

**CLOSING REMARKS BY MEC NELISWA NKONYENI AT
THE STEPHEN COVEY ADDRESS AT I.C.C DURBAN
13 MARCH 2006**

All Protocol observed

As it may have been stated, I am Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni, here representing our Honorable Premier, Dr Sbu Ndebele, who as a result of prior arranged commitments cannot be with us in this mind-juggling occasion.

Since I have been given this platform, I may as well utilize it to say, On behalf of the Nkonyeni and Mlambo families, we hereby extend our deepest appreciation for the support you gave us when I lost my son Monde, beginning of this year.

For all the messages of support, for all the embraces given and received from across the breath of our country and also those that arrived from abroad through our embassies I today want to say Thank you again.

For all the things you did for us, we have no choice but to concur with Vincent van Gogh as he says:

‘Great things are not done by impulse,

But by a series of small things brought together’

Let the spirit of camaraderie be extended to all the needing people. Thank you again

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be part of this presentation by Stephen Covey of his “Nine Effective Steps Towards Leadership” I am convinced that this presentation was indeed an eye-opener to all of us.

As South Africans we have just emerged from a local government elections and it is from here that we build leaders, create new ones and mentor those who are already in positions of power.

Our unique, multi-cultural demographic composition in our country presents pressing contemporary management and leadership challenges. We cut across the colour line, across ethnic enclaves and more importantly cut across the cultural divide.

Learning from leaders

We have heard today accounts of leadership challenges, successes in leadership development and the overall self, accountability of leadership, and how leadership can empower ordinary citizens by creating better lives for people.

This is what we attempted to do almost two weeks when 50 percent of our population took the polls. They voted for leaders who they believe will make a difference in their lives.

We have reached a point in our society where we are developing a leadership culture. In the workplace contemporary encouraging legislations help creates good leaders and a prosperous economy, in the public sector and government a leader with vision will create, promote and enhance our democracy, the capacity of individuals to accelerate service delivery, and contribute towards a productive society.

Awakening the leadership genius

The ability to work with and through people to achieve mutually beneficial goals is likely to become a key performance defining skill in our thriving democracy. For the many business associates and government officials sitting here today, ask yourself, "What can I do to add and create value to and positively impact on my

people's development?" Leaders create a lasting impression and a memorable legacy.

Dr Stephen Covey refers to the development of a new leadership theory – addressing the whole person consisting of body, mind, heart and spirit. If we don't address the whole person, we cannot hope to lead, then we can only manage. Leaders are expected to get the best and the most out of their people in order to harvest a significant return on the developmental investment.

In African leadership, King Shaka Zulu, can be regarded as an icon. He was a conqueror - a highly visible leader who led courageously from the front. He expected no more from his impi's as what he was prepared to give himself.

Brave heart leaders are courageous and tread where angels fear to go. Dynamic leaders have to become fighting fit – whipping themselves and their followers in shape – to measure up to and keep pace with the exceedingly rigorous demands of the frantic, corporate rat race. Top leaders, similar to Shaka Zulu, are zealous, uncompromising and vigorous in their efforts to achieve their objectives.

Leaders are responsible

Any kind of; leadership requires responsibility. And responsibility goes together with commitment.

As we are gathered here today, we want to create leaders who have will, responsibility and the zealousness to perform.

To lead means a responsibility to chart the way forward. You may be idealistic in your leadership and require a regiment to implement your dreams. Dr Stephen Covey has beautifully outlined the characteristics of good leadership.

Some leaders feel comfortable to lead from behind. In this type of leadership one is expected to crack the whip from behind. You allow your followers to “walk” in front of you after you have discussed the route and the pace of the journey. In this type of leadership you must keep focus and not allow your followers to leave you behind.

I was personally impressed with Dr Covey’s presentation especially with the way he outlined and highlighted the effectiveness of leadership in various fields of operation when he says: “Today the challenges and complexities we face in our personal lives and relationships, in our families, in our professional lives, in our organizational are of a different order and magnitude.” This is very true.

It is also true that most people are not performing well in their places of activity due to lack of motivational leadership initiatives. For this educative information we salute you Dr Covey.

It is also very true that we need to change our mid-set in order to fully transform ourselves to the new developments in our lives.

What we need to do now is to go out there and implement all these wonderful ideas. We highly appreciate your contribution and all the knowledge that you have showered us with.

It is also of interest to observe that the survey made in United States found that despite gains in technology, product innovation and world markets, most people were not thriving in the organizations they worked for. And for that reason, they suffered from a loss of passion and felt disenabled in their jobs and had to cope with low-trust environments. This scenario is very common with us here. Some of the employees find themselves disorientated. We do need motivational talks of this nature which could improve the working ethics.

It is not surprising that your “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” sold over 15 million copies worldwide. This is a clear indication how effective your contribution is.

I urge my colleagues in this province to apply these principles given to us today which will undoubtedly improve productivity in our performance.

I therefore would like to welcome you to our Province of KwaZulu-Natal and assure you that your presentations were highly appreciated.

I thank you.