ALTERNATIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES
CASE STUDY ON CONTRACT EMPLOYMENT
IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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Abstract

In the forty years since Trinidad and Tobago gained independence from Great Britain, the country’s public service recruitment practices have progressed from the maintenance of an emphasis on permanent and pensionable employment “from cradle-to-grave” to a mix of permanent and contingent employment and the recruitment, on contract, of professional and technical individuals. Strategies have been developed for making the most effective use of talented nationals from within and outside of the organisation to provide the services needed at this stage of the country’s development and to allow the Public Service to keep pace with the innovations being pioneered in the First World states.

The strategies developed are intended to facilitate the management of this process of recruitment and will have to undergo continuous refinement to maximise their potential for effectiveness and, at the same time, to minimise the possibility of abuse of the system.

Introduction

The Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago is the single largest employer in the country, having a workforce of upward of fifty thousand public officers comprising members of the Civil and Teaching Services, the Police, Fire and Prison Services and the Judicial and Legal Service. As obtains in all the countries of the Anglophone Commonwealth Caribbean, the constitutionally-appointed Service Commissions1 have responsibility for

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1 There are four constitutionally-appointed Service Commissions in Trinidad and Tobago: the Public Service Commission, which has jurisdiction over members of the Civil, Fire and Prison
the appointment of persons into the several arms of the Public Service and for their promotion, transfer and termination of employment. The Commissions also exercise disciplinary control over such persons.

Traditionally, the Service Commissions recruited individuals into entry-level positions at the Clerical, Secretarial, Technical and Manipulative grades of the Public Service. To ensure equity and transparency, the application form was standardised and the application date used as a determinant of the applicant’s position on the list for appointment. With the exception of persons seeking entry into the Manipulative Class, competitive interviews and/or examinations determined suitability for selection.

Persons seeking recruitment into the middle and senior (managerial and professional) levels either responded to advertisements and submitted to competitive interviews or were targeted for promotion/appointment from within the organisation on the basis of seniority and merit. Successful completion of a public service promotion examination and/or the acquisition of tertiary-level qualification from recognised institutions qualified clerical officers to enter the Administrative Class.²

The procedures for applying to the Service Commissions for positions in the Public Service have, essentially, remained the same over the years:

- Walk-in applicants apply for entry-level positions by completing a standardised form and waiting for temporary vacancies to become available.
- At the request of Ministries and Departments, advertisements for specific positions (usually at the professional and technical levels) are posted by the Service Commissions Department, the Secretariat for the Commissions, which

² The Promotion Examination for Entry into the Administrative Class of the Public Service was an annual, competitive examination which qualified officers of the Clerical Class to join the Administrative Class. The examination was preceded by a Public Service-sponsored preparatory training programme. The examination has not been conducted for several years and public officers desirous of achieving upward mobility have been enrolling in certificate-level programmes offered by the University of the West Indies.
processes applications and interviews suitable candidates for selection and subsequent placement.

- The Service Commissions Department also fills positions by internal recruitment, that is, appointment/promotion from within the Public Service organisation.

The monthly-paid workforce in Ministries and Departments operate in established, permanent and pensionable positions.

**The current system of recruitment: challenges to effectiveness**

The current system of recruitment was designed to serve the needs of a Public Service that was smaller and less complex and which provided goods and services to a citizenry whose needs were simple. As the size of the society increased, so too did the quantity and complexity of the demands they made on the State apparatus. The Public Service itself was enlarged to cope with its client needs; however, systems and procedures to support increased demands for staffing within the organisation have not been upgraded in proportion either to internal needs or to the needs of citizens seeking employment. The challenges thus encountered include:

- the dysfunctional effects of rigidly bureaucratic, time-consuming procedures that result in frustration for users of the system and possible loss of qualified entrants;

- delays in the recruitment of new staff which adversely affect the ability of a Ministry/Department to provide promised services to its clients;

- delays in the receipt of approvals for promotions which affect individuals’ remuneration and the organisation’s ability to effectively plan its future activities;
- a lack of flexibility in effecting promotions across functional streams\(^3\);

- difficulties in appointing qualified retirees or non-nationals into the Service, a practice that is deemed unconstitutional.

The Service Commissions’ recruitment decisions are also affected by activities for which other central Public Service agencies have primary responsibility\(^4\): As a consequence, filling non-traditional positions is frequently constrained by the rigid structures that are applied to traditional areas of employment. Other constraints are that:

- the existing classification of established jobs in the Public Service limits an agency’s capacity to incorporate all the functions required in a position. A Permanent Secretary has the option of:
  - selecting a job position whose stated functions most closely resemble the ones that are required; or
  - requesting the creation of a new job, a time-consuming activity which requires the input of several agencies;

- salaries in the Public Service have not kept pace with similar positions in the Private Sector. The low salary levels are not readily adjustable within the existing Classification and Compensation Plan\(^5\);

In addition, many skilled persons prefer the flexibility of short-term employment with an attractive compensation package. For them, permanent employment is not a viable option.

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\(^3\) Within the Public Service, promotion generally occurs upward through particular “streams”. Individuals who possess the qualifications for appointment/transfer into a different stream are usually required to respond to a specific advertisement/engage in a competitive process.

\(^4\) The public service human resource management function is fragmented; responsibility for functions critical to the recruitment process lies with three different agencies: the Service Commissions Department (staffing and discipline), the Personnel Department (terms and conditions of employment, including pay) and the Public Management Consulting Division (formerly the Organisation and Management Division) of the Ministry of Public Administration and Information (organisation structure and position management).

\(^5\) The Public Service is in the process of conducting a system-wide Job Evaluation exercise which is expected to result in the establishment of a new, modern Classification and Compensation Plan.
As Public Services in the Commonwealth Caribbean strive to provide more highly specialised and professional services in a technology-driven world, due recognition must be given to the mix of knowledge and skills that are required for enhanced organisational performance. At the same time, the competition for required competencies, the means for acquiring them and their worth in monetary terms must be considered. As a result, the use of non-traditional methods of recruitment, the offer of different terms and conditions of employment and/or the refinement of existing mechanisms have assumed greater prominence.

The strategy of alternative staffing (whether through the use of temporary employees or by way of contract employment) is a means of acquiring quality staff for the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago. The parameters have changed over time, policies guiding remuneration, contract duration and other terms and conditions have been circumscribed by environmental imperatives, and refinements to strategy have brought the system closer to meeting ideal performance targets.

In this article, the strategy of contract employment used by the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago will be discussed and the procedures employed to provide Ministries and Departments with talented, qualified personnel, as and when needed, will be outlined.

**Government’s response to the recruitment challenge**

The employment of persons, on contract, into the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago was once catered for by the Civil Service Regulations of 1967 which provided for the re-employment of [public service] pensioners and the hiring of persons who were not citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It was understood that the knowledge and skill base of employees in a traditional, newly independent, Public Service was limited, and there was a premium on those senior public officials whose employable time in the organisation had run out. Given that, at the compulsory retirement age of sixty years, many of the pensioners, who had been specially educated and trained in the early days of Independence, were repositories of organisational memory and possessed skills of which
the Public Service had critical need, it seemed prudent to temporarily re-hire them until succession could be assured.

Re-hiring retired public officers, other former employees of the Public Service who may have moved on for a variety of reasons, and skilled non-nationals had its advantages and disadvantages. While the obvious advantages were the retention/acquisition of knowledge and skill from retirees, and the rehiring of officers who had, earlier, moved on to greener pastures, served to import new technologies into the organisation, recruiters ran the risk of de-motivating younger employees who felt that they were being deprived of the opportunity to rise to positions of prominence.

In time, however, changes in the national and international environments signalled the need for skills other than those resident in retired public officials. The onset of globalisation and its related challenges and pressures forced the Public Services of the Commonwealth Caribbean to begin to explore new technologies and competencies to enhance organisational performance.

While not denying the Service Commissions’ continuing responsibility for recruitment into the permanent ranks of the Public Service, it became necessary for the Government to consider an alternative method of acquiring personnel with the knowledge and/or skills needed by Ministries and Departments to improve the delivery of services to the public. Once areas for such recruitment were identified, the strategy of employing persons on contract was expanded to meet satisfy the growing need.

Consultants/advisors were engaged for a finite period of time on the understanding that they would pass their specialised knowledge and skills to members of the permanent staff of the agency. This would ensure that, at the end of the period of engagement, the \textit{status quo} could be maintained. One approved method was the practice of \textit{counterparting}, where a permanent staff member worked alongside and understudied the person on contract so that there was a complete transfer of knowledge and skill. There were weaknesses in that method, for example:
the counterpart chosen was not always ideal, sometimes lacking the full range of knowledge and skills required, so that some learning was lost or not acquired;

once the person on contract had left the organisation, the counterpart might, himself, leave the organisation before he was able to successfully transfer to another permanent officer the knowledge and skills he had gained;

it was often necessary to withdraw the counterpart from his assigned day-to-day duties during the period that he understudied the counterpart; so it appeared that the organisation was paying two persons to perform the same set of functions;

a consultant/adviser who wished to be viewed as indispensable, or who was reluctant to impart the knowledge he had brought to the organisation could effectively withhold or skew information to limit or prevent the transfer of learning.

The other method of transferring knowledge and skills was through the establishment of a programme of formal training which ensured that several persons in the organisation were prepared for succession, thus providing the organisation with a pool of individuals who possessed the required expertise.

Notwithstanding the five-year stipulation for contract duration, many contracts existed for a seemingly infinite period to the extent that the incumbent’s employment in the agency appeared to be permanent. There was a perception that, using the route of contract employment to engage staff circumvented the lengthy bureaucratic procedures employed by the Service Commissions Department, thus reducing the delay in acquiring staff. In addition, it became possible to offer more attractive remuneration packages than were available to officers in established positions whose standard terms and conditions of employment were non-negotiable. Therefore, several public service agencies opted to engage as many critical staff members as possible as contract employees.
The practice of recruitment, on contract, was subsequently taken out of the hands of the Service Commissions and became the direct responsibility of the Government following a ruling by the Solicitor General that:

“... having regard to the provisions of Section 2 (4) (e) (ii) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and by virtue of the absence of any statutory provision which empowers them to do so, the Service Commissions have no jurisdiction to appoint personnel to hold public office by contract whether for a period more or less than five years. Appointment by contract is the sole responsibility of the State and/or its agents to whom this responsibility is delegated.”

The Public Service Commission advised that it would “no longer consider recommendations for the employment of candidates on contract in pensionable offices” and that, where there was a dearth of suitable candidates who were eligible for permanent appointment to pensionable offices in the Public Service and there was need for such services, “Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments could seek the creation outside the pensionable Establishment of their Ministries/Departments of appropriate temporary positions carrying titles other than those of designated public offices, and approach Cabinet for the employment by contract of the persons selected in the temporary positions”.

Although the Public Service Commission conceded the need for contract employment to exist side by side with “normal” recruitment to established, permanent and pensionable positions in the Public Service, it asserted that, in such a case, “the particular pensionable office should be held vacant pending the availability of persons who are suitably qualified and within the age limit to permit their permanent appointment to such pensionable office”.

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6 Section 2(4)(a) of the Industrial Relations Act provides for the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO), deemed to be “the employer of any worker employed by the Government”, to have some responsibility where persons recruited on contract are concerned.

7 Extract from a Director of Personnel Administration Circular Memorandum: Appointments on contract to offices in the Public Service – Discontinuation of practice. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. April 16, 1992.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.
Where, therefore, a Ministry or Department considered that there was a need for someone of a particular skill/area of expertise not available in the Ministry/Department, and where the relevant Service Commission was unable to recruit someone possessing the skill, the Minister would approach Cabinet for approval to employ, on contract, someone known to possess the required capability.

**The current reality**

Requests for approval to hire persons, on contract, in Ministries and Departments have increased, in the last few years, for several reasons:

- Many of the competencies now required by the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago are also being sought by the local and regional public and private sectors, so that competition for those resources is keen.

- Public Service salaries and terms/conditions of employment for established positions can, in no way, compete with the packages offered by the private sector, so Government would lose opportunities to secure the best talent unless it could compete.

- The recruitment process in the Public Service continues to be slow and ponderous lending itself to inordinate delays; a candidate is, therefore, often forced, by circumstances, to accept a competitor’s offer even while the Public Service machinery grinds through its recruitment processes.

- Increases in projects funded by international donor agencies require the establishment of several temporary project units to manage implementation. These units are routinely staffed by officers in contract positions, since lengthy delays in the acquisition of personnel through the Service Commissions may result in financial and other penalties being applied to the agency.

As part of its public sector reform initiatives in the 1990s, the Public Service began the transition from the practice of Personnel Administration to Human Resource
Management. The Personnel Department and the Service Commissions Department were designated Central Human Resource Management agencies for the Public Service and Human Resource Management Units were established in Ministries and Departments.\(^\text{10}\)

The scarcity of human resource management professionals within the Public Service created a need for the engagement of persons, on contract, to design and set up Units in line agencies. Several of the initial human resource professionals engaged were recruited from the private sector where, it was believed, the practice of human resource management was firmly entrenched.

At about the same time, it became apparent that the necessary skills existed in serving officers, many of whom might not have been eligible for promotion according to the established criteria. Several of them accepted appointments, on contract, in line agencies, thus creating a void in the [mainly] central agencies, such as the Personnel Department, from which they had been recruited. It was envisaged that these public officers, having established the Human Resource Management Units, would revert to substantive offices at the end of the period of engagement. However, since the establishment of the units was staggered, many persons, recruited from both the public and the private sectors to fill the vacant positions, moved from contract appointment to contract appointment at salaries far superior to those that obtained in the mainstream Civil Service.

The practice of acquiring staff through the contract route was becoming popular, possibly because the procedure was so much quicker than that of recruitment through the Service Commissions and, all over the Public Service, small units were being established and positions advertised, many of them bearing job descriptions identical to established public service positions, especially in the clerical, secretarial and junior administrative ranks. Junior officers were accepting contract positions in Units established within their own Ministries and Departments at terms and conditions far superior to the ones they had left behind. This emerging practice ran contrary to the spirit of the arrangement, which made it clear that contract appointments were an option only where the need for the

\(^{10}\) Cabinet Minute No. 600 of 1998 established Human Resource Units in all Ministries and Departments to aid the organisations’ transition from the practice of Personnel Administration to Human Resource Management.
services was urgent and it was not possible to find suitable candidates for permanent appointment to pensionable offices.

**The conditions for contract employment in the Public Service**

It is always to be borne in mind that the creation of any new human resource policy, system or procedure must conform to general and specific principles that have been enunciated by the organisation and must enhance existing practices. The primary motive for the development of the new policy and guidelines to regulate contract employment in the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago was the need to provide, as necessary and on a timely basis, the range of competencies required by Ministries and Departments of Government for their optimal performance and the realisation of their and the country’s development goals.

The employment of persons to serve on contract obtains principally in the following situations:

(i) Where there is a dearth of suitable candidates for permanent appointment to pensionable offices in the public service and there is urgent need for the services attaching to such offices.

(ii) Where special projects or programmes of specified duration (often funded by international agencies) are undertaken by Ministries/Departments and need to be executed and monitored by personnel additional to those on the permanent establishment of the Ministry/Department involved.

(iii) Where a need has been identified for the specialised services of an individual – e.g. an Advisor in a particular area of expertise - and such
need cannot be met by the filling of any existing position on the establishment.\footnote{Information contained in a Note for Cabinet from the Chief Personnel Officer: \textit{Employment, on Contract, of public officers in non-established positions in Ministries and Departments.} Personnel Department, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. September 20, 1993.}

(iv) Where a Minister requires staff personal to himself/herself for the duration of his/her tenure in a Ministry and the established job positions do not lend themselves to the range of responsibilities assigned\footnote{It is understood that, in this instance, the tenure of the person engaged, on contract, is for the duration of that Minister's stay in office.}.

In the cases described above, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments would seek the approval of Cabinet for the creation, outside of the pensionable establishment of their Ministries/Departments, of appropriate temporary positions and for the employment, therein, of suitably qualified persons on a contractual basis.\footnote{Extract from: \textit{Guidelines for the Administration of Contract Employment in the Public Service}, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Personnel Department.}

In that connection, Government approved the following policy to guide the recruitment of persons on contract:

1. The period for which the skills are required must not extend beyond three (3) years.

2. Proposals for the appointment of a person, on contract, should be submitted for the consideration of Cabinet by the relevant Minister justifying the need for such contract appointment, providing the relevant job specification and job description in respect of the specific position, outlining the appropriate recruitment process, and identifying the source of the funds required to effect the relevant contract appointment.
3. The contract positions must not carry job titles of offices on the permanent pensionable establishment of the Public Service.

4. The Chief Personnel Officer should negotiate the terms and conditions of employment with the person being engaged and submit same for the approval of Cabinet.

5. The employment agreement should be between the Permanent Secretary/Head of Department and the person to be employed; and the renewal or extension of such contract agreements must have the prior approval of Cabinet.

In the early stages of the implementation of the policy, persons employed were recruited from the private sector where, it was believed, the requisite skills resided. However, it was later discovered that, in many instances, the unique skills and experience sought in candidates for the temporary positions created to meet the needs identified were found to reside in public officers serving in some other capacity either in the Ministry/Department concerned or elsewhere in the Public Service; but because of the difficulties encountered in moving public officers from one position to another in a different stream through the established recruitment procedures, much talent was lost or bypassed. Consequently, in such cases, it became easier to select these officers for employment, on contract, in temporary, non-established positions that were created for that purpose.

Specific principles were then developed to suit these new circumstances, where a Public Officer was selected for employment, on contract, in a temporary, non-established position:

1. The officer would be released from his substantive position in the Public Service on leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy: the period of
which, under Regulation 9(1) (d) of the Pensions Regulations, is reckonable for pension purposes.\footnote{Regulation 9 (1) (d) of the Pensions Regulations, Chapter 23:52 of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago states, \textit{inter alia}: “For the purpose of computing the amount of an officer’s pension, gratuity or allowance, the following periods shall be taken into account as pensionable service:
(a) \ldots; 
(b) \ldots;
(c) \ldots;
(d) any periods during which he has been absent from duty on leave either on partial pay or without salary, granted on grounds of public policy and during which he has not qualified for pension or gratuity in respect of other public service.”}

2. The approval of the Minister in the Ministry/Department to which the officer is attached should be sought for the officer to be granted leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy from his substantive office, for the period of the contract.\footnote{The facility of leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy allows a public officer to retain his/her substantive office on the establishment for the duration of the contract and have that period of leave count for pension purposes. During the period of the officer’s leave of absence, no other officer can be permanently appointed to the “vacant” substantive position, although one may be appointed to act in the position to allow the agency to achieve its objectives.}

3. The maximum period of leave of absence on grounds of public policy which will be granted to \textbf{permanently-appointed} officers shall be three (3) years.

4. In exceptional circumstances, the period of leave of absence on grounds of public policy will be extended with the concurrence of the Chief Personnel Officer and the Minister of Public Administration and Information.

5. Officers who are at present employed, on contract, and who have been granted leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy for a period in excess of three (3) years, shall be permitted to continue on the period of leave already approved.\footnote{Extract from Personnel Department Circular Memorandum: Variation of the Policy in respect of the grant of Leave of Absence without Pay to public officers to take up employment outside of the Public Service. Personnel Department. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, August 30, 2002. The provisions of this Circular Memorandum have an effective date of August 01, 2002.}
6. Officers who are granted periods of leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy and who resume duty in their substantive positions shall not again be granted such leave within a three-year period.

7. In determining the officer’s remuneration/compensation package, due cognisance shall be given to the duties and responsibilities of the job to be performed and the fact that persons employed on contract:
   i. are not paid Cost of Living Allowance;
   ii. are [often] eligible for less vacation leave per annum than that for which they were eligible in their substantive position.  

8. No contract gratuity is payable on completion of the period of engagement.

9. The officer is required to utilise all annual vacation leave for which he/she is eligible prior to the commencement of the period of leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy.  

10. Officers who hold temporary appointments shall not be eligible for the grant of leave of absence without pay to take up employment outside of the Public Service or leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy to take up employment, on contract, in Ministries/Departments/Statutory Authorities.

11. Officers [holding temporary appointments] who are at present on a period of approved leave of absence without pay to take up employment [on contract], shall be permitted to continue on such period of leave but must, at the expiration of such leave, either return to their positions in the Public Service or resign.

17 An officer in an established public service office would usually be eligible for 28 or 35 days’ vacation leave per annum with the option to accumulate up to a maximum of 60 or 90 working days’ vacation leave. Officers, on contract for the first time, were eligible for 21 working days’ vacation leave with no facility to accumulate leave not taken during the agreed period.


20 Ibid.
12. Public officers who are/have been granted maximum periods of leave of absence without pay on grounds of public policy shall be required to indicate, at least three (3) months prior to the expiration of such periods of leave, whether they intend to return to their substantive positions in the Public Service or to resign/retire from the Service to continue in employment, on contract.

13. Temporary officers referred to above shall be required to exercise their option in the manner described at Paragraph 13 above.21

The Ministry/Department that wishes to employ a person who is not a public officer, must:

- justify the need for the contract appointment and seek the approval of Cabinet for the establishment of the contract position;
- provide the relevant job description and specification in respect of the particular position;
- identify the source of funds for effecting the relevant contract appointment;
- ensure that the contract position does not carry the job title of an office on the permanent establishment;
- advertise the position and interview candidates;
- submit to the Chief Personnel Officer recommendations for the terms and conditions that would govern the employment of the person selected;
- offer the agreed terms and conditions to the person selected and, when they have been accepted, submit the package for the approval of the Minister with responsibility for that Ministry/Department.

21 Ibid.
The terms and conditions offered are, *inter alia*, in respect of the provision of:

- salary
- leave:
  - vacation leave
  - sick leave
  - injury leave
  - maternity leave (where applicable)
  - special leave\(^{22}\)
- a transport allowance and, where applicable, a low-interest loan to facilitate the purchase and insurance of a motor vehicle as well as a loan to facilitate repairs to said motor vehicle
- the payment of a contract gratuity at the end of the period of engagement
- termination on grounds of ill-health
- dismissal as a result of breaches of the provisions of the contract.

As is the case with all policies, there are both advantages and disadvantages to opting to employ persons on contract. Some major advantages are that:

- Ministries have greater flexibility in assessing candidates. In the current system of appointment to permanent, pensionable offices, a Permanent Secretary/Head of Department has limited say in the selection of an officer placed in the Ministry/Department by the Service Commissions. Where it is possible to create a detailed job description specific to the needs of the Ministry and the job function, there is greater chance of matching person to job.

- Heads of Ministries/Departments are better able to conduct an analysis of the system and determine what best suits their needs.

\(^{22}\) Special Leave is a facility granted to a public officer or a person engaged on contract in instances where the person may be required for duty as a member of a national sport or cultural team or as a representative of the State.
There is greater possibility of satisfying the immediate needs of a Ministry. Where serving officers possess the skills and qualifications for the available position but, owing to the vagaries of the traditional Service Commissions’ recruitment practices, are unable to be considered for appointment/promotion, the option of contract employment serves the needs of both the officer and the Ministry/Department.

The possibility of becoming eligible for contract employment and receiving attractive terms and conditions of employment is an incentive for officers in established positions to strive to upgrade their qualifications and skills, and build a portfolio that makes them more valuable to the organisation and, at the same time, makes the organisation more competitive and adaptable to the needs of its clientele.

On the minus side, there is the risk of establishing a parallel Public Service with some positions in the same agency being filled by the Service Commissions and others by the Ministry itself through contract employment.

One cannot gainsay the fact that the proliferation of contract positions in Ministries and Departments creates dissatisfaction among those serving officers who are either not sufficiently qualified to compete or are leery of the possible risks of venturing into contract employment. At the same time, the strategy allows the organisation to creatively use those officers who possess the critical competencies and reward them accordingly.

**Conclusion**

The introduction of the concepts and practice of Public Sector Management/New Public Administration, coupled with innovations in communication technology, has generated a dimension of flexible work arrangements that will ultimately change the way public service business is conducted in the next decade. We are likely to see a greater increase in the out-sourcing of traditional public service functions to the extent that there may be less need for the central Public Service to recruit large numbers of permanent staff. The
competencies needed for employment will also change as routine functions, such as accounting and personnel, join the list of jobs that can be out-sourced at a lower cost to the organisation.

Already, there is the recognition that the qualified contemporary job seeker has little interest in “cradle-to-grave” job security. The myriad of possibilities offered by the financial services sector to provide a healthy post-retirement income has negated the need to stay in a job long enough to qualify for a substantial pension. Young professionals are willing to sell their services to the highest bidder, so that the question of loyalty to a specific employer is no longer a major negotiable issue. In such a scenario, contract employment may tip the scales as the more effective recruitment option for the Public Services of Trinidad and Tobago and the Anglophone Commonwealth Caribbean.

There is no guarantee that this will be the best solution to problems created by competition for available talent. Issues of equity will also be paramount. It will be necessary to take into consideration the social consequences of changing recruitment strategies or of maintaining parallel strategies.

It is especially important, at this time, for Trinidad and Tobago to join the forward movement of Public Services that are involved in innovating recruitment processes as the country positions itself to achieve its vision of developed country status by the year 2020.

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