



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

AN INITIATIVE OF
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- HAUSMAN: This is David Hausman and I'm here at the Department of Home Affairs Central Processing facility in Pretoria, South Africa on February 24, 2010 with Ms. Yogie Travern, the Director for Identity Documents here at the Department of Home Affairs. Ms. Travern, have you agreed to be recorded for this interview?
- TRAVERN: Yes I have.
- HAUSMAN: Great. I wanted to start by asking you about your background and career and the jobs that brought you to this position.
- TRAVERN: *I started in Home Affairs straight after college. That was in 1989. My first job in Home Affairs was just a clerk assisting applicants, taking ID applications. I've had a total of 21 years service in the department, so I've been here like forever. I started to know the local offices, working at the front office that actually deals with members of the public first and I've worked there for almost ten years. Then I moved up to Pretoria in 2000 and I've been in Pretoria now since. I've moved through various stages in Home Affairs before I became the Acting Director of ID Documents.*
- I've worked in the Permanent Residence, the Temporary Residence. I've worked with citizenship. I've worked with passports. The position I'm holding now I started in June 2007. That was when the "turn-around" team arrived here in Home Affairs and we started with the "Turn-Around" project which was initiated by the then minister of Home Affairs. I've been—I'm not sure how I got chosen for this position, because I wasn't actually working directly with IDs, but I hear rumors that they said now, she would probably manage in that post. So I was then transferred here to actually oversee the transformation of the ID process itself.*
- HAUSMAN: Great. I wonder if you could describe how the ID process worked at that time and what some of the issues and challenges facing it were.
- TRAVERN: *Previously the ID process, you'd find the applicant would go to an outside office, he would submit an application, it would come through the process. We then used South African post office to actually send the documentation through to us. Being not such a secure service as such, you'd find that there would be delays of between three to four weeks before the applications arrived here for processing. That actually extended the turnaround time even more. You'd also find that because it wasn't a secure service you'd find bags being lost with ID applications. That would eventually come to us here in this building.*
- Previously we had a postal receipt. It was just one section that dealt with the receiving of post. They would receive the post, open the bags and just dispatch the work to the HANIS (Home Affairs National Identification System) facility. We have the HANIS facility here which is your Home Affairs Identification System where they actually do the verification of the fingerprint before the ID book is issues.*
- HAUSMAN: What does HANIS actually stand for?
- TRAVERN: *Home Affairs Identification System. So they would do the verification of the fingerprints and after that verification it would come into a data section that actually populates the national population register and the ID book is issued. Now that entire process, after it has been issued, we have two outside service providers which is SITA which is the State Information Technology Agency. They do the actual printing of the ID books for us. We then have GPW which is called*

the Government Printing Works. They physically do the binding of the ID book and that ID book is then sent back to us for quality checks and thereafter the ID book is dispatched to the outside office.

I'm not sure if you've seen the video, you would have seen they showed you the very manual process that they were using when they received and dispatched the books as well. So that was basically the process. The turnaround times at that time were anything between 127 to 130 days for an ID book to be issued because it was a very long, mundane, dragged out process. That's where we started in 2007, in June 2007.

HAUSMAN: Why did it take so long apart from the postal service?

TRAVERN: *Processes were not right. You had too many handovers. You'd have in one room the application going between five to seven desks before it left that room. So the processes were not right, there were no controls, there was no accountability, there was no responsibility. So if I sat with an application for ten days on my desk nobody knocked at my desk and said, what are you doing with this so long. It was just taken for granted that I would sit with it for however long period I chose to sit with it. And maybe on a smaller scale, lack of staff, lack of proper systems.*

We didn't have a track and trace system that would say this application is here too long, it should not be here too long. There were no turnaround times, no measurement of times to say why are you guys taking so long. Or is there a system that can tell me I've been sitting with an application for whatever period of time.

HAUSMAN: So was there an effort, before the turnaround started to sit down and plan how the changes would take place?

TRAVERN: *With the turnaround team or separate from the turnaround team.*

HAUSMAN: Both I guess.

TRAVERN: *Previous, before the turnaround team came on board, I guess the managers tried their best in terms of seeing how can we improve the times. But, you know, if you're coming from an old mindset of thinking we've done everything, there's nothing more that we can do. So that probably was one of the factors that impacted them thinking beyond, or thinking out of the box, because they felt at that time, you know what, we've done everything, we can't get more resources, we can't improve our computer systems because we have an IT (Information Technology) that's failing us so why even bother making any effort. Let's just do what we can and as long as the guy gets his book, even if he gets it after six months, he gets his book.*

Then when the turnaround team came, between April and June, we actually documented the "as-is" process.

HAUSMAN: That was April and June 2007.

TRAVERN: Yes, 2007.

HAUSMAN: So before you actually took this position.

TRAVERN: *Long before.*

HAUSMAN: Were you already involved in the turnaround team?

TRAVERN: *Very, but not sitting in the building. I was involved, but sitting in the Wacker building. So all I did was attend meetings and look at process documentation and things like that but didn't physically come in too. So between April and June, there was a team in the building that just did a walk through to say, let's just see visually what are these guys doing.*

So they took three months, April, May, June, say two months, to actually do the visual. So they walked into sections, they sat and did observations. Then I came into this building in June 2007. Then we got a team of about seven people together. We actually took people from outside offices. We brought in four people from outside offices that had that front office experience.

HAUSMAN: Who were those people?

TRAVERN: *There was—you want the names?*

HAUSMAN: Sure.

TRAVERN: *There was a Riana, she was actually from our Vrede office. We had Miss Mapule, she was from Limpopo. We had Nozi, she was from Eastern Cape and we had another gentleman, I forget his name, we used to call him CJ. He was also from one of our provinces. So we took four from different provinces and we made them—we actually relocated them to the head office for six months. So between June and December 2007. Then it was myself and we had four turnaround team members. So we formed a group of a total of about ten.*

HAUSMAN: And who were the four turnaround team members?

TRAVERN: *It was Abel Dafonseka, he was one. We had Linton Lovel, he was the other one. Then we had Joshua Mumaw and we had Andrew Pierce.*

HAUSMAN: Were these all consultants?

TRAVERN: *All consultants, and the consultant lead was Adius Ncube, he was the one that was the consultant lead. But the four gentleman, I gave you their names, they were the ones that were hands on that were involved. I was the Home Affairs team lead. So I would oversee the Home Affairs team. Then we had Adius overseeing the consultants.*

So in June 2007 we actually all took occupation in this building. We secured ourselves on the fifth floor. What happened, we said, let's document the as-is process, physically document what are these guys doing. Then we started with, not so much the outside office, but we took the process from the time the outside office had started to use a dispatch service. That means the client has already been in the office, submitted the application and from the time they had prepared the application, to send it through to us. So that's where we started documenting to say, what are you guys actually doing now?

So detail of that was that we sat with each section. We monitored what they did, we documented what they did. Then we could visually see that there were these loop holes and there were these over duplication of work, this duplication of handover.

Simultaneously in 2007, the department also ran with a—also introduced a track and trace system. So that track and trace system with us looking at the physical process tied hand-in-hand. So they started rolling out the track and trace at the beginning of 2007. So the track and trace basically, very briefly, they said, each application—we've got bar codes on our ID application, so they would track in a bar code at the outside office and then you could follow a bar code from beginning to end and see exactly how the process went through.

So that was being rolled out at the outside offices, we were actually looking at the process itself and say, how do we improve the process. It's good to have a track and trace, but the guy still took ten days at an outside office it was a problem for us. So the first thing we've done was we've implemented a quality check list for the outside office to say before you guys actually dispatch the ID application you need to check, does the application meet these fifteen requirements. Does it have a stamp? Does it have a signature? Does it have a fingerprint? Is the form correctly completed? Have you tracked it in on track and trace and things like that. So we've done that initial—so that actually brought that awareness to outside offices.

Now I can't stand work that is not of good quality, I have to now double check. We are all saying that maybe there should be a control sheet for them to say, after you've done your checklist, on every batch of applications you put a control sheet with a list of ID numbers. But what used to happen—Because we didn't have that you'd find fraud applications being sent to head office and being processed with nobody's knowledge that it is actually a fraud application. Because there was no track and trace and no one checking, so I can slip in a fraudulent application in between and nobody would pick it up. But with the control list, it forced you to document that fraudulent application if you took a chance and sent it through. So there was a control sheet on batch of every—whether it was 25 or 50 ID applications. So that's the initial step.

It already brought that kind of awareness at the outside offices, both on the quality and what am I sending to head office. Simultaneously what we did was South African Post Office services, in South Africa, you'd find it is our major server that delivers post for us. But there was no security attached to it. That means if they lost a bag, they lost a bag. But they never looked at the consequence of losing a bag of 50 ID applications.

The delays for them was that if they never had a driver to deliver to me the applications would sit with them for three to four days. So that created a lot of problems for us. So then we engaged with a service provider, XPS. That is one of our speed services in South Africa, a courier service in South Africa. So we engaged with them and with approval from the minister then and the DG then, we were asked to actually go into a contract with XPS. The good thing with XPS is their footprint was excellent. They covered almost each and every office of mine so it wasn't a problem visiting my office. We actually then specified in our SLA (service level agreement) with them to say you guys would go there five times a week. You would pick up my applications from the outside office and you would deliver to me.

We also gave them a timeframe to say that you need to deliver within three days. It is only the far remote areas I gave you five days. But any area that had a certain radius, within three days you must deliver. So that guaranteed that I would receive the application within three days. So that cut off at least three weeks of our time off that wastage time. So that made a huge impact on just the front office, us receiving it here. Changing the service provider and putting in

conditions on the service level agreement to say this is how many times you'll go. This is when you will give me back the applications and this is what is going to be done. So that's just covering the first part which is the outside office.

HAUSMAN: Can I ask you quickly?

TRAVERN: Yes, sure.

HAUSMAN: Was there resistance from the outside offices to the introduction of control sheets and quality check lists?

TRAVERN: *Not resistance in the way that I won't do it, but resistance in the way it is too much work because previously I would just pop it in an envelope and send it to the post office. Whether it was delivered or not wasn't my concern. But now we gave them a little more work to do. So that was the only resistance. But over time and what we did is when we introduced that we actually went and held workshops with them. So we went to each province. We actually called each province together and said to them, you know what, we're coming on this day. We want to introduce the new system to you. We want to hold workshop. We want to show you. So I think after the workshop and the communication and educating them the reason why we're doing it, they eventually bought in very quickly to say you know what guys, we also need to play our role. Pretoria is changing and doing things better. We also need to play the role in doing things better.*

HAUSMAN: When did these changes happen?

TRAVERN: *We already stated by October 2007 the checklists were already out at offices, training was already done. Workshops were already in. By the end of 2007, they were already starting to do the work how we wanted it. Okay, you'll never get 100% compliance because of the human factor, but they already bought in to the changes at the front office. So by the end of, in December 2007, they were already trying to send us work the way we wanted to send it, but not 100%.*

HAUSMAN: Great. So let me ask you to go on now. For the other parts of the process.

TRAVERN: *Now we used XPS, so XPS now comes and delivers the bags to us. But then we had to look at what's happening here. The old postal receipt was bags just being dumped on the floor, open the bags. You had about 65 staff that now separated the work into various categories and now started saying okay fine, now we've got to send it. But at that point postal receipt was sitting in my directorate ID documents. So then a very simple picture was that the bag will be delivered to me, I open, sort. I then send it to the other directorate and I tell them now you verify the figures, do whatever you need to do.*

Then after they've done their job it comes back to me. I now then will issue the book, dispatch the book. Then I will send the form back. So we had that backward movement which is actually a waste of time. So what we did was we moved postal receipt to the other directorate to cut the process into two clear defined processes. To say you guys will receive, document, verify the fingers. Then you will send it to me, I would populate, NPR, issue the book and dispatch the book.

HAUSMAN: And what is the other directorate?

TRAVERN: *Identification.*

HAUSMAN: Is that HANIS?

TRAVERN: *That is HANIS, that's the identification. So we moved postal receipt there. That's to make the process more streamlined instead of having the backwards and forwards of application. That's what happened—with the backward and forward of application, a lot got lost, misplaced, delayed unnecessarily. With moving the postal receipt to that directorate there is another thing that we did. We said our problem was top management always wants to know how is this province doing in comparison to another province. We never had that eye on what the provincial was doing on a provincial level. It was just a big ball that we looked at.*

So what we did was okay, let's divide the postal receipt into our nine provinces. We then split the postal receipt into nine processes. At the same time what we did, when we implemented at the outside office the checklist and XPS, we also made them actually, on the envelope they were sending, they would indicate which province to me. They will say, this is coming from KZN (Kwa Zulu Natal). So on the environment they will write a big KZN when they gave it to XPS.

Then the postal receipt downstairs was separated into nine provinces, each province sitting with about six to eight staff. We gave the bigger provinces more staff because of the volume of applications being received. So now when the envelopes came you have about seven different people that physically open the XPS bag. So after they've opened the XPS bag, inside that bag is an envelope that said KZN. They then would then send that work to the KZN team. The KZN team now, their job was to open that envelope, see does it meet the requirements, put it on track and trace that it has been received.

We also introduced something that is a quality check. So what KZN would do as an example, after they had opened the envelope they will do the first check. Is there a quality list? Yes. Does the number of applications on the list match the number of applications attached. Then after that they would say fine, it matches. Then is it on track and trace because outside office had to use track and trace.

The way the track and trace is designed, I cannot perform a function if the outside office did not perform their function so there was that link to say that if you didn't perform then I'm stuck, I can't do the next function. But we found the challenge with that was that the outside offices a lot of times forgot to do their work. But now, not to disadvantage the client, because if I send the application back to say "do your job, you haven't done it" we created a mini front-office team as you would call it. So we actually put in four people and we said, "You guys, we're giving you all the front-office functions. Should we ever pick up an envelope that the front office forgot to do their work, they would do it on behalf of the outside office just to avoid sending the application back and disadvantaging the client.

HAUSMAN: What are some examples of the front-office tasks then?

TRAVERN: *The front office, they've got four track and trace functions they must perform before sending it to us which is receive at outside office, fingerprints taken at outside office and dispatch from outside office to head office. Now if they never perform any of those three functions on track and trace I can't perform the fourth function which is receive application at head office. So we created that team just to assist to say, without having to send the application all the way back, I would perform those three functions on their behalf but with their office name. So we created the track and trace function here with a specific office name.*

HAUSMAN: So for example with fingerprints, there would be fingerprints on the application but they wouldn't have been registered in track and trace?

TRAVERN: Yes, I would register it here on behalf of them. The ones that I have to send back if there are no photographs attached to the application, if no fingerprints are taken, or the fingerprints are really bad, that HANIS can't even verify them. Those will have to unfortunately go back to the outside office asking the client to come back in. So then we created that section just to assist the outside office and assist the client basically. All right, must I continue?

HAUSMAN: Yes, that's great.

TRAVERN: Then the division of the nine provinces you understand that and then the application will go to the nine provinces. Then we also provided a quality report after a week. So what we would do is, we had a quality report to say, what was the problems I'm experiencing with KZN, the track and trace problem, is it the quality of the applications? A problem of photographs? From that quality report once a week on a Thursday, we would send that report back to all the office heads in KZN and say, "Please take note. If your name—," we would actually put the office name. it would be the province KZN, KZN has a hundred offices, then the office names would be underneath and each problem with each office would be detailed. Take an example, from Scottburgh office, you sent us 500 applications, from your 500, fifty had track and trace issues, twenty the fingerprints were very poor, ten this was the problem, five this was the problem. So it was then more to do refresher training with their front-office clerks to say, "Guys, this is what's happening."

So the whole of 2008 the quality reports were being sent back on a regular basis to them to say, "Guys, take note of one." You'd find the first six months the reports were really bad. So the offices could see that their work was really, really bad. But over the latter part of 2008 and 2009 there has been a huge improvement in terms of the work.

So that was the postal receipt task to say this is what you guys need to do. Then maybe I should just highlight the fact that HANIS does various tasks. You'd have a person who has never applied for an ID before, who is applying for the very first time. That means his fingerprints are not on the system for me to do verification. But what I do, I do a search. That means I search the database to see if this guy, at any other time, under a different name and number apply for an ID. So it does a search and the search takes about three days. They will do the search. The search will come back and say to me, no, nothing found.

If there is nothing found the old system was the application would go for an ID book to be issued. After the book is issued and dispatched, the application will come back into HANIS and say now capture his fingerprint. But it was a back-end because in that interim period if that guy wanted a passport I couldn't give him one because his fingerprints were not on HANIS. All HANIS did was check; they did not load. So that was creating a problem. So we then changed that process. We said, no, after you've done the check and you said that this guy didn't apply on any other number previously and you're satisfied that this is the first time he's coming, you now capture.

So we changed the process to capture his fingerprints immediately. When we came on board in June last year in that particular environment, they had over

200,000 backlog where the ID book is already sitting with the client but his fingerprint is not on HANIS. So it was a huge problem.

He could do any activity in terms of passport or travel but his fingerprints were not on the system. So then fraud is another huge aspect because somebody else could have stolen his number and come into the system and we would not know because we would give the person another book because we never had his fingerprint, it was never captured. So that was a very good thing that we actually implemented in the turnaround team to say, you know what, there will be no more issuing of ID books if the fingerprints have not been captured on the system. So that's a change that we did in HANIS.

So now when the application went from the nine provinces, if it was a first-time applicant, they would do the search, they would capture the fingerprints and then send the book for issuing. That was the change we did. Then for the re-issue person who has just lost his book and he just wants another book it would go through the system, they would do the verification. They would say yes it is Yogie on the system. They would say that is fine, everything, then the application would go for an issue. That entire environment, what needed to be done is we needed to change the way the work flowed because you'd find that the machines on this end, they would receive the work on that end. It would go through five different hands before it go to the machine. Then on coming out of the machine it is five different hands before it was dispatched.

So we had to just streamline the process and say, you know what, there's an entry point and there's an exit point. You enter at the point where you want to use it because what used to happen, I used to receive it. So there are three people receiving, they can move to another three people tracking it in on track and trace, move to another three people that were actually doing the sorting, and then move to the machine. But we said what is the purpose of these three people in between the first and the third group. You can actually remove them and say, you know what, you track and trace, you receive. That means when you get it you just check, if it's fine you track it in, you pass it to the guys who need to scan. So we actually had to remove certain steps in the process to streamline and make it shorter. That saved us more than ten days in that environment itself. Because you'd find that if three people were checking, if two were off sick or were on leave or one was on leave, that work would pile up for three days on that desk, not going through. But having streamlined the process, removing some of the staff in certain areas and giving more staff to track in this case, instead of having six people we can have six people—you track and trace, everything received today has to be tracked in today and has to move to the next section by the end of the day.

HAUSMAN: Did you keep all the same people in the same section, just moved them?

TRAVERN: *We just moved them around. If there was a training that had to be done, we gave them the training. But the good part in the HANIS environment is that all of them were fingerprint experts. So it was just a matter of them doing different functions, but they all had common knowledge of what needed to be done in that HANIS environment. So that was the streamlining that we'd done there. In that six-month period, by the end of December, I would say by January 2008 we had got rid of that backlog simultaneously.*

What we did is we changed the process, streamlined it to flow this way. At the same time we had a group working on the 200,000 backlogs and said, "Guys, let's work on that." So by the time that team left the HANIS environment we had

the new process flowing and no backlog. It took them between six to nine months to eventually get everything running smoothly in that environment. That saved us ten days in the time.

So we saved about three weeks in the postage. We saved, in the actual postal receipt section maybe another week and then in the HANIS environment we saved another ten to twelve days there. So already we had saved more than 30-35 days from the 127 days in time with not major IT changes or new programs in the system. It is also changing the way people think. I'm used to working in this way and you know if you walk through the building we've got people that have been here forever. To get that mindset changed, to say we need to change the way we work, it was difficult but eventually—. I'm so used to doing it like this and I'm comfortable doing it like this, why must I change.

HAUSMAN: How did you manage to change that mindset because that's problem in many civil service reform efforts and many of them fail.

TRAVERN: *It's huge.*

HAUSMAN: So why did it work here do you think?

TRAVERN: *I think it worked more—previously we've had other turnaround projects. It was the consultant coming into the building dictating to me what I should do from their experience. You'll find consultants have been through a hundred companies and they want to kind of bring that and say, you know what, this will work. But the difference with the team with us was that we had DHA and consultants part of the same team. So it wasn't a consultant telling you it's going to work, it was your own colleague telling you.*

So what we did, when we went to an environment like postal receipt we took the manager, we took two of their supervisors and the clerks and they became the team that was designing the process. It wasn't Yogie and a consultant designing your process for you. It was sitting with you and saying, you know what, you've been doing it like this. We've seen the way you're doing it. We say remove these two steps and you'll still be able to achieve the same thing you've been achieving but in a shorter period of time. That kind of worked.

The same in the HANIS environment. We actually took—we created little teams ourselves. We said okay, you guys are the machine operators. We see how you're doing it. We said, "okay, what if you turned that paper over. You're working with the paper this way, just turn it over, try it for two days and see how it works." So because you've got them involved and you've got them practically doing it themselves, they thought they were actually—in their mind it is, I'm actually improving the way I work, it's not somebody telling me how to improve. So that kind of helped. That actually brought the mindset to say, "You know what, let's work with.

I think the good things, even with the consultants as well, we had lots of meetings with them to say, you know what, when you go in that environment, you go like you don't know anything. You want them to tell you. Because if you go there with this—if you—when you look at consultants it's a suit and a tie. They're coming from an outside environment. They've got all this knowledge and experience and they've all got laptops in their hands. They look like executives walking in the building. If you look at a government civil servant he doesn't even know what a laptop looks like, he hasn't even touched a laptop. He's touched an old pro-line

computer. Or he doesn't even know how to work a mouse. So that was an intimidating factor when you walk in.

I mean, if a guy walks in here all automatically I might not look but inside I'm saying Yogie, act professional, this guy is here and things like that. That was helpful. The consultants were excellent, they really were. The team that—I think it was a God-given team to us because everyone else in the department struggled a lot with the consultants they had, but the ones we had were down to earth, they sat with the staff. No matter what your rank was, if it was just a clerk they would sit with the clerk and say, "You know what, tell me what you're doing. Let's sit together."

You know what, we also used the clerks because over years you have twenty staff and the twenty staff have learned the way they work. Over time they also have ideas. But because they didn't have a manager that thought out of the box, they couldn't actually bring their idea to the table so they suppressed the idea to say, "I can do it better but you know this manager of mine, I don't think he will listen. He always wants to say to me how to do things." The difference with the team was, you know what, you tell us how you think it is going to work.

So we took what they said, built on it, implemented it, so it made them feel like, you know what, it's my idea that they actually used. That's how the buy-in came and eventually everyone bought in. History will tell you, if you ask anyone, this building, before we came on board, very union dominated. That means if I didn't like the process or I didn't like something I would run to my union. Then it would become a union issue and then automatically the managers felt intimidated because unions were actually running the show. So what used to happen, as a manager, instead of me implementing a new process, I'd say just leave it. I don't want that confrontation with the unions. Even if you speak to the turnaround team, the consultants, they'll tell you, a lot of the environments they when they walked in the staff will tell them, before you do anything you invite the union, so that's what we did.

So whenever we had a process change we said unions, please join us in the process change meeting. We're thinking of changing this process, is that going to impact the staff in terms of time, in terms of their job? It might improve their skill, there might be a slight change. So the union actually started buying in as well so we used the unions a lot to get that change happening in this place.

HAUSMAN: Do you think there's anything in your background that helped you with this kind of inclusive process?

TRAVERN: *I'm a people person. I think that actually played to my advantage. Coming from a Christian background you always learn that you listen to the other person. You talk, you don't instruct, you don't dictate. You don't have this attitude to say, "this must be done". I think that helped me a lot because being a people's person I enjoy—even when I have my management meetings if I sit in the meeting it is basically what can I do to help you. Tell me, if there's something that you're struggling with in your section that you can't get done, you've got obstacles, if I can pull a string here, if I can do something—and I think that kind of helped. Because when I came in it was, "what is she doing in this building? She doesn't even know anything about IDs." Remember I wasn't coming from an ID background, I'm coming from citizenship, dealing with foreigners' background.*

I knew everything about dealing with foreigners but I knew basically nothing about the ID process. So already it was why her, why is she here. But when they

got to see that I came down to their level to say you know what, I don't know anything, you teach me. That kind of helped. To say, I didn't come up on a high horse to say I know everything. I didn't know anything about ID. But the fact that we sat with them, we sat with the physical people doing the cutting and pasting of photographs. You guys are cutting and pasting, isn't this manual? What are you guys doing? Sat with them, looked at what they were doing, understood what they were doing and then said, how can we improve this, what can we do to help you? I think that worked for me a lot.

That worked a lot, working with the people. I mean over two and a half years they haven't moved me as yet, I'm still here.

HAUSMAN: Great. So let's go on to the next step in the process.

TRAVERN: *So after the HANIS environment we changed I think the next environment was my data processing. Now data processing there is not much change that you can do there because it is 35 ladies that are data ladies, they're typists. All they do is, they get an application that is completed. That means it has been verified, it has been checked. They need to now go onto the national population register, in short term we call it the NPR and all they must now do is activate the ID book. So in terms of changes there there was nothing; that section was already running like clockwork. So they don't have backlogs. There was no process that you could actually change because all that happened is it came through the section, it went through 35 ladies, it went out of the section. The only thing we put in there was the track and trace, just to monitor the times, just to make sure they weren't doing unnecessarily too long, that means they weren't taking a long period to actually issue the ID book. That is all we did there in terms of change.*

Operational management is what we implemented in the building and that helped a lot. That means we've got quarter-past-seven meetings with management, where the manager actually sits with the staff and gets to know what happened yesterday. What were the challenges? We set norms and standards. That means you must reach a certain target per person, per day. If you do not reach that target, so that quarter past seven meeting was more a review of the previous day to say guys, I can see from the statistics you've reached your norm, you've managed, but you did not manage. What was your challenge?

Then you find that they'd say, "My PC was off for two hours" or "I had to attend a meeting for an hour" or "there was a union issue." So that operation meeting brought more light to the section itself to say, "You know what, this is what we're actually doing in this section." So that helped. From the quarter past seven we had the other meeting, which is at half past eight, nine o'clock. That is when the management sits. That means you had an Assistant Director and you have her senior administration officers and you have a chief clerk. They sit as a management team on each floor and they say, "You know what, there were one, two three problems in this section." There were a few problems in the section and the staff was saying the computers were off. What have you done as a manager? Did you report the computer being down?

The guy said, I didn't have stamps, I didn't have this, I didn't have my material to work. So they have a management meeting at nine. So that kind of helped a lot because now an assistant director knew exactly what was happening on the floor. Previously it was in isolation. I was in my office, whatever happened on the floor happened on the floor. Nobody even questioned me if an application was sitting there for three days or for five days on my floor. So that ops management kind of brought the light to the section to say this is what's happening.

So in the data section we didn't do much, we only implemented ops management to monitor what work they were doing and things like that. The two service providers are what data waits for which is SITA, the State Information Technology who does my printing of the book and the GPW who does the binding of the book. There we couldn't do much change because SITA turnaround time was one day and GPW turnaround time was three days. So we didn't change anything there but we did consult them in terms of errors, problems, delays. You'd find that sometimes there would be a paper error; you'd find spots on the paper. So that was an ongoing consultation but nothing was changed in terms of them.

After the data section we wait three days. The book then arrives in our building. When the book arrives in our building it is actually a totally blank book; it has just got demographics on it, it has nothing else on the book. So it is a book that just comes like this. This is a scanned photo, it is previous. Our current ID book has got the photo that is stuck on like that. The book just comes like that to us, plain like that with no photo, just that comes like that. Then it goes to my section which is called My Completion Section.

Now my completion section, what they actually do is, they have the physical application and they have the raw book. They now compare only the demographics. That means does the name and ID numbers match. That's the only thing they do. Then they pass it to another set of ladies, staff, who physically do the photograph match to say yes the photograph is here, the ID numbers match and they physically cut out the photo to make sure it is in size, paste it on the ID book and then send it to another team of staff that do the physical lamination. You can barely see, this is a very old book. They physically do the lamination of the front page. They basically put a flimsy on the front page to say that this is now protecting the front cover of the book. So that is what the other team does. I don't have a copy with me.

All that happens is this front page gets a lamination strip so it just protects the front page. So you have another group of people who physically do that. After they've done the lamination of the book it then goes to a team that does the dispatching of the book. Now let me just quickly tell you about the changes in this one environment. There are approximately eighty staff, it is called the completion area. This eighty staff basically, there was no monitoring, no controlling of what happened. They issue—we issue about 10,000 ID books a day. So that 10,000 would come into that section. You'd have people seated anywhere. You've got a checking group here, you've got a checking group there. You've got a cutting group, you've got a cutting group—there was no organization, nothing.

So what happened, the turnaround time in that environment was anything between fifteen to twenty days that a book would take to go, even in this and that environment before it left to the dispatch section. People were just happy, as long as the book was being done and sent out nobody bothered to say but you know what, we're working in a sort of haphazard way, let's get some system in place, get some controls in place.

What we did there was we changed everything completely. We formed cells. We said for us to produce 10,000 a day, each cell must do a minimum of 3000. So we created four cells. We have to up the norm because 10,000 is the bare minimum. We had to keep up with what's coming in. We're getting 12,000 a day but we're only producing 10,000 a day, so we're slowly building a backlog of 2000 every day. So when do you attend to that 2000?

We had to up the production to at least 12,000 a day, being in line with what we were receiving a day not to build a backlog. So we formed three cells. We said each cell must do a minimum of 3000 a day. But that cell did beginning to end. That means they would get 3000 in the morning and you got your first lot of ladies, they are sitting basically in a position where they're sitting straight. The rows of desks are like this. You have the first four ladies who will now check the 3000. It will then move to the next ladies who do the cut and pasting of the 3000 and then it will move to the other ones who do the final QA. The problem is in our lamination, the skill of lamination, we only have about six people with that skill, nobody wants to learn it, nobody. They say it is just a job that they don't want to do. These six people are the only people that are willing to do it.

You're working with lamination machines about this big, 120 degrees Celsius. The books have to be placed actually into the machine and it comes out on the other side with the lamination stuck to the front page. So nobody likes the job. With the six people we said we can't do anything in splitting them. We then situated the laminating machines at the end of the three cells, or four cells. So what would happen is all four cells' work would go to one lamination station. There is somebody there who is controlling the books going through the laminate.

Creating the cells brought a lot of control and also brought the fact that I can't do less than a certain amount, I have to achieve my 3000 a day as a team. They had to work as a team. It wasn't a person being held responsible for 3000, it was a team being held. If this guy was late, this team would scream, "guys, it's late, we're only 2500, where's my other 500." The other 500 is coming. So we said by 3 o'clock I must have—you would have finished your 3000. So because we put in that team effort of making sure 3000 it helped a lot. So that made a huge, huge difference in terms of how the work flowed. Can we stop?[end of file one]

HAUSMAN: Let's keep going where we left off.

TRAVERN: *Okay, then we're looking at—by creation of the cells and there's more control in the work. We knew what was coming in, what was going on. We put in track and trace to say you guys, if you track in the work that morning that says you've now received the work in the morning you are given—we gave them eight days. We said, "We are given between five and eight days to have the book completed and the book must leave your section to go to another section." That really brought a lot of control. That one of my sections at that point in time when we entered the section was also very union dominated but what helped a lot was that we got—again, we got them involved in the process.*

We said, you know what, look at the way you guys are working now. I mean, that's a very secure environment. You have security outside the building, directly outside the office who does physical body searches before you even leave. So we said, if you look at all of that and the work you're doing, you're doing important work. But for you it's oh so what if the book takes five days more or ten days more. But there's a client out there. So we got them to understand that part and say there's somebody out there, it could be your mother, it could be your brother, it could be your sister is waiting for the book. But the longer we took, the more—. And if you look at the media clips between 2007—we were in the media every day for poor service delivery, not doing this. So we were in the media quite often. So that helps.

The creation of the cells, ops management, hand-holding. We actually sent—we had two consultants. We said, you sit on that floor because what used to happen, we used to sit on the fifth floor. So you only went there maybe three times a day if you were lucky because you were busy. We said no, the consultant actually moved down, sat with the—so the staff could see the consultants there. If they had a problem with the process we had changed immediately they could bring up the problem and say, you know what, this is not working Andrew. Josh this is a problem here. Josh, let's help here. So that helped a lot with having the consultant sit with them so that they could see that you know what, there's somebody who is willing to work with us, not just come in and implement a new process but then just ignore the new process. They are there. They say here you do it but we hand-held them through the entire process. It worked fantastic.

I mean at the moment if I have my full staff I can push up to 14,000 out which is excellent. But I mean in the civil service absenteeism is a huge challenge. So it is a huge, huge problem. I mean, I have under me 244 staff. Each section has between 13 to 18% absenteeism rate on a daily basis. So it is a huge, huge thing. You know, in the public service in South Africa they—we've been given 36 days sick leave over a three year cycle. Then you're given 22 days vacation leave over a one-year period. Then you're given five days, they call it compassionate leave. That means if one of your family members is sick and what have you, you have five days you can take in a year. You get another five days if someone in your family is deceased. Then you get another five.

So what happens, you'll find that a lot of staff, instead of using twelve days vacation leave a year, sick leave a year, they would take all 36 days in one year. Then you've got study leave because we give a bursary if your studies are related to your line of work or even in the public sector. So we give you study leave. You must know with your study leave every exam you write we give you four days. You find that most universities, I'm not sure overseas, but in South Africa, they've now gone into a semester. So that means I can enroll for two subjects a semester, or three subjects a semester. So what happens? Every subject I write I get four days. So if I've got three subjects, I've got another twelve days.

You have people who want to study, you can't stop people from studying. Then you've got the sick leave, the vacation leave and all the others. So you'll find that in a week a section will suffer a lot in terms of leave. You'll find you'll have this team will have normally ten people, you'll have five of them, two on study, one on vacation, one on sick. The minister says Yogie how do I achieve my norm when I have that high. So absenteeism is a huge thing. You have the valid absenteeism and you have the one that just abuses leave. You'll find as it is closer to payday, the day after payday you'll have a huge absenteeism in the building because you'll find that I want to pay my accounts, I've got this to do, that to do. Unfortunately, maybe I shouldn't say it, maybe it shouldn't be documented, but you can't fire someone very easily in the civil service, you can't. You've got to really go through a stringent process of disciplinary action before the person can even be fired.

By the time you go through that stringent process of disciplinary action, that person will probably pull up his socks after six months or nine months and what do you do then? You can just forget everything that happened nine months ago because the guy decided to pull up his socks. He'll pull up his socks for maybe six months, he'll go back all over again. But when he starts all over again and you want to take disciplinary action, you can't go back in history and say, you know what, two years ago you gave me a hard time and you're giving me a hard

time now and I can hold that against you. You can't. Because whatever happened after six months, you can't hold that person liable for it.

So completion area you understand. That's the processes we've changed there; we've reduced the times, we've done a lot of changes there in terms of cells. Backlogs, when something has to pass—they also had backlogs of over 60,000 books in the building that didn't even go through.

HAUSMAN: Have there been improvements in absenteeism rates?

TRAVERN: *It has, it really has because what happened was, there was an HR policy change that says, when you finish your 36 days sick leave, you now go to temporary incapacity. Now temporary incapacity is detailed. What happened there is you now had to bring a doctor's note so you had to go to a doctor. If it was for a day, because our policy says if you're absent for three days or more that's the only time you bring a doctor's note. If you're off for just a day you don't bring it. Now it is even for one day, you have to bring a doctor's note.*

So you can't just decide I have a headache this morning and stay at home and come tomorrow and say to us, "Oh, my leave is finished and I want temporary—." They won't give it to you. It will be leave without pay. HR (human resources) has improved a lot because in 2009 they did a full audit of our staff and where people were abusing leave. People got a surprise this year in January, they ended up with less salary. Some of them had thousands of rands deducted. It was because over the years they've been abusing their leave but audits were never done.

Now they've kind of pulled up their socks now in February this year to say you know what, we've got to now control how we take our leave because at the end of the year when they're doing audits, we're just losing money. In fact there's a meeting at 10 o'clock today to say to people, this is the reason why the money was taken, you've been abusing your leave. So there has been a huge improvement in the absenteeism. But, again—.

HAUSMAN: What were the rates? You said the rates now are 13 to 18%.

TRAVERN: *They were between 30 to 35% absenteeism at that time. It has really improved now. I mean there are certain sections which are close to about 8%, as low as 8% absenteeism. But even that 8% is actually leave that the person is entitled to because if he's studying you can't stop him from going on leave or writing his exams. That's leave that he actually has to take.*

HAUSMAN: How do you explain the big improvement, apart from the HR policy change?

TRAVERN: *Over time, getting things done in terms of—the process changed, backlogs were experienced. We started working overtime and set up a policy to say you're not allowed to work overtime if your absenteeism is bad. Overtime means more money. So everyone wants more money. But what we did is we put in internal policies to say if you want to work overtime and there is overtime available, your absenteeism rate has to be good. That means you have to show us you are the person who is dedicated to Home Affairs. You love your work, you enjoy your work and because of that we will give you work to work overtime.*

Also the change in the process has helped a lot. What happened, they found that it is no longer my mundane way of working, it's a new way of working. Some of them, if they go off for two or three days and if processes changed, when they came back they felt left out, things have changed, I wasn't here. Now I'm so

worried if they change again they might move me, or they might say I don't need you in this section. They may move me to a section that I don't like. That kind of—. Various small factors that played a role in terms of improving the absenteeism, but we hope that as we go forward there are more changes coming in terms of HR policies and that probably will make people realize. I think in South Africa, probably being a developing country, you can't fire me, so I can probably do anything I want to do. It will take you forever—my job is basically secure.

So that kind of mentality that it needs to change, to say after a certain period and our disciplinary policies in the department need to change, really. It should say that after I've done one, two, and three, I must be able to suspend you or to release you from your job and say you're incompetent. We haven't fired anybody for incompetence in the department. The only one who got fired was because you were caught for fraud or you were caught stealing something. So incompetence where a person was just lazy or a person doesn't show up for work—he comes to work but not regularly, we haven't done that as a department. That's what we need to improve, but I believe we've got a new DDG in HR and she is coming from a outside background so we believe that she is going to make a lot of changes in terms of HR.

We've heard already, we've seen some circulars already that she wants to do a lot of changes in terms of HR policy so hopefully that will be going on. [end of file two]

Okay, so we've covered the completion area in terms of everything that we've done there. Now the book goes into another area which is called our dispatch area. They actually physically dispatch the books to the outside office. Now the old system of working—I think you would have seen it on the video where they physically threw ID books into little cubicles. So they had this huge shelf with little cubicles with alphabets. Not even office names, it was alphabets.

So they would then, crates of 10,000 books would come into this section. They would—previously there was no track and trace so they would receive it. They would then take it and physically throw it into little areas like a factory, that had alphabets on it. So all the "A's," all the "B's," and things. Then they would then take all the "A's" and three people would sit on a desk and now physically go through each book and say, "Okay, now put it in strictly alphabetical order." Then they had to take it into office order so it was a huge, huge mundane process of working.

When we went into that environment the first thing we did was we said no throwing of books. First we introduced track and trace. That means, when they received that book that morning, the 10,000 it had to go on track and trace immediately to say yes it is in my section ready for dispatch. So that track and trace was there. After they had tracked it in, we said no more throwing. We don't want to hear anything about throwing. So all we did was, each person was given a crate of 800. They have about 23 staff. Each person was given a crate of 800. We said, "All you do is, you take the 800—," previously what used to happen, on the outside of the ID book this address slip, this is your address that the book must go to. This address slip was on the inside of the plastic cover and the book would go like this to the section. But what the section would do, little pieces of paper were stuck at the back with the office name. When they're doing the—when I'm sitting with the 800 I would sort according to office name. I'd put these office names.

What we did was we removed that and we said this address slip must now come there. That was one. Then we changed—previously we had the applicant's postal address and the applicant's physical address. Now with XPS using them as a single service, courier service, we said, books are no longer going to be sent to the client. The client must come and identify himself at a Home Affairs office and collect his book himself. So we now put the office name.

We did two things. We took the address and we put the office. We said now it must go there. So now when they receive the 8000 I don't have to worry about writing small pieces of paper, it's there already, it says District Office Uitenhage. So it means District Office Uitenhage, is going to be here. That kind of changed a lot of things by just doing that small change. It helped a lot. It was easy for them to sort out.

After they did the sorting out, we had one person with 800 books and they just did that. Then you had the other person who would go—you have a manager, he said, "Okay, I'm collecting Durban." So he would pick up all the Durban from about six clerks. He'll take all the Durban books and bring it to a dispatch clerk. We then installed a dispatch system. They never had a dispatch system. They would just put it into a bag and they would just send it to the outside office. They would use the National Population Register to say ID book sent.

Now we put in a dispatch system to say, you've got 500 books that need to go to Durban. The first thing you do is, you will go on the dispatch system and you will scan all 500 ID. It will then give you a print out to say these are the 500 IDs. You take that printout with the 500 IDs. You will double check that 500 matches the printout. Then we have XPS, we have XPS in house. So I use XPS to bring me the application and I use XPS to deliver the ID book as well. So I have now an XPS team which was never there before.

The XPS team now will also generate me a label and an XPS bag for this office. So immediately they are sitting in my office. They have their own machines. They will generate me a label every morning. They would give me labels for the entire country and they will prepare my XPS bags. So when my clerk is ready, dispatch is done, the dispatch will now go directly, right there in front of us. There is no taking it and putting it somewhere else or whatever. Into the XPS bag, XPS bag is sealed in the presence of XPS and DHA official, put into a crate. So that kind of brought more control to say what goes into the bag I can account for. There are two people signing the dispatch list to say yes, we agree to the content.

At 3 o'clock every afternoon XPS arrives in the building. They would then take my crates. But before they take my crates my crates are sealed here with the seal so should there be any robbery during the course on the way XPS takes responsibility because I send the crates sealed. So they put all the bags in the sealed crate, XPS will take it, take it to their hub and deliver. The process we changed there is small as that, but the outside office previously they would just receive a bag of books, open the books, file it in a cabinet and that was it.

Now what we said, "No, when you open the bag you need to tally. Does the dispatch list match the number of books that you have in the bag?" Because, a lot of books were missing and being stolen. So we put in that control measure to say you need to now open. So XPS going back is given three days from the time they pick up the bag from me and from the time they deliver it at the outside office. They can't just drop the bag and go. XPS must stand there. They must open the bag with the Home Affairs' official, check that the content is correct, sign off the dispatch list and XPS must leave.

My clerk must immediately put that ID book on track and trace to say yes, ID book is at outside office. Simultaneous to that, we had the problem with the client. Previously the offices would tell the client come back after six months to collect your ID book. Client will come back and the book is not there. He'll come back five times and the book is not there. So then we implements an SMS system which is linked to the track and trace. So when the outside office tracks in the ID book to say the ID book is here, immediately an SMS is sent to the client to say your ID book is at the office ready for collection.

We subsequently send two other SMSs as a reminder, the first one at the time of receipt of book, after sixty days and thereafter after 110 days. So giving the client enough time and reminders to say come and collect your ID book, your ID book is ready. So that saved a lot of time in terms of the book leaving my office and going back. By June 2008, we had already dropped our turnaround of the ID book from 127 days to sixty days. So we had already cut the time by more than half. It was only just changing the process, changing the way people work and having them, making them comply with the new way of working and the track and trace. The track and trace played a good role.

By 2009, beginning of 2009, we call it the name and shame report. What we were doing by the middle of 2009, we sort of, our daily reports became weekly reports. So on a weekly basis we started rating the outside offices and the provinces. So the rating created quite a hype in all Home Affairs offices because I could see my name would be bottom of the list and I would be picked out in management meetings or my province was doing—. So first we did a provincial rating to say XPS is at your office, they're picking up applications and they're bringing it to us, how long is it taking for you to scan it in and for you to give it to XPS. For that rating, how? Because you have the provincial managers, big guys, fighting with each other, fighting with the office saying, "Guys, we are number seven on the list, we must be number one on the list. The DG is looking at this list as well." That helped a lot to get them to say let's be sending the work on time.

The same with the return of the ID books as well. When the books got back there we said, "Which office was tracking it immediately on track and trace and filing it." So we did a rating. Then from provincial rating we went to office rating. Then in our Thursday report we put in the best five offices and the worst five offices as the covering to our e-mail. So automatically that created a hype as well to say, "Boy, we are now in the worst five offices in the country." That helped a lot to create that to say, "You know what guys, we need to pull up our socks." That helped a lot to the outside office in terms of compliance.

I think I've covered most of what we've done in terms of the turnaround, in terms of everything that we've achieved so far. I think the buy-in of the staff, the working in together with management and consultants and also I think my DDG, (Vusi) Mkhize, I'm not sure if you've already met him or interviewed him as yet, but he is an excellent person. He always, he gave us free reign. He didn't come down to say, "You know what, everything you run by me first." He said, "Guys, you know what, you know what you're doing. You give me feedback on what you've done." You'll find that in other branches the head wants to have a say in everything and everything must be first run by them before you do it. But he trusted us a lot to say, "I know what you guys want and I know what you want to do. You guys do it."

We used to have a once a week meeting with him and just give him an update but we had his full support and that helped a lot. You know, when you have your manager's support it makes it so much easier to implement things that you want to implement. Then we got the support from the managers in the building, the lower levels as well. They all knew this as well. I think the message went around, we're here to stay, we want to change and we want to make things happen. So either you jump on the boat and you go with us or if you feel you don't want to be part of the change then find another way out. You find a transfer, you want to transfer yourself. But we're here to help you.

You know what? Nobody transferred. Everybody jumped in and said—you know what? Of course we had resistance, you still have them now. We come from an old school, we don't believe in change, nothing will change, everything will remain. But eventually—that's the way you think but this is the way I want you to work. So if I want you to work this way obviously I can't change the way you think, but I can change the way you work, because at the end of the day there's a deliverable, there is a norm to reach.

We sent a norm of 150 a day. For you to reach 150 you have to follow the new process, you cannot follow your old process. So that is how we got them to eventually buy into the changes that we've made.

I think I've covered most of it David unless there's something else you want me to elaborate on or give you more explanation on.

HAUSMAN: I think that's great, thank you very much.