

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE STAFF RETENTION STRATEGY  
IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF VHEMBE  
DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

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## ABSTRACT

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The Public Sectors of Vhembe District Municipality is an amalgamation of the former Departments of Customs and Excise, and the Receiver of Revenue. Public workers (SARS) obtained full autonomy from the Government in October 1997 in order for it to administer its own affairs. Government Sector has since made great strides in transforming its people and technology, although some growing pains are recently being experienced, i.e. the “retention question”. The problem statement, “What strategies can be implemented for retaining skilled employees within Public division norms” is derived from a multitude of problematic issues currently being experienced world wide. Problem areas particular to South Africa, include: the mass exodus of white skilled labour; baby-boomers (aged 60 – 65) nearing retirement, affirmative action, employment equity, and a general lack of skills in the employment industry. An employee engagement survey (2007) conducted at government segment, shows figures that further exacerbates the problem.

The objectives of the research were therefore; to conduct a literature study of employee retention strategies, investigate the research strategies currently being employed at SARS, the reasons for the low levels of employee engagement and to develop a strategic model for employee retention for use at Public sectors Customs in the Limpopo Region of South Africa. The study takes the form of a case study, using quantitative and qualitative methods of research. A questionnaire was distributed to respondents, the results of which were analysed and presented.

The findings show that Public sector Customs is in a good position with regards to pay and benefits. Areas that require attention though are training, development and career management, effective supervision, and day-to-day activities. The strategic model for

employee retention developed during this study addresses numerous retention issues, covering local and national perspectives. Other aspects of the retention model include: an integrated management and human resource perspectives; provision for generation subsets; and overall health (for performance measurement).

- Firstly, a full literature study regarding strategies that an organisation can utilise for the retention of their critical employees was researched.
- Secondly, the views of current public sector employees on retention strategies were assessed in an empirical study, which involved completing a questionnaire.
- Lastly, recommendations due to the findings of the researcher were identified for public sectors to retain their highly skilled and specialised employees.