

THE SERVICE DIALOGUE

DENIED PLEASURES

It is often said that we as Batswana are ever patient and willing to accommodate. We do not however show those traits when we start seeing that our individual pleasures are being impacted upon. It is common place nowadays to loudly state our displeasure at an unfortunate service provider who may have not kept the promise of good customer service. Nonetheless there are cases where the service we could have received is not what it should be because of external factors such as the current electricity shortage and soon to be shortage of petrol in our tanks which may lead to many who have not walked for a while, to start using those muscles (the exercise will do most of us good!) We finally have a new local soap opera, "Morwalela," which is actually quite good and has us glued to our television screens every Monday night, only most of us have not quite enjoyed it much recently because of the seemingly consistent load shedding on Monday nights at 6:12pm. Sometimes the load shedding happens two or three other times during the week, but the Monday one really if wishes were horses

It is indeed difficult to cater for everyone's special and personal needs. I know for sure that soccer lovers are hoping that during the World Cup there will be no interruptions. Across the border in South Africa imported electricity, a wind farm and privately owned generators are all part of Eskom's plan to keep the lights on during the 2010 World Cup. Hopefully BPC's customers can be given some reassurance that there would be no load-shedding during the World Cup, despite the event's being held in winter when demand for household power will be higher.

In order for customers to enjoy personal pleasures this winter it looks like we must do a little planning and saving. Saving electricity (through using efficient appliances, switching off equipment when not in use, and using alternative sources of energy such as solar geysers) has benefits such as reduced cost, reduced pollution, better use of natural resources (coal, water, and fuel) and it saves customers money. In these times of capacity constraints, saving electricity also means that the load on the national power system is reduced, thus helping with the balance between available generation and the demand load, thereby reducing the risk of load shedding.

Therefore, saving electricity can help to avoid too much load shedding taking place, especially if customers switch off unnecessary appliances and loads during peak periods and at other times when the risk of load-shedding is high. So we must all work together as customers to increase the likelihood of enjoying our individual pleasures. BPC should also meet customers halfway by improving load-shedding schedules, accuracy, quality, equity, and adherence to schedules. They must also improve frontline staff training and increase the number of service providers who can inform and educate on an ongoing basis. It is only fair that the Corporation must develop other consistent channels of communication, such as regular schedules published in newspapers, an SMS notification service, and a voice-response system to handle queries. They must continue to encourage saving of electricity.

While on the subject, BTV should consider showing re-runs during the week or weekend when those of us who were affected by the load shedding and were thus unable to show our unmitigated support, are able to demonstrate it. If they are doing so, well as a keen customer I need to know when this actually happens. Maybe in exchange for our pleasures, we will talk more and watch less television and with fuel shortage, the roads will no longer have traffic jams and there will be more car pooling.

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