

Evidence of a Mature Scorecard: The Power of Alignment!

By Gail S. Perry

Co-Author of *The Institute Way*

GABORONE, Botswana - I had an interesting phone call today. I dialed up Air Botswana to book an in-country flight. While spelling out my email address, ...@b-a-l-a-n-c-e-d-s-c-o..., the reservation agent cut me off and said excitedly, "**balanced scorecard!?!?**" I was surprised. I usually have great difficulty communicating our URL to people who are not familiar with the term "balanced scorecard" and even more so when they are trying to decipher my Texas accent.

The reservationist then went on to very animatedly tell me all about the scorecard that is cascaded through the government of Botswana and used at Air Botswana, a parastatal entity under the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communications.

The reservationist spoke enthusiastically about the balanced scorecard strategic objectives and the measures and about how the balanced scorecard helps improve performance across the entire government of Botswana. Here I was, talking to a reservationist whose job it is to answer phones and book local flights, and she was clearly attuned to the big-picture strategy and performance of not only her organization, but of her government, as well.

During the course of the call, I also learned that Air Botswana is currently deploying a new online reservation system, and this seemingly made the reservationist's job more difficult in that she was required to stay on the phone with me and walk me through the online process and manually check my input from her end. Yet that didn't annoy her. In fact she was happy, patient and enthusiastic. She seemed to understand the bigger picture of why the implementation was strategic – and that she plays an integral role in the mission: "Air Botswana is committed to being



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the airline of first choice through the delivery of high-quality service". Her name was Tumul.

That's an incredible example of strategic alignment!

I cannot adequately convey how surreal – how COOL this encounter was. It is so energizing to witness, first-hand, the impact of successful strategic alignment. To encounter someone who understands that she is doing much more than "just a job" and understands how she fits in and how she contributes to a larger whole – THAT is powerful!

So, how has a Federal Government in a developing country done something so leading-edge? What is their secret?

First, let me tell you more about the **astounding results that the government of Botswana has achieved in the six years since they adopted the strategic balanced scorecard framework.**

The Institute recently participated in a fact-finding team that examined the strategic results within the Botswana Ministry of Health (MOH). During interviews, the MOH leadership attributed the following results to using the aligned balanced scorecard framework.

- The PMTCT (Preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV) **rate was reduced from 40% to 4%** over the past few years, best in the developing world (on par with developed countries)
- The **incidence of childhood disease has been significantly reduced** through an aggressive early childhood vaccination program. For example, in 2000 there were over 2600 cases of measles reporters nation-wide. In 2008, there were zero cases of measles in Botswana. A small outbreak in 2009 was headed off with only 184 cases reported.
- The MOH is currently vaccinating the nation against **H1N1** as a precautionary (preventative) measure. A keynote here is that a **cross-functional decision** was made to use the child preventative services division to lead the initiative although another division would normally handle adult immunizations.
- With cooperation from the neighboring countries to the north, the MOH of Botswana **projects a malaria free country by 2015.**
- The Botswana National Cancer Registry is the **first and currently the only one of its kind in Africa.**
- Health facilities are actively pursuing international accreditation to ensure the **healthcare facilities, personal, and practices meet international standards.**

Amazing.

After six years of using a strategic balanced scorecard management system, built on the Balanced Scorecard Institute's Nine Steps to Success™ framework, Botswana has accomplished so much.

So, what's their secret?

- ✓ They clearly have **engaged leadership.**

The commitment of the top leaders to the balanced scorecard is impressive. The President reviews national level performance with each minister (15 ministries) quarterly. The Vice President reviews strategic initiative progress with the Permanent Secretary of each Ministry and updates their "performance contract" quarterly. Each Minister publishes balanced



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scorecard results quarterly in the local newspaper and appears on public radio to field citizen questions shortly thereafter. Strategy is discussed weekly by leaders at all levels. The leadership is "walking the talk", owning their balanced scorecard system themselves, rather than simply delegating the management of their balanced scorecard to a separate planning office. And the leadership incorporates the knowledge gained from their strategic management system into their operational decision-making.

When Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian took Presidential office in 2008, he continued "walking the talk" by updating "His Excellency's balanced scorecard" to include his own priorities and initiatives and to communicate them through the affected ministries. His Excellency was able to leverage the power of the strategic balanced scorecard framework. Leaders who understand the framework understand that they can make strategic adjustments that will effectively cascade throughout their organization, which in this case, is an entire federal government. The framework does not limit their ability to lead; it **magnifies the ability to lead** by providing an efficient mechanism for communication and alignment of priorities.

- ✓ They are committed **to interactive communications.**

The Government of Botswana has ensured that their strategies are not top-down mandates. Instead, their process continues to be **inclusive** which greatly increases buy-in and enhances overall collaboration, alignment, and performance. Tumul's knowledge of the



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balanced scorecard is evidence of this.

A notable attribute of Botswana's system is their executive-level **stakeholder communications** in which each minister publicly publishes the balanced scorecard progress and interactively fields citizen questions in a public forum – on the radio.

Internal communications are also in evidence as directors and managers are encouraged to collaborate within and across functions and to make decisions within the context of strategic performance. Evidence of these interactive communications was found when our fact-finding team documented the following quotes from MOH senior managers and officials:

- "We work together to find better solutions"
 - "Things are much more focused now than before (balanced scorecard)"
- ✓ The balanced scorecard has helped **reprioritize work**, to focus on the most important programs and projects and to **measure what matters**.

Improved communications and engaged leadership led to a greater focus on strategy and results, and how to get things done. The focus on strategy led to more focused discussions and analysis on program and service priorities, and on how results will be measured, and projects managed. MOH managers and officials were quoted as saying:

- "Areas of focus are highlighted in our balanced scorecards...and lead to high impact interventions [initiatives]"
- "It (the balanced scorecard) has helped to prioritize and clarify direction and actions"

- ✓ The balanced scorecard has become **"the way we do business"**.

It is one thing to build a balanced scorecard system, but quite another to employ it optimally. It takes time, thought and commitment of effort to continuously improve the system. The government of Botswana realizes this and continues to invest the time and resources to move its system forward to achieve progressive, measured results.

They have demonstrated a significant commitment to continually build the **capacity of their leaders** at all levels to understand and leverage the balanced scorecard. Over the years, the Balanced Scorecard Institute has trained hundreds of government leaders, performance improvement coordinators, and supervisors from Botswana in formal certification courses in both the U.S. and Botswana. A primary responsibility of the course graduates has been to transfer their knowledge of the *Nine Steps to Success™* framework to others within the government. They become the trainers, coaches and mentors of their teammates, subordinates and superiors for balanced scorecard purposes, and continuously bring back the latest developments in balanced scorecard from the most recent courses. This deep commitment is **evidenced by the continuation of the balanced scorecard system following changes in key leadership, including the presidency**.

Other evidence of the maturity of a balanced scorecard is the formal establishment of an **Office of Strategy Management**, to centrally coordinate performance management functions and activities. Botswana has been systematically establishing a formal strategy management function at each level of their organization, starting at the Office of the President, at Ministry, and then down to directorate level to manage strategic planning and execution processes as well as to coordinate progress reporting. At present, a coordinating capability also exists in the Public Service Reform Unit at the national level and at the Performance Improvement Units

at each ministry level. Embedding the OSM functions at every level ensures that the **balanced scorecard remains integral to the way business is done and is integrated with other management processes and systems** at each level.

In fact, MOH leaders told our fact-finding team that "they and their teams would be hard pressed to work effectively without it (balanced scorecard)".

The evidence is clear: The Federal Government of Botswana is a model example of a mature, aligned, effective strategic balanced scorecard implementation. We are honored to have had a small part in your success and cannot wait to see what you accomplish next!

About the Author

Gail S. Perry is co-author of *The Institute Way*. With a career spanning over 30 years of strategic planning and performance management consulting with corporate, nonprofit, and government organizations, she enjoys speaking, training, and writing, sharing her experience with others. She currently is the Vice President at Credera.

About the Balanced Scorecard Institute (BSI)

BSI provides consulting, training, and professional certification services to organizations worldwide related to strategic planning, balanced scorecard, KPI/performance measurement, and strategic project management.

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Botswana Vision 2016

Vision 2016 is Botswana's strategy to propel its socio-economic and political development into a competitive, winning and prosperous nation. Seven key goals have been developed to achieve this. The vision reflects the aspirations of Botswana about their long-term future and is a result of extensive consultations with a wide spectrum of individuals and institutions in the country.



City centre in Gaborone