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With 2009 now well behind us I think it is safe to say that many people and business would never want a repeat of the previous year. The impact of the economic meltdown internationally was not felt as much in the Healthcare Industry during 2009 but the cost escalation of the day to day running could definitely be felt. This remains a concern as we enter 2010 with changes to legislation and regulations around our industry. In an industry where operating margins and profits are marginal we have to relook the state of our industry and ask ourselves some serious questions around the way forward. The so called 12.5% commission becomes a serious concern as we face the uncertainty of the impact of new labour legislation in our industry. Unlike many other temporary employment services in the greater industry the nursing agencies do not have a buffer to absorb any additional cost implications that could be brought about by such legislation and regulation.

The focus for 2010 has to be on the self regulation of our industry and formalising and legalising ourselves in the big structures of the temporary employment industry. ANASA plays a vital role in taking the project forward and ensuring the survival of our industry. It has been mentioned often over the last few months in the media that without the services of the nursing agencies the Healthcare Sector would be in further crisis and could face dire consequences. Our role in this industry therefore should not and cannot be questioned in any way. The validity of our service offering and the value proposition we offer is something that has to be driven home to our clients and their commitment to our industry and cause is something that has to be re-established during 2010.

With a renewed call for a labour broker ban we have to harness the expertise we have in our industry and make sure that our voice is heard as an industry leader. CAPES has been the industry spokesperson over the past few months during the initial battle with the trade unions for a ban. It is becoming more evident that ANASA has to reinvent and reposition itself during 2010 to ensure it speaks for the industry as there seems to be some uncertainty around the inner workings and stability of CAPES as a governing body for all of us in the industry. I am of the opinion that this has forced a number of organisations such as APSO etc. to re-evaluate their position on behalf of their members and how they represent the best interest of their members.

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Labour Broker Ban:

As was expected during the holiday season there was little or no activity that indicated anything around the proposed ban. Although we are all aware that changes to Labour Legislation is imminent and could be communicated towards the end of April it is concerning that in the last month many key figures became vocal again around the proposed ban. The Namibian ruling

around outlawing labour brokers remains the benchmark and it is the opinion of many stakeholders that the renewed call for a ban remains “hot air”. We will keep all members posted on any developments around the proposed legislation and the possible impact this might have once more information is available. The plans of state hospitals to not utilise nursing agencies seems to be in full swing and although from a public interest point of view the legal opinion is that we cannot stop them there now are huge question marks around the validity of bids where non-compliance is forced upon agencies by state especially in light of the call for a ban because of exploitation. This is something I firmly believe ANASA should challenge in 2010.

The way forward for ANASA:

ANASA has an obligation to serve their industry and with probably the most difficult year ahead in the history of our industry it has now become critical for the organisation to transform itself and take on a role its members WILL perceive as a value add. The main focus this year will also have to be increasing the member database but the organisation is under no illusions that this can only happen with a complete rebranding and new purpose. During the next AGM this issue will be discussed in detail to allow members insight into the proposed future and the benefits of such a rebranded and repositioned organisation.

SETA:

The initial fears of the impact the move to Higher Education would have had fortunately was not realised. Learnerships have been elevated in importance not only due to facilitation of skills development but also due to the positive financial implications it can have on businesses. The reality still remains that self-regulation in the industry centres around the licensing and certification of recruitment consultants in the future and this is something ANASA has to play a vital role in along with the SETA.

MINISTERIAL DETERMINATION:

With the due date for renewal in May it remains a concern as to whether this will be granted again under current circumstances. ANASA will be proactive in engaging the relevant parties around this issue as failure to obtain the Determination will have a severe financial and legal implication on our businesses.

CONCLUSION:

I would like to thank all members for their support of ANASA over the past months and believe that we will be successful in our struggles.

Werner Laubscher

National Chairperson 2009/2010