

Sustaining the Geomatics Profession through effective Associations

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Introduction



- The survival of any given profession is dependent to how relevant it is to society
- It is also depends on how well it organises itself
- Good and relevant organisation attract high calibre individuals
- Geomatics as a profession is one of the oldest known professions but seems to be less attractive than Law or Economics

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Introduction



- A robust association helps rekindle the profession
- Surveying is currently at a crossroad due in part to the “encroachment” of different professionals in the traditional area of providing land information

Surveyors Challenge



- The need for the Surveyor to find voice in society- Could be considered to be invisible at the moment!
- Need for a specialist generalist- grounded in Geodetic principles but with knowledge of articulating societal issues
- More mapping players in the Surveyor space- Can create irrelevance of the profession.

Existing Situation in Botswana



- Botswana's Geomatics profession is governed by the Land Survey Act.
- The Land Survey Act provides for the establishment of the Land Surveyors' Board and its duties.
- This Board is composed of the Director of Surveys and Mapping, one Land Surveyor in the public service and a private land surveyor.
- The function of the Board is to set and carry out examinations for the purpose of registering Land Surveyors.

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Existing Situation in Botswana



- The LS Act spells out the duties of a Land Surveyor and sets rules and regulations on how Cadastral Surveys must be performed.
- When a surveyor passes the examinations set by the Board s/he qualifies to be registered as a Land Surveyor and will practice in respect to the Act.
- The Land Survey Act in essence sets out the registration and the practice of cadastral surveyors
- It does not have any control of any other survey practice in the country.
- So, practitioners in the other surveying areas such as engineering surveying do not have to register with anyone to practice in the country.

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Perpetual Licensure



- Once one is licensed as a land surveyor s/he is licensed for life and does not need to renew her/his license.
- This has a fundamental flaw in that once licensed one does not need to keep abreast with the latest technology, with new developments in the profession and even to participate in the growth of the profession

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Botswana Surveying and Mapping Association



- Created to try and solve the issue of professionalism in 2001
- The association has three chapters:
 - cadastral surveying;
 - cartography, remote sensing and GIS;
 - engineering, topographical and mine surveying.
- At the moment the association has no student chapter, a very serious omission more so that the association is eagerly looking at growing the surveying profession

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Fundamental Question for the Association

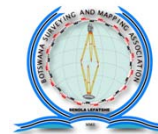


- How should the association become effective to achieve its objectives?
- Since 2001 the association has managed to attract a membership of about twenty out of more than 225 professional and technical surveyors in Botswana
- What needs to be done?

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EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



- An effective professional association
 - promotes the profession
 - protects the public from unethical professional practices.
 - Should be the voice of the profession in articulating the role of the profession in society.

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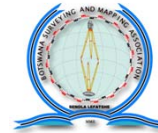
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Functions of Professional Association



- According to Allred (2006) the functions of a professional association should include at least one of the following attributes:
 - determination of entrance requirements;
 - provision of a system of registration;
 - licensing of professional practitioners;
 - maintenance of competence;
 - codes of ethics;
 - standards of practice; and
 - adjudication of complaints and discipline.

How then can we create an effective Association?



- An association is successful if **members value** their membership.
- The Association must **add value** to its members.
- Successful association's have a **strong marketing strategy** to market to both the profession as well as the public at large
- A successful association is one that **regulates itself**. It ensures who comes in and sets the standards for practice.
- A successful association is one that will **participate in the registration** of its members

An example of a successful model in Africa



- SURCON in Nigeria
 - The SURCON is a self-regulatory professional body with legislated responsibility for licensing all land surveyors in Nigeria while the
 - Nigeria Institution of Surveyors is a professional association that represents the professional surveyors

Way forward for BSMA



- Two things must happen
 - At one level is the recognition of all Land Surveying/Geomatics professions that an association or institute is an imperative in their professional lives
 - At another level, the recognition by government that without involvement of the profession the growth will be limited and the public remain unprotected by possible malpractices in the profession

Sustaining growth through Youth and Women



- there has to be a deliberate program to attract these categories of our population.
- Attraction is but only one component of sustenance
 - you might attract but fail to keep those you have attracted if there are no incentives to stay in the profession
 - there is need therefor to have a strong attractive professional activism that society can recognise as being relevant to its needs

Concluding remarks



- As a first step towards regenerating the surveying profession it is suggested that a task force be set up with a mandate to investigate the operations and shortcomings of BSMA
- A strategic and business plan is urgently required to enable the association to meet its goals and objectives in a cost-effective and sustainable manner
 - Review the constitution
 - Develop marketing strategy that would attract the youth e.g. social networks