.15	Using financial information when taking decisions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.16	Using financial information when performing control activities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.2.17	Handling a variety of incidents at once	1	2	3	4	5	NA
13.3 Strategic action – Managers' ability to understand and adapt to the media enterprise's vision, mission and goals												
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.1	Monitoring changes within the department/section to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.2	Monitoring changes within the media enterprise to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.3	Monitoring changes within the media environment to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.4	Monitoring changes within the broader South African context to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.5	Monitoring changes within the international context to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats impacting on the performance of the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.6	Knowing the national news agenda	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.7	Knowing the international news agenda	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.8	Playing a role in setting the news agenda	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.9	Knowing the enterprise's news policy	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.10	Implementing the enterprise's news policy	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.11	Being informed on the activities of other media enterprises (i.e. competitors)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.12	Being informed on the activities of strategic partners	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.13	Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders (e.g. reporters)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.14	Understanding the concerns of external stakeholders (e.g. shareholders, society at large)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.15	Knowing the enterprise's vision, mission and goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.16	Prioritising and making decisions consistent with the enterprise's vision, mission and goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.17	Ensuring that operational goals (and objectives) support organisational strategy	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.18	Realising organisational goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.19	Developing human resources	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.3.20	Understanding the nature of the news product vis-à-vis the news enterprise's target audience	1	2	3	4	5	NA
13.4 Teamwork – Managers' ability to organise reporters into small groups, facilitating shared responsibility and interdependency												
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.1	Structuring the department/section to implement teamwork principles	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.2	Organising reporters into teams	1	2	3	4	5	NA

1	2	3	4	5	13.4.3	Assisting reporters in acquiring specialised knowledge of working within a teamwork structure	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.4	Formulating teamwork objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.5	Motivating reporters to perform satisfactorily within teamwork situations	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.6	Sharing in the responsibilities associated with the implementation of a teamwork approach	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.7	Compiling teams in such a way that diverse ideas are accommodated/promoted	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.8	Compiling teams in such a way that technical skills are utilised effectively	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.9	Defining team objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.10	Defining individual objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.11	Creating an environment within the newsroom where teamwork is rewarded	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.12	Coaching, mentoring and counselling reporters throughout a team project	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.13	Supporting teams in identifying resources necessary to achieve set goals/objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.14	Supporting teams in obtaining resources necessary to achieve set goals/objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.15	Understanding individual strengths and weaknesses to function within a teamwork situation	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.16	Managing team conflict optimally	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.17	Sharing recognition and credit with members of the team	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.4.18	Praising reporters in the department/section	1	2	3	4	5	NA

13.5 Global awareness – Managers' level of cultural knowledge, understanding and cultural sensitivity												
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.1	Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.2	Being informed about social, political and economic changes within an international context	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.3	Being able to recognise the impact of local and international changes on the media industry	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.4	Developing multilingual skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.5	Being confident in handling ethnic and cultural differences	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.6	Willingness to gain understanding in ethnic and cultural differences	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.7	Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.8	Being able to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.5.9	Adjusting behaviour appropriately when interacting with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	NA

13.6 Self-management – Managers' ability to take responsibility for their actions, performance and success in both private and professional life												
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.1	Conducting themselves according to clearly defined personal values	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.2	Accommodating differing personal values between themselves and reporters	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.3	Upholding the ethical code of the news enterprise	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.4	Admitting to personal mistakes	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.5	Working diligently	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.6	Being conscious of a healthy lifestyle (e.g. diet, exercise)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.7	Being able to lead a healthy lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.8	Taking responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.9	Being ambitious/motivated to achieve set objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA

1	2	3	4	5	13.6.10	Persevering under conditions of failure and stress	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.11	Coping with secondary trauma (experienced through the eyes of reporters within the department/section)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.12	Balancing private life and work responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.13	Taking reporters' physical state into account	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.14	Taking reporters' mental state into account	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.15	Being able to clearly define personal and professional goals	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.16	Maximising individual strengths	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.17	Addressing individual weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	2	3	4	5	13.6.18	Being able to learn from mistakes and past experiences	1	2	3	4	5	NA

16. In your view, state the three most important constraints facing first-line news managers within your department/section, hindering them in managing reporters

1.

2.

3.

17. In your view, state the three most important opportunities facing first-line news managers within your department/section, supporting them in managing reporters

1.

2.

3.

Addendum C: Sanef's South African National Skills Audit Phase 2 Framework for interviews

General

- Give a general introduction on the management structure of your enterprise.
- On what level do you function?

Competencies

1. Communication (The way information is transferred and understanding facilitated in the enterprise)

- 1.1 How does communication take place between you and the people reporting to you?
- 1.2 What is the role of interpersonal relationships in facilitating communication?
- 1.3 How do you handle difficult situations / reporters?

2. Planning and administration (How identified tasks are planned, put into action / performed and controlled)

- 2.1 How do you plan activities for the people your are responsible for?
- 2.2 Do they participate?
- 2.3 How do you get people to perform the planned activities as agreed?
- 2.4 How do you control performance on agreed upon activities?

3. Strategic action (The way the enterprise's vision, mission and goals are understood throughout the enterprise and adapted to/executed)

- 3.1 Are you and the people reporting to you aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the enterprise and the opportunities and threats confronting the enterprise?
- 3.2 Are you and the people reporting to you aware of the enterprise's vision, mission and goals?
- 3.3 What is the knowledge level (your own and that of the people reporting to you) of the national and international news agenda?
- 3.4 Do the people reporting to you know and execute the enterprise's news policy?
- 3.5 How is the enterprise's news policy and news product aligned to the enterprise's target audience?

4. Teamwork (Organising reporters into small groups, the way shared responsibility and interdependency is facilitated)

- 4.1 Do you implement teamwork as a *modus operandi* in your area of responsibility? How?
- 4.2 If yes, how do you facilitate shared responsibility and interdependency in teams?
- 4.3 How is conflict handled in teams?
- 4.4 How is recognition handled in teams?

5. Global awareness (The level of cultural knowledge, understanding and cultural sensitivity in the enterprise)

- 5.1 How do you promote cultural knowledge, understanding and sensitivity among the people reporting to you?
- 5.2 How important is multilingualism in your newsroom?

- 6. Self management (The way people in the enterprise are able to take responsibility for their own actions, performance and success in professional and private lives)**
- 6.1 How do you accommodate people's personal values in the work situation?
 - 6.2 Does the enterprise have a formal code of ethics?
 - 6.3 If yes, how is the enterprise's code of ethics upheld in the work situation?
 - 6.4 How balanced are the lives of people reporting to you in terms of their work and personal lives?
 - 6.5 How are the people reporting to you encouraged to build on their strengths and improve their weaknesses?

Addendum D: Rotated factor patterns retained by Kaiser's criterion
Importance and implementation of managerial competencies
from the perspective of reporters

Importance of managerial competencies
Communication

Management task	Factor 1 Informal communication	Factor 2 Formal communication
13.1.1 Originating formal communication		0.805
13.1.2 Encouraging feedback and comment from reporters	0.380	0.771
13.1.3 Technological resources to accommodate communication needs		0.812
13.1.4 Soliciting interpersonal communication between self and reporters	0.764	0.322
13.1.5 Maintaining sound interpersonal relationships with reporters	0.781	
13.1.6 Taking into account reporters' feelings/emotions in communication	0.829	
13.1.7 Negotiating resources for reporters	0.591	0.582
13.1.8 Developing relationships with higher management	0.549	0.524
13.1.9 Exercising influence with higher management	0.600	0.429
13.1.10 Decisively handling difficult reporters	0.486	0.646
13.1.11 Handling difficult reporters fairly	0.684	0.356
13.1.12 Using hierarchical structures to promote communication	0.427	0.564
13.1.13 Aligning goals to promote communication	0.689	0.368
13.1.14 Language skills that promote communication	0.780	0.368
13.1.15 Handling multicultural differences to promote communication	0.704	0.454
13.1.16 Handling multilingual differences to promote communication	0.703	0.383

Planning and administration

Management task	Factor 1 Budgeting and financial management	Factor 2 Gathering and analysing information	Factor 3 Planning and organising projects
13.2.1 Taking well-informed decisions despite deadline pressure		0.800	
13.2.2 Anticipating consequences of risks to deliver news product		0.778	
13.2.3 Defending consequences of risks taken		0.787	0.317
13.2.4 Pro-actively developing plans to improve output		0.674	0.435
13.2.5 Pro-actively scheduling plans to achieve set goals		0.767	0.378
13.2.6 Prioritising tasks to deliver the desired news product		0.579	0.544
13.2.7 Delegating responsibility for tasks			0.734
13.2.8 Delegating authority to perform tasks			0.707
13.2.9 Identifying resources to deliver news product		0.439	0.709
13.2.10 Obtaining resources to deliver the news product		0.353	0.768
13.2.11 Organising resources obtained		0.326	0.769
13.2.12 Keeping accurate and complete financial documentation	0.827		
13.2.13 Budgeting for activities in the department/section	0.896		
13.2.14 Using financial information to plan activities	0.904		
13.2.15 Using financial information when taking decisions	0.899		
13.2.16 Using financial information during control activities		0.556	
13.2.17 Handling a variety of incidents at once	0.699		

Strategic action

Management task	Factor 1 Understanding the internal and external media environment	Factor 2 Monitoring changes and aligning the media enterprise accordingly	Factor 3 Cognisance of the national and international news agenda
13.3.1 Monitoring changes in the department/section		0.737	
13.3.2 Monitoring changes in the media enterprise		0.867	
13.3.3 Monitoring changes in the media environment		0.822	
13.3.4 Monitoring changes in the broader South African context		0.834	
13.3.5 Monitoring changes in the international context		0.791	
13.3.6 Knowing the national news agenda			0.849
13.3.7 Knowing the international news agenda			0.793
13.3.8 Playing a role in setting the news agenda		0.424	0.597
13.3.9 Knowing the enterprise's news policy	0.575		0.503
13.3.10 Implementing the enterprise's news policy	0.688		0.419
13.3.11 Being informed on the activities of other media enterprises	0.340	0.389	0.607
13.3.12 Being informed on the activities of strategic partners	0.550	0.334	0.436
13.3.13 Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders	0.565	0.448	
13.3.14 Understanding the concerns of external stakeholders	0.729	0.365	
13.3.15 Knowing the enterprise's vision, mission and goals	0.736		
13.3.16 Making decisions in line with organisational vision, mission etc.	0.814		
13.3.17 Ensuring that operational goals support organisational strategy	0.883		
13.3.18 Realising organisational goals	0.874		
13.3.19 Developing human resources	0.671	0.326	0.344
13.3.20 Understanding nature of news product vis-à-vis target audience	0.506		0.644

Global awareness

Management task	Factor 1 Cultural knowledge and understanding	Factor 2 Cognisance of national and international changes and the impact thereof on the media enterprise
13.5.1 Being informed about social, political changes in SA	0.370	0.818
13.5.2 Being informed about international social, political changes		0.900
13.5.3 Recognising the impact of these changes on the media	0.340	0.842
13.5.4 Developing multilingual skills	0.418	0.549
13.5.5 Confidence in handling ethnic/cultural differences	0.685	0.521
13.5.6 Gaining understanding in ethnic and cultural differences	0.862	0.377
13.5.7 Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues	0.908	
13.5.8 Being able to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues	0.894	0.324
13.5.9 Adjusting behaviour when interacting with different cultures	0.828	0.314

Self-management

Management task	Factor 1 Integrity and ethical conduct	Factor 2 Balanced personal and professional lives
13.6.1 Conduct based on clear personal values	0.709	
13.6.2 Accommodating different personal values	0.804	
13.6.3 Upholding ethical code of news enterprise	0.845	
13.6.4 Admitting to personal mistakes	0.805	
13.6.5 Working diligently	0.763	0.322
13.6.6 Being conscious of a healthy lifestyle		0.934
13.6.7 Being able to lead a healthy lifestyle		0.926
13.6.8 Taking responsibility	0.841	
13.6.9 Being ambitious/motivated to achieve set objectives	0.702	0.478
13.6.10 Persevering under conditions of failure and stress	0.803	
13.6.11 Coping with secondary trauma	0.666	0.509
13.6.12 Balancing private life and work responsibilities	0.774	0.382
13.6.13 Taking reporters' physical state into account	0.733	0.380
13.6.14 Taking reporters' mental state into account	0.809	0.331
13.6.15 Being able to clearly define personal and professional goals	0.760	0.396
13.6.16 Maximising individual strengths	0.882	
13.6.17 Addressing individual weaknesses	0.785	
13.6.18 Being able to learn from mistakes and past experience	0.819	

Implementation of managerial competencies

Planning and administration

Management task	Factor 1 Planning and organising projects	Factor 2 Budgeting and financial management
13.2.1 Taking well-informed decisions despite deadline pressure	0.831	
13.2.2 Anticipating consequences of risks taken to deliver news product	0.722	0.334
13.2.3 Defending consequences of risks taken	0.775	0.300
13.2.4 Pro-actively developing plans to improve output	0.744	0.480
13.2.5 Pro-actively scheduling plans to achieve set goals	0.773	0.436
13.2.6 Prioritising tasks to deliver the desired news product	0.793	0.366
13.2.7 Delegating responsibility for tasks	0.700	0.400
13.2.8 Delegating authority to perform tasks	0.722	0.422
13.2.9 Identifying resources to deliver news product	0.714	0.508
13.2.10 Obtaining resources to deliver the news product	0.691	0.506
13.2.11 Organising resources obtained	0.659	0.589
13.2.12 Keeping accurate and complete financial documentation	0.454	0.762
13.2.13 Budgeting for activities in the department/section	0.418	0.820
13.2.14 Using financial information to plan activities	0.392	0.866
13.2.15 Using financial information when taking decisions	0.370	0.859
13.2.16 Using financial information when performing control activities	0.353	0.836
13.2.17 Handling a variety of incidents at once	0.734	0.330

Strategic action

Management task	Factor 1 Understanding the internal and external media environment	Factor 2 Monitoring changes in the media environment and aligning the media enterprise accordingly
13.3.1 Monitoring changes in the department/section		0.869
13.3.2 Monitoring changes in the media enterprise	0.326	0.875
13.3.3 Monitoring changes in the media environment	0.514	0.761
13.3.4 Monitoring changes in the broader South African context	0.552	0.678
13.3.5 Monitoring changes in the international context	0.532	0.690
13.3.6 Knowing the national news agenda	0.729	0.367
13.3.7 Knowing the international news agenda	0.779	
13.3.8 Playing a role in setting the news agenda	0.702	0.511
13.3.9 Knowing the enterprise's news policy	0.817	0.354
13.3.10 Implementing the enterprise's news policy	0.830	0.368
13.3.11 Being informed on the activities of other media enterprises	0.747	0.376
13.3.12 Being informed on the activities of strategic partners	0.787	
13.3.13 Understanding the concerns of internal stakeholders	0.629	0.457
13.3.14 Understanding the concerns of external stakeholders	0.717	0.419
13.3.15 Knowing the enterprise's vision, mission and goals	0.759	0.376
13.3.16 Making decisions in line with organisational vision, mission	0.719	0.411
13.3.17 Ensuring that operational goals support organisational strategy	0.795	0.369
13.3.18 Realising organisational goals	0.787	0.387
13.3.19 Developing human resources	0.632	0.414
13.3.20 Understanding nature of news product <i>vis-à-vis</i> target audience	0.745	0.434

Global awareness

Management task	Factor 1 Cultural knowledge and understanding	Factor 2 Cognisance of national and international changes and the impact thereof on the media enterprise
13.5.1 Being informed about social, political changes in SA	0.373	0.862
13.5.2 Being informed about international social, political changes	0.334	0.902
13.5.3 Recognising the impact of these changes on the media	0.369	0.873
13.5.4 Developing multilingual skills	0.668	0.341
13.5.5 Confidence in handling ethnic/cultural differences	0.824	0.413
13.5.6 Gaining understanding in ethnic and cultural differences	0.882	0.340
13.5.7 Being sensitive to ethnic and cultural cues	0.860	0.337
13.5.8 Being able to adapt to ethnic and cultural cues	0.906	0.311
13.5.9 Adjusting behaviour when interacting with different cultures	0.833	0.328

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