

PR DIGEST

A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF KENYA



IVAN OMONDI:
DISABILITY IS AN OPEN
SUBSCRIPTION CLUB

DATA & TECHNOLOGY

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Tomorrow is not guaranteed, you get what you work for

We are bound by people and places we live in. We also build connections with our colleagues, neighbors, peers, fellow parents, classmates and surround ourselves with a community of strangers who become family. The World Health Organization indicates that 1.9 million people are depressed in Kenya. In terms of ranking, Kenya is 4th in Africa and 9th globally. An even more worrying trend is the fact that five in every six Kenyans who suffer from mental illness don't receive treatment. This then begs the question: what are we doing in our spaces to provide a safe space for people around us?

Institutions such as churches, hospitals, schools and other organizations are bound to make mental health issues an integral agenda in their spaces. They have to preach about it, talk openly about it, be that listening ear, be someone's shoulder to lean on. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the mental health gaps we have as a society. Let us work to reiterate government's efforts in fighting this war.

With this edition, PR Digest magazine is trying something new: telling unique stories with a single focus of enriching the content and your worldview.

We handpicked articles that tell inspiring stories. So in these pages you'll see two stories of phenomenal men whose stories are as educative as they are inspiring. You can be in excellent state of health, tomorrow, you are not. You could be employed today, tomorrow, you are out of a job yet you still need to meet your obligations.

Ivan Omondi shares on his journey from the land of light to darkness and how he had to acquire a new personality to survive. Read his story on denial and acceptance. We also feature Dr Edward Odundo, the former CEO of Retirement Benefits Authority, on life as a CEO and after retirement. These two are a must-read. Don't also forget to read on the rich stories on different topics from our contributing authors.

Thank you for your continued support to the publication, we are truly indebted to you. I encourage you to continue sharing feedback on our magazine via editor@prsk.co.ke.

Be kind. Be someone's little light because sometimes, that is all they need.

Maureen Koech, MPRSK
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KASNEB to administer exams for PR Professionals in new partnership with PRSK



The Public Relations Society of Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examinations Board. (KASNEB) that will see the exam body administer exams for the PR professionals.

The certification course, postgraduate diploma (PGD) in public relations course, was developed by the technical working group that was chaired by renowned communications scholar Prof Murej Mak'Ochieng. The team phased out the certification program with the pilot course being the PGD in PR, intended to be rolled out in the last quarter of this year.

This course sets the wheels in motion for plans to roll out multi-level training examination and

certification programme that will facilitate continual enhancement of skills as envisaged in the Public Relations and Communication Management Bill, and development of world class institutions and practitioners.

“We are glad KASNEB has come on board to walk this journey with us. This partnership couldn't come at a better time,” PRSK President Dr Marube said. Implementation of this course will contribute significantly to the professionalization of the practice of Public Relations in Kenya by ensuring professional integrity of individuals and institutions in the profession in Kenya.

“KASNEB is delighted to partner in this new venture that will greatly improve the quality of PR professionals in our country. We are excited for this new venture,” KASNEB CEO Dr Letting said.

The working group is also working on finalizing the curriculum, syllabus and structure for the proposed Advanced National Diploma in PR by the end of the year.

Global PR Body appoints its first ever CEO



The Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management has appointed Justin Green, its current President, as its first ever Chief Executive Officer. The current President will take on the additional role of chief executive with a focus on delivering the programme of activity, ensuring the flow of income and managing stakeholder relationships.

Justin Green joined Global Alliance in 2017 as a board member and was elected President in 2019 and re-elected as President in 2021 for another two-year term. Global Alliance has doubled its membership numbers, enhanced membership benefits, established a global Accreditation for academic and training organization and opened five offices in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America and Latin America, under his leadership.

His global leadership was recognised in 2019 by the Public Relations Society of America with their Lifetime Achievement Award in International Public Relations and by the European Institute of Communications with their Lifetime Achievement for Excellence in Public Relations Award. In January 2021, the Public Relations Society of Kenya awarded Justin their World Excellence in Public Relations Award.

He is CEO of Dublin, Ireland-based Wide Awake Communications which he founded in 2011 and a director of public relations agencies in both Kenya and Nigeria. He will be working with Mateus Furlanetto, the current GA Chief Administrative Officer.

PR Bill now a reality

The National Assembly Committee on Communication, Innovation and Innovation held engagements with the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) Council on the draft Institute of Public Relations and Communication Management Bill. The Committee, Chaired by Elgeyo Marakwet Member of Parliament Hon William Kisang, agreed to adopt the Bill as a committee bill and shared comments on the improvements of the document.

The Council made its presentation to the 19-member committee and received comments and feedback as well. "Our job as legislators is to ensure we pass laws that benefit our citizenry," Hon Kisang said. He reiterated on the importance of ensuring professions are protected under the law to shield them from infiltration by quacks. "We have lawyers, teachers, accountants in this committee and they will agree with me that having legal backing will bring sanity and order to the PR Profession," he added.

Hon Anthony Githiaka, Mukurweini MP echoed the sentiments of the Committee Chair saying that this Bill is a timely idea that comes when the country is readying itself for the General Elections in 2022. "The danger of having PR practitioners who are neither licensed nor qualified owning the agenda of the election means we will end up with elections that are murky and driven by propaganda," he said.

The Committee has scheduled engagements with the Council to finalise on improvements on the draft Bill before it is included as a house business in Parliament.

"Kenya will be the 1st country in East and Southern Africa to have a PR Law in place, showing we are a trailblazer in our field," PRSK President Dr Marube said. The only other countries in Africa that have a law in place are Ghana and Nigeria.

The PRSK Governance, Integrity and Compliance Committee, where the Bill is domiciled, members were present during the engagement.



Former PRSK VP appointed CEO of KAMP

The immediate former Vice President of the PRSK Council, Dr Mbugua Njoroge, has been appointed CEO of Kenya Association of Music Producers (KAMP) for a period of three years, a statement from the organisation stated.

Dr Njoroge, a renowned champion of intellectual property rights, was the Head of Corporate Communications at the Institute of Certified Public Accountants (ICPAK) before his appointment.

His over 20 years' experience in media and entertainment law, corporate communication and intellectual property sets him apart and readies him for his position as head of KAMP, where he will be in charge of administering Copyright Rights on behalf of members and promoting the interests of producers of sound recordings through collection of license fees and distribution of royalties in accordance with the Constitution and Copyright Act of 2001.

This appointment comes at a time when communication professionals are encouraged to assert their positions in organizations and not shy away from applying for top positions. Dr Njoroge now expands the circle of PR professionals who have been appointed CEO in the last two years.

He is also a Board member for the Media Council of Kenya

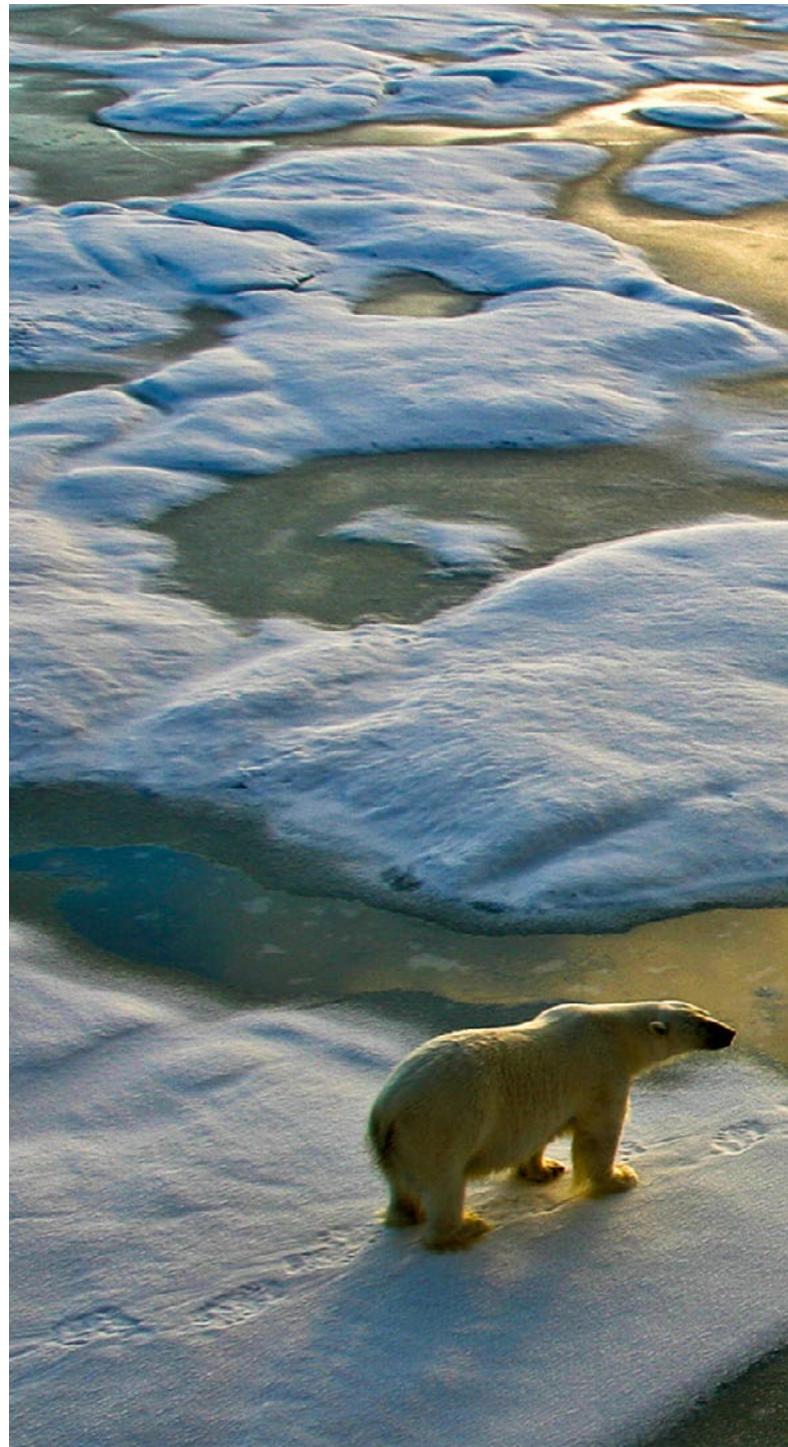
Big data for climate change adaptation

By Nancy Marangu

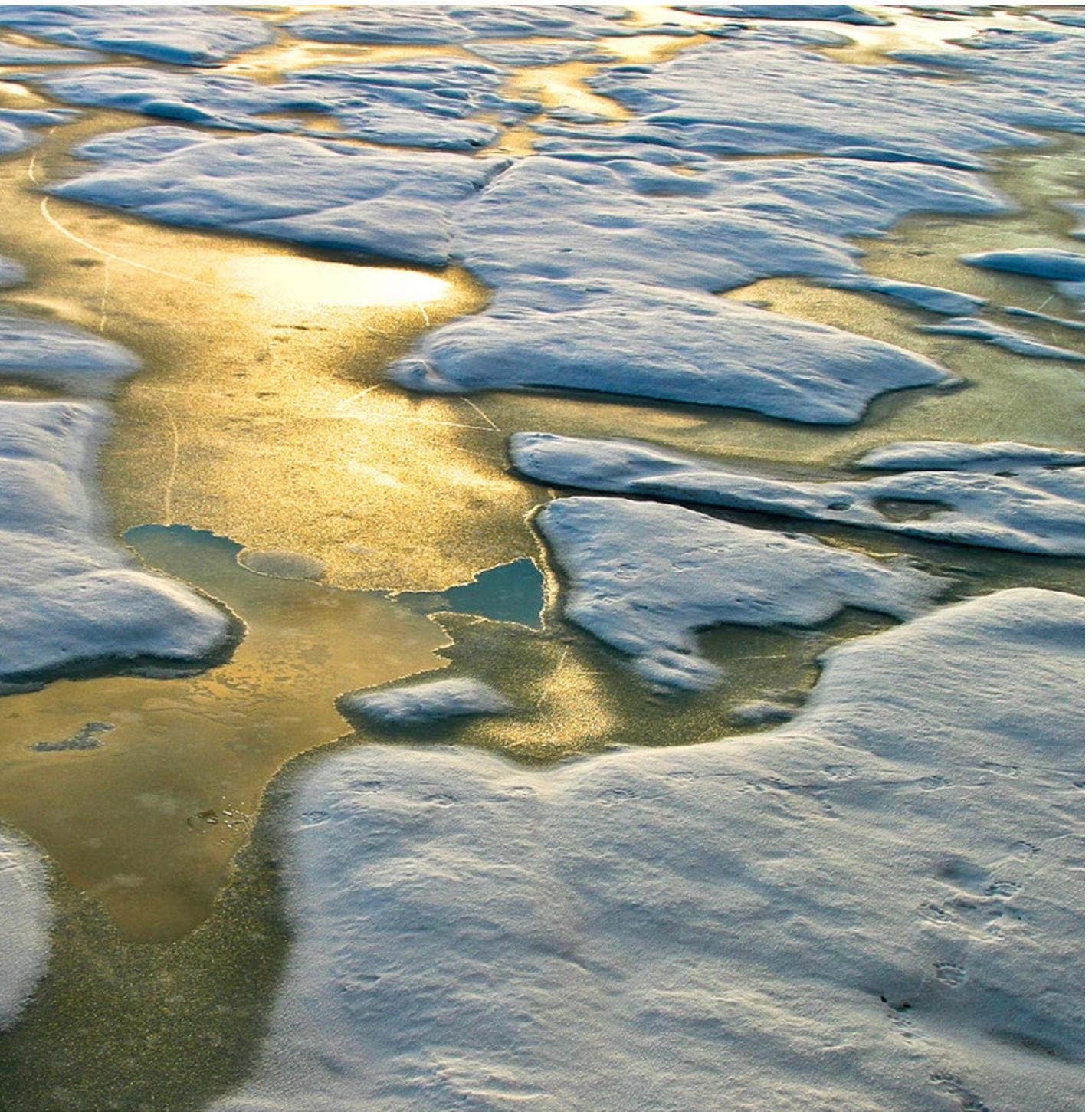
The nature of human-environment interactions in a changing climate necessitates the use of climate science to comprehend the functioning of the climate system in the absence of longitudinal data and climate information gaps. Big data analytics can fill the visible gaps due to its capacity to use automatically collected large datasets to disseminate information. Whereas anonymized records of cell-phone use (known as call detail records), for example, allow large-scale tracing of people's movements and can be used to examine the dynamics of human mobility in a changing climate.

Consequently, big data can also be used to create georeferenced datasets on factors affecting vulnerability, such as population, habitation characteristics, economic status, location of sensitive infrastructure and trends for environmental conditions, which are often lacking, outdated, patchy, or unreliable, especially in rural households. Call detail records and geospatial big data, such as high-resolution remote-sensing imagery, allow for dynamic population mapping that can be used to assess risks, characterize habitation patterns of high-risk regions, and track trends over time. What's more, natural language processing techniques can be used to mine and analyze large volumes of text on how climate change discourse is evolving on social media to catalog "bottom-up" perspectives on various components of vulnerability.

Accordingly, surveillance and the provision of early warnings is an important component of enhancing the capacity to respond to climate change. Many big data applications have been pioneered for use in early detection, whereby passively collected data from the use of digital services have been variously used: from detecting influenza epidemics based on flu-related queries coming into search engines, to the use of Twitter posts to identify areas affected by floods and earthquakes. Collected digital data has the potential to



enhance the monitoring of climate-related threats and vulnerabilities, and can provide real-time awareness and feedback to decision makers and emergency services. Hazard warning systems, for example, could incorporate social media data to trigger emergency response measures such as heat or flood alert systems. Personal devices equipped with sensors could allow the monitoring of human movement before, during, and after a hazard event to aid with disaster response; tweets can be geotagged so disaster management services can map impacted areas in real-time to target efforts and the internet can be scanned for recently uploaded photos of affected areas. Search queries could be analyzed to monitor health-seeking behavior to detect outbreaks of climate-related diseases and changes in the magnitude and frequency of climatic risks could be detected through time-series analysis of multiscale data, with the potential to detect leading indicators of abrupt, nonlinear change.



Importantly, big data whether historical or real-time can also help to tackle the problem of greenhouse gas emissions by locating harmful emissions or identifying pressure points along the supply chain. This transformative change in data capabilities is an example of what the World Economic Forum refers to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Despite its multidimensional capacity, how to best unlock the potential of big data for resilience remains an important and yet largely unaddressed question especially in rural households. Technical barriers include access to data crumbs, local coordination for climate data sharing, data reliability and representativeness. Furthermore, big data introduces new ethical and political risks that warrant careful consideration in its use.

A key message is that big data ought to involve its fourth function as an ecosystem of several actors. Approaches should focus not only on ingesting data from people, but more importantly on getting data to the people.

Conclusively, big data is no panacea, but if carefully used, it provides an enormous and untapped opportunity to diversify a deeper understanding of climate adaptation and informed decision-making. Hence, building a resilient community involves fostering accountability, empowerment, and communication in all stakeholders and integrating social vulnerability at each level. In order to adjust to the changing needs of those most vulnerable in an ever-changing environment, we must put data into their hands, making the data system a more participatory process which empowers individuals to make the leap from data to action.

Lets think about the voice of citizens in dispensation

By Denis Okore

Promulgation of the 2010 Constitution opened a new frontier in terms of access to information which, traditionally, has historically been a preserve of the state and a few individuals who were closer to power. These individuals used this privilege to expand their power base and access resources based on the competitive edge brought about by the privileged access. The citizenry was predisposed to rely on sources that were either filtered or skewed to a sole acceptable narrative.

The Constitution now allowed for every citizen the right of access to information held by the State and the information held by another person and required for the exercise or protection of any right or fundamental freedom.

Bill of rights

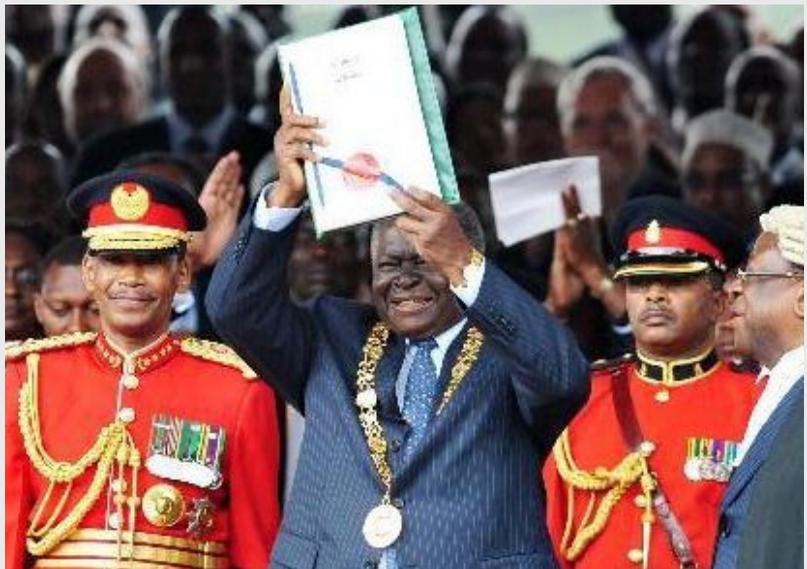
The law now gives power to every person who has the right to the correction or deletion of untrue or misleading information that affects the person and further compels the State to publish and publicize any important information affecting the nation. Through article 35 of the 2010 Constitution, this changed for good. Perhaps, the most significant event that was promoted and anchored by this piece of legislation is that it compelled Kenya to align itself to the global practice of adopting open government policies. The 2009 census results were among the first datasets to be released to the public under this initiative. Thereafter, there was an increase in the datasets released for public consumption through this web portal. This impacted the engagement with the government and the quest to demand more accountability because of the information and inferences made from the now publicly available information.

Opportunities available in the public sector in form of business and jobs were now accessible together with related

processes and procedures. But there was a problem. There was still some level of information that the government still held on the pretext of safeguarding state security. While there are legitimate and legal grounds to do so, this provision of the law has been abused to accommodate the secrecy which has in a way incubated practices such as corruption. As the government has continued implementing this initiative there has been a question of the effectiveness of the data therein in driving the outcomes of development from a point of access. Ideally, this information has only available to the members of the public who had a robust knowledge to utilize technology to engage with the information.

Missing information

Other avenues of access were not initially integrated and this has contributed to a large part of the population missing out on the information. This means that the disparities in accessing and utilization of this data have further compounded the inequalities that this portal was to solve by generating evidence of problems that policy-makers can prioritize to solve. Interestingly, this comes in the wake of the governments' agenda to implement a biometric system through the huduma number those inefficiencies also affected the impact of the open data initiative from the perspective of access. This situation persists even when there is a concerted quest towards democratization of data to increase more access and



also contribute to the outcomes of the Sustainable development Goals (SDG) while reducing or eliminating Human Rights issues related to this data.

As data more, reliable, quality, and accurate data are demanded in all spheres of our lives, we need to think about the voice of the citizens in the data. Citizens will engage and provide data for aspects about their lives that they think will be impacted most. In this context, the issue of privacy is a key issue to watch as it may be another recipe for human rights infringement.

Dennis Okore, Communications and Public Policy Consultant at Sustainable Africa Innovators.

Brands without data are working blindly and will soon perish

By Nyadeje Owira

Pigeons used to deliver messages: you could wait two days to one week to receive a response of your message, or if it was urgent, you were charged for the number of words you sent through a telegram. Relationships have been broken for replying a minute late to a text. As an "entitled millennial" I cannot fathom living under those conditions. We are thankful for technology.

I recently saw a post on a newspaper dated 1963 with a headline, "You'll be able to carry phone in pocket in future" They found it mind boggling that one day there could be a visual image phone. Ten years later the first mobile was invented in 1973. Communication is definitely linked to technology and data. The invention of the internet was the start of a new era. It has been the foundation for exponential growth in the industry. It brought about the birth of the giant we call social media. Social media has changed how we communicate, the time it takes to communicate and the reach. Brands have put in place social media strategies and they have to always be constantly "on" and to come up with innovative ways to keep up with the evolving nature of the space to reach their target audience. The wider reach social media has offered is a phenomenon. We can be in different continents and in different time zones and still communicate in a second.

Expand business

A wider reach means brands have an opportunity to expand their business. Social media has to some level, levelled the plain field in that the work you put out there for your brand can compete with bigger brands as compared to before; you have a chance at exposure.

We can't ignore the impact of technology on our industry during this pandemic, especially with events. Events is a huge part of the communication and it was immensely affected by the pandemic. The industry had to adjust and technology



once again took the stage. People held successful events virtually from different parts of the world despite the pandemic. Apart from events, people worked remotely and many companies considered changing the work structure to remote because of the spaces technology created. To communicate effectively, brands need to know what works and what doesn't, brands need data. Data tell stories; they provide insights on your clients. A brand can be able to measure its efforts and make decisions on the best strategies for their brand's strengths and weaknesses. Data is measured by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which may vary with different brands/ industries. Some of the KPIs may include, number of sales, shares, likes and engagement. Brands should define their goals and strategies to achieve them. Clear goals determine the type of data a brand will use to measure their efforts.

Medieval times

Technology has also changed how we collect data. Data in the past used to be sales, coupon redemption and response to direct mail; the internet has changed the industry, giving brands access to massive data. The data is also easily stored and accessible, brands can save up finances on future communication, that they would have paid to send. Technology is evolving and that means how we communicate will evolve. Brands/ Communicators have to stay up to date on the emerging technologies to be able to reach their target audience. Data plays a huge part in telling brands changes they need to make or improve on. Brands need data and without data, they are working blindly, they have no idea of how their business is running and that could lead them in a ditch.



Ivan Omondi: The father of two who wears his scars, he calls them tattoos, with pride. A stop over for a few house supplies from a local shop that was a few metres from his house led to an attack that left him with ‘tattoos’, a term he used to refer to his permanent visual impairment

Acid attack left me permanently blind but looking back, I am much better now than I was then, says a man who lost his eyesight 7 years ago!

By Maureen Koech

What would you do if you lost your eyesight today? I'll do you one better. Close your eyes and try to get yourself a glass of water from your kitchen. You knocked over some things as you tried to, I'm sure, yet this is a familiar territory to you. Such a thought had never crossed your mind, had it? Well, neither did it 40-year-old Ivan Omondi Odera, whose journey as a visually impaired person began seven years ago, on September 11th 2014, just a day before his birthday.

It was a normal Thursday evening after work, in Kisumu. His friend offered to graciously drop him home since he had car trouble. He decided to buy a few house supplies from a local shop that was a few metres from his house, because well, a man never goes back home empty handed. As he was about to get to his gate, he was unfortunately attacked by a group of four men who roughed him up and poured sulfuric acid onto his eyes in a bid to disarm him, damaging his cornea in the process.

He didn't notice this right away, as all he felt was a burning sensation on his eyes before he crawled to his gate to ask for help. Unknown to him, this was the beginning of life without light. One look at him, one wouldn't think he is visually impaired save for the white cane that he uses to move around. So eloquent, perfect mastery of the queen's language, smartly dressed in a grey-stripped crisp suit with a white shirt and, the most charming of smiles. You know what they say, you can conquer the world with just a smile.

Denial

As is with most of us, we tend to spiral into denial when we get bad news. This was no different for Ivan. The doctors told him he had a 5% chance of ever seeing again. He couldn't believe it. He was traumatised. Worse still, was how the news was delivered to him, with no empathy at all. "Doctors need

to learn how to deliver news, we are not just patients but humans who have feelings," he recounts deep in thought. On getting the news from the doctor, he embarked on a sight recovery mission and ended up spending over 2.5 million shillings, his efforts bearing no fruit. Every doctor he visited told him the same thing, he had sadly lost his sight. "In hindsight, I should have trusted the process and began the rehabilitation process at once, but these are lessons to pick from my journey," he says. Depressed, he went back home. By this time, his businesses were in shambles because all his efforts, time and money were dedicated on visiting doctors with the hope of restoring his sight.

He had a young family at the time, a 2-year-old daughter and had been barely married for two years. He ended up staying at home for two years, not knowing where to begin from. Until one day he heard an advert for a walk organized by the Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB), his first encounter with such a society. And his path to rehabilitation began.

'Born again'

As the Bible says, I once was blind but now I can see. For Ivan, it's the opposite. What was normal to him, ceased to be. He had to start everything from scratch. Three months after listening to the advert, he finally felt ready and decided to visit KSB to begin his rehabilitation journey. He was ready to work on Ivan 2.0

Yet when he went there, he was in the company of 12. He couldn't speak for himself. Silent through the deliberations. "My confidence was stripped when I lost my sight, I didn't know how to speak for myself," he quips. The Society officials, however, insisted that he speak for himself, but he wasn't in the right frame of mind to. It was during this initial meeting that he met a blind man walking without any assistance.

He was in awe and knew that he had to quickly shift his attitude and take the leap of faith.

Learning, relearning and unlearning

Human learning begins at birth and slowly transitions depending on stimuli and environment. Ivan had to erase what he had learnt for 34 years and begin from scratch. Attitude change was one of the things he had to work on. But that wasn't the only thing, he had to learn the alphabet from the beginning, learn to read and write at 36 years. "I had to be taught how to be person again. I had to look at life at a different lens," he says. The transition wasn't easy. He had to learn how to groom himself, fix a cup of tea, move around the house without any help, iron his clothes. Back to basics. This helped him remove the dependency that comes with visual impairment.

To ensure he never makes messes, his obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) heightened. He is very particular about his environment and ensures that people don't give him the 'blind person' pass. But it doesn't stop there. He had to learn the braille system and using voice-enabled technology to work, make phone calls and text.

Positive attitude

When I bumped into him a few days after this interview, he sent me into pearls of laughter when he said: "Maureen, I wish I became visually impaired many years ago. The things I have been able to achieve due to 'my born again' state are immense. I am able to do what normal people do and can do much more. My only weapon is my mouth. I do businesses and win tenders and get prompt payments."

Expensive venture

Assisted devices for the visually impaired are quite costly, which makes it difficult for the average blind person to make do. "Disability is an extremely expensive venture," he says. A white cane, that is supposed to help with mobility, costs Ksh 2000, which is quite costly to *Wanjiku*.

The normal pens that we use to write don't cost anything more than Ksh 50 yet to the visually impaired, the braille, which is their pen, costs a whopping Ksh 80,000.

As he had lost his source of income and savings trying to restore his sight, he had to somehow finance his rehabilitation process, which costed him Ksh 200,000. You can easily walk from Upper Hill to town but a visually impaired person can't hence an extra cost for cabs or motorbikes. "I live in Kitengela and to get to the bus stop, I have to use a motorbike which is an extra cost," he says.

Counselling

There's a lot of stigma associated with disability. Most of the differently-abled persons get discriminated because of their physical conditions and often judged by a different lens. When he lost his sight, all the attention shifted to him and no one thought about his wife and daughter. His wife never complained but she was bottling the motions which isn't healthy. While his life was changing, theirs was too. "I have come to appreciate the value of therapy because we go through a lot both as individuals and as a unit as a result of disability and, it is important to talk about these experiences to a professional," he says pensively.

"I was once denied entry to a hotel because they thought I was going to beg patrons," he says. He was in a company of five, two of whom were visually impaired. Absurd, isn't it? While the hotel apologised after this ordeal, this exposes the kind of society we live in. There is a lot happening in our backyards to persons who are physically challenged that we are either not exposed to or are ignorant about. Some even prefer to talk to his guide instead of addressing him directly, yet he isn't deaf. This punctures his ego as he reckons this wouldn't have otherwise happened. It is no wonder that visually impaired persons are considered hostile. We come to learn that this is a defence mechanism and a means of protecting themselves.



Diversity and inclusion

The Persons with Disability Act Kenya (2103) provides for the rights and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities; to achieve equalization of opportunities for them. However, the reality on the ground is different. While most job adverts go with the disclaimer 'Organization X is an equal opportunity employer, persons with disability are encouraged to apply', this is more often than not done for optics and audit purposes. The spirit and letter intended in the Act is far from being realized.

"Institutions need to understand that we have the necessary skill set to perform just like sighted people do. We are able to match one-for-one," he reiterates. He tells us of cases where institutions have hired visually impaired persons as interns and ensure they retain them as such in case auditors come knocking.

Getting conned

He has gotten conned so many times because of his situation. Before he got used to the assisted technology, he would allow people he thought he could trust to help him do certain things. This meant exposing his passwords and even bank pins and he ended up losing a lot of money as a result.

"I once gave someone Ksh 200 and he said it was Ksh 50," he quips. He had no way of knowing whether this was true. It is such people that erode the trust that they have in humanity, as they get taken advantage of at their most vulnerable.

When the President was launching the new currency, it was believed that this would then enable the blind be able to tell bills. However, according to him, they were not involved in the process from the onset.

Advocacy

Ivan considers himself a true advocate for the blind. He prides himself to being '*mtetezi wa vipofu*'. He believes in changing their world, gradually. "We have so many great policies that could change the world for the blind that are gathering dust," he says. Access to information on the stopgap measures that the government has put in place to make life bearable for the visually impaired is rather wanting. He believes there is much more to be done and he is going to use his platform to educate the public about life with the white cane.

If you have a child or know someone who is visually impaired and is yet to be rehabilitated, please link them with the Kenya Society for the Blind via www.ksb.co.ke



Hiking: Stress relief as ordered by the doctor

By Johnson Duro, MPRSK

We are never told in school how the Public Relations field is a thankless and somewhat stressful field. Especially in situations when one does not have much control over factors at play like a reporter touching on a sensitive subject during a live press event or when you find out that your story was shot down minutes before a client status call.

Pr has always been demanding but recent surveys indicate that PR is becoming even more stressful. A survey by CareerCast rated public relations executive as the eighth most stressful job on its 2019 Most Stressful Jobs list, behind life-or-death occupations like the defense forces (soldiers and the police), firefighters and airline pilots.

This stress, if allowed to percolate, has the potential to adversely affect one's ability to work efficiently and this year's Mental Health Awareness Month was focused on raising awareness on how to cope with stress.

Physical exercise has long been a highly recommended means of stress relief and this has seen young professionals from all fields flock to gyms in a bid to manage their mental health. However, this has been greatly affected over the past year by the restrictions on movement occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We were forced to think outside the box. For me, "outside the box" turned out to mean literally outside, in nature, hiking through a dense forest with a group of people I had just met. A growing body of literature also shows that visiting green spaces and being exposed to natural environments can reduce stress.

One way that hiking contributes positively to an individual's mental health is in how they view their body's capabilities in a more positive way. The ability to walk for long distances is a mark of resilience. It quickly dawns on a new hiker how



much commitment is needed for such adventures to be successful. On a typical day, hikers wake up quite early in the morning as they are expected to assemble between 5:00 AM and 6:00 AM to prepare for their journey. Some companies offer private transport, while others rely on using public transport to access their hike locations.

A typical 12-to-15-kilometre hike takes around four hours including breaks. There are no promises that all will go smoothly as well. Hiking is an extreme sport. There are days when one is faced by extreme heat, and others extreme cold. I did my first hike in a place called Gatamaiyu which is in Kiambu County. Githunguri was quite cold and foggy, and our vision was affected. But this experience made everything more authentic.

Hiking Gear

There are three essential pieces of equipment that are a must-have for a hiker: a pair of hiking boots, a hiking

backpack and a hydration bladder. These three are essential because a good pair of hiking boots enables one to walk comfortably on the rough terrain. A hiking backpack also helps manage the excess weight of the snacks and water. A proper hiking backpack should have waist straps which are designed to handle the weight of the backpack when one is hiking so as to protect their shoulders. A hydration bladder on the other hand provides the most essential resource that one needs as they hike, water. Dehydration is always a risk when one is out on the trail especially on a sunny day. A proper hydration bladder would help to keep one properly hydrated as the hike along the trail.

Cost to hike

There is no standard cost for one to get started hiking. All this is dependent on variables such as the price being charged for the hike, the cost of one's gear and extra fees such as transportation and food. The cost of one's gear is determined by where they go to buy it. They can either

choose to buy their gear second hand or to visit specialist stores which may charge more for gear.

Keep in mind

Key things to consider include the fact that hiking requires one to be physically fit to a certain extent so that they can be able to handle the long walks. Anybody aspiring to be a hiker also requires high levels of mental resilience because they will not just be walking from point A to point B.

They will experience differences in terrain, temperature and humidity levels in the air thus the need to be primed to experience all these different aspects of the hike. Hikes are not easy regardless of the distance. They are worth the physical exertion however. The benefit far outweighs the cost. I have visited Naivasha, Kiambu, Kajiado, Nyandarua and Nyeri counties as part of my hikes and I look forward to traversing the continent.



Cyber security risks linked to remote working



By Verck Kinoti

When the third wave of COVID-19 hit the country and the globe at large early this year, President Uhuru Kenyatta announced new measures to try and flatten the curve. Some of the corporates in Kenya resulted to remote working also dubbed as 'working from home' to observe social distancing and minimize the number of employees going to work. This work-from-home pivot makes some employers and especially the Information Technology support department nervous.

IT professionals in the country have reason to be concerned. There has been increased incidences in cybercrimes arising from the exposed brought about by the work-from-home movement. With organizations and businesses rapidly

deploying remote systems and networks to support staff working from home, criminals are also taking advantage of increased security vulnerabilities to steal data, generate profits and cause disruption.

With the emerging threats, corporates should explore a permanent to protect the employees who are working remotely and ensure that the organizations data is not compromised Robust, permanent defenses are required to tackle the array of threats they face. Here are some of the best cyber security policies companies may consider adopting: -

- Integrate security within business processes, an organization needs to have a robust information security program that maps to its business drivers, legal and regulatory requirements, and threat

profile.

- A security governance which is a set of responsibilities and practices exercised by the board and executive management with the goal of providing strategic direction and ensuring that objectives are achieved, managing risks appropriately and verifying that the enterprise's resources are used responsibly.

- Information security governance regarding personnel and business processes that ensures security is carried out to meet an organization's specific needs.

Corporates should always note is that security is not a onetime action but a development and improvement process.



IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER

THE LATE MR JOHN MWADIMEH WA'KESHO

We have learnt of the untimely passing on of our dear professional colleague, friend and member of the Public Relations Society of Kenya, Mr. John Mwadimeh Wa'kesho, known to many of us as *Ras Dimes*. The cruel hand of death has robbed the PR fraternity of a dedicated mentor and astute professional who was ever ready to offer guidance to many budding professionals and established ones alike.

An ever bubbly and charismatic individual, *Ras Dimes* was one of the PR professionals who didn't allow age to limit him. A creative par excellence, he enrolled himself to design school and became one of the best graphic designers of his time, launched his music career and was also working on a movie. He was the founding editor of *The Aviator Magazine*, a production that was close to his heart. He was free- spirited and didn't allow anything to bring him down.

His exuberant and warm nature endeared him to many in the profession. He was always the life of the meeting which was evident in the many PRSK and partner events he attended, the last one being the PRSK Annual Summit that was held in Pridelnn Paradise Beach Resort in Mombasa. He never shied from speaking his mind and sharing feedback. He opened his doors at the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority PR department to interns we sent his way. He was accommodative and ready to teach and he always introduced himself as *Tiche* to his interns, slang for teacher.

Thank you for sharing your life with us dear friend. You have left an indelible mark. To family and friends, please take heart and remain comforted as we celebrate his life. From all of us at PRSK, we hope that you find fortitude in the memories you shared.

Till we meet again dear friend, Rest in Perfect Peace.

W. Marube

Dr Wilfred Marube, MPRSK
President, PRSK



Rebuilding Africa post lockdown

By **Loth Makuza**

African continent has demonstrated resilience in different phases of crises including the Ebola outbreak and the global financial crisis. Africa has once again faced and still facing a severe test of its strength and agility because of the COVID-19 the pandemic.

As soon as COVID-19 hit the world, and prior to the lockdown, many African countries reacted. Most African governments saw agility as the single most important strategy to use when dealing with the pandemic disruption.

While the continent has entered this crisis in reasonably good shape following decades of progression in health, education and economic outcomes, all industries were disrupted in one way or another, many closed their doors for the time being and forfeit growth and profits they make from in-person customers.

Africa needs sustainable long-term strategies, and we need to start by assessing the priority areas of focus and initiating a shared sustainable political, social and economic recovery strategic plans.

Collaboration between regions

Weakened global economic growth will have an impact on trade without and within Africa, further providing the region with the opportunity to collaborate and leverage its scale and efficiency by both re-thinking the fundamentals of partnerships among African countries (AU) and speeding up the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

The facilitation of trade between African countries through policy harmonization will boost commerce and social reforms by increasing the competitiveness of African products and services and creating global

export opportunities and new export markets within the continent.

According to WHO, Regional Office Africa: (The Report of a Multi-Country Study, June 2012) it tells that, "In spite of government and partner efforts to strengthen health service provision in most countries in the region, the users still find the health care and facilities inadequate".

The findings show that local and community health services are under-resourced and require more investments to boost their capacity to deliver quality care and increase access for the vulnerable members of society including senior citizens.

Services in district public sector health facilities should not be limited or perceived by the people to be limited to only children (immunization) and women of child-bearing age (antenatal and delivery care) but should be expanded to other interventions that respond to broader community needs.

Doing so will make Africa strong and well committed to fight any pandemic disruption because of independent and institutionalized base of health care providers in the region.

The Africa CDC should be Independent for Africans

The Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) was established in January 2016 and officially launched in January 2017 by the 26th Ordinary Assembly of Heads of State and government to improve coordination among health institutions among African Union member states in dealing with disease threats.

The Africa CDC has been operating depending much on how and what

the WHO reacts on global health systems. This jeopardizes the efforts of African governments to establish and strengthen their health care institutions and innovations basing on African environment.

The time is nigh for us to re-think and remove the dependency to the western world on matters health care. Independent and strong health systems institutions in Africa will help the African continent to react differently from the other corners of the world when it comes to disease threats.

Embrace Transformation and Optimism

Africa as a continent must start encouraging her governments to appreciate and understand the process of transformation because the vast majority of leaders claim they are transforming their governments and leadership while in real sense, they're just changing them. This is because most of us don't understand the difference between transformation and change of governance systems. And in today's world of modern geopolitics, if we are only changing the model of governance, ruling or embracing political powers without political, social and economic transformation we are falling further behind every tenure.

In rebuilding Africa post COVID-19, let's avoid tactical strategic errors that will cost lives of many Africans, the COVID-19 the pandemic should be a wakeup call to the heads of states, senior government officials, policy makers and the chain of decision makers to set the dreams of Africa as a continent alive.

Loth Makuza is a leading Communications Strategist. Loth is the founding and current President of the Public Relations Society of Tanzania (PRST)

Take proactive steps to safeguard data privacy because its our duty

By Judy Mwangi

My home is my sanctuary and I would feel violated if anyone without permission entered my home and ransacked my property. Personally, I want to ensure that my own home is secure and that no unauthorized person will come in and steal. To ensure our safety and prevent break ins, we lock our doors, gates and others enhance their security by hiring guards and installing CCTV cameras and alarms.

Technology is here to stay and is essential in our daily lives. Many of us cannot go a day without using our phones, I-pads or computers to access data or speak to loved ones. We have as a result gotten accustomed to saving our contact lists, photos, personal files onto our electronic gadgets. Our professional lives whether we are employed or entrepreneurs, are no different with majority of our work immersed around technology. Majority of us do have controls in place to ensure our data is secure, but how guaranteed is your personal and professional data? Now as much as we try to make our lives easier and save all our data online, it is possible and very easy for someone to hack into your system and steal your data.

Court order

I recently discovered from a friend that her office was raided in the pretext of a court order from a previous disgruntled business partner. Through the court order, a hacking company had been hired to take away all electronic gadgets in the office premises. The hacking company's job was made easier as they were accompanied by police who did a great job of intimidating and ensuring all electronic gadgets (computers, phones, I-pads etc.) were confiscated. My friend was helpless as she was forced to surrender all personal and office gadgets to the hired professional hackers. As the court order was given to her on the day of the police raid, she was surprised, defeated and unprepared. Thus, begs the question, how do we then protect our data when courts can have thugs gain access to hack into your system?

Hackers

There are also many unknown hackers out there using new and innovative ways to access your data and, in most cases, can impersonate you or access your finances. Therefore, is any of our privacy guaranteed? I doubt it. It just requires one not to be too gullible and to find ways and means to consistently protect themselves and to defeat these hackers. Ignorance is not bliss. The same way, you lock your doors, gates as your leave your home, intentional measures should apply online. One must take proactive steps such as talking to data privacy experts to safeguard their privacy and their data as no one will do it for you.





Dr Edward Odundo,
former CEO of RBA

One-on-one with Dr Edward Odundo, Former CEO of Retirement Benefits Authority on his experience in retirement, battle with cancer, what you need to know while in employment and what awaits you if you ignore the most useful allies- family

By Maureen Koech and AG Awino

Our interview is supposed to begin at 9am at his home situated in the posh Runda Estate. Maureen and I are at the venue earlier as is usual with us when we have an interview. Dr Odundo opens the gate to let us in his palatial home whose gates open on the command of a remote. He is sprightly as he ushers us to the living room. He is donning a chartreuse Chinese-themed shirt and a pair of black pants and appears younger and well groomed.

The plush seats in the silent house welcome us as we wait for our photographer who is running a little late. In keeping with the African hospitality, we are offered tea. He serves us himself. A healthy buffet, including cashew nuts, which we learn are from his daughter who lives in Kilifi, Coastal Kenya.

For a man in his early 60s, he doesn't look a day over 45. He is chatty and cracks jokes as we take our Limuru tea, quipping that it's the jokes that keep him young and warm. He prides himself in being one of the longest-serving CEOs in the country after his 16-year stint at Retirement Benefits Authority (RBA). For a retiree, he has his plate quite full. He chats with us about his CEO days, life in retirement, family and everything in between. He prods each of us about our homes, professional path and other social facts. He does it systematically from Myself, AG then to Moffat, the cameraman.

Who is Dr Odundo?

A very young man (chuckles). I am a son, brother, husband and father. I am blessed with four girls, two of whom are in the communication industry.

I am an alumnus of the University of Nairobi, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government and London School of Economics. You might have known me during my days as the CEO of Retirement Benefits Authority. But I have since retired and currently sitting on various Boards and also lecture at the University of Nairobi.

I am a proud girls' father (smiles). I'm married to an amazing woman, my best friend, who bore me four beautiful girls. My wife is a retired lawyer, one of my daughters is a lawyer too- she took after her mother. They never seem to agree on anything. My eldest daughter is a paediatrician currently working at the Kenyatta Hospital. My third born did communication at USIU and is currently working for one of the leading TV stations in the Country. My youngest is also studying PR and Communication at Daystar University. So now, it's just my wife and I most of the time.

How was life at RBA?

Well, good. I think we did lay a lot of ground work to making it the dream organisation. Some of the policies I introduced were unorthodox and we all know change

isn't welcome most of the time. So, facing resistance was inevitable. But with time people understood that those policies were for their own good and started warming up and being receptive.

What policies are these?

Three things: housing, education and medical. I ensured that everyone bought a house and had a mortgage to pay. I understand the importance of owning a house and this is one of the things I advocated for. My dad forced us (my brother and I) to buy houses early on, so we didn't have money to riot or even drink. It made us become responsible and I think that is one teaching I am proud of to date. The other thing that I ensured I standardised was our medical cover. Everyone from the CEO to the driver was entitled to the same amount in the medical cover. I mean if my secretary and I contracted Malaria, we would get the same medication, which would ideally be the same price. No one chooses to be sick, but when you do, I would want you to get the best Medicare. It didn't make sense to me to have employees on separate medical covers.

I also pushed my employees to go back to school. So, anyone who went back to school to further their studies was guaranteed a promotion based on our grading system. This was beneficial to both the employee and the institution because the quality of our work improved immensely. I introduced a policy for fee-payment where we would co-pay for staff to pursue further studies. It worked pretty well.

What was your harshest reality upon retirement?

My phone stopped ringing. I realised that most people who interacted with me, did so because of my position. They were looking for the CEO not Edward. In the hour and half you have been here, my phone has rung only once and it was a call from my daughter. My phone would ring on end when I was CEO. I would get emails, text messages and unending calls. I am so glad that I invested in my family because I would be such a frustrated man right now. I always had time for my wife and children and that is what has kept me going, day by day. Nowadays, my day ideally starts at 7.00am, I read the newspaper and check my diary to see what I have planned out for the day. I sit in many boards, so sometimes that would mean a meeting or two planned out for the day. I also lecture at the University of Nairobi, so sometimes I have classes. I try as much as possible to keep myself busy.

You mentioned both you and your wife are retired. How is retirement taking both of you?

It's like being in an unending honeymoon (almost laughing). Our individual experiences could be different but I am now noticing things that I wouldn't otherwise notice because of my rather busy schedule. And that right there, is where we go wrong as men. Our eyes open when we retire. It is no wonder that women complain that men become clingy and needy post retirement. They have too much time on their hands and no one to spend it with. So, it's natural for them to gravitate towards their



spouses. I retired before my wife did and I noticed it would worry her that I was staying at home while she went to work. She'd ask me before leaving, "what is your programme for the day?"

What is the most important thing in retirement?

Five things: medical cover, liquidity, pay all your debts (*vide loans*), ensure you have a side hustle and be close to your family. These are the things that I always tell people who are about to retire. When my last contract at RBA ended on July 1st, I had no medical cover. And we know medical care in Kenya is quite costly. But I am glad I had planned myself before retirement and had bought medical insurance to cover my wife and I.

I think people mistake liquidity for investments. It's okay to have investments but take a pension scheme or annuity so that you assured of monthly stipends to sustain you. I have properties that are rented but times are hard and people don't pay rent on time or even at all. Same with business, the market is unpredictable and you can't be assured of sales.

I insist on telling people to ensure all their loans are paid before retirement. Because sustaining payments after retirement is such a challenge. You don't have a regular source of income so don't lie to yourself.

It is also important to start a side hustle early on before you retire. Identify the opportunities, gaps and start a business. Complaints are opportunities. Embrace them and start something today.

Invest in your family by all means. As I told you earlier, my phone stopped ringing the moment I retired. And that was the harshest reality. Bond with your family, have family dinners, never miss a birthday or graduation, never miss an important family function. When you become absent when you're busy, they will be absent in your retirement and you will spiral into depression. Those are my five mantras for retirement.

Your policy on medical cover was inspired by a personal experience. Tell us about this.

I am a Cancer survivor. I got my diagnosis while still at RBA and this was an eyeopener. I was able to get treated because of my medical cover and this got me thinking, if any of my low cadre employees got cancer,

would their current medical cover ensure they get proper treatment? I knew I had to do something to ensure everyone is taken care of.

What would you say is your proudest legacy in RBA apart from the policies you have mentioned here before?

I was the proprietor of the *Mbao* Pension Fund for the juakali workers where they contribute Ksh 20 as and when they get money. It picked up pretty well and took care of the constituent that weren't assured of monthly income. I am proud of this scheme.

Have you ever fired an employee?

Oh yes! Not my proudest moment because it is quite heart-breaking to see someone lose a source of income. But firing someone was my last resort. However, I would advise them to resign instead of being dismissed. It improves your chances of getting a job elsewhere.

What was your management style?

Participatory. I ensured everyone in my institution used their skills well. I am not an expert in communication, so I wouldn't know how to handle a crisis. I am not an expert in finance nor in law so I wouldn't know how to manoeuvre issues around these fields. I believed in my team and they delivered.

You are enjoying your retirement by all standards. Was your childhood as privileged?

Well well well (laughs). We were comfortable by all means, never lacked anything. My parents were very hardworking. I was born and bred in Eastlands, Mbotela Estate. I am a Nairobiian through and through.

You sit in many boards; was this deliberate?

Well, yes. When you retire you have nothing but time on your hands. You could choose to sit at home and 'enjoy retirement' as most people say. But I chose to give back to the Society by serving in these Boards. It gives me so much joy. I am retired but not tired (chuckling). I have a very flexible schedule, with some days busier than the others.

We know a good number of Communication professionals becoming CEOs. What advice would you give them?

Don't get used to the perks of your position if you know you can't sustain the same once your contract ends. I have seen some of my friends who do 360 degrees on their lifestyle, move to a company house and want to be driven around by the company car complete with a driver and security, but when they get dismissed or when their contract ends they are faced by harsh realities. Drive yourself when you can. If you don't need a company house, don't take it.

Also, be humble and relate well with people regardless of your position. *Hii dunia ni duara.*

Do you believe in dowry payment?

Absolutely! Dowry negotiations provide an opportunity for both families to meet and know each other. It's important to know what kind of family you are marrying from and into. I know a lot of people believe in the modern way of doing things. You can still be modern but preserve our traditions. Invite your in-laws for a *mbuzi* and get to learn them, it's important.

Do you read?

Yes. I am an avid reader and writer. It's important to keep replenishing your fountain of knowledge by reading books. I have published two books so far; *The Doctrine of Strategic Planning* and *The Doctrine of Entrepreneurship* in three volumes. I like being in the know of what's happening so I religiously read the newspapers, every morning.

In your opinion, what common mistake do people in employment make?

Contentment. They don't improve themselves. You have a job with good perks, so what? Go back to school if you can, add to your body of knowledge. Believe me, it will be beneficial in the long run.

Any advice for budding professionals?

Never get comfortable in your current position. Constantly reinvent yourself with the world so you remain relevant



Intelligent PR to support the technological innovation drive

By Kerry Sheehan Chart.PR Accelerate Communications and Accelerate AI

Innovation in PR is our growth opportunity to support Kenya to leapfrog to the forefront

COVID-19 continues to accelerate a 'quiet' technology revolution across Kenya and many Africa nations. Kenya has been widely recognised as one of the most established and thriving innovation ecosystems in Africa.

Innovation can achieve economic and social development and is taking place in all realms of the economy, not only in high-tech companies and technology sectors. As a result, economies across the nation are focusing their attention on the creation and upkeep of sound and dynamic innovation ecosystems and networks. This provides an opportunity for public relations practitioners to drive the innovation forward.

Over the past few years, Kenya has been ranked in the top three countries in leading innovation in sub-Saharan Africa according to the World Intellectual Property Organisation's Global Innovation Index (GI). Kenya's so-called Silicon Savannah only trails upper to middle income economy in South Africa and the iHub technology-focussed co-working facility in Nairobi, opened in 2010, houses many tech companies, researchers and start-up entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, Kenya's innovation centres, AI accelerators particularly, around mobile, agriculture technology, supported with artificial intelligence, have attracted international venture capitalists and corporations such as Microsoft and Google to invest.

Homegrown solutions such as M-Pesa, Ushahidi as well as the iHub have gotten global recognition and,

according to the Global Innovation Index Report, less formal models of innovation are thriving. Furthermore, the report notes that assess to quality rather than quantity of innovation inputs and outputs has become an overarching concern to the innovation community.

There is also a growing focus on Agritech (agriculture technologies) using data and artificial intelligence across Kenya and neighbouring nations. The manufacturing industry is growing and is now making use of advanced technologies such as blockchain in tracking the supply chain and enhancing trade in coffee beans.

So, what does this have to do with PR?

PR practitioners, as solutions-led leaders, should support businesses, organisations and brands with their accelerated transformation and innovation and ensure they are not left behind. The innovations that give access and information to Kenyans and help them make informed decisions will be the ones that trigger participation. As professionals, we must support organisations, businesses and brands bring innovation down to the citizen and stakeholder level.

When you have engaged citizens and stakeholders effectively, you also have the possibility to influence policy. In recent years, artificial intelligence has been positioned as one of the biggest commercial opportunities for global economies. On the flip side though, AI poses one of the biggest reputation risks to businesses, organisations and brands especially



now that automation and AI adoption has accelerated.

It becomes ever more important for public relations practitioners to be confident to advise on data and artificial intelligence, as well as digitization and other technologies. This is because the current climate is seeing leaders looking to leverage the momentum of digital transformation and innovation to reduce costs through automation and AI, and looking to gain value from data to stay competitive in the new economic landscape we now find ourselves in. Coronavirus, particularly, has put data to the fore.

Therefore, PR professionals need to upskill to remain relevant to those they serve and provide services for. We must go beyond having foundational skills in new and emerging technologies in our communication and advisory roles so business and organisations can pave way for innovation and opportunities for growth. We can also support companies to actively drive the development of digital, transformation and AI creating linkages between government, business and academia.

AI's role and importance will not be diminishing anytime soon.

Reasons for optimism across Kenya

- The African continent is home to some of the youngest populations in the world now demanding digital services, digital innovation and digital communication as people and organisations become increasingly mobile-phone enabled.
- It promises to be a major consumption market over the next three decades
- It is increasingly mobile-phone enabled
- An emerging digital ecosystem is particularly crucial as multiplier of that growth, because access to smart phones and other devices enhances consumer information, networking, job-creating resources, and even financial inclusion.
- Innovation, diversification and inclusion and the linkages are key to Africa's continued development.

Data upskilling

AI runs on data, so it is imperative that the right and ethical data is used.

Communicators need to be aware of the data, its considerations and data ethics to start to build general awareness, becoming a more informed data-led communicator to be able to provide robust challenge and ethical communication on AI.

1. Use data ethically
2. Ensure data used is ethical
3. Be aware of the challenges of data bias
4. Have awareness of the value of automation and the data pipelines

Public relations practitioners must support to drive business forward – we are no longer in our own swim lanes – and that clearly includes the now accelerated mandate for solutions to problems, mobile and digital technologies, automation, AI and other emerging technologies.

We must be innovators, being at the forefront of business, society and technological change, if we truly want to be strategic leaders

How data has revolutionised claims in the insurance sector

By Mercy Kabangi

The future of the insurance business is highly navigating towards digitization as Artificial Intelligence (AI) integrates in the industry laying the groundwork for solving current and future risks and meeting consumer demand, quickly. The biggest shift is in the way big data has reshaped claims, distribution, underwriting and pricing, single-handedly consummated previous efforts to leverage big data in the insurance operations.

Before Covid-19 struck early last year, motor insurance premiums were determined by the rate of exposure to accidents and resultant claims. By the end of that year, most governments across the world had restricted majority of workers to remotely work from home; travel or physically interact, as it sought to contain the pandemic. For motor insurance, this portends a rich opportunity to revolutionise the industry. Indeed, the writing is on the wall for the future of insurance and white smoke is peering in the horizon in as far as innovation is concerned. For insurance firms like Heritage Insurance Kenya, pioneers of AI-driven motor insurance, the pandemic brought to fore a trend that is has been gathering pace – usage-based motor insurance.

Risk profiles

Telematics technology helps the insurer to better understand policyholders and their risk profiles, as well as glean insights on driving trends. The solution incentivizes good driver behavior captured through a telematics device fitted in a driver's car and linked to their smartphone. The device calculates braking, cornering or acceleration incidents, generating a score. This way, the pricing model becomes uniquely tailored based on an individual's behavior, making it fairer across the board.

It goes beyond usage-based pricing. It engenders faster and more efficient claims processing, while reducing disputes, a mutual advantage of both the insured and the insurer. For instance, in the case of an accident, and depending on its gravity, the requisite data of the cause of the accident will have already been captured by the telematics device and transmitted to the central database. The claims processing can start, in real time, based on the information transmitted by the device.

Significantly, this technology is able to combat an industry abhorrence – motor insurance fraud. It enables detection and protection against fraudulent 'crash for cash' schemes, or instances where others make fraudulent claims against customers

covered under a telematics insurance solution. Leveraging technology provides a lot of benefits, enabling insurers to offer customised solutions instead of a one size fits all approach. During the onset of the pandemic period, with restricted movements, curfews and lock downs, there has been a definite decline in the number of drivers on our roads, with people driving less as they worked remotely, and as a result, there were comparatively less accidents.

Pricing

Data driven technology allows insurers to peg pricing on vehicle use and driver behaviour, intelligently pricing the premium for the benefit of both the insured and the insurer. Post-pandemic, the rise of digitization is not a feel-good conversation, it is a reality that, if managed well, would not only manage the new COVID-19 accelerated customer realities but influence growth and profitability. Artificial intelligence-based decisioning, user-experience technology in policy processes would highly improve the customer experience and enhance a faster turnaround of back-end processes. Blockchain technology has found its way in insurance companies. Thanks to its tenet of decentralization, insurance departments (IT, claims processing, and underwriting) can now access records simultaneously, saving a significant amount of time and effort in record keeping and information processing and improving underwriting efficiency. In more developed markets, insurance players have started to use gamification to trigger growth in areas with traditionally low performance – through creation of more customer-centric digital solutions, owing to its relatively low implementation cost. This growth is opening an exciting chapter in an insurance industry long projected as devoid of technological advancements. On equal measure, evolving customer expectations mean that nimbler and first-to-innovate players stand to benefit.

The writer is the General Manager, Marketing and Communications at Liberty Life and Heritage Insurance.





Bank staff: PR is more stressful these days than the past

By Ruth Mbugua

The first thing I do after switching off my alarm clock is checking my social media. I know it's a bad habit but it is what it is. The average millennial spends 3 hours online in a day. Technological innovation and access to it has made it easier for people to spend more time online than offline. The rate of digital disruption is astounding. Every few months a new platform is trending and the old ones start playing catch up. Organizations are left at a place where they are struggling to keep up with these ever evolving trends and fast-paced millennial yet they have to go to where they are. If you are like me, I would really like to know the correct answer to what kind of videos would a corporate post on Tiktok? Or do they need to be on the platform because the millennial and Gen Z are there.

PR Stress

If there is a time that being a PR professional can give you a heart-attack is now. At the rate at which news spreads, you will sleep and wake up to your brand having been cancelled on social media in hours. The other day a shoe brand nearly got cancelled because of a response to a customer's comment on social media. We have seen institutions that were established

years ago be brought down through bad press on social media. As a PR person it's difficult to have off-line days, anything could happen. But one thing I love about digital PR is that it has increased avenues of telling your story with the rise of digital content creators, online news publishers and the like.

Digital communication

A PR professional must embrace digital PR because is here to stay. Previously I would prepare a press release, have it approved by management, and send it to media houses for it to be published the following day. Now, in a matter of hours, my press release needs to be up on our social media sites and on online news sites in addition to being on print media. You also need to learn how to use the current digital PR tools and platforms to up-skill to stay relevant. Previously as a PR professional you needed a few skills, but today, with technological innovations, the list is endless.

You need another group of people: influencers. People don't trust your brand speaking for itself. No one speaks ill of themselves, so let other people speak for you and about you. Influencers don't need to be celebrities; they can be your customers who become your brand ambassadors.

Digital PR also has a longer life-span than traditional PR because the internet never forgets. My Facebook posts from 10 years ago make me look like someone who doesn't know how to spell or didn't go to school. But they are documented because the internet never forgets. Especially in the new normal, everything is online. It just takes 5 seconds to Google and learn about something that happened years ago.

Build relationship

Create relationships with online publishers and content creators. As a young PR professional in the industry, my biggest worry used to be that I have not networked with enough journalists. Today I get to network with more stakeholders in the digital space. Digital PR has measurable return on investment due to data and analytics. My biggest challenge as a PR professional in a profit-making organization has always been quantifying the value of PR and money spent. But with digital PR, the numbers do the talking. Content is king. Millennial care about what your brand can do for them not what your brand does. We need to be more customer-driven than business-driven.

By Ruth Mbugua, a communications professional at ABC Bank

Let's support development on technology infrastructure

By Stella Muhoro

Unlike in the 20th century where oil and gold were among the most valuable tangible assets for many economies, the 21st century is changing the trajectory with new intangible treasures: data and technology. For many governments, businesses and individuals, the inclusion of the same in their operations is propelling their entities into greater heights.

However, for developing nations like Kenya, an underlying need for modern, reliable and safe infrastructure to drive data and technology development is still a requirement yet to be attained. To set the ball rolling, so to speak, there is need for governments, organisations and individuals to rally behind the development of strong Information Communication & Technology (ICT) infrastructure projects in the country. In so doing, not only will they be creating an avenue for more business opportunities but also nurturing a better technology environment for development in other sectors.

This will further position our country at a vantage position to achieve its Vision 2030 aspirations, which aim to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized, middle-income country by 2030.

According to the Kenya National Economic Survey of 2020, the country's digital economic value rose by 10.3 per cent to KSh 427.0 billion in 2019, thanks to its fast internet penetration, data and technology policies and the ongoing ICT infrastructure development projects

across the country.

By giving these infrastructure developments support – in terms of social operating license or even funding – our digital economic statistics will undoubtedly rise in the coming years, thereby growing other businesses through data and technology.

While we have ongoing data and technology projects such as the Konza Technopolis, some questions still emerge: what role can businesses, governments and individuals play? What support can they give to this development, critical at present and in future?

According to the 20th edition of the Kenya Economic Update themed “Securing Future Growth” prepared by the World Bank, Kenya faces a significant digital divide, with 44% of the urban population having access to the internet as compared to 17% in rural areas. This is where our efforts come in.

With infrastructure developments such as the Constituency Innovation Hubs (CIH) taking place at our grassroot levels, creating awareness on the importance of such developments in bridging the rural urban digital divide becomes essential.

Individuals and organisations should ensure such initiatives are implemented, thereby creating more strengths and opportunities in those areas.

While steering this development, businesses can explore investment opportunities available in the data and technology arena thereby building the industry.





According to Deloitte, technology and data infrastructure is the cornerstone of an effective business operation. It enables businesses to successfully achieve its objectives through the automation of key activities and services. This will only be realized through the establishment of reliable IT infrastructure, which can handle both the existing and arising challenges.

For instance, by utilising mega technology infrastructure facilities like the Konza National Data Centre, businesses can get better services catering to storing, processing, and analysing data for various opportunities. This utilisation, undoubtedly, will enable enterprises to grow their business applications while also securing their data. In the process, they will also be attracting more investors.

As a nation aspiring to have a digitally driven economy in future, advocating for partnerships in the development of technology avenues is also critical. Looking at the current arrangement between Kenya and Korea, we have seen it leading to projects such as the Kenya Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) which is set to play a critical role in supporting innovation and technology in the country.

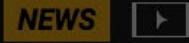
Such partnerships are what international developers such as the World Bank can also look into as they seek to help the country grow.

A report from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of Digital Economy (2019) indicates that data has become a new economic resource for creating and capturing value. Giving support to infrastructure projects will create a channel through which this more data can be captured, stored and be used to drive more business in the country.

In addition, this reliable infrastructure, buoyed by business friendly governance and policies, will build our resilience and create a better future for us all.

Therefore, to ensure that we attain our aspirations on data and technology development, the consideration of developing our ICT infrastructure while championing innovation will be useful.

The writer is the Chief Manager, Business Development and Innovation at Konza Technopolis Development Authority (KoTDA)



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Remedying media fragmentation: Focusing on Public Relations as a strategic practice

By James Kuchio Asonga

In the decade I have been a Public Relations practitioner, there has been a seismic shift in the media landscape. In 2010, legacy media channels, that include radio, television and newspapers, were still dominant and digital media, including websites, apps and social media platform, were in nascent stages.

There has been a steady shift towards digital media and a slow decline of legacy media. In the past year, The Standard and The Nation, Kenya's biggest newspapers, have undergone rebranding towards providing more digital content with paywalls limiting access to their prime content. Meanwhile, there have been numerous blogs and websites that have come in to being, giving established media houses a run for their money.

On the broadcast front, there have also been a number of changes too. Kenya's shift to digital broadcast signals resulted in the availability of a myriad of new niche television channels. Additionally, there has been an emergence of content on demand services that has further splintered audiences. Social media channels have video and broadcast

features that have allowed individuals to showcase their ideas and talents, building audiences and credibility.

As has been seen in recent months, legacy media organisations are adapting to digital media platforms and integrating them with the old broadcast format. For a lot of organisations and practitioners, these changes are proving a challenge, especially organisations that had placed media relations and the press release at the centre of their public relations efforts.

While in theory a lot of these changes have been happening for a while, in practice numerous practitioners and their organisations are still grappling to make the best of these platforms. Public Relations practitioners exist on different points of the diffusion of innovation theory graph, while some adopted early, others are still lagging.

In 2017, I did a content analysis study on how the five top tier banks in Kenya were using Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Of the five banks, one seemed to be effective in its use of social media, two were middling and one was doing the bare minimum with its platforms. My criteria for analysis was based on how appropriate

the communication was for the platforms, the tone used and the type of messages shared.

The better performing organisations adapted their messaging to the platforms while the ones that didn't do so well seemed to echo or maintain the tones from legacy communication channels and approaches. Their content seemed geared to inform but did not drive engagement, thus was a poor fit to the platforms.

While it may be intuitive to some practitioners, in this era where multiple channels are vying for audience attention, having a clear understanding of your target audiences and knowing how to connect to them through those channels is key to meeting your communications objectives. Strategic planning with an emphasis on the target audience has become more crucial than ever to getting your message across.

Viewing public relations as a strategic practice empowers practitioners to map out the best approach for communications campaigns and deliver the most value in a world of media fragmentation and splintered audiences.

Collective responsibilities in Covid-19 management: A company perspective

By Eldah Odongo

After the Madaraka day fete that saw the people of Kisumu city wash and polish the roads, wearing 'Owalo' (sisal skirts) and 'Kondos' (feathers) Luo traditional regalia, cook traditional delicacies, bring all Luo musicians together to perform songs that made the Head of State shake a leg, the beautiful lakeside city is now left with a sour after-taste which is threatening livelihoods, resources, and businesses. You see, Luos are very proud people and when guests arrive they are trained from a very early age to only show love and respect, political differences notwithstanding. Even with all the experts' warnings and MOH protocols on the looming threats of COVID 19 infections, the love had to be shown right?

Unfortunately, Kisumu is now at its peak as far as the infections are concerned, this is coming 14 months after the first case of COVID 19 was detected in Kenya. 'Do you know somebarre, who knows somebarry, who knows somebarry who has Corona', young creative youths would dance to this tune to kill boredom during the first-ever lockdown in the world. We would sing this song in Kenya to mock our leaders who were putting everything in place to protect us, and if you are a Kenyan, then you must have also questioned the existence of the disease at some point. For the lakeside city, now that the fatalities are rising, it is no longer a laughing matter as the reality has surely dawned that the disease certainly was not a dream.

Despite the glaring rise in Covid 19 numbers, there are schools of thought that feel that Kisumu numbers were always high but could not raise alarm as the testing was not as extensive as it was just before the Madaraka Day celebrations when more samples were taken and tested. As the numbers rise, people are confused about whether to stay at home or go to work, whether to open businesses or close-

a clear Catch-22 situation.

For a company like KIWASCO (Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company Ltd) that provides water and sanitation in Kisumu city, we are between a rock and a hard place since water is not only an essential service but is often referred to as "Life". Ours like all essential services must be provided irrespective of the prevailing circumstances and as such we have remained at work throughout, as our presence must still be felt in every corner of the city. It is critical to note that as a country we can only isolate, stay home, or be in hospital if we there is running water. Yes, that small bill that you normally plan to pay last or not at all is the most important bill that you have and should be paid first.

At the onset of the pandemic, KIWASCO like most companies locally and internationally put measures in place to protect staff and customers by ensuring that all services offered were easily available and accessible through various online channels. Communication channels were boosted and as a result, the call center number 057 500 7000 was launched which ensured that customers could now be served 24/7 and call center agents were also enabled to serve from anywhere in Kenya. The *483*86# USSD code enabled self-service and an app downloaded from the PlayStore all launched during this period were geared at assisting clients resolve all their water issues and requests effectively.

Whenever the cases rise and people are encouraged to stay at home, office operations had to be scaled down, including the field operations in adherence to MOH protocols. Protecting the staff also means protecting members of the community during sensitizations, distribution of food stuffs and fliers, setting handwashing points and distribution of soaps from well-wishers.

As in most organizations, the Human Resource Department organized mass testing for the workforce and any infected staff who were found positive were treated promptly. Those who tested negative were encouraged not only to adhere to MOH protocols but also to get vaccinated. We are grateful because, despite the pandemic, we have remained united and dedicated to serving the people of Kisumu.

My biggest fear as I write this today is the proximity of Kisumu city to the villages in the County such as Seme, Kajulu, Nyakach, etc, have we asked ourselves what would happen if the disease were to hit the rural areas? Are we doing enough as a county? If given a second chance, would we still host Madaraka day? We are in difficult times the world over, the only thing required of us is collective responsibility. Let's postpone our meetings, our celebrations, so that we can all be available to make merry tomorrow. For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" Jeremiah 29:11.

Eldah Odongo, Head of corporate and communication, KIWASCO



Owning Africa's narrative - A new age in communication and storytelling

By Winnie Okello

When we think of all the amazing innovations, technology and the major shifts in what is now commonly known as the “new normal” we cannot disregard the role COVID-19 has played in shaking things up and revealing significant gaps in both availability and accessibility to essential public services. The narrative has since changed since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and now Africa is recognized as a force to be reckoned with. An even bigger shift has been the greater awareness for the need to not only change, but also reclaim Africa's narrative to better reflect the reality of the lived experiences of those within the continent and throughout the diaspora.

African Continent Positive Coverage

With innovations in technology, like the Africa Engineering News (AEN), you can get the latest news in engineering, innovations, and technology from across the African Continent. Sharing positive content on the Pan-African representation brings to the fore the many innovations arising in this wave of globalization and transformations in the 5th industrial revolution. Moreover, this positions Africa as a ripe continent for investors with innovators, and support research and development for market ready products.

These topics permeate every aspect of our daily lives; be it transportation, infrastructure, medical innovations or lack thereof within our communities, economic development, politics, or access to the internet and information. Safe to note that STEM sectors as well as the ARTS have been an integral part of how we live and transform our lives and, we are seeing that more evidently, especially during this COVID-19 season.

The African Perspective

The reality is that Africa, to this day, has a very misrepresented or skewed narrative to the rest of the world. We have not been able to share



our stories from our own perspectives, at least not on a comparable scale to the general mass media. Therefore, others have been telling our stories, from their own vantage points and that, for the most part, has been very problematic.

Africa Engineering News Platform

It is time for us to change the narrative in a very intentional matter. As the STEM community continues to conduct research and publish their findings, it is our duty as PR professionals to break this down in a language that is understood by the general populous. Most importantly, these are changes that affect entire communities, because what we do; our research and innovations impact real people, in real communities and have generational effects. We are not just numbers and data outputs on a spreadsheet, we are real people with multifaceted life experiences, and we need leaders who are more cognizant of that fact.

Winnie Okello is the founder of Africa Engineering News Platform. Follow conversations on FB/IG/Twitter/YouTube via @AfricaEngineeringNews.





Let's HARP about it!: H.A.R.P - Technology for social change

By Winnie Okello

When we talk about data and technology, especially in this day and age, we must address the way both of these factors impact communities beyond the physical built environment. Data has historically been ignorant of the human element, which has directly impacted the implementation of technology and any subsequent evolutions. Every great innovation comes from a place of seeing a need and subsequently filling that need; which leads us to the story of how the Harassment & Assault Reporting Platform (H.A.R.P) came to be.

Abuse, whether via Harassment or assault, is a global issue, and the quarantine period occasioned by the current COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened situations for individuals who were already enduring abusive environments -as shown in the global trends on domestic abuse reporting. Underage pregnancy spikes in Kenya during this period as well as the rampant police brutality that sparked protests around the globe are stark realities that came to the fore. Kenya, Rwanda, and Nigeria's #EndSarsNow movement evidently highlighted the impact of COVID-19 in the ongoing abuse of power by law enforcement officials, as traumatized residents shared stories of excessive use of power by these authorities in the name

of abiding by set quarantine curfews. The global demand for the dismantling of the oppressive policing systems has been long overdue, and all of us have a role to play in the fight for a more equitable society.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics [STEM] sector professionals play a significant role in shaping the environment as we continually innovate to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our systems. H.A.R.P is a one-stop-shop reporting platform that aims to gather more contextual data, while increasing education and awareness about harassment and assault related incidents world-wide. Although studies show that both men and women can be victims as well as perpetrators of abuse, women are more likely to get harassed and assaulted while navigating through society in both public and private spaces.

The anatomy of police brutality and the numerous abusive incidents that occur in public-spaces typically involve; street harassment, transit harassment, workplace harassment, bullying, and many other trauma-inducing experiences. Who can we rely on for accountability and documentation of police misconduct when we do not trust the police to hold themselves accountable? We HARPit!

Platform users can submit a harassment/assault, or a police brutality related incident report via the HARPit user interface, and reports can be submitted by witnesses or survivors of these events. The climate survey data on H.A.R.P is used to evaluate the overall sentiments and trends regarding harassment/assault, as well as police brutality across the global community. The ease-of-use and accessibility is a key feature that allows individuals to submit reports on the various forms of abuse from the comfort of their safe-spaces, or while navigating public spaces. Users can HARPit from anywhere as long as they have internet access.

Technology has played a key role during this quarantine season given that in-person interactions have been extremely limited for public safety. Collective participation in this effort therefore is essential, because, while most people may assume abuse is strictly a social- issue, technology plays a significant role in data collection, analysis, visualization, incident response and even after-care-services such as mental health assistance.

So, the next time you witness or experience harassment or assault, be sure to HARP it, and be a part of the movement for a safer, global community. #HARPitNOW

Artificial intelligence algorithms

The game-changer in the African transformation forecast

By Frank Ojwang

Since time immemorial, man has had an insatiable desire to be able to tell the future, or make near-accurate predictions and forecasts to be better prepared against foreseeable perils. Fortune tellers and magicians' services featured in many African cultures and belief systems to quench this thirst for future-predictions. Additionally, the past has been a mystery that many people from the historical times have equally desired to understand in order to be able to predict the trajectories for the future and patterns for seasons, events, pandemics, disasters and many more. The insatiable thirst for knowledge and unending curiosity has triggered mankind's desire to understand the origin of the universe and human beings, and theories have been developed to hypothetically fill in the empty voids of human curiosity.

Technology, data and information has changed the script in recent times. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the accuracy of predictions and forecasts using algorithms that logically form an accurate pattern for predictions.

In developed countries, curiosity is taking them to the moon and outer space including Mars while developing nations such as Kenya and other African countries are still struggling with 19th century challenges due to historical problems that post-independence governments have not been able to successfully shake off. Bad governance and leadership have made Kenya's peers such as Singapore and United Arab Emirates (UAE) overtake Kenya by several years development-wise. Adoption of technology has been a dominant feature of all countries in the developed world bracket. Could using AI accelerate the course of development and change management for Kenya into the foreseeable future?

Kenyan experts and technocrats are yet to embrace technology more meaningfully for various reasons including; ignorance to technology, pessimism about data accelerated changes, general fears of being edged out in the economic net and a colonial mentality that is a key feature in the current generation in leadership in Kenya and across



Africa. The world we live in today has evolved rapidly since the advent of technological advancement. Digital solutions have expedited the achievement of rapid results at scale and offered life-saving solutions within the click of a buttons across all sectors. Data-driven technologies are the gateway to a better Kenya by 2030.

Any government that is not technology-driven today is lagging behind in transforming the welfare and well-being of its people. There is sufficient evidence from capitalist and social-welfare states in the global North, that technology accelerates development and reduces loss of public resources. Developed countries that rely on data have been able to plan



modern day PR profession, which now has a visible space that is clear-cut for advocacy and championship of technology-driven solutions for African and beyond. PR training should integrate technology in its learning programs and inculcate an ethical code for digitization and digi-verification of all information relayed to the public.

AI is one single interface that can magically contribute to solutions for African governments and corporate sectors in Kenya and across Africa to bring Africa up-to-speed with the global superpowers, and for the continent to jostle for a space commensurate with Africa's resources, population and potential might.

Digitizing the citizens' data in programmes such as the Huduma Number can catapult Kenya to a new space for accelerating speedy growth and development. Accurate citizen data can improve the capacity of the Government to plan for Universal Healthcare (UHC), improve access to quality education across Kenya, improve revenue generation through taxes and strengthen national security. A conglomerate of digitization and AI will catapult Kenya out of the developing country's status to a hybrid status between a middle-income country and developed country.

AI is the magician and palm-reader of the modern day. The Kenyan Government with the help of PR professionals needs to embrace AI to ensure that they share evidence-based algorithm-driven predictions on various trajectories for various decisions taken by the government at the micro and macro levels. In addition, digitization will help the Government access real-time data on the country's population and cut on costs associated with a national census every 10 years. The benefits for civic participation exercises such as elections and referendums, during vaccinations and such major healthcare initiatives, in education planning will be enormous and will improve the welfare of Kenyans and increase the longevity through algorithmically-derived interventions.

There is no way Kenya and Africa will move forward without digitalization and prioritizing data and technology. This is the sure way to achieve vision 2030 – by encompassing AI into government planning and the development discourse. Data and Technology holds the key to the African future!

their economy better, increase their revenue collection, improve their healthcare systems and take pride in quality education, innovation and technology. Whereas the developed countries were worst hit by coronavirus pandemic in 2020, their use of technology and data has enabled them to accelerate their recovery and reach millions with vaccines in a systematic fashion. Coronavirus has further poked and revealed the need to adopt and adapt to the new normal that includes adopting cashless payments, wireless technologies, cryptocurrencies and block chains among other innovations of the 21st century.

The Public Relations (PR) profession needs to voice the need to report accurate data or information and enhance visibility through technological platforms and innovations of the modern day world. PR experts need to understand the significance of data, information and technology-driven solutions, and its application in the

The creator economy, an alternative to unemployment in Kenya; Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic

By *Jessee Mutugi*

The steep rise in Kenya's unemployment rate coincides with the hit of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country which prompted mitigation measures among them travel restriction and the closure of businesses including the lucrative event management industry. Many Kenyans would throng to entertainment joints to watch live comedy shows, music and art shows. This was however curtailed and most entertainers and owners of the establishments lost their source of living.

According to KNBS, the highest proportion of the unemployed has remained between ages 20-29 years with respective unemployment rates of 22.8 and 21.7 per cent.

While the government has moved to ease restrictions as it sights control over the global health crisis, some enterprises have folded under the weight of the pandemic while some especially in hospitality and entertainment are yet to re-emerge from past restrictions. The pace and spread of the economic recovery further lies in uncertainty prompting many companies to cut down costs including staff to stay over the waters.

Even with the current state of affairs, technology has provided an avenue for many creatives to earn an income. With no crowds to entertain and with entertainment joints closed, most creatives have resulted to distribute content online through YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and other social media channels.

The Creator economy?

The internet has made it easier to access content and this has increased the demand of, and the amount of available content. Anyone with an internet-enabled mobile



phone can watch whatever they want. Watching content has become more of a private thing than sitting around the TV with the family regardless of whether or not you were interested in a show.

Historically, the creator economy has been predominantly composed of individuals sharing an existing skill, perspective, ability, demonstrations among others that they're now able to distribute, and ideally monetize, through online platforms. In the modern day however, we are now seeing an entirely new segment of online creators gaining momentum, and amassing millions of followers without sharing a unique skill, case in point TikTokers. This ability for individuals to create their own content has resulted in the birth of the creator economy.

One way the internet changed everything is that it opens up content to a far larger audience. For creators, this means that they could start focusing on finer niche audiences in the form of subscribers. For the Kenyan youth, it is worth noting that the creator economy is the future. This is because the world now has access to the

major platforms that content is distributed through.

Technology has made it possible even for amateurs to create their own content without the need for a huge budget and technical know-how. With a mobile phone, one has a camera and a studio all in one. Internet is easily accessible and with a little effort, ideas and hard work, one can generate content ranging from photography, comedy, poetry, farming blogs, even evening chats with your granny as she makes her evening meals. If well done, your granny can become a Tiktoker and you make a living out of it.

The COVID -19 Pandemic has also taught the world tough lessons. With restrictions in public gatherings and disbanding of events, entertainers mostly have come up with innovative ways of keeping their fans entertained while still making a living. Companies like NAS DAILY being a great example whose "goods" are online content. In the coming years. We will see more of such companies creating employment and contributing to the world economy.



How can make your content worth the pennies?

Focus on content that can be viewed multiple times. This is particularly the case on platforms like YouTube where money is generated every time a video is viewed. Get as many likes, retweets, comments as possible.

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are a digital certificate showing that you own a particular digital asset and gives the holder ownership over digital assets that can still be left in the public domain for all to see. The NFT can be sold in a way you can sell your facebook page. Remember Bonfire Adventures offering to buy comedienne Jemutai's Facebook page?

Collaborate with other creators to help to boost each other's visibility. Noone thought the famous Churchill Show would brave the COVID crisis, however, through collaboration with other creators, the Journey Edition was birthed. Each of the featured creators is able to increase their following.

How do Content Creators Make Money?

Advertising and paid subscriptions

You know when you're watching a video on YouTube and a Safaricom ad comes on? YouTube offers a profit-sharing scheme with creators who place adverts on their video. Whenever an ad is shown then both parties get a share of what the advertiser pays. There are also people who are willing to pay a monthly subscription to access content.

Contributions:

Creators will often give people the opportunity to donate to help fund their efforts. The case of the artiste Embarambaba "support msanii" comes to mind. However, this method tends to be popular among modders – people who create add ons to games and other software.

Merchandise

They create branded T-shirts, caps, mugs, pens, to sell to their fans and create a wider range of marketing opportunity. The fans use the merchandise to identify with the creator.

Sponsorships:

A lot of creators have a large audience and this is a potential gold mine for businesses. A company may therefore sponsor a creator to keep on creating provided its content that benefits the company by for example mentioning the Sponsor's name which will help to increase the brand's visibility and also directly generate revenue.

The creator economy only looks set to grow further as more people come online and get access to the tools needed.

Senior Administrator at the University of Embu and Corporate Communications Professional





Data privacy: Cyber risks during and Post-Covid-19 period

By James Singa

It is quite clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world upside-down. The 'normal' that we were used to before this pandemic is gone, and may be, forever. Now, we must re-think how we do things and how we live, at a personal and corporate level. This includes reviewing our concept of what we think are our daily threats (risks) or fears that we face at personal and corporate level.

The world before COVID-19 was moving very fast technologically. And it continues to move faster, during COVID-19, and will definitely move even more speedily, post-COVID-19. This is a good outcome in itself, as leveraging on technology definitely means doing things better, faster, cost-effectively, with more information at hand to help in decision making and execution.

Smart phones, laptops, computers, smart TVs and Apps (aka Software applications) will even become more socially indispensable as the world becomes more digitally reliant. Concepts such as remote working, cloud-computing, Crowdsourcing, internet banking and online shopping have literally become our new normal.

Pre-COVID-19 new technologies had revolutionized how we utilize channels of communication with our personal and organizational stakeholders. During and post-COVID-19 period, new technologies such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Twitter

Space, Facebook/ Instagram live, meetings/ webinars became main stream and are now increasingly preferred compared to physical meetings. Further, even though physical Memos, letters and notice boards still remain key corporate communication channels for internal organizational communication, communicating through staff WhatsApp and Telegram groups is the most time-effective mode of interacting with staff.

In the same breath, communications intelligence research is being undertaken via survey tools such as Survey Monkey rather than administering physical questionnaire tool to targeted sampled units. This I.T. powered data-gathering methodology and the resultant data analysis is faster, cost effective and has a wider reach, as compared to traditional and physical method of collecting research information through administering questionnaire tool to your sampled units. The examples are too many to enumerate here!

As with everything, this new normal has a dark side, loaded with risks galore. Institutional or personal websites or social media accounts (facebook, twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram or Instagram account) are not immune from hacking or defacing. You are just a click away from opening a phishing email, and someone can maliciously, gain entry into all details, public and private, stored in your laptop or computer. It can also go as far as someone spying on you via

the camera of your sitting room or your bedroom smart TV!

As we are all well aware, there are numerous cases of cyber bullying, or disinformation (deliberate effort to give false information) or misinformation (unknowingly giving false information). There have been many incidences of private, confidential or respectful 'Zoom meetings' being hacked and filled with pornography. There are also cases of multi-national projects such as general elections or corporate projects and even financial institutions being compromised by hackers. For Public Relations and Communications professionals, such risks feed right into reputational accidents for our clients and organizations.

One of the most important assets we own at a personal or corporate level is information. The protection of this information or data stored in our various departments, ERP System, registry or personal devices is critical and anything that interferes with this data in this new normal era will definitely cripple us.

If your stored data is stolen, defaced or interfered with, its integrity is compromised, which translates to into lost opportunities, lost stakeholder confidence, eroded (personal and organizational) identity and credibility and possible extinction.

It is critical for us to be awake to such threats, and we must constantly be alive to in the fact that this new normal is here to stay. The faster we can shape up and evolve, the better a reality we can confidently say we are heading towards.

James Singa; Head – Corporate Communications/ Ag head of Risk Management; Commodities Fund

Whatsapp and the need for clearer communication in the tech industry

By Brenda Mussoko

In the beginning of the year, WhatsApp announced a new set of policies that caused a major outcry, with users expected to accept these changes by 15th February 2021, which was later revised to 15th May 2021. This was as a result of privacy concerns among a number of users about data sharing with Facebook, the parent company that owns WhatsApp. This tussle highlighted the role of effective communication in among other industries, the technology space, in a world which is laden with tech jargon that may be difficult for the ordinary person to understand. This article breaks down what the changes were and, the responses mitigated by WhatsApp to sort out the mess.

After the initial backlash it received, WhatsApp was forced to clarify that it does not intend to disclose the content of personal information, shared by users through their private and group chats. This was at the heart of the matter with many people concerned, rightfully so, that their personal data would be compromised. This meant that the status would remain and that messages would remain end-to-end encrypted, meaning that WhatsApp cannot see your private messages or hear your calls. This applied to group chats and calls as well.

The new changes announced were that WhatsApp had the right to share data it collects about you (exclusive of your personal and group chats) with the broader Facebook network. This information referred to as “metadata” includes information about the user’s phone including the phone number and mobile company, operating system, battery level, signal strength, language, time zones and financial transactions made over WhatsApp. Before this announcement sharing of this metadata by users was optional but this new privacy update meant that it would be compulsory.

Another issue affected by the new feature was that businesses that are signed up on WhatsApp for Business would have the option of storing their clients’ data on Facebook servers. This means that businesses would have the option of using this data to inform their advertising on other platforms such as Facebook. WhatsApp would inform the respective clients if the businesses that they are communicating with have their chats store on these servers.

Due to the initial vague messaging around this privacy update and the subsequent spread of misinformation, WhatsApp faced a considerable amount of criticism. It did not make matters any better that the messaging app is owned by Facebook, a company that is still reeling from its battered reputation because of the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Similar messaging apps such as Telegram and Signal cashed in on the situation and saw a huge uptick in downloads at the height of the confusion. Data from Sensor Tower, an insights firm reported that Signal had approximately 7.5 million downloads globally between 6th January and 10th January. Apptopia, media intelligence firm reported that Telegram registered 5.6 million downloads between 7th January and 10th January. Telegram announced that users would have the option of importing their chat history from WhatsApp, in what was seen as setting the stage for continuity in a world previously dominated by WhatsApp.

It took some early interventions by WhatsApp to try and put out the fire. This included setting up a FAQs page with concise, simple language with an image graphic to explain the new changes in a digestible manner. In the coming days WhatsApp reinforced this messaging through posting on the Status feed of users to dispel the misconceptions surrounding the new update. WhatsApp also toned down on its initial announcement that users who would not accept the new changes would be discontinued from using the app, instead announcing in a separate FAQ page that users will not have their accounts deleted or experience reduced functionality past 15th May if they do not accept the privacy changes.

This confusing episode critically highlights the fundamental role that communication plays when announcing new changes to a product or service beyond what you are communicating, how are you saying it? One Forbes article put it, “the change of terms was more a bad PR exercise than a bad privacy issue.” Moving forward, organizations especially tech companies will have to factor in strategic clear communication to their various stakeholders to ensure that they convey the intended message and avoid a scenario as witnessed by WhatsApp.

[Information acquired from different sources including the New York Times, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal and WhatsApp Blog]

The writer is the Director of PRHUT, a public relations firm info@prhut.co.ke

You just need the passion; opportunities can be created

By Eunice Victoria



I was travelling from Nakuru to Nairobi last December. I had just left a very intense event where I had felt out of place. I had just sworn to my husband that I would never go anywhere with him again when I got a call, one that would later make my day. It was an opportunity to attend a communication manager interview at Strathmore University. We could not believe it!

I had had so many opportunities in my life but none was better than this one. Strathmore University was among the organisations that I really wanted to work for. I remember telling my husband how I would grow from a Communications Manager, into lecturing. I had so many plans. I am blessed with a brain that loves solving problems. I wanted to mentor a generation of communication practitioners who understood how to use their skill to influence their surroundings.

This opportunity came when I was so ripe to create a positive impact. I wanted to mentor, empower, motivate and inspire African Millennials to achieve their full potential through my story so that together we would create a world where everyone has influence. I had worked in the same sector before through

an opportunity I had created for myself in 2018. This was the main reason why I had gotten the opportunity. They told me that I was already in the “industry”. This is what I saw myself doing.

I attended my first interview which was via Zoom and, later that day, I got an email that I had passed the first session which I expected. This was my space. My next interview was to be in two days. Passing was the least of my worries as 90% of my interviews had always advanced to the next level. I was only worried about the amount of time I had on this world. Would it be enough to serve these young people? What would be some of the strategies that I would use to ensure we have enough opportunities to advance their growth? I had so much to do and achieve. I was even ready to be introduced to the team.

My interview was a nightmare. First, I was one hour early, which meant I had to wait for the people who work there to arrive. I waited for thirty more minutes to be called for the interview. The room was so quiet. It was a panel of four comprising of the head of the communication department, a

human resources officer and a lecturer from the school of communication. I didn't quite capture which department the fourth came from as he spoke in a very low tone.

After two hours of grilling and answering the never-ending questions, I was so drained. They dug and dug as if searching for an imperfection somehow. Their questions kept going and going. By the time it was my turn to ask questions I got yes and no answers. My information was filled in a database as if filling a form that was mandatory. I just needed to remain seated for a minute and sip glass of water when I was asked to leave as if I had wasted their time. I had to carry my portfolio, my pen and note book as if scooping dirt from a farm to go and organize them far from their sight. I did not even have an opportunity to pull down my skirt from behind. The gentle man in blue had already opened the door and stood by the door as if uttering "Shuu" and locked the door.

That day I wrote an email thanking them for the opportunity and sent them my documents. I followed up every two days. All I was told is that the process was not complete and that I should follow up after Christmas.

I was so devastated. My only opportunity to pursue my purpose had gone. I had nothing else to do. Maybe join the conspiracy theories of why bad things happen to good people, or cry, I do not know.

On the first of January I had an idea., I remember asking my husband to drop me at a cyber on a Monday morning. I logged in to my LinkedIn page and went to the company page that I had started in 2018.

I already had an opportunity. I just needed to accept it. The passion was there. I started seeking employment

roles for young people. I texted and emailed everyone on my LinkedIn page. I then started to seek individuals who would pursue a 1-month training program at a cost and a 3-month internship at our partners who had accepted to offer the opportunity.

After two weeks two people had believed in me and signed up. By the second month 14 more people had signed up. Soon I moved from the cyber café to an office space, I got an intern and some trainers. Before we knew it, I had 50 trainees out of a target of 100 that seemed impossible.

I created an opportunity out of rejection and opened a door for other people to walk in too. Although I had a bad experience from my interview, that they didn't believe in me and locked the door because they didn't want me there nor find me qualified to work there, I knew that I was qualified. I just needed that burning passion. I took that bold first step and started with the support I had at that point.

Skills to Grow Africa will officially launch on the 26th of this month. I am a NITA certified trainer and the organization is a fully registered company. For the last 6 month I have focused on growing the company and creating opportunities for individuals interested in a Public Relations Profession from a form 4 leaver to a retired practitioner. Sometimes it is not about the opportunity, it is about the passion. If you have the passion, nothing can kill it, not even a closed door.

Go for it.

The writer is the CEO and Founder of Skills to Grow Africa



Crisis communication in the digital age

By Agneta Alubala



'It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it'

—
Warren Buffet

In the digital age, a simple act of clicking and sharing content online, could be all that it takes for an organisation to crash down from grace to grass. Technology has made it such that we no longer have the luxury to rummage through loads of dusty protocols looking for the perfect rule for given crisis mitigation or wait for working days or hours.

PR has become a 24/7 activity that requires absolute speed, agility and an solid response plan that is bound to decrease the negative impact and help diminish the situation faster. Otherwise, the story will be trending on social media as fast as a bush fire and before you blink, it will already be in mainstream media. Unfortunately, the line between truth and propaganda has seemingly become too blurred due to big data making it even harder to contain a crisis.

The following is an analysis of possible strategies for dealing with emerging crisis situations: -

Establish a crisis response team

Identify a team to handle any developing and unforeseen crisis situations. Ensure that the team is available and on standby. Each individual should clearly understand their role and be ready to spring into action in a flash because speed is of essence in mitigating crisis. The team should be able to work in synergy providing the right answers to the questions. Additionally, identifying a techno savvy team is of great importance in this digital age.

Have an effective crisis response plan

Formulate a detailed customized crisis communications plan that is both proactive and reactive and let everyone within the organisation aware of its existence and structure.

The fact that employees are a company's number one brand ambassadors means that everyone should have and understand their role in the plan.

Invest in the right tools

Seek to formulate a protected data accession hub where all necessary modern-day tools, protocols and communication material can be easily accessed remotely 24/7 by the response team. Online monitoring tools should be keenly observed and use of data visualization incorporated to quickly provide insights and inform adjustment of conversational trends.

Identify and understand your publics

Understanding your publics' different information needs and preference is important.

Customize each data as per their need and target them as per their importance and interest to the organisation. In the digital era, it's important to at least have contacts to main bloggers, social media influencers especially negative influencers, mainstream digital news editors and key followers on social media.

Test Your Plan

You need to identify a response plan that works. Once you've done that, test the plan. Coordinate with your security team and conduct a dry run. The results of the simulation will enable you to detect areas that require improvements or amendments.

Focus on research and development

Purpose to continuously and consistently train your team and the employees on crisis response strategy especially the social media policy to ensure they clearly understand its impact on a company's reputation.

By and large, there is no perfect content strategy in crisis communication. Public relations practitioners should strive to be responsive and well prepared to adopt and customize their strategy in alignment with advancement in technology.

The writer is a Brand Strategist and Co-founder at BeingYou Consult – a Personal Branding Social Enterprise in Kenya.

How communication can benefit from data



By Bernadette Ngara

Data is a valuable resource for businesses today. It is akin to what oil was in years gone by. It literally powers the engine of our increasingly digital world.

Many interactions that were previously physical have gone digital. Even so, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic that has accelerated the transformation. The phone has evidently become the gateway to our digital lifestyles.

With the convenience of digital first for customers, marketers and communicators also get a window of opportunity from the footprints left from these interactions. Now, more than ever, organisations of the future have the chance to keep a laser focus on the customers and to engage them more effectively and relevantly.

From data gathered along customers' digital journeys, organisations can strategically spot opportunities. It can lead them to tap into new segments, review and innovate their offerings, and generally tweak operations to deliver better value to their customers and drive growth sustainably.

It's a data-driven society

All it requires is a close, hard and regular look at data from customers' behaviours on different touchpoints in order to identify

and extract value from it. The convergence of touchpoints through the internet, system integration and advanced technological inventions such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data makes it easy to pick up the trends and inform strategic decisions.

Take the example of a bank. There are many opportunities to a value-adding insight from customer trends. This is from a variety of sources – the queue management system at premises, web traffic and activity on digital channels, interactions on social media, transactions on different touchpoints, complaints on the contact centre, among others. The opportunities to deploy and learn from data are limitless in our truly data-driven world.

The insights from such data are beneficial to the entire organisation, including the communication function. It has the potential to enrich stakeholder engagement strategies, campaigns and activities. Further, it creates a great foundation and appraisal for any customer strategies since this is the base of in-demand tailored solutions, backed by data.

For a financial services provider, trends in the nature of queries at the contact centre or through social media channels could provide an opportunity to attune messaging across integrated communication channels. A spike in customer queries

relating to fraud provides an opportune time for an education campaign with messaging on how funds can be kept safe and avoid being defrauded. In addition to targeted customer emails on security, social media engagements or blast SMS to customers, this can also go into internal communication messaging as well as media outreach.

Tapping the opportunities of data

Gone are the days of a 'spray and pray' approach to messaging. Digital technology is continually ushering in an age of planned, targeted and intentional communication. Many organisations are just beginning to scratch the surface of the possibilities that are being opened up by this information age. A few others are still stuck in their old ways of doing things oblivious of the digital revolution underway.

With increasing data-focused expertise and usage, so is the risk of infringement on privacy rights. This creates the need for organisations to self-regulate and strictly adhere to provisions of data protection laws, even as they attempt to draw opportunity for it.

The data opportunity is too great to be missed. The advantage of data from digital technology lies in its immediacy. This is unlike the past when brands relied on the power of gut or the force of long experience for marketing and communication decisions. Often, brand custodians had to wait for years before an audit was conducted or feedback chits retrieved and analyzed. Today, establishing customer feedback can be real-time, with tools for setting up listening posts on social media and the contact center queues.

However, for this value to be unlocked, it requires strategic investment in appropriate tools that can gather data, analyze and generate insights from it. More importantly, it also requires an enabling organisational culture that pays attention to data and the opportunities to draw insight. Ultimately, organisations of the future will be driven by data for communications and entire operations. For those that choose to ignore this digital revolution, they do so at their own peril.

The writer is the Director of Marketing, Corporate Communications and Customer Experience at National Bank of Kenya.

Neural networks drive business results

By Vincent Kipyegon

Big data and artificial intelligence can have a positive impact in the public relations and communication profession. Donald Baer, CEO of Burson-Masterlller envisions growth of Public relations in integrated communications where data will transform the PR industry (Frenemies, Ken Auleta).

Data is the new oil while artificial network is the electricity. We live in a data driven era where neural networks technology has recently emerged and transformed the way we make decisions and relate various publics.

Neural Networks and Deep Learning

Neural networks is an area in artificial intelligence through which computer systems that can do anything a human brain can do using a process called deep learning to mimic functional process of the human brain neurons. The most important aspect of neural networks is the value of insights that can be harnessed from the data, in this case, neural networks crunch huge amount of datasets and outputs important insights.

Big data combined with machine learning and deep learning is a great tool of public relations and communications that plays a vital role in digital communication and marketing. Data driven decisions can improve reputation, create cordial relationship between clients and brands drive business results.

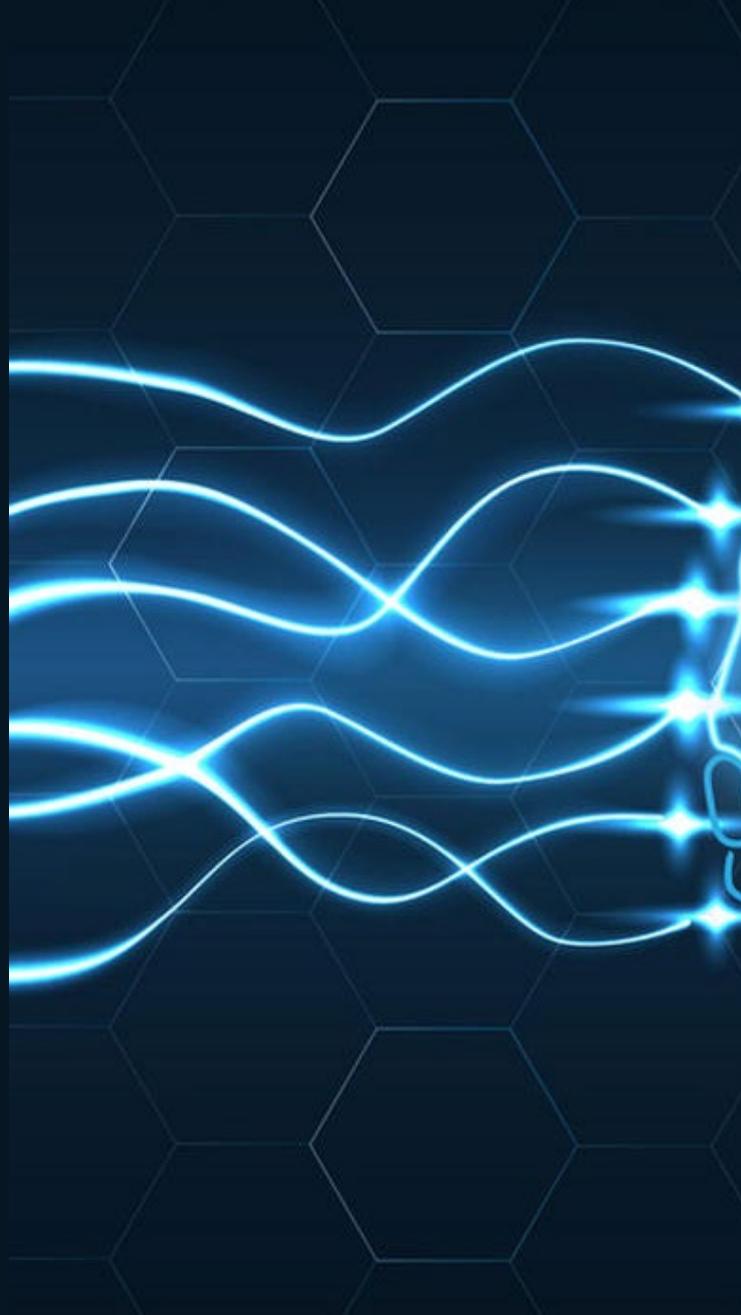
The heart and soul of the company is creativity and innovation. Bob Iger, CEO of Walt Disney company states that these emerging technologies plays a vital role in enhancing creativity and the growth of any company.

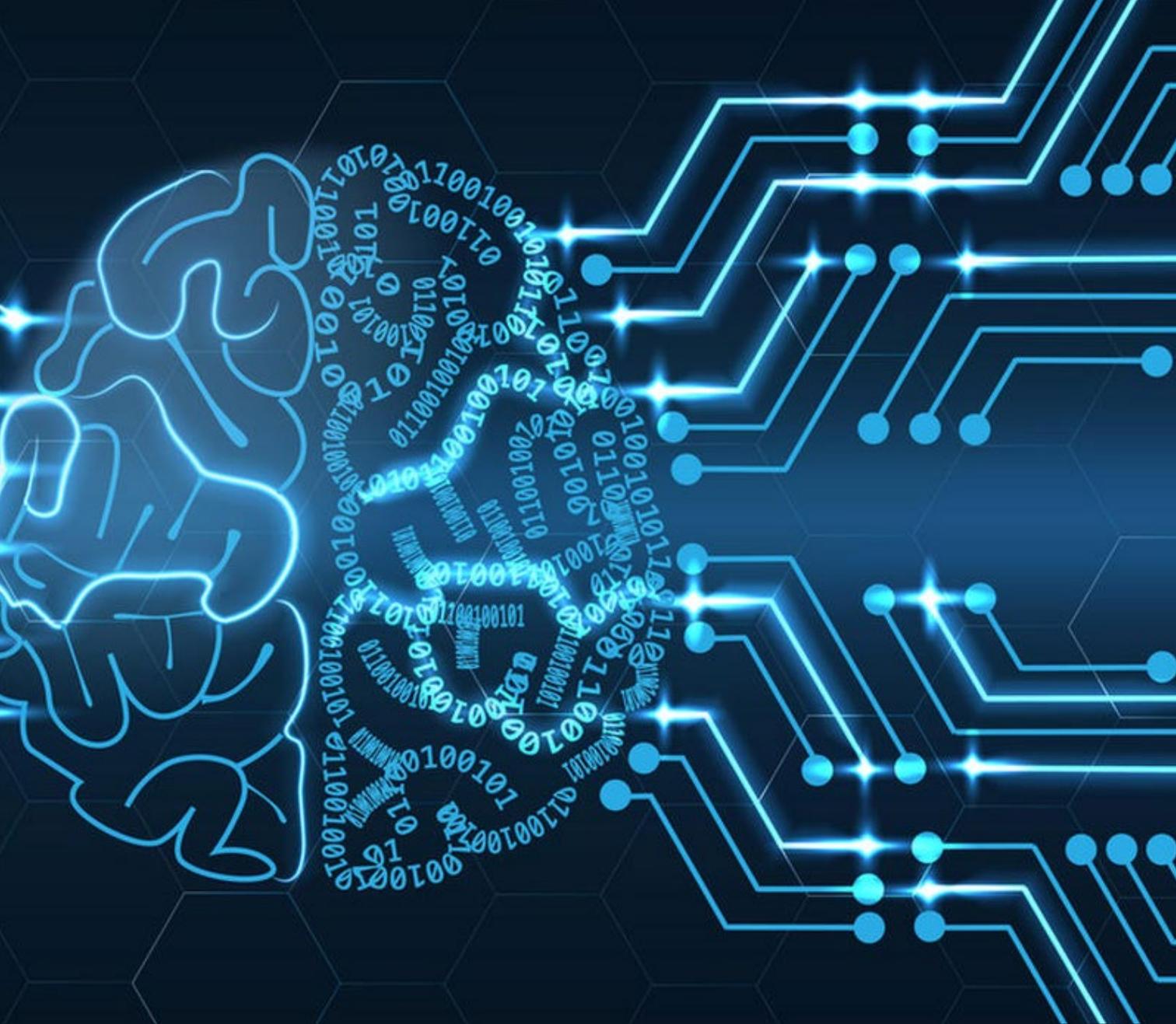
Insights generated by neural networks on big data act as an

essential tool of storytelling, content creation, identifying the target audience, improving creativity, predicting consumer patterns, marketing, advertising, inform strategies for developing communication plans and effective public relations campaigns.

Big data, though, is a double edge sword in the public relations and communications as it comes along with its own side effects: bias in the data, lack of human empathy and emotional aspects from machines analysing the data. Creativity being an art, not cannot be quantified using science. Big data doesn't guarantee on insights about human behaviours such as emotions or empathy. These human behaviours are key indicators in any decision making process in public relations and communications profession.

AI,through deep learning, plays a crucial role in informing the strategies for developing effective communication strategies and PR campaigns. The insights from the data can map out the target audience from a demography, curate the messages and suggest the efficient communication channel to reach out to





them. This leverage ensures that the communication plans meet the objective of the plan and guesses are avoided.

Public relations is the art of telling the right story to the right people using the right channels, Business guru Seth Godin observes in his book, 'This is Marketing' that storytelling is an essential function of public relations for building and strengthening relationships between clients and organisations. Deep learning comes to the rescue in storytelling, it provides insights that can be used shape the narrative and improve the corporate reputation of brands.

Strategic messaging and Content creation

Content creation and tailoring is the greatest advantage of neural networks and machine learning. Data driven content is king. Big data companies provide the content for messaging as well as for the market. Facebook AI can test how best a message will work as well as choosing the best target audience while Google Gmail assists us in curating email messaging process through auto prediction of sentences while typing

"Messaging drawn from big data insights gives communicators and marketers an opportunity to communicate to consumers in new ways that will evoke emotion and drive business results. "Carolyn Everson, Facebook global marketing officer notes in an interview with journalist Ken Auleta.

Marketing has emerged as a great beneficiary of big data and deep learning. This data-driven marketing has led to various variants of digital marketing campaigns including: content marketing, one-to-one marketing, influencer marketing, email marketing and relevant marketing.

The outcome of advertising is through data. Big data has revolutionized the world of advertisement strategically targeting consumers directly rather than throwing ads to the whole population. Google ads and Facebook ads are the best advertisement modeled using neural networks. These ads provide customized advertising based on personal information and preferences.

The writer is a Public Relations Practitioner based in Nairobi.

Censorship of social media apps and the internet by governments- cause of concern?

By Keith Njiru

The impact of social media and the internet is undeniable; millions of citizens rely on the online space to access information in an unfiltered manner. For the modern communications practitioner, it is social media has become part and parcel of the daily work day.

Unfortunately, in the wake of the potent power of social media, governments and other authorities have resorted to imposing censorship, and in the extreme cases complete shutdown of internet access. This move has been defended as a mode of “controlling misinformation” but observers have pointed out that these tactics are aimed at clamping down on freedom of speech. There have been several cases of this globally, with the potential to impact on the practice of public relations.

Most recently in Nigeria, the government on June 4th 2021 announced that it had “indefinitely suspended” operations of Twitter in the country, reason being that the government viewed the medium as a platform used for “activities that are capable of undermining Nigeria’s corporate existence.” Ironically, the ban was announced on Twitter. Many perceived the ban as retaliation for Twitter’s deletion of President Mohammed Buhari’s tweet a few days prior, which was in contravention of Twitter’s moral code and was thus pulled down for being offensive. As is the case with such restrictions, users seeking to bypass the ban can only do so through use of virtual private networks (VPNs). At the time publication of this article, the internet ban was still in force.

After the Israeli attack on Gaza in May of this year, Reporters Without Borders reported that WhatsApp blocked the accounts for at least 7 journalists based in the Gaza Strip. This included five working for the global Qatari news outlet Al Jazeera English and two for news agency AFP. The same pattern was repeated on Instagram, with Palestinians complaining that their accounts were being taken down after uploading videos and images of protesters



opposing the intended forced expulsions of families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in occupied East Jerusalem.

In what is seemingly becoming a dangerous pattern, some governments are imposing partial shutdowns especially during the election period and in response to protests. This was witnessed in the Republic of Congo (not to be confused with the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC]) when the country experienced internet blackout hours before the presidential election. The same was witnessed in Niger during and after its presidential elections, in what was termed as the country’s first democratic transfer of power since the country gained independence. Similar restrictions were witnessed in Chad, Uganda and Russia.

While these clampdowns might seem detached from the communications space, they do affect how public practitioners perform their duties. The implications of these are that communicators must reinvent ways to communicate with their audiences in the online space. Collaborations with journalists, a group that PR practitioners work closely with, is likely to be impacted, given that these restrictions have at times extended to TV/radio stations being taken off air. PR practitioners must circumvent new ways to ensure these operations do not affect their messaging. These blackouts also create a distrustful perception of the government by its citizens. An internet shutdown equated to a blanket information darkness, with citizens feeling that they are being denied their right to access information and that some elements are being concealed from them. For professionals operating in government communications, this may not be the first impression that they would for citizens to have of their government.

One way of embracing this is by communication practitioners packaging their news stories in a 360° angle that it can be pitched to diverse media- be it radio, television or on social media spaces without the message being compromised. Spreading awareness on this censorship and condemning such shutdowns is another way that PR professionals can step up and take their stand against such actions. A silver lining amidst this trend is an opportunity for powerful lobbying by stakeholder groups to governments to discourage them from implementing these drastic measures. This should take the form of delicate negotiations- not with a view of yielding to government demands but evaluating how to work side by side in a symbiotic relationship. PR professionals as well as their membership bodies can engage with civil society organizations and institutions that promote digital rights to reduce instances of such actions.

[Information acquired from among other sources NetBlocks and Access Now]

Clientele management through interactive kiosks

By *Muchichu Rose*

An interactive kiosk is a hardware equipment with special integrated software that provides useful information and allows users to carry out various activities independently as per the function without waiting in long queues. Interactive kiosks offer an agile and practical experience to users around the globe.

Today's advancing technology has seen us live in an era of independence, self-confidence and entrepreneurship with self-service as a possible game-changer in both business and industry. As the world continues to adapt and reinvent itself, digital interactive kiosks are becoming an integral part of most organizations' marketing strategies.

Digital signage kiosks have enriched the communication sector by allowing businesses to give real-time information updates to its customers and stakeholders. Through centralized data management systems, company communications departments can easily update and refresh multiple screens information such as new product introduction news or flash sale updates. These skills have allowed locations such as shopping malls and other high traffic areas to be a great channel for sales, communication and information sharing. This has thus made it possible to inform passersby about special offers and discounts.

Being a product of independence, self-service digital kiosks are also used extensively in financial institutions with a singular aim of boosting consumer's security while reducing traffic in banking institutions. Customers feel secure while carrying out their transactions alone, for instance in ATMs. This helps in establishing brand trust.

Interactive kiosks are also common where queue management is necessary. It is common to find these kiosks in banking halls, healthcare receptions, public service receptions and even during events' check in. The kiosks help coordinate information centrally and allocate visitors to open

counters for easy queue management hence giving customers a good brand experience.

In fast-food restaurants, the installation of self-service digital kiosks has proved to be overwhelming. Diners have shown signs of being comfortable ordering their food from such kiosks rather than from cashiers as everyone hates standing in line waiting to be served especially the hungry customers. In some instances, businesses have given customers the opportunity to customize their meals at the kiosks making the ordering experience engaging and satisfying.

For the communications and marketing departments, introducing digital kiosks makes it easy to learn the customer's behavior, receive feedback and adjust business offers accordingly. By collecting data on customer's actions, a business can easily recognize trends and habits. This analytic knowledge would then help in improving the experience, advertise effectively and provide better services.

By placing an interactive kiosk in your business, you will also allow clients to achieve their quest for information and service while avoiding queues and close human contact especially at such a time when the Covid-19 is wreaking havoc. Using the hardware without enforcing covid-19 safety rules however would also create a risk of spreading the virus. Having users sanitize their hands before use would be a good way of ensuring that the kiosk does not become a risky contact point. Furthermore, introducing interactive kiosks would help scale down a company's expenditure by eliminating the necessity of employing a large number of customer care service personnel. This thus shifts the focus of the employees to other critical operations. Since the kiosks have special features where anyone can access products or services independently; the customers are likely to find the information they need without being easily distracted.

In today's world where people enjoy independence, deploying interactive kiosks will ensure that customers enjoy a great



brand experience. Putting up interactive digital structures calls for companies to focus holistically on quality, performance, efficiency and interactivity while optimizing the use of resources, embracing environmentally friendly approaches and ultimately reducing costs. Companies should think about the experiences they would like to give their clients. If a company notices long queues in their business, seeking out a solution of having an interactive kiosk can complement the services. When planning an exhibition, think of having the guests sign-in using a kiosk rather than scribbling down their details on a book. Also, at the exhibition, have a product catalogue displayed on a digital screen alongside other relevant product information.

Looking at the kiosk-based initiatives in different sectors, it is succinct that they play a critical role than imagined. It is obvious that they are an integral part of many organizations' marketing strategies owing to their unmatched features and advantages ranging from reduced costs to improving communication and enhancing customer satisfaction. Perhaps, it is something worth considering to help improve business service, optimize human resources as well as mitigate environmental issues.

The writer is a digital and online marketing expert based in Nairobi.

Fast evolving Public Relations stands the test of time amid Covid-19 challenges



By Isaiah K. Cherutich

The history of public relations is replete with twists and turns as the activity once referred to as publicity and press agency metamorphosed to what is now corporate communications. When Edward Bernays taught PR in New York and Ivy Ledbetter Lee sent his 'Declaration of Principles' to American media outlets at the turn of the last century, none had ever imagined how core public relations would become in contemporary business.

Since early 1900s, this field evolved and was thrust into the limelight to eventually become a highly respectable profession and an integral part of contemporary business. Corporate communications today has an immense responsibility in terms of taking charge and managing organizational reputations, championing, maintaining

and where possible enhancing its image amongst clients, stakeholders, special interest groups and the public at large. Its forte is issues management as well as shaping stakeholder, public perceptions and attitudes.

None in the world of business today can envisage a successful strategy without the input of public relations, more so considering the changing communications landscape and rapid technological advancements. PR's main components that include advocacy, issues management, loyalty, honesty, expertise and fairness cannot be achieved without strategies to reach out and engage audiences online. For these strategies to become impactful, the use of ICT, latest data collection and analysis methodologies are a must. The use of technology has opened up new frontiers that enhance the world of

corporate communications. This precisely why Kenyan companies are now, more than ever before, keen on hiring and retaining personnel with advanced digital skills and values. Such credentials enable them to maximize gains in a robust ICT infrastructure like ours.

Reflecting on events in the 20th Century when public relations was slowly getting transformed into a serious discipline in its own right, organizational public engagements were usually one way communication. Then, institutions churned out advertisements, PSAs, posters and brochures without as much of a thought on feedback. And if at all there was feedback of any kind, it most times took months to reach the organization. But in the contemporary business scenario, organizational communication be it corporate or public sector is anchored on

two-way communication. Using a variety of platforms at their disposal, organizations relay information and within no time, feedback comes in fast and furious. Information on social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook is instant, an activity that is 24/7 with updates every few minutes. Management of information therefore becomes an absolute necessity if an institution wants to stay ahead of the competition, become relevant and credible.

Nowadays, it is the norm rather than the exception for companies to use blogs, websites, social media platforms for outreach purposes. The latest studies on social media consumption state that organizations have no choice but to be credible, sincere, factual, fair and transparent in their engagements with the public. Follow ups on feedback, quick responses through social media channels are a necessity. The input of big data, algorithms becomes essential avenues to research, data-based management systems and predictive analytics. Any lapses in this information chain would be disastrous to an institution's reputation as the same publics have easily accessible, alternative and multiple sources of Information, some of whom may not be supportive. It is without doubt therefore that for one to be an effective public relations practitioner, skills in ICT are a must have.

How else can communication specialists organize vast amounts of information that trickle in through their systems, make them available to the press and the public if not through online platforms? How else would practitioners transform information into a comprehensible structure for use now and in future without embracing the contemporary pluralistic sources of information? We may wish to disregard or even run away from the current technological advancements but data collection, data preparation and interpretation are unavoidable engagements in present day business practice. Information is power! We must embrace modernity, take the lead and transform these channels to better serve our communication needs.

Come 2020 when Coronavirus happened, and you realize the quantum leap humanity took in a matter of days. From March 2020 going forward, previously unknown

teleconferencing providers like Zoom, Google-meets, Bluejeans, Microsoft Teams became part of our everyday business vocabulary as face-to-face meetings ceased as Ministry of Health Covid-19 restrictions came into force. Further, these health safety precautions dictated how human beings interacted with each other and the communication channels available. Since Covid-19 protocols emerged, technology took over how the humanity conducts business – From the annual UN General Assembly, international conferences, Heads of State Summits, symposia, departmental and even staff meetings, everything went virtual further reducing human interaction. Distance learning

from nursery, primary, secondary, higher education institutions went on remotely. Our court system, sports, commerce, health institutions, the money market, religious institutions and virtually every other sector of the economy have embraced virtual platforms, redefining corporate communications as we have always known.

The author is Broadcast and Corporate Communications Lecturer at the School of Communication, Cinematic and Creative Arts - United States International University – Africa, Nairobi.



As time progresses new consumer targets will come into view that you like to add to your competitive analysis program.



Competitive analytics a much needed data stake

By Moses Bwire

With today's social media monitoring capabilities and data analytics tools, there's no reason that you shouldn't be using them to keep tabs on the competition. Any form of competitive intelligence that you can act on to improve your brand's position is a win. However, competitive monitoring ensures that you're consistently getting those chunks of intel, so you're constantly improving your brand awareness concerning the competitor. Keeping track of the competition is more accessible than ever before though, which is good. But many brands, for whatever reason, are still not leveraging competitive monitoring to its full capability.

Competitive monitoring and competitive intelligence. They both use social media listening and data analytics tools to capture insight about the competition. However, competitive intelligence can be gained from running one analysis. In distinction, competitive monitoring establishes benefits that you can measure over time with a continuation of similar examinations. It's a repeatable, powerful process.

Tools

Today's data analytics tools allow users to analyze through their data for precise insights. Perhaps the sheer number of directions one can go with this data leads to analysis paralysis with many brands you're just starting out, it's acceptable to choose a few broad metrics to begin with. For instance, you can choose to measure your competitor's net sentiment quarterly so you can track movement throughout the year and compare it to your own. From there, you can add key metrics, you're just starting out, it's acceptable to choose a few broad metrics to begin with.

For instance, you can choose to measure your competitor's net sentiment quarterly so you can track movement throughout the year and compare it to your own. From there, you can add fundamental metrics, or measures, about your competitor's social

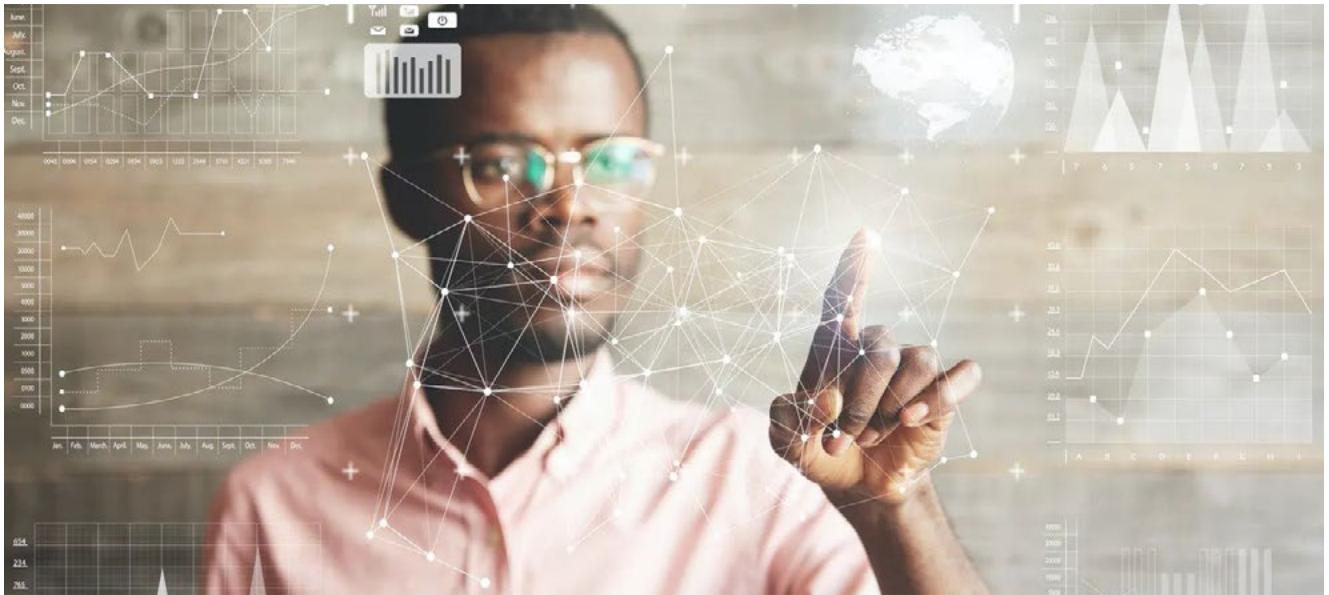
media performance and consumer opinions to help your brand make better market decisions or criteria, about your competitor's social media performance and consumer opinions to help your brand make better market decisions. You can run a social media audit, more specifically a brand health diagnostic on your main competitors at key intervals throughout the year. Afterward, compare them against your own brand health metrics to yield a panoramic view of movement throughout your category.

Competitive advantage

As time progresses, new niches and consumer targets will come into view that you'd like to add to your competitive monitoring program. For example, if cosmetic business owners in Nairobi generate lots of competitor mentions at 3 p.m. on Saturdays – you can track that. Monitor how your competitors perform there regarding sentiment, mentions, impressions, etc., and use that data to inform your messaging.

Comparison metrics

As you strategize into this specific audience, you can retake those social readings whenever you want and compare them against the same metrics for your brand. That way, you know if you're gaining ground or losing steam. Both you and your competition have brand stories that are playing out in the market. Competitive monitoring puts real numbers to the metrics you want to watch, so you know where you stand at all times.



The future of communications lies in data interpretation

By Carol Songa

Even as organisational communication plays an important role in an organisation's environment, we are now faced with the reality of digital transformation that continues to redefine our world in the age of digital disruption and innovation, Big Data is causing an irreversible revolution in many professions, including corporate communication.

Maybe that is why, some argue, that while the significance of Big Data generated by organisations has continued to evolve, the agility and capability of these same organizations to proactively respond to these changes remains debatable. Employees are the most valuable assets to organizations, and their commitment, engagement, productivity, satisfaction, innovation, and retention is enhanced in a cost-effective way when internal communication is implemented strategically and effectively.

Digital revolution

To develop internal communication strategies, the profession can embrace the digital revolution by adopting insights from Big Data. However, studies have shown that a good number of organizations operate without an internal communication strategy and even fewer organizations and agencies utilize data to enhance their strategic organizational communication efforts. According to a study conducted in 2018 by Arthur J. Gallagher & Co, 60 per cent of organizations do not have a long-term

internal communication strategy. In order to utilize this information, the data is accurately acquired and analysed to produce results, which are then evaluated and interpreted to generate tangible information. In this case, to get a broader and deeper overview of employee's perspectives and requirements, Big Data can be collected through the organization's internal communication channels. The information is then translated to provide knowledge and insights, thus enabling organizations to have a more informed decision-making process when developing communication strategies.

Measurable messages

Eventually, this makes it possible for strategic, segmented, personalized, relevant and measurable communication messages to be developed. However, data mining, data analysis and data usage ought to operate under ethical and legal guidelines to avoid disputes and privacy concerns. In-line with the future of corporate communication continuing to be data-driven, corporate communications practitioners will be required to learn how to generate, accurately explain and apply knowledge from insights gained from Big Data analysed by data scientists. This will enable organizations to practice strategic organizational communication more efficiently, hence achieving organizational effectiveness when organizational goals and objectives are met.

The author is a Media and Communication Science graduate student at Technische Universität Ilmenau

A hand holding a glowing smartphone with colorful app icons floating around it. The background is dark, and the phone and icons are illuminated with a bright yellow light. The icons include various symbols like a magnifying glass, a person, a document, and a speech bubble.

Disruption presents Public Relations with an avenue to harness creativity and innovation



By Juliana Juma- MPRSK

Public Relations has continuously evolved especially over the past 5 years where unconventional modes of getting messages across have become the order of the day. Previously, if one had mentioned terms such as “influencer marketing” or “thought leadership”, most corporates would have had to think twice before getting on board. Today, these are just some of the emerging PR trends without which, organizations run the very real risk of becoming irrelevant.

PR measurement through qualitative and quantitative metrics as well as brand online reputation management are also critical trends to watch out for. Another major trend shaping the current PR scene is contributor marketing where anyone can give (paid or unpaid) opinions/views on products and services, a tool that works well particularly for B2C companies.

Emerging trends

The Future of Work as a tenet of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), also has a disruptive nature, which to organizations means having to adapt their operations to ever-emerging trends. There was, however a laid-back approach to entirely embracing this facet, as there was no imminent urgency for the same. The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly accelerated this disruption and forced organizations world-wide to re-think strategies of how to work and communicate effectively with the necessary adaptability for any further unplanned situations. Over the past decade, digital technology has disrupted various professions across the board and PR is no exception. PR Disruption is brought about via technology, process automation, social media among others.

Rather than being a negative interference, disruption in PR presents an avenue for practitioners to harness their creativity and innovation. It will require organizations to constantly stay updated and ahead of the pack as far as targeted trends are concerned. Trends such as social media listening and digital storytelling are gaining notable traction because of their cost-effective, un-orthodox, but highly effective avenues of relating audiences to brands that were previously considered un-relatable. Current business dynamics means that PR/Communication strategies will need to extend beyond the digital divide and integrate non-digital processes to achieve a desired result and remain relevant. Digitization has been also been credited with enabling PR practitioners to measure the impact of campaigns with the view of analyzing them and making them more responsive to consumer behavior.

Reputational management

It is critical however, to ensure that social media company reputation is well-managed as an online reputation is easy to destroy. PR practitioners must embrace disruption if the PR profession is going to successfully and sustainably evolve. It is in the best interests for PR practitioners to ensure effective adaptability as much as possible to fully reap from the new normal. A progressive PR mechanism especially is one that seeks to remain ahead of the disruption curve and adapt as it advances. Organizations and businesses need to understand that the bottom-line of disruption is embracing the effects of technology on decision-making, and with it developing ideas and innovative strategies that give them a competitive edge. Whatever it takes to perceive hope through disruption, we will keep on doing, as our resilient humanity has proven.



The evolution and inclusion of the black African woman

By Zippie Mucheke

Being a black African woman means much more than an afro hairstyle, melanin, and black girl magic.

It's having to fight for equal pay, economic power and a seat at the table every day. Over the years, women have unfortunately and disproportionately been burdened by work and poverty, with limited decision-making powers while being excluded from the political, economic, and social power structures.

From something as simple as having the right to inherit property and open bank accounts to freedom to access credit or capital without consent from their husbands, the struggle for financial freedom for the African woman has been a long journey.

In the 1990s, the banking and financial sector in Kenya operated under the archaic Napoleonic law where women, children, and lunatics were put in the same category. Women had no contractual rights, yet they played a big role in nation-building.

In 1961, Barclays now ABSA abolished the 'marriage bar'. This was the condition whereby upon marriage, women were expected to resign from their positions. Barclays' abolition of the marriage bar meant that women could remain in post, with additional benefits such as maternity leave, albeit unpaid.

In some places across Africa, the Middle East and in South Asian countries, a woman requires her husband or a male family member co-sign a loan. Similarly, daughters do not have equal inheritance rights to their parents' property.

What happens when women cannot enjoy their financial rights? They are vulnerable to income shocks, especially now in a pandemic. If women cannot borrow, they cannot invest in their future. A gender-based financial exclusion means that the developing world operates at massive under-capacity.

Today, the story of the African woman is changing. The Black African woman is demanding policy reforms, customized financial products and equal access to pay and opportunities because time has been way up.

The Black African Woman needs to know that she can overcome the countless barriers that may threaten to thwart her aspirations for success.

We join other girl-centered organizations in empowering the black African woman in all aspects of her life. Hesabu Dada Initiative seeks to reach women and girls in vulnerable communities through financial education and amplifying voices in boardrooms, in governance and policy creation.

The article is written by the CEO of Hesabu Dada Initiative



The impact of technology on health

By Caroline Gatwiri

Technology has become part of our everyday life. Without technology, life becomes more difficult, especially for those with various health conditions. Several studies have been done showing the impact of technology on persons living with disability, in all aspects from electronic wheelchairs to braille machines.

Stacy, a 10 year-old girl in Nkururu Village, was unable to walk following a bout of meningitis. This put tremendous strain on her family, especially her mother who was her full time primary care giver. Stacy's family were peasant farmers, and the fact that her mother was unable to work meant that they were financially in dire straits. Following intervention from a community-based health advocate, Stacy was given a wheelchair, elevating her quality of life.

A report filed by reporter Wilkister Nyabwa` on the first test-tube babies in Kenya revealed about 15% of women locally grapple with infertility. Lilian Ogutu, a mother of one, struggled for 10 years to conceive her second child, before a gynaecologist revealed she had blocked fallopian tubes. She was faced with two options: surgery to unblock the tubes or in-vitro fertilization (IVF). The chances of conception with IVF were higher, and she was able to have the baby.

IVF is the process whereby eggs are extracted from the woman's ovaries and sperm is retrieved from the male partner. The egg and sperm are then physically combined in a laboratory and the embryo transferred to the uterus. Technological advancements have made IVF successful; couples are even able to select the sex of the child.

The two cases above are examples of technology at work to solve health based issues. Technology continues to bear more impact on our health and is set to play an even bigger role as the world continues to change.

The link between data and data speak; it is PROs to unpack

By Mutethia wa Mberia

Many public and private corporate institutions have manifold data management systems consequent to their foundational establishment. Most of which harbor and manage mouthful data in the different modules set up of these systems geared towards ease of service and attendant objectives.

Some of these systems are stand-alone while others are integrated with existing ones such as the E-citizen platforms. The usage and access controls are thus diverse depending on individual organization and target clientele. A long while, the focus has always been whether or not corporate have systems and the extent to which such data systems have been integrated to core operations. This question has considerably been handled by system developers.

The role of Communication practitioners in the system development continuum (conceptualization to development to roll-out and finally to periodic reviews) has not been exploited fully hence the outcome tends to be more mechanical rather than striking a balance to attain “human-faced” systems. Most often than not, PR professionals are brought on board after the entire system is done only to be informed by the bigwigs, the need to publicize the existence and appeal of the system. This has proven challenging in that the target audience is neither prepared nor involved in the messaging.

The interpretive, presentation and overall system messaging ought to be given a thought that can only be distilled from wisdom of the Communication practitioners right from its mooted. A look at any system one will notice wide messaging opportunities in various form and content. Introductory pages, pop pages, dialogue boxes, sign up/in section are some of the areas practitioners can capitalize on and appropriately crystalize messages pertinent to the user value . Summary of interpretive, implication and interconnection of data therein in the system can also be done through such messaging that can be reviewed and repackaged from time to time.

It is within the precincts of our trade to be always hands on and advice on the need for simplified outlook of systems in terminology to be used, navigation arrangements across its functionalities. A deliberate connection between technical developers and communication practitioners need to be interwoven so that systems and data therein will receive broad buy-in by the users. This collegiate approach from development through the life of the system will also act as a selling point for the corporates, ease and repackage business processes as well as scale up the credibility of data and data protection within the broader tenets of information management system controls.

The writer is a communication professional and a member of PRSK





Can smartphones replace computers?

By Boniface Mwalii

At the dawn of the millennium, owning a computer in Kenya was a major status symbol. For organisations, it was a competitive advantage that placed them at the edge of what has become the most crucial technology of the information age we presently find ourselves in. For individuals, it was an enviable display of perceived super-intelligence.

Twenty odd years later, computers have become a universal tool in nearly every occupation. Like coloured television sets of yesteryears, they are now a must-have home accessory in the average urban household. And as computers increasingly become part and parcel of our professional and personal lives, their uses, capabilities and worth are also morphing.

Today, it is relatively easy to find a 4GB USB flash disk. We use them to exchange work files, carry movies and backup projects. Two decades ago, this was practically inconceivable to the everyday person who at best had to make do with a 1.44MB portable floppy disk which was about enough to either store 50-word document files or 1 photo.

Increased demand for smartphones

However according to data published by the global stats counter, mobile operating systems have now officially overtaken computer based operating systems with Android & iOS accounting for more than 57% of the global market share as at May this year. In simple terms, people across the world are now using more phones than computers. This has actually been the trend for the better part of the last decade and with demand for smartphones steadily growing across Africa, the expectation is that it will continue to rise.

Besides the fact that smartphones are less bulky and more affordable when compared to laptops or PCs, they are also a lot more powerful. With their quad-core processors, super-hyper-ultra-mega pixel cameras and a seemingly infinite plethora of software applications, smartphones have actually lived up to their billing as the most disruptive communication devices of our time. Their ability to seamlessly integrate with other activities in our day to day lives through gadgets like ring lights, functional features like M-PESA and constant improvements like 5G also make them an indispensable tool of modern life.

But while Canva offers a fast and convenient way to edit social media fliers on the go, most designers would aver that

the user experience on a laptop/PC allows for better fluidity of their creative juices. The same goes for writers, video editors, web developers and other professionals who spend long periods working with their machines. The jury is still out on whether super-hyper-ultra-mega pixel cameras for laptops/PCs would be a game changer in this regard.

One thing that is certain is that every two years, processing power doubles as the cost of data processors decreases. In effect, this allows more customers to access higher quality mobile devices at their fingertips. Additionally, more young people are harnessing the power and capabilities within these devices which enables them to produce superior quality outputs with unprecedented speed as evidenced by the bursts of creative innovation that have spawned a generation of Tiktok/Insta-celebrities and 'Bitcoinaires'.

Whether or not smartphones do render computers obsolete will ultimately depend on how consistent smartphone users prove to be in utilizing the devices to create and consume. Either way, creators now have to master a new set of skills to keep up with the needs of the mobile-driven digital media ecosystem. After all, technology, like all science, exists to make work easier.

Leveraging data analytics for better PR output

By Jonathan Ngulamu,

In the last four or five years, many businesses across the world have digitalised their operations. Neither businesses nor humans want to be left out of the technology bandwagon. With emerging technologies, a better business future is promised by development such as data analytics.

Data analytics is a process of using special tools and techniques aimed at increasing business efficiency and improving its performance by using analysed data, while everyone may agree that data analytics may not be a basic need for every business, it may come as a secondary tool. However, public relations practitioners and organisations need not to subscribe to that reasoning. To Public relations (PR) practitioners, data analytics must be part of their daily tool, not only to monitor and measure their work output but also to make insightful decisions.

Integration of data analytics

Undoubtedly, the full integration of data analytics in public relations will further advance the industry to greater heights while helping organisations and clients to make data-driven decisions hence gaining a competitive advantage in their business operations.

According to Tab, a 34 years old US data company, data analytics offers businesses an array of opportunities. Just like in any other business dealing with people, public relations practitioners are able to gain insights on customer's preferences, able to build better relations with their publics, identifying new opportunities for businesses while having an upper hand in managing issues or even crises whenever they happen. Is this not what we do every day?

According to the International Data Corporation (IDC) report of 2019 on why predictive analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) matter in businesses, about \$77.6 billion (more Ksh 8 trillion) will be spent on cognitive and AI systems by 2022 globally.



On the same note, Forester Research on modern analytics correctly notes that augmenting data with human wisdom can accelerate the developments of businesses even in disruptive periods like the ones we are living in.

With more organisations like the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), endorsing data analytics as a key tool for businesses like public relations, the PR actioners how can leverage these analytics in their operations. Data analytics is more important to the practice more than ever

Data-driven content creation

Just like the media landscape, the scope of public relations is changing at a fast pace as technology is developing. This brings to fore the need for data-driven content creation for campaigns and strategies which forms a big part of the PR job description.

Data analytics will help in content creation since it will document how messages are received, the reactions they get, and what the consumer wants.

Channels of communicating

Utilising data analytics will help in establishing the channels of communicating on data driven content. In normal scenarios PR practioners are aware that social media is the new tool that is used in every campaign. This tool assist in analysing which platforms give the organisation the best value for their money. For instance, while Twitter has become a medium to break news and digest bite-size content –

with its new features like Twitter Spaces – an insight into how many people use this tool and whether it will be necessary to use it is important. Notably, Facebook is now the largest social network in the world with over 2.5 billion monthly users but with insights that most teenagers and young adults are on Instagram, a need to be guided by key data insights becomes mandatory in selecting which channel to use.

Measuring and publishing content

While focusing on the two, data analytics will also enable PR practitioners to conduct their measurements in real-time while also establishing the best time to publishing their content, send press releases, keep contact with the media or even conduct PR campaigns.

With data and technology developments rising at rates never seen before, now is the time to explore how we can make use of the billions of gigabytes of data while exploring how we can incorporate the insights to writing better copies that are tailored to highly targeted audiences.

For business and organisations, consideration to fund the PR department or support the PR agency whenever data analytics-related requests are made will be important. That said, organisations will stand a chance to drive their businesses to greater heights while building resilience, creating a sustainable future and setting the ground for new developments for their organisations and the publics.

About \$77.6 billion (more Ksh 8 trillion) will be spent on cognitive and AI systems by 2022 globally.

The writer is a MPRSK, Communications Consultant and Assistant Clients' Services Manager at IMG Kenya (PR & Events)



PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY
OF KENYA

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starts with you.

Dispose off your
masks properly
to protect our
environment.

DISPOSE
RESPONSIBLY





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