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# SMALL CHANGE

## Financial houses reap the benefits of change without reforming

### MoneyTalks

## SAM MUOFHE

SUCCESSFUL businesses rely on quality leadership. Those in financial services become winners by investing heavily in recruiting and retaining experienced managers.

But these giants lack meaningful reform programmes to move with the times and win the confidence of the black masses.

That is why I was not surprised when speculation about Dikgang Moseneke, the head of the Nail group, was finally buried before Sanlam released its financial results.

It had been rumoured that Moseneke would take over from Marius Daling, Sanlam's chairman.

But contrary to expectations, Leon Vermaak, the

managing director of Sanlam's short-term insurance arm Santam, got the nod ahead of Moseneke.

I think Carl Niehaus, the chairman of the Home For All initiative, would have been happier had Sanlam appointed Moseneke.

This would have added weight to his call for whites to apologise publicly about having benefited from the former regime.

Sanlam missed the boat.

Many big, white corporations don't seem ready to appoint qualified black people to meaningful positions.

I would not have been happy if Moseneke had been appointed to head Sanlam at this stage because of his involvement in the process of

unbundling, reshaping and restructuring Nail. He will, I hope, become the chief executive of Metropolitan Financial Services after this process. Nail is its holding company.

I believe that once Moseneke becomes actively

involved in the day-to-day running of Metropolitan, blacks will move into senior managerial positions there.

Black legal, financial and advertising companies will also stand a better chance of obtaining briefs from the group.

Having said that, I doubt if Moseneke is the only black person who could step into Daling's shoes.

Cyril Ramaphosa, who was involved with Nail in the past, is eminently qualified for the job.

Besides, he is already the chairman of Sasria, the government's short-term insurer.

Even Vermaak cannot be said to be the best man for the job. Yet he was affirmed by the group.

He might be qualified, but he has acknowledged that he knows little about the life-assurance business. He is, however, prepared to learn the ropes – and he enjoys strong support.

Any black person in the

mould of Ramaphosa would also learn quickly, particularly with backing from Daling.

It appears that the former chief executive will remain executive chairman purely to help Vermaak.

Big business, it seems, refuses to be transformed.

It is excited that the country is stable politically, but it is not too keen on the social engineering programmes that will help to bring black people aboard the economic train.

Yet the big insurance companies that released their financial reports by December 2000 posted healthy results – thanks to business from high-income blacks.