



## Welcome

As winter announces its presence across the country, we have the immense pleasure of welcoming several new members to the IDSC family.

Firstly, a warm winters welcome our newest clients, University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU).

While we've been working with SMU over the last year on various projects,

we officially signed a new contract this year.

Our new Chief Operating Officer, Glen Barnes, has been hard at work visiting clients, and to date we have provided on-site training at 4 clients and conducted one tailored training session at our Potchefstroom office.

So we welcome you all to the next season of our year programme, new PowerHEDA features on the way, user training and enhanced client support.

## Client Visitations

With the introduction of the new business model and the implementation of the new contracts in 2017, IDSC offered each client the opportunity to engage with Glen or the team in a strategic discussion on the continued relationship between the parties and to plot key focus areas going forward for the client.

Many clients responded positively to this invite and some sessions have

already been held to date. IDSC found these discussions extremely valuable and encourage those clients who have not yet set a date to do so. The contents of these discussions varied widely between clients, each depending on the clients priorities. In all cases, IDSC undertook to continue and even improve the support to existing and new clients, and detailed several new methods to these clients on how this will be accomplished.

In tandem to that discussion on all other aspects tabled by each client were discussed in a systematic way, some of which translated into specific tasks to be undertaken by either party. Some consistent themes came through these discussions and are summarised in this newsletter.



### Inside this Issue:

- *Welcome*
- *Client Visitations*
- *Advocacy of the New Business Model*
- *Some confusion over the need for two invoices*
- *Pre-paid Hours and the Monitoring of Time*
- *Integrated Analytics*
- *Aggregated Analytics*
- *The Move to Detailed Student (Learner) Analytics*
- *The need for more Financial Analytics*
- *New Staff*
- *Congratulations*
- *Are you using your Umbrella?*
- *Next Publication*

**Simplicity Through  
Innovation**

## Advocacy of the New Business Model

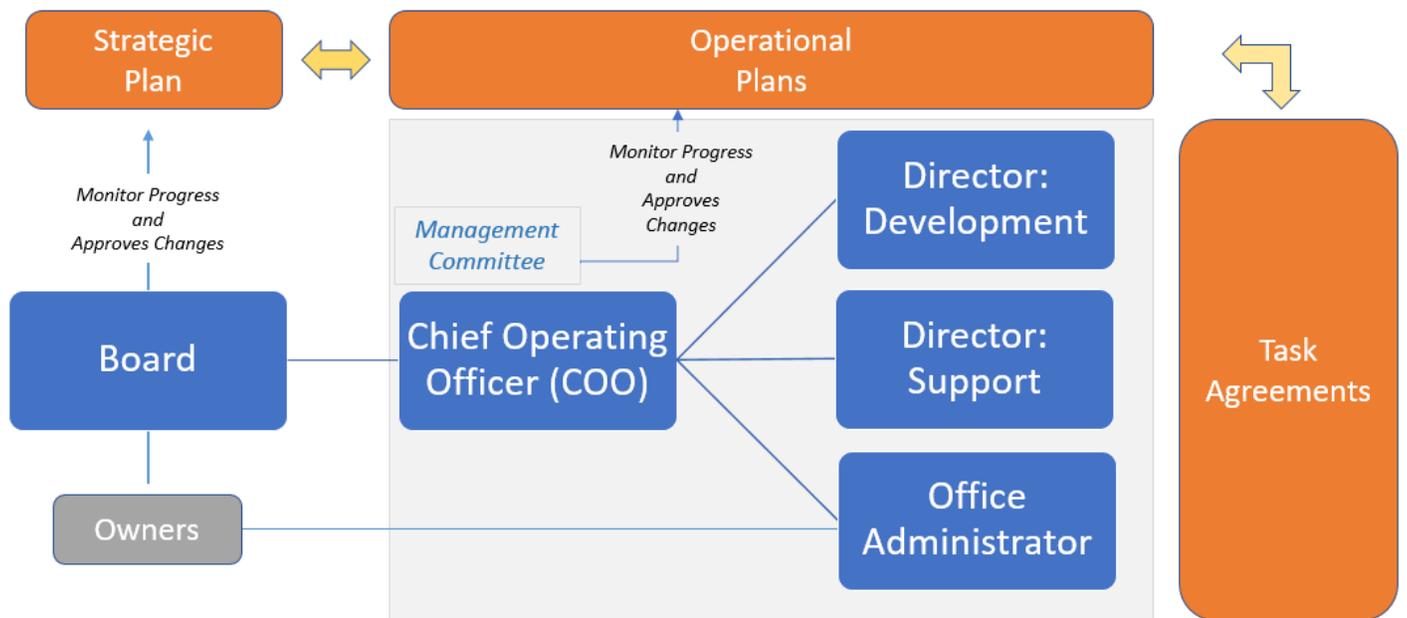
While all clients received a personal visitation by Thys and Amanda towards the end of 2016 regarding the new business model, some were a little uncertain about its particulars, its implementation in 2017 and the implications thereof. This aspect was once more addressed and clarity sought on the commitment of IDSC to the Higher Education (HE) sector. IDSC's response to the #feesmustfall campaign was a significant component in the new business model and envisaged that the expected income of IDSC would be significantly impacted. This meant that all clients, irrespective of the duration of their current contract,

would go onto the new contractual agreement, and set a new 3-year period going forward. A secondary objective of this was to get all clients onto a '1 March 2017' commencement date which would assist in the support process to all clients. This has been achieved thus far, with only one existing client not yet on the new contract agreement.

This change also meant that IDSC would be taking a greater risk from a business perspective and would be under enormous pressure from a cash flow point of view. As such, payment terms would be applied strictly according to the agreements to

alleviate the pressure. To ensure client satisfaction, IDSC also addressed client turnaround times to ensure that all interactions were as efficient as possible. The business processes were revised in terms of how IDSC would attend to ad hoc queries. These changes were all communicated to those clients where uncertainty existed.

The new business model has impacted on the structure of the company. The new company configuration is summarised in the following graphic:



This graphic presents the structure from the oversight of the Board down to the operational implementation of work and tasks, and shows the links between the strategic plan, operational plan and staff task agreements.

## Some Confusion over the Need for Two Invoices



It must be noted that 'IDSC' operates as two companies; 'Ramsden' is responsible for the licensing of the product suite while 'IDSC Consulting' is responsible for servicing the product suite to the client. All agreements clearly define the different roles and responsibilities of the two companies, the client, as well as the costs and fees associated with the respective

services. This is the reason for the two invoices and the different banking details used by IDSC.

We request each client to please ensure that our banking details at your institution are updated as there were quite a few clients who made payments into the wrong accounts.

# Pre-paid Hours and the Monitoring of Time

This aspect came to the fore in many discussions, and not surprisingly either. As a new concept for both IDSC and the clients there was bound to be some confusion on how it worked. Pre-paid hours and the monitoring of time was part of the consolidation of the product suite and the implementation of the new support process. At the core of this was fairness to clients on the service being provided to different clients.

The issue of some clients receiving more attention than others for the same fee, was identified and addressed. Looking at other industries and service providers, we adopted the 'pre-paid' and 'top-up' approaches for our client support. The rationalisation of the product suite resulted in a fewer number of modules, while retaining all the

existing functionalities of the original modules. This resulted in the identification of a set number of support hours being purchased with any particular module based on the size and complexity of the module. The amount of support hours was referred to as the 'prepaid' time and clients chose to use this time against any of the purchased modules. High demand clients would use up their pre-paid hours faster than lower demand clients and then move towards a 'top-up' for further service. The pre-paid hours are not billable given that they were already paid for, while the top-up hours are billable.

Many questions on (1) the overlap of time from old to new contract, (2) the possibility of not using the total pre-paid time over the 12 month period, and (3) the possibility of a carry-over

of time from one period to the next, were addressed in these sessions.

A few important principles are in place to deal with this aspect, (1) only client-specific work is deemed billable or deducted from pre-paid hours, generic work is logged against IDSC time, (2) all non-billable time will be communicated to the client to show the contributions of IDSC in supporting the client, (3) all billable time is first approved by the client before commencement of any work, and (4) all this information will be visible in a summary on the client dashboard in PowerHEDA and in more detail on BugNet.

Clients must note that this aspect is being carefully monitored and will be looked at on a regular basis during implementation.

Client

201

Allocated Hours

28.56

Billable Hours Spent

66.11

Non Billable Hours Spent

20%

Percentage Time Used

Thank you, your account is up to date.

### Hours Allocated and Used

Module	Allocated (hrs)	Used (hrs)
Annual Performance Plan Monitor	18	0.0
Business Plan	12	0.0
Enrolment Planning	12	0.0
Funding Allocation Model	18	0.0
HEMIS DW	26	0.6
HEMIS Manager	18	4.4
No Module	63	11.5
PowerHEDA, Dashboards, Reports	16	2.7
Viability	18	9.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>28.6</b>

### Time Summary by Module

	Allocated Hours	Billed	Not Billed	Time Used
Annual Performance Plan Monitor	18	0.0	0.0	0.0%
Business Plan	12	0.0	5.2	0.0%
Enrolment Planning	12	0.0	0.0	0.0%
Funding Allocation Model	18	0.0	0.0	0.0%
HEMIS DW	26	0.6	0.0	2.4%
HEMIS Manager	18	4.4	2.4	24.4%
No Module	63	11.5	25.6	18.3%
PowerHEDA, Dashboards, Reports	16	2.7	8.0	16.7%
Viability	18	9.4	24.9	51.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>66.1</b>	<b>14.2%</b>

### Tasks awaiting your input

#### Awaiting Approval

	Time Logged (hrs)
ABC-001 - Update Viability	0.0

#### Awaiting Feedback

No Data

## Integrated Analytics

Integrated Analytics refers to any area where student, staff, space, research and additional data are brought together, and some clients were of the opinion that more could be done in this specialized area.

This is in line with a current project underway to have an 'example client' available on PowerHEDA.

The objective of having such a client is to host the 'best of breed' reports

## Aggregated Analytics

In a similar fashion as above, some clients would like ideas on how to package aggregated analytics for the different decision making bodies (Faculty, College, Senate, Executive

and developments for all clients to use, allowing them to see what ideas are emanating out of the IDSC community and choose to use the same or similar reporting structures.

This would also facilitate the ability of clients to observe the progress and functionality of modules they don't have and then choose to purchase any additional modules.

and Council). This aspect will also be brought into the 'example client' mentioned above in order for clients to observe the current thinking in this area.

## The Move to Detailed Student (Learner) Analytics

A very common need amongst clients is the need to do more reporting at the level of the student and to move quite quickly into the area of learner analytics. This is a very topical conversation at the moment and there is momentum nationally and internationally in this area.

The current thinking is to start with the development of student-level reporting with the vision of possibly

introducing another module to the product suite. This conversation will continue and will incorporate all current ideas coming from the Siyphumelela Project, SAAIR forums and workshops, etc.

There are already valuable ideas of detailed reporting in this area and the design of integrated datasets down to this level. We will keep you posted on any further developments.

## The need for more Financial Analytics

Many clients shared this view and the need to have more financial reporting and analysis, or as mentioned above, to have more integrated reporting which includes financial data.

Clients are encouraged to view the outputs of the three financially related modules (Funding Allocation Module (FAM), Viability and the Business Plan Generator) as these cover many aspects of financial analysis. We will pursue the need to

have the outputs of these models as datasets underpinning PowerHEDA reporting. Some of these are already in place.

Furthermore, we are looking into the ability of these and other reports to consider different scenarios where appropriate. This functionality will add enormous value to the information provided in certain areas.

Further ideas in this regard are welcome.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

### HEDA Research Information Module

Due to the current difficulties experienced by higher education institutions in capturing, managing and reporting on basic research data, IDSC feels that including a new research information module into the PowerHEDA environment would be a valuable option to our clients. Planning and development is underway and the planned completion for the new module is the end of June 2017. A brief overview of the functionality is listed below;

- i. Import data already captured
- ii. Integrated with PowerHEDA
- iii. Capture research records for Books, Proceedings and Journal articles
- iv. PowerHEDA reporting
- v. Validations of data and automatic notifications of potential problems
- vi. Export to the prescribed DHET format for submission

Feel free to contact the IDSC office if you'd like more information about this development

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## New Staff

IDSC is proud to announce the appointment of Glen Barnes as Chief Operating Officer.

Glen's areas of specific interest includes:

- Decision Support Systems and modelling;
- Business Intelligence & Organisational Performance Management Systems;
- Management Information Systems; and
- Tracking & Monitoring Systems.



## Congratulations



Congratulations to Dr Alfred Mutanga on receiving his Ph.D. Best wishes for the future.

His doctoral thesis is titled "A Context-Aware Business Intelligence Framework for South African Higher Education Institutions".

The research for his thesis has already resulted in the publication of six peer reviewed conference papers and two journal papers.

## Are you using your Umbrella?

Recently Glen Barnes was accompanied by a team to two client visits in order to present training on Viability Models to Executive Management, as well as their Dashboards and Reports. The objective was to show the decision makers what is available, and how to use it. We quickly realised that this is not a project that can take place in isolation.

This training is planned to be taken to the next level of management and so assist the integrated approach to analytics at our client institutions.

At IDSC we have a wealth of experience in understanding Higher Education requirements and as such we are best positioned to provide solutions that are best practice in Higher Education. Sometimes we lack institutional knowledge, and don't always fully appreciate the nuances at each client environment. As part

of our back to basics approach, we are also in negotiations to include on-site support as part of the dedicated approach to understand individual requirements and how these roll up to institutional operational standards and expectations.

The purpose of the on-site Consultant will be to understand and document the requirements of the users, to facilitate the process of building dashboards and reports according to those requirements, and to train users to use the dashboards and reports. Our process introduced this year allows that we account for all engagement with various users, and work as a multi-disciplinary team to identify solutions, recommend solutions based on industry best practices, and estimate effort towards the solutions. Only once a client has approved a task, do we proceed with the task.

The billable hours spent on site will comprise of meetings and discussions with users, documenting these, presentations to and training of users, work output in the form of Dashboards and reports, and any associated tasks or waiting periods.

Are you one of the clients with whom we are discussing more dedicated support with? Are you one of the clients that won't open the umbrella before it rains?

For IDSC, Back to Basics is a concerted effort to apply our motto "Simplicity through Innovation" to our entire business model. We are excited to help you use your tools before the threat of rain and forge a winning partnership with you - our client.

## Next Publication

August 2017