

# PR DIGEST

A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF KENYA



THE PROPOSED BILL IS A TIMELY IDEA  
LIKONI FERRY

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PR IN THE GIG ECONOMY  
NO, YOU DID NOT TREND

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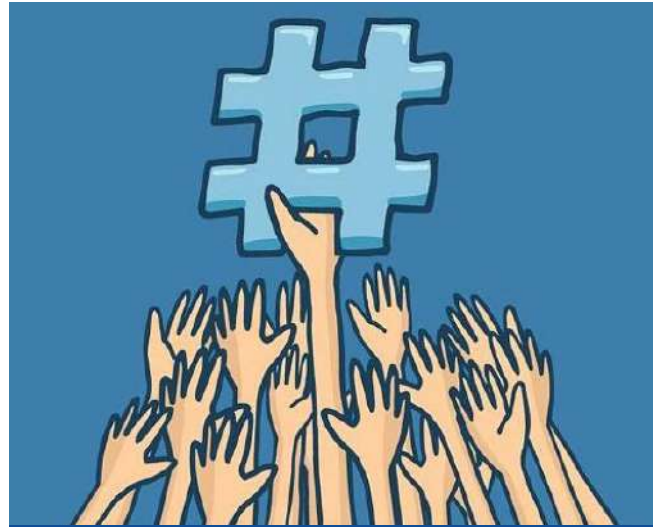


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## Editor's Note

**Dear Reader,**

When the idea to have a publication for the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) was borne, the editorial team envisioned a magazine that sets the pace and seeks solutions to the challenges faced by professionals in the Public Relations industry.

This was no small feat but this extraordinary team brought together a collective of like-minded and passionate game changers who craved for something extraordinarily authentic that will go beyond the pages of a print magazine.

In birthing this issue of the *PR Digest*, we wanted to showcase our identity as PR professionals, by telling stories by and that matter to us. We scoured the pool of articles we received for original thinking and out-of-the-box writers.

Our first issue gives you a good mix of the status of PR industry in Kenya, touches on PRSK focus programs, communication in government with a bias to the Big 4 Agenda, technological advancements and artificial intelligence in PR and science communication as a new frontier in this space.

This magazine is for you, the person who isn't afraid to shake things up, who asks 'why?' 'So what?'

Happy Reading!

**Maureen Koech, MPRSK  
Editor**

### Editorial Board

1. Awino Gilbert	Member
2. Elizabeth Mulae	Member
3. Joseph Ndegwa	Member
4. Kamuzu Banda	Member
5. Nicholas Manyara Mureithi	Member
6. Dr Wilfred Marube	Editorial Advisor

Designed by: Janet Karani

# President's Foreword

The last few years have defined a new trajectory for the Public Relations industry in Kenya. There have been highs and lows. However, the industry is now approaching its maturity and ready to assert itself.

*PR Arena*, a publication by the Society last went to print a decade ago. Significantly, this inaugural edition of *PR Digest* is testament of the intention to be the dominant voice in the market place.

This first edition is special in so many ways but I will mention just a few. This magazine provides thought leadership opportunities for members and relevant industry leaders. It will be a knowledge sharing platform for practitioners.

I see this publication as the platform through which consumer education and other market awareness initiatives will be run. This will be an opportunity for the professionals to set the record straight, set agenda for conversations and ultimately preach to the unconverted.

I congratulate the editorial board for their energy and passion in making this production possible. At the same time, I challenge the team to come up with measures to ensure that this publication is sustained for days to come.

We are proud of the following members who have recently joined various Boards in the industry: Dr Mbugua Njoroge (MCK), Tabitha Mutemi(MCK), Patiece Sanguli Nyange (MCK) and Samuel Kumba (Youth Fund). Keep soaring the PRSK flag.

Have an enjoyable reading.



**Dr Wilfred Marube, MPRSK**  
**President, Public Relations Society of Kenya**

*Advancing Excellence in Public Relations and Communication management*



## PR Bill presented to ICT Cabinet Secretary

The draft Institute of Public Relations and Communication Management (IPRAC) Bill was presented to Joe Mucheru, the Cabinet Secretary Information, Technology and Innovation for onward adoption as an Act of Parliament in August this year.

The Bill was developed by a 14-member taskforce that was constituted by the PRSK Council in June 2018, and was tasked with examining existing policies and best practice in relation to legislation of professional societies locally and internationally as well as reviewing existing draft legal framework document.

The regulation journey dates back to 2017 when the then Jane Gitau-led Council initiated the process. This featured a series of consultative fora that formed a foundation document for the taskforce to deliberate on. The Bill, when passed, will regulate all public relations and communication management professionals, in both the public and private sectors in Kenya.

“Kenya has a vibrant public relations and communication management industry but lacks a legal framework to regulate the manner in which professionals conduct their practice,” The Taskforce Chair Dr Rahab Nyaga opined. “The country lacks mechanisms to enforce the code of conduct for the practitioners as well as standards for training,” She added.

This, together with the lack of a coherent understanding of the PR and communication practice, has subjected the industry to manipulation, resulting in negative perceptions that have injured the profession. It has posed a challenge to implementing Article 35 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Access to Information Act, 2016.

The Bill proposes the enforcement of a continuous professional development programme, as a mandatory requirement to membership renewal. This will help cure the unprofessionalism that has since infected the PR profession. PR professionals will now operate on the same level of respect with their peers in law and accounting professions.

This will also have a serious bearing on the trajectory of the PR profession. Transiting from PRSK to the Institute of Public Relations and Communication Management will operationalize the Disciplinary and Ethics committee, Registration committee and Examination Body.

All prospective members will be required to meet requirements as set out in the Bill and the registration process will be undertaken by a statutory committee, the Registration Committee, which will issue practicing certificates to eligible members. Any member practicing without a valid practicing certificate will be liable to a Ksh 500,000 fine or imprisonment for a term of one year or both. These stringent measures will bring sanity to the profession and ultimately inject competence and professionalism into the industry.

The next few months are critical to us, as the Ministry of ICT begins the public participation processes to collect views on the proposed Bill. If anyone missed the sessions that were conducted by PRSK, now would be the time to offer your views to ensure that the Law once passed, is as inclusive as possible.





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# Four admitted to the College of Fellows

Four colleagues were this July admitted to the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) College of Fellows. The College of Fellows is the apex level of membership for PRSK. It is an active, honorary organization comprising of senior practitioners and educators whose collective skills, experience and knowledge help guide PRSK through the Council. The College strengthens PRSK's ability to pursue its key objectives and deliver on its strategic plan.

The new members, Mr Stephen K Kirogo, CBS, Mr Stephen Wangaji, Ms Jane Gitau and Ms Ruth Musembi bring the number of fellows to 15.

The four were nominated after a rigorous selection process by the Membership and Professional Development Committee, who then recommended the names to the PRSK Council. All nominees were required to satisfy a criterion that required them to prove active engagement in practising Public Relations (PR); demonstrate an exceptional level of expertise in the profession and considerable professional achievements; provide proof of exemplary service to the Society and significant contribution to the PR profession as well



as be members of good standing for at least 10 years.

"Fellows are custodians and promoters of professional standards, code of ethics and excellence in the profession. These four have proven and promised to uphold what is required of them as Fellows and, we are looking forward to working together to propel the industry forward," Mr John Mramba, the Chair of College of Fellows noted during the inauguration of the four members.

"Fellows are the face of the profession

and membership of the Society. Their experiences, insights and set of skills set them apart from other peers in the industry. The Council is ready to work with the entire College and heed advice from them for the growth of the profession," Dr Marube said.

Other members of the College include: John Mramba (Chair), Collin Church, Dr John Macharia, Shabanji Opukah, Yolanda Anderson, Kennedy Onyonyi Oduor, Keli Kiilu, Fatuma Hirsi Mohamed, Mike Njeru, Peter Mutie and Kentice Tikolo

## A new era at the helm of PRSK leadership

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) membership elected new leaders during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) that was held in May this year at the Serena Hotel, Nairobi. Dr Wilfred Marube was elected President by an overwhelming majority to serve for a two-year term, taking over the mantle from President Ms. Jane Gitau.

Madam Gitau has been the President of PRSK since 2015. "I wish the new office bearers the best of luck and thank the PRSK fraternity for according me the opportunity to serve as their Chair," said Madam Gitau.

In the hotly contested elections, Dr Mbugua Njoroge, Vivienne Atieno and Arik Karani were elected Vice President, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The Society's leadership assumes office with high expectations

from members who have long craved for a team that will sanitize the industry from quacks who have since watered down the professional standards. The introduction of a professional practising certificate will weed out unqualified people who masquerade as PR practitioners, denying members the opportunity and platform to put their skills to work.

"The new certifications are part of the wide-ranging reforms that will be rolled out to guarantee quality practice. I have all the confidence that the current team in office will work tirelessly to deliver outstanding results," Dr Marube noted in his acceptance speech.

The 9-member Council will work toward having a more united professional body since there are many opportunities and capacities that interested members can serve in, without necessarily being elected

into office.

Public Relations practitioners in Kenya are currently managing operating budgets estimated at more than Kshs 8.7 billion. Based on this, there is an urgent need to enhance the professional profile of the communications discipline, to accelerate its economic and social impact as well as restore the confidence and trust from client organisations.

The Society is currently working to anchor the Profession on Law through an Act of Parliament. (Read separate story on IPRAC Bill). The team has already set the ball rolling by devising strategies to fast-track the formation of sector-based practice that will cater for the professional development needs of PR practitioners in the Public Communications, Private practice and the PR-related academia fields.





**DR. WILFRED MARUBE**  
*PRESIDENT*



**DR MBUGUA NJOROGE**  
*VICE PRESIDENT*



**ARIK KARANI**  
*TREASURER*



**LILIAN NGANDA**  
*SECRETARY*



**MICHELLE ANEKEYA**  
*ASST. TREASURER*



**VIVIENNE ATIENO**  
*ASST. SECRETARY*



**ALFRED NG'ANG'A**  
*COUNCIL MEMBER*



**KAMUZU BANDA**  
*COUNCIL MEMBER*



**DR HARON MWANGI**  
*COUNCIL MEMBER*



# PRSK launches digital membership management system

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) has launched a digital membership management system (MMS) a system that gives members an exclusive self-service at the comfort of their space.

Members can now update their profiles, generate membership and training invoices, download their certificates through the portal. They can also track and manage their continuous professional development (CPD) points; book for events and training and interact with online resources.

“The ultimate user experience through the MMS comes at a time when organizations are digitizing their services. And for PRSK, this means that we will not print any certificates; whether membership or training and you have been given the freedom to do that at the comfort of your office or home,” Michelle Anekeya, the Chair of Membership and Professional Development Committee noted.

To access the portal, log on to the website [www.prsk.co.ke](http://www.prsk.co.ke) and click on the membership menu; and choose the member log in tab. Key in your email (the one you used when joining), click on the link sent to you on your email and follow the steps. The system also doesn't bar you from downloading your certificates and member statements as many times as you want.

New members can now join online, making the process seamless, less taxing and more effective. You can now have your membership certificate in less than two (2) days if you submit your online form and make payment as soon as you get your confirmation. With the digitization of membership services, members can now update their work as well as contact information on a need-basis. This cures the problem of missing out communication from the Secretariat because they moved jobs or changed emails.





## PR membership certification begins

A working group to develop a curriculum for the certification of Public Relations practitioners in Kenya has begun its work.

The team, established by the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) has been operational since 2nd July 2019. The thirteen members Working Group is chaired by veteran Communication Scholar, Professor Murej Mak'Ochieng of the Multi Media University of Kenya and Mr Arik Karani will be the Secretary of the team.

The team will put in place structures for admission of competent and deserving members to the Society.

"The certification will serve as a stamp for approval to practice and an assurance by PRSK that a certified member is competent to practice at a given level,"

Remarked Dr Wilfred Marube President PRSK. "It is estimated that there are about 2500 unqualified people practicing public relations in Kenya," Dr Marube observed.

With only a month left to its tenure, the team has to deliver its final report to the PRSK Council and make recommendations on the next steps.

Other members of the team include Kennedy Onyonyi, Eunice Muthamia, Franklin Odhiambo, Henry Ndirangu, Sylvia Mwichuri, Yvonne Marete, Eric Wamanji, Samuel Karanja, Dr James Oranga, Ooga Omanga and Leah Eshitemi

The President stressed on the need to enforce professional and ethical standards in the practice, "The certification process should not be designed to lock out any one

from practicing public relations."

He added, "It should admit members through an inclusive but rigorous process. Only the ones who demonstrate required competence levels will go through."

To ensure the quality of the proposed certification units is observed, PRSK has sought for technical expertise and support from organizations like Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, Media Council of Kenya and KASNEB; whose track record and experience in coming up with the certification programmes will come in handy.

The public relations industry in Kenya is estimated to transact close to 400 billion shillings per year in business, mostly from private sector.





# PR professionals must adapt fast in changing times to remain relevant

**By Reuben Wanjala**

*The changing scope in the practice has necessitated the need for PR to transform fast in order to remain relevant in the dynamic audience environment.*

The continued sophistication of the PR arena has, in many ways, translated to the fact that most organizations have diffused the meaning of PR and its role. The standard definition and role of PR in organizations has been lost. Marketing, advertising, branding and PR are lumped together and placed on the shoulders of the communication or PR department. Today, PR officials carry out roles beyond communication. It is therefore important that a PR professional be well versed in areas related to and beyond communication and management.

It is now a trend that PR professionals also get to handle other organization tasks including recruitment and, in other cases, company accounts and resources. It is therefore incumbent upon the PR professional to ensure that s/he is well versed in areas other than communication. Companies and organizations looking for 'Communication Officers' have 'Manage Our Finances' as one of the roles and 'Knowledge in Financial Management' as one of the requirements or qualifications. PR Professionals who have made communication the only specialty get to be marginalized in recruitment processes of such companies.

## **Centrality of Social Media**

Social Media has also risen to occupy a central position in the practice of Public Relations. Companies are having press releases and communication programs entirely conducted on social media. Audience studies and the needs

assessment tests are done on social media. Today, companies and organizations are able to pinpoint their customer base through a very basic online study. This, albeit arguably, has made the practice of PR more effective. It is here to stay and keeps evolving every minute. Its significance cannot be overlooked. Social media has orchestrated an evolution in communication making it incredibly easier. The other end of the spectrum is, however, a worrying fete. The spread of negative publicity or stories about the organization cannot be controlled on social media. A breaking negative story travels round the globe and back before the PR Department of the organization devises an effective model to mount a counter.

## **Writing for different audiences**

Another trend that has risen to effectively take center stage is content development and writing. Unlike the recent past where the focus was almost entirely on verbal communication and basic writing for internal and external communication, diversified audience needs have made it a necessity for PR professionals to be extremely good at content creation. Writing and story-telling is an effective way of cultivating interest in the audience. A good story-teller can attract widespread interest in the company services and products by use of effective language tools. As PR professionals, this is a necessity. It is even more relevant now that companies have decided upon carrying out most of their communication through dedicated websites and through social media. This kind of communication requires a lot of writing. The PR professional is tasked with finding content, developing and redeveloping it to make it much more appealing to the audience.

## **Positive digital presence**

Maintaining a positive online presence is also yet another trend on the ascendancy. Today, this seems to be one of the very primary tasks of PR Professionals. The 'ability to work with social media platforms' and 'update social media platforms' is a primary requirement for most companies hiring PR professionals. Online reputation is something all organizations and companies guard with all available resources. For PR Professionals, it is a pre-requisite to have the ability to effect online opinions and generate compelling debates for the benefit of the organization. Knowledge of social media trends is a key requirement.

## **Opinion leaders**

The varying audience characteristics and the widening PR scope have also necessitated the need for the use of opinion leaders to run PR campaigns. Organizations and companies are now using prominent or famous individuals in PR campaigns and also as brand ambassadors. This enables them to pool together and get the effective magnetic effect on their targeted audience. In product launches or marketing programs, opinion leaders are used for the product to gain as much exposure as possible. In most cases, the opinion leaders are usually not trained as PR professionals and do not have any background knowledge of Public Relations.

To fully keep tabs with these developments and trends, PR professionals must be willing to adapt and be open to newer changes.

*Wanjala is a PR Student, Maseno University*



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# For future development, scientific communications can not be ignored

By Simon Mwangi

*USA continues to be a leader in space exploration due to the fact that the country has put in place solid information mechanisms that have made their citizenry own feats such as visiting the moon*

In June this year, residents of Lamu celebrated a ruling by the National Environment Tribunal (NET) that revoked the license granted to Amu Power Company to build a 2 billion shillings' coal power plant on the island. The main reason for the ironic celebrations boils down to lack of investment in science communications in the country.

As Kenya takes the front seat in technological advancement among Africa's nations, it can no longer ignore the impact of science communications, in particular, how to present scientific ideologies to a non-expert audience in formal and informal settings because science plays an increasingly prominent role in everyday life.

## User friendly platforms

The country leadership must be candid in science-based-user-friendly communication instead of concentrating on the 'big projects'. Early last year, Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, urged scientists to share their problem-solving innovations with the public in more accessible ways, including

through using vernacular languages.

One of the most prevalent channels of communication for scientists is through peer-reviewed academic journals. Unfortunately, research has shown that only ten people, on average, read a given article in its entirety; so clearly, the general public is missing out on the conversation. In Kenya, no single university, college or tertiary learning institution has designed any course that furthers science communications. In other words, the country is not preparing for the future through investing in the training of science communicators. Increasingly though, universities and research institutions in the developed world are trying to find ways to do it and the efforts are bearing fruit.

## USA, a world leader

The world recently marked the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, which was the first time humans set foot on the moon. The United States remains the only country to have put people on the moon and according to a survey conducted in May this year, as of 2018 the large majority of Americans considered it essential that the U.S. continue to be a leader in space exploration. This is mainly compounded by the fact that the country has put in place solid science communications mechanisms that have made their citizenry own such feats.

The issue of climate change equally

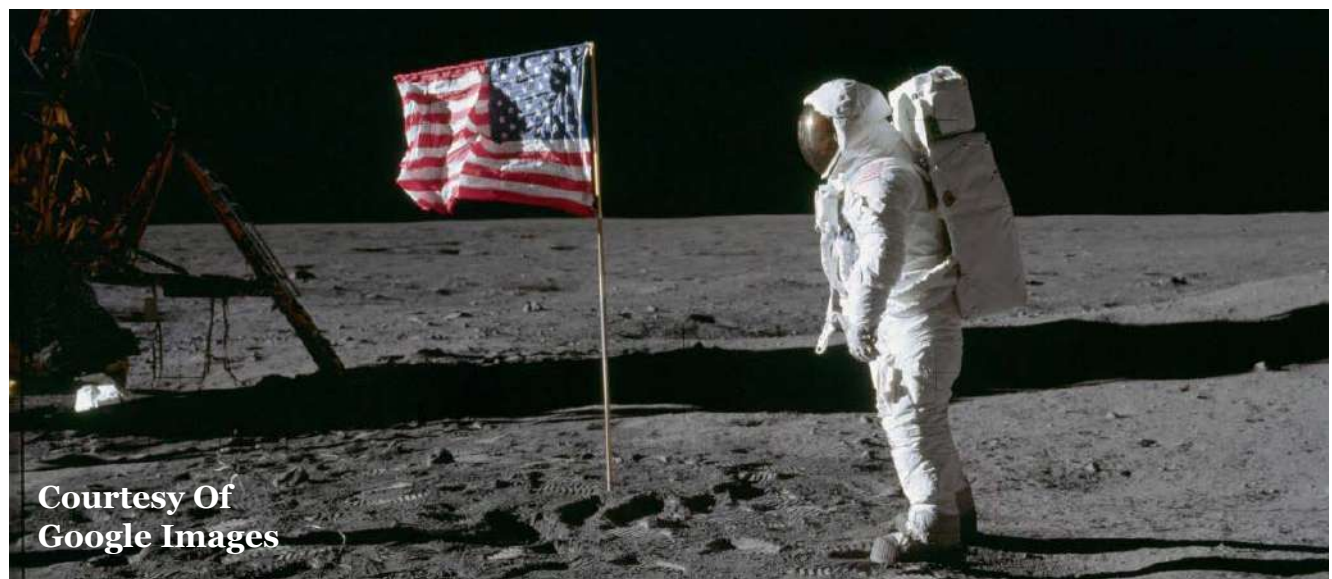
demonstrates how public acceptance and understanding of science can influence government decision-making with regard to regulation, funding, and science policy. The classic example here is the dicey Mau complex issue where with a robust science communications strategy, the evictions, as is usually the norm, would be unheard of.

## Fosters understanding

When science is communicated effectively it builds support and fosters understanding and encourages more informed decision-making at all levels. Just as it is with nuclear power, there needs to be strong communications systems to ensure that other interventions such as the Galana Kulalu projects are well articulated to communities and the wider public.

Currently, the government is set to roll out mass vaccination of girls against cervical cancer, even as there is mounting opposition from doctors affiliated to the Catholic Church who have cited a myriad of health complications. If an elaborate science communication strategy was employed from the very inception of this program, there would be consensus on the contentious issues for the greater good of society.

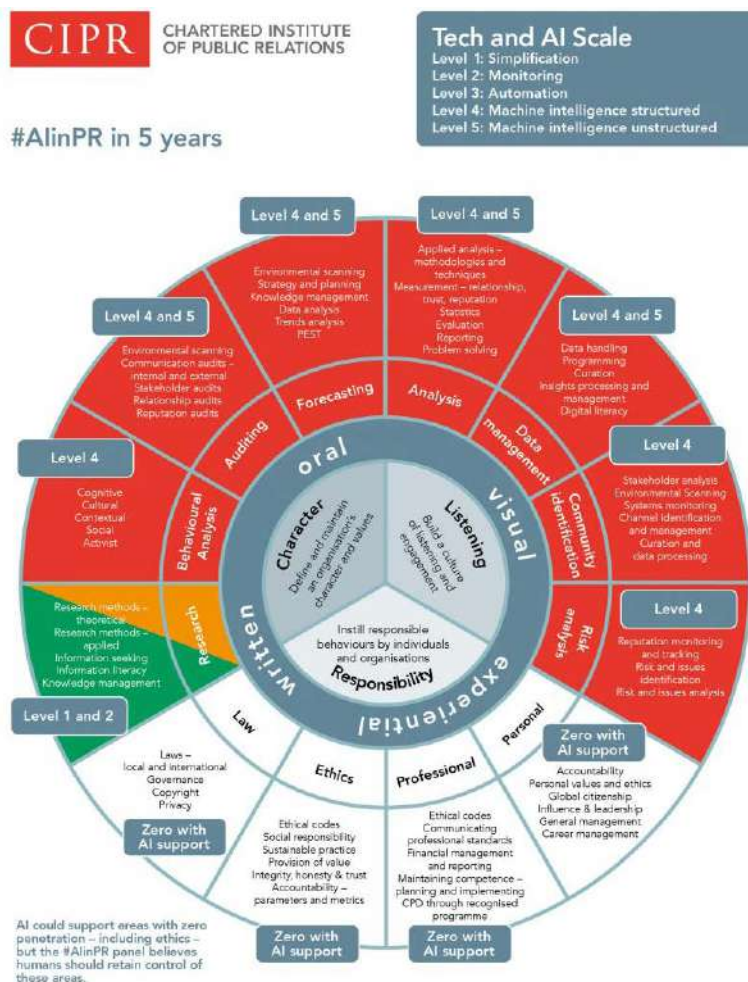
*Simon Mwangi is a Development Communication Specialist*



Courtesy Of  
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# Artificial Intelligence – Public Relations’ Intelligent Assistant



Original image courtesy of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

By Kerry Sheehan

As technology advances, PR professionals will need Artificial Intelligence (AI) to diversify and analyse data. They must know all things data and ask the right questions to ensure what is being worked on is ethical and right. The rate of adoption of AI, though thought to be slow, across the world, is much faster than people expect.

Over the coming months, we will see more AI-powered solutions continue to gain market share across all industries but this will enable our PR, communications and marketing teams to focus more on bottom line growth, the critical strategic and creative tasks. The power of AI will augment how we reach our goals from data integration to real-time insights.

We must also be aware of what data our

organisations, clients and brands hold. As much as AI is enabling us to work smarter and faster in our roles, I strongly believe, as a profession, we are no longer in our own swim lanes. We have to help organisations, businesses and brands come up with solutions to improved working efficiencies for better customer service.

AI runs on data. If we do not know all things data, then we won't be able to ask these questions and, worse, we'll not be able to communicate and promote the positive outcomes. Remember, if you feed garbage data into the system, you will get garbage out.

It is important for PR practitioners and communicators/marketers to think about the best value and application of AI in our roles and the business needs of our organisations/clients. We need to conduct

a situational analysis, assess the problems and opportunities in the business.

AI-enabled marketing intelligence (MI) platforms have become the panacea for modern PRs and marketers. Rather than provide a historical snapshot of data, MI platforms provide data accuracy, flexibility, real-time insights and ability to scale.

AI will enable communicators diversify into supporting more effective workforce engagement and positive work culture by automating content and voice assistants. They will be able to provide insights as to where more focus of AI is needed in the organization. Additionally, communicators will play a big role in ensuring the workforce become the organization's ambassadors for AI.

*Kerry is a fellow CIPR and Vice chair of CIPR-AI in PR Panel.*

# As PR evolves, a lot more needs to be done



*By Okoth Obado*

The global PR industry continues to grow and remains attractive to investors willing to bet on reputation management as a critical intervention in protecting brand equity.

The attractiveness of PR continues despite various challenges facing the PR practice globally, fueled by several factors as highlighted in the 2018/2019 World PR Report. First is the uncontainable optimism about the future of the industry with agency heads envisaging a growing market and opportunities for their consultancies. The second one is the integration of disciplines and diversification into new areas – with PR's agility and ownership of storytelling seeing it outpacing other marketing disciplines, thus confounding those who feared that blending PR with other marketing disciplines would hurt the industry.

Third is the continued global shift in marketing spend from big budget campaign to PR-centric activity. This has been accentuated by the shift from traditional print and electronic media to modern digital platforms.

Finally, PR has proved adept at addressing digital needs of clients well. With the growth of digital as a function and a practice, we are likely to see agencies of the future investing more in their digital offering. Obviously, that paints a rosy and optimistic future of the global PR arena. Let's now peek at what's happening closer home.

Africa presents numerous opportunities for PR, with its growth story remaining attractive to all marketing and communication disciplines that include PR. However, with a dearth of readily available information about doing

business in Africa, key insights are still lacking, requiring investment in research to inform market dynamics, pitfalls and the opportunities that abound on the continent.

In Kenya, the PR industry has undergone tremendous transformation over the past two decades. The PR consultancy firms of the 1970s and 80s were nothing more than press agencies, principally serving as publicists for their clients.

For instance, some PR departments of the yester years for those who remember, were nothing more than an extension of the HR department dealing with mundane logistical issues like travel bookings. Others were purely fanfare-driven, hosting event after event, party after party – without much thought on the strategic role of events.

Today's practice has morphed into a more professional, more strategic and more specialised industry. Although the typical PR consultancy in Kenya largely offers a bit of everything, the industry has witnessed recognisable shift towards greater specialisation.

As we witness greater specialisation we are seeing several firms focusing on niche areas such as financial PR and investor relations as their forte. Others have become adept at stakeholder management. Even areas like litigation communication are now appearing as a strategic offering by some players.

Considering where the PR industry has come from, its dynamism, diversification and more specialisation is evident. This transformation has immensely contributed to the professional development of the industry.

The professionalisation of the industry is attributable to several factors, notably the growing number of better informed and

more educated people joining the industry as well as the initiative by Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) to administer Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points as part of the minimum mandatory requirement for renewal of membership.

Another contributor to the development of professionalism in industry was the launch in 2014 of the Association of PR and Communication Management Firms (APReCoM) as a chapter of PRSK to deal with consulting agencies while PRSK dealt with individual members.

Since formation, APReCoM has had several initiatives that support the professional development of the PR industry in Kenya. The first one was the launch of the code of conduct and ethical principles that commits APReCoM members to ethical conduct and behaviour. This was followed by the launch of two professional tools offering guidelines on how to procure a PR agency as well as one on how to work with a PR agency. Other tools to support the professional advancement of the industry are under way. They include a tool on how to measure the effectiveness of PR and guidelines for digital and social media PR.

APReCoM's recent initiative through a partnership with International School of Advertising (ISA) to launch a Fast Track Programme offering final year communication students an opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice will augment PRSK's CPD programme as well as enhance the employability of the students by making them more market ready.

A lot has been achieved over the years. Yet, much more remains to be done. However, we are confident that with the recent MoU signed between PRSK and APReCoM to explore and collaborate on areas of mutual benefit, especially in the areas of professional development of the industry, we can achieve a lot in driving the recognition of PR a critical practice in supporting the viability and success of brands, thus ensuring proper investment in reputation management as the true safeguard of brand value.

*Okoth Obado is the managing director of RedHouse Public Relations.*



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# Believe in yourself and remain honest, you will rise to the top - Dr Mutua

By Maureen Koech

*A CEO is the face of the organization and is required to understand that image reflects directly to that of the organization. How you dress, talk will influence the perception of others about you and your organization*

*The Economist* described the late Hugo Chavez, the former President of Venezuela as a remarkable leader, a natural communicator who won elections with margins ranging from sweeping to comfortable. It further described him as a man who had only two things in his heart: his political talent and the popular support of the people of Venezuela. Michelle Obama describes her husband, Barack Obama, as a man with admirable confidence that could make a difference in the world. Far East, Anshel Puffer describes the current Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu as a man who invested his time in news cable channels because he understood how twenty-four-hour rolling news cycle would reorder news agenda. Though these leaders are worlds apart in ideology and world view, the CEO of Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB), Dr Ezekiel Mutua posits that he is the three leaders collapsed into one, "Though I am more of Obama in character and mannerisms," he says.

Sitting in a thoughtfully arranged office on the 15th Floor of Uchumi House, one gets the sense that Dr Mutua is a man who knows what he wants with his time and people around him. His WhatsApp messages must be responded to as soon as there is a blue tick, "Otherwise you have no business in communication," he says. The striking design of his perfectly fitting suit and the complementing brooch tell it all that the man understands the power of unspoken communication.

Dr Mutua is one of the few Public Relations (PR) practitioners holding a CEO's position in Kenya. This is no mean feat considering that PR professionals in Kenya hardly rise to the helm of organisations. The journey, however, like the Biblical entry to heaven, has not been a smooth sailing for the man who is defined by others as confident, controversial and



fashionable.

'One important key to success is self-confidence and I have lived by this mantra all my life,' says Dr Mutua. Confidence and trust made him President Moi's favourite who he met at on a number of occasions at State House.

It will be interesting to see if Dr Mutua will drop the moral police tag, when he joins Law School next year and comes face to face with the teachings of positivists that Law is separate and from morality. In his line of duty, he comes across many policies which require legal grounding. Now more than before, he is more inclined to use his position at the regulator to sanitise the cinematography industry, which he says has been infiltrated by immorality and filthy content.

## **Sacked while in school**

Dr Mutua has seen it all. At one point, he was sacked while attending a training at Kenya School of Government in the company of now Kirinyaga Governor, Hon Ann Waiguru. For six months, before he was unexpectedly called to go back to his

office, he lived on allowance from his wife who gave him the equivalent of what he was earning at the ministry. "My driver started behaving funny only to discover that I had been sacked. They locked my office."

Despite this, his spirit is unbowed and as long as he is at the helm of the regulator. Brace yourselves for more bans and censorship. The latest move to ban two hit songs Wamlambezi and Tetema from being played in public, except in clubs and bars are some of the things that many have argued, earned him the title: Moral Police. Despite the backlash from his bans, he is unapologetic, saying some of the songs and content available online gives "weird" things that are foreign to the African way of doing things.

"Parents hail me for banning and classifying TV programmes and songs. Because let's face it, this country needs me, but it needs more people to act as moral champions," Dr Mutua said.

**Controversy and Mutua: Two sides of the same coin?**

As an ardent believer of change in society, Dr Mutua believes that for any leader worth their salt to revolutionise the environment and society through a paradigm shift; it involves rigorous disruption of the normal way of doing things.

“Exceptionalism (which others call controversy) is hated, people prefer to be okay in doing ordinary things in ordinary ways and delivering ordinary results,” Dr Mutua says. He believes that improper communication is the main cause for the mess in leadership. “Until we learn to communicate accurately, effectively and in a timely manner to energize our constituents towards achieving our desired goals, we shall continue to be in a mess.” He adds.

He is not afraid to criticize the government that he works for. Just after our interview, he made a Facebook post that chided the government for not valuing communication: “Unfortunately, in Kenya, particularly in Government, communication is not valued,” he says, adding that it is shocking that in most Government agencies Communication is placed under HR or Admin and in most cases is not properly resourced.

The man who loves his moustache trimmed to precision joined KFCB in the backdrop of the famed digital migration in 2015 and since then, he has often been at the centre of controversy, with people expressing mixed reactions to his directives. The expansion of the Kenyan digital spectrum widened the purview of the regulator to oversight over other audio-visual output on TV and online, something that has been disputed to be an overstretching of its mandate by other players in the industry.

### **Did Communication Background Prep him for his Current Job?**

Dr Mutua owes his career to the training and exposure he got during his journalist days in Nation Media. Much as he was summarily dismissed from the media house in 2002, he said the move was the genesis of many opportunities that awaited him.

He later moved to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at the Department of Information where he revamped the

Kenya News Agency (KNA) with a vision to digitise the agency and restructured government communication at the time. This position saw him appointed to the Kofi Annan Committee to coordinate communication amidst the mayhem during the post-election violence (PEV). His stellar performance during that time and the recognizable changes he brought at the department of information earned him a Presidential accolade; the Moran of the Burning Spear (MBS) in 2010.

A CEO is the face of the organization and is required to understand that his/her image reflects directly to that of the organization. How you dress, talk and interact with others will influence their perception on you and your organization; which are basic communication skills.

We are in the business of perception and when you speak, people must have a reason to listen to you. That is how powerful communication is.

### **Communication and Management**

Understanding how power works and which cards to put on the table is one of the skills that has worked in favour of Dr Mutua. If you can't persuade, you can't communicate. “Communication is at the heart of management. Expect resistance and moments where you will fall from the powers that be. Treasure such moments because this is the only way you will learn power dynamics,” he adds.

### **The PR and Communications Profession Rising to the Top**

We are the calm in the storm and there are expectations of what we need to meet. However, as a communicator, you need to brace yourself because many a time, the PR or communication officer takes the blame when things fall apart. No one appreciates your role in the ‘pressure-cooker environment’ until things go wrong.

The challenge that most practitioners are faced with is making top management understand the critical role of communication. Dr Mutua offers advice on that is, “The key to recognition is through delivery, people need problem solvers. If you support people around you and energize them to deliver, then your management will recognise your work and support you through proper budgeting for your activities.”

### **Overshadowing his PR manager**

Having a communications background, he often thinks he overshadows the communications manager for his organization. This challenges his manager to up her game. KFCB is however, one of the few organizations that have incorporated communications department to the CEO's office. Reporting is done directly to the CEO, ensuring there is collaborative effort. This isn't unique to the communications discipline though; a Finance Officer would be in the same situation reporting to a CEO with a Finance background.

### **Revolution and Disruption of the PR and Communication Management Industry**

In line with the 2019 PRSK Summit theme, technology and the globalisation that comes with the fourth industrial revolution commands us to move with the speed of light in restructuring our way of thinking. Technology has become the biggest disruptor to not only the PR industry but all other industries in the world. This introduces many dynamics that will challenge the political, corporate, family and economic way of doing things. “Communication in this era is faced with many challenges that requires PR professionals to adapt pronto. News for example, have become accessible on a go form and you no longer wait for the 7 o'clock bulletin to be informed. Audiences have evolved and you can no longer operate in the traditional way,” Dr Mutua opines. The current communicator has to constantly adapt because the consumer has become more informed and fragmented owing to the liberalization and dynamism of media technology. There is ready access to information thanks to the internet and we have no choice but to adapt, fast.

### **Advice to Communication Professionals**

Just like Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jnr and Nelson Mandela were people of integrity who influenced and changed the world in their own ways, responsibility starts with the small office you hold. You can only progress if you are diligent, truthful with the little that you have.

*You cannot lead change when you are not sure of yourself-  
Dr Ezekiel Mutua, 2019*





# Does image still matter ?

## Etiquette: Language and grooming of the Kenyan Politician

**By Dr John Oluoch**

*What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet."* - William Shakespeare

Etiquette, language use (oration) and grooming are the customary codes to how people see or interpret our image as public figures or persons who hold certain sway and influence in the society, especially for the political class.

Till now, the jury is still out on whether or not these basic considerations still ever matter to our politicians in terms of how they express themselves in the various public functions, events and activities that they grace every other day. To them, the general rule of any publicity is good publicity seems to ring supreme. It is whispered in the media circles that it is actually the use of foul language that generates 'good sound bites' to the politicians. Should this be the standard case, especially for us in the professional public communication space?

The other day, I watched a clip of a politician talking about a senior (in age and status), well known trade unionist in the country in a manner that would leave even the most unfeeling of us seething in wonderment.

He gave a languid, body shaming description of the trade unionist's physical appearance, including the imagined contents inside his belly. He waxed in the most discourteous language about his newly married wife and what the unionist does or doesn't do to her. As if that was not enough, the youthful politician also ranted something insolent about one of the trade unionist's publicly known children, and proffered unprintable profanities about why the old man should not offer any of "his unsolicited advice" to his preferred future presidential

candidate.

Not so long before that, a female politician had been embroiled in an equally coarse public exchange with a famous governor during the mourning period of the late Kibra member of parliament Ken Okoth. The governor fired a verbal invective at the female politician by telling her how he was longing for the day she would give birth so that she could experience the pain of childbearing, among other things. The female politician returned the fire by retorting that though she was still proudly childless, "every human being" should be happy with the conditions that God has put them into, including having "commas and full stops".

The bit about the commas and full stops was something that many Kenyans have (mis)construed rightly or wrongly, to be a puerile reference to the governor's male member, a certain sexual dysfunction or genetic handicap in that field.

The examples mentioned above and many others that I am sure very easily come to our minds, are just but a few of the numerous cases in which Kenyan politicians have treated the citizens to brazen public display of bad manners, lack of decorum, civility and linguistic misadventure. In this day and age, these scenes are unfortunately relayed via the mainstream and our ever-robust social media, almost immediately after they happen.

With the political temperatures likely to continue rising every day, especially towards the next general elections set to take place in 2022, the key questions that must continue to beg for our answers are whether; apart from the legal requirements enshrined in the various Acts of Parliament such as the National Cohesion and Integration, Public Order and Security and so on, we

as a country need a certain ethical public communication standard and threshold, especially for the political class.

An African proverb says that "When the mother cow chews the curd, its young ones watch its mouth". Basically, this proverb means that younger people copy from, learn and eventually practice what they see adults do. It is therefore incumbent upon the cow to show good example to her calf so that they can learn and apply good attributes from a young age.

Our universities offering communication and public relations programmes have tried to do a decent job to include courses such as communication ethics, political communication and communication aesthetics to teach the students how to effectively and functionally package their message and deliver it to the intended audience in a professional manner. However, our political class comprises peoples from different academic backgrounds who, during their college education (if they had any) may not have encountered any training on communication, speech delivery or public speaking.

Be that as it may, either Public Relations Society of Kenya and the Parliamentary Service Commission or the Kenya School of Government should in my opinion, take this opportunity to design a good programme for our MPs and facilitate their training on language use, decorum, ethical communication and other related issues to make them live worthy of the title "Honourable". Ethics and personal values and responsibility pick up from where the law ends because no one can legislate common decency anywhere in the world.

*Dr. Oluoch is the Dean, School of Information, Communication and Media Studies at Rongo University*



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# Want to be a successful leader? Communicate effectively

*By Peter Mutie, FPRSK*

Communication is indispensable leadership discipline. Leaders who are effective communicators take the audience seriously. Such leaders work hard to ensure that all engagements move audiences towards their goal. They, therefore, care a lot about what audiences observe of them, think and feel about them.

The words the leader uses to engage others say a lot about the leader. There are many cases where leaders have been brought down by choice of words. The famous cliché

“you must know people” is associated with a leader who was removed from leadership position because of wrong choice of words. A leader who uses words that display mockery and disdain will mostly be met with resistance from the audience, either passively or openly. A Chief Executive Officer had a habit of telling his senior team that “they were not made of the right timber.” The fellow never lasted long in the position as the team decided to live to the insinuations of the boss.

Words matter a lot in leadership: they shape worldviews, provoke action and reactions.

Judging from many blunders committed by leaders on choice of words, it is clear that this skill is lacking in leadership echelons. And the main reason why it lacks is because many leaders think they are good at communication – after all they have been speaking, reading and writing since they were of tender age. However, just as fish is unaware of the water it swims in, such leaders often are unaware of their own communication and choice of words ability, or lack thereof.

For instance, we have seen leaders in corporate, political and religious realms openly tell the people they lead “to go to hell,” “wapende wasipende,” or openly call them “rubbish – takataka,” among other crude and unacceptable statements. The consequences of wrong choice of words are adverse.

Words are known to win hearts and minds – a key communication output, the higher in leadership one goes in an organisation, the more crucial communication becomes. Therefore, leaders must be good in verbal engagement.

The relationship between a leader and the audience matters. Poor relationships will always result in leadership failure. If a leader doesn’t relate well with the audience, quite often resistance creeps in. Understanding how human brain works is important and can help leaders shape their audience engagement skills. Human connection is not only a function of proximity, but a function of biology too. To put it in other words, humans are not thinking machines but feeling machines that think. Humans feel first, then think. For leaders, engagement is imperative as far as meeting emotions is concerned. Successful leaders meet emotions with emotions before they can move their audiences with facts and reason.

As human beings, we are wired to connect with each other. We feel with other people. The manner in which a leader engages others propels that leader to connect strongly with the audience. The reverse is true. A leader whose engagement is lacking loses the audience.

*Peter Mutie is the founder and executive chairman of Peterson Integrated Communications Ltd.*



# The debate about 'Benki' and 'Banki' is a testament to our a poor reading culture

By AG Awino

*Kenyans seem to confuse Tanzanian lilt for proper Kiswahili yet there is no evidence to support the claim that Tanzanians are more competent in Kiswahili than Kenyans. Finally, the old 1000 shilling note is no more. We are in the era of the new bank notes, thanks the Central Bank of Kenya and the Constitution.*

A few months ago, when the new notes were launched, communications fraternity were up in arms about the notes. Their contention was the assertion by the bank's head of Communication that the use of the Swahili Word 'banki' on the new notes would be right. His assertion might have put to rest the debate about which one is grammatically correct between the two words: banki and benki.

In his characteristic no-holds-barred approach, Mr Wallace Kantai reminded Kenyans on Twitter (KOT) that indeed the word banki has been in use on the Kenyan currency since 1966 and that he did not invent the wheel. At some point, he had to ask them to go form WhatsApp groups to discuss the matter.

In another professional WhatsApp group, there were shades of opinions on which one is the right translation of the word 'bank'. A number argued that the right one is 'benki' and not 'banki'. Some even sent images of Tanzanian currency, complete with Benki Kuu ya Tanzania writing. It was not until a member posted a shot of a page from TUKI that described the two words as synonyms that the debate seemed to rest but, only for a few minutes before a member opined that we must resist thinking like 'whites' but Africans. He said the word 'banki' is much closer to the English pronunciation than 'benk' therefore, to retain our Africanness, we must use the word 'benki' just like Tanzanians.

In my view, the sudden debate about those two words has something to do with Tanzania, books and Google. Kenyans seem to confuse Tanzanian lilt for proper Kiswahili. Tanzanians do not perform better than Kenyans in the competence of

Kiswahili. Prof Kimani Njogu is no lesser a Professor than James Mdee. Other people think that Google has the answer to every translation issue. Far from it. For example, Google gives you the translation of "Do not look at my swollen eyes again" as "Usiangalie macho yangu ya kuvimba tena," while the right translation is: Usiangalie macho yangu yaliyovimba.

As Profesa Ken Walibora of Riara University puts it, Tanzanians seem to lean so much on the English language by all means. It gives them a false sense of modernism and social status. Tanzanians love the white man; the white man loves Tanzania too. Let us just say it is mutual love. They will comfortably say *promisi* instead of *ahadi* just like *manegementi* instead of *usimamizi*. It is not their Africanness.

While I agree that both banki and benki are variants and it is a matter of choice and taste on which one to use, dismissing 'banki' without immersing yourself in research and the existing dictionaries to see what Profesa Kiango Momanyi, Profesa Kimani Njogu, Profesa Salehe Mdee had to say when they wrote *Kamusi ya Karne ya 21* as well as *Kamusi ya Kiswahili* is a disgrace to literacy demands. They did not check what the then Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili (TUKI) Bilingual Dictionary said were the proper translations of the word bank, which for your information, they agree is either benki or banki.

But why do Kenyans and social media lynch mobs seem to trust Tanzanian Kiswahili than the standard Kiswahili? Why are they so ready to accept anything Tanzanian without thinking? There are indeed obvious advantages that come

with acquiring a language as opposed to learning it in class as it happens mostly in Tanzania where everyone speaks Kiswahili. Such advantages include right accent, more vocabulary and easier understanding. However, in terms of linguistic competence, Kenyans despite their not so likeable Kiswahili lilt, are just as competent in Kiswahili as Tanzanians and sometimes, even better. I have been to a table that has brought together Kenyan and Swahili scholars and you cannot tell who is Tanzanian or Kenyan contentwise.

Those in favour of benki must begin to use it daily and widely and recruit many people who agree on its meaning to catch the attention of lexicographers. That is how words like Mpesa found its way into the dictionary. Usage may not be about correctness but usage and acceptability. However, owing to the dynamic nature of a language, it is a tall order to delete banki or benki from the dictionary.

The problem therefore lies in our reading culture, which at best tells of no difference between the literate and illiterate. Many Kenyans have not made a deliberate effort towards reading beyond their subject areas hence relying on the social media wave to criticize a statement of fact without evidence. When did any of you last purchase a book from a bookshop to enhance your skills in a different subject area?

A communications professional who doesn't read or do research will have very little to offer in the profession.

*AG Awino is a communications specialist and a member of Public Relations Society of Kenya*





# No, you did not trend

By Brian Kuira

In this day and age of digital communication, one of the key things that should be demystified is the word 'trending'. Unfortunately and, often times, trending has been misconstrued as a measure of success in online campaigns.

On the flip side, trending has caused untold misery to PR and communication managers. Brands have been brought down courtesy of trending. If you have been keenly observing the Kenyan online space, you will remember a certain young man who during an interview when asked to introduce himself, proudly said; "My name is so and so and I make brands trend."

Which raises the question, what value if any does trending bring to the table?

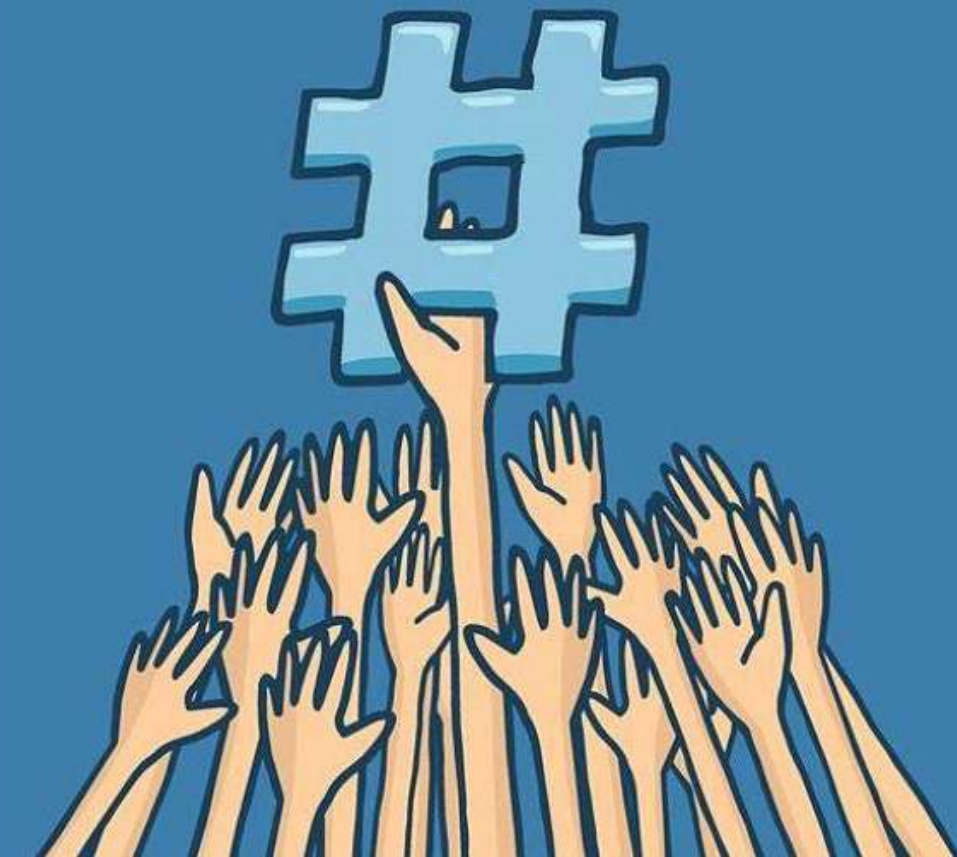
Twitter will probably give you a jargon-filled description of trending which ends with "we are giving you the most prominent real estate on our newsfeed/Trends list, but that will cost you \$2,000."

For advertisers and for brand managers, trending makes sense when you're launching a product or doing a product re-launch as part of a larger marketing plan. You'll get the increased level of awareness you seek, if nothing new interrupts it.

On the other hand, there exists a caliber of young savvy individuals who have the tags social media strategist or digital marketing expert on their bios. These are the people who approach brands and sell them the "we will make you trend" narrative. Unfortunately, they are the same individuals that are used to offer what Kellyanne Conway famously described as alternative facts. In much simpler terms, I prefer to call them "Guns for hire".

If you have worked in the PR and Advertising world, you've probably come across questions or comments like: Are we going to trend? Why are we not trending? I don't think our campaign was successful, we didn't trend! in client briefings or campaign reporting meetings.

One of my favorite authors Adam Kirk Smith once said "You will make better decisions once you begin thinking long-term



rather than short-term". The same applies to strategic communication campaigns.

Research shows that the attention span of millennials is now shorter than that of a goldfish, but I think there's another way to look at it. Consumers are becoming more selective and want to be spoken to at a more personal level. The key to engaging your audience is a compelling narrative with stimulating visuals. That is the only way to get the attention of 80% of your online target audience.

Kenyans on twitter have become a famous constituent globally. They have been known to rain hell on any person, country or organization and the sense of loyalty cannot be mistaken. In one instance, people could be talking about how avocados are trash and in the next a couple that has broken up.

It's very easy to tell whether a trend is organic or has been paid for. Usually the 10 or 15 people who most likely have been paid an average of Sh10,000 for the day will all start tweeting at the same time, pushing the same narrative. If you're keen enough, you'll notice that the content between the social accounts is the same, basically a copy and paste job.

Which brings us back to the value.

Has that one hour created value for your brand? Within that one hour that your keyboard warriors were at it; people have talked about the price of potatoes or fuel, why *wamilambe* was banned et cetera. So, what makes you think that your hashtag has created a lasting impression on your brand?

The only real value your brand will get is through sustained communication over a period of time. The one hour promoted trending online is basically a waste of money.

The brands that hire keyboard warriors for nefarious means like tarnishing a competing brand are just ticking time bombs. People see right through that tactic and tend to de-value the brand even more.

Much as time is of the essence to any issue that brews online, take time to assess the situation and carefully strategize your next move. Weigh your options well to ascertain how affected your brand will suffer as a result and invest in longer and sustained campaigns

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# Lights, Camera, Action!







1. The team steering the certification process pose for a photo after their inauguration.

2. We got it right! PRSK President and TIFA CEO Maggie Ileri share a light moment during the MOU signing between the two organizations.

3. MCK CEO David Omwoyo during the signing of the MOU between PRSK & MCK

4. Members of the College of Fellows during the admission of the new members into the College.

5. PR Bill Taskforce Chair Dr. Rahab Nyaga hands over the Bill & Policy to Former PRSK President Jane Gitau

6, 7, 9. Members during the August PR Connect

10, 11 Members cast their vote during the 2019 PRSK elections in Serena.



# Public Relations still struggles to shed off propaganda tag

*By Dr. Wilfred Marube*

In an environment where anything passes as truth, propaganda is in good company. Unfortunately, it has dragged public relations along with it; substituting it with propaganda.

This is certainly not good for the industry if nothing is done to change the perception. The public relations industry appears to carry the blame on deceptive communication on behalf of politicians, and unethical marketers and advertisers. These two terms, despite a common heritage, are mutually exclusive. Both are forms of persuasive communication. However, public relations entail ethical communication and relationship building; while propaganda relies on lies, distortion and manipulation.

In a widely accepted definition of propaganda, Jowett and O'Donnell in their book *propaganda and persuasion*; define it as the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.

The Public Relations Society of Kenya defines public relations as the strategic planning, execution and evaluation of internal and external communication to enhance mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders and; manage reputation in order to meet organizational objectives.

Having said that propaganda is one form of persuasive communication, how do we identify it? how and where does it manifest itself? and how does the public relations industry shed off the propaganda tag?

## **Identifying propaganda**

Propaganda is carried out by an individual (s) or organisation and normalised in everyday messages and conversations that serve the interests of the propagandists at the expense of the masses.

An encounter with a message should reveal the likely beneficiary of action emanating from the content. Critical readers are able to identify propaganda and question its veracity.

Unfortunately, a good number readily, hungrily and innocently consume propaganda, especially when articulated from credible sources such as news platforms.

This is how you can identify propaganda. To start with propaganda is best known for its one-sided messages. These messages singularly advance the interests of the source. Earlier forms of public relations focused on this publicity and one-way





asymmetrical model, hence the confusion with propaganda. However, this model is no longer applicable in public relations.

Historically propaganda has largely been associated with utterances and actions of politicians whose main goal is acquisition, accumulation and exercise of power. To them, the end justifies the means. As Adolf Hitler once stated, "Propaganda must harp on a few simple slogans appealing to the primitive sentiments of the broad masses".

Thirdly, propaganda has traditionally been used in government, especially where the State controls the channels of communication. At the moment, this is not easy given the plurality and independence of media; and the explosion of social media which has made it difficult for government propaganda to thrive. Hence, the shift to more strategic and open communication by governments.

You may also identify propaganda from messages designed to manipulate emotional reactions at the expense of reason. Such messages discourage one from questioning their validity or seeking alternative viewpoints.

As such, propaganda messages are designed to numb people's ability to think logically and only respond to issues emotionally. As Hitler stated in *Mein Kampf*, "The task of propaganda is to attract followers.... a follower of a movement is one who declares himself in agreement with its aims..."

Lastly, propaganda flourishes when messages are tied to current situations, problems, challenges and struggles that people identify with. The messages paint a worldview designed to elicit fear,

hate, hostility, violence, adoration or commitment among other base emotions.

### **Popular propaganda platforms**

Here are examples of a few platforms where audiences are likely to encounter propaganda.

Politics and politicians. Do not expect any public relations effort from the politicians. It is never about you. It's about them. Even when it is called political branding, it is propaganda.

Any time you encounter a political utterance which you find insincere, dismiss it as propaganda or siasa; and not PR. Perhaps instead of saying "hiyo ni PR tu"; revise it to read, "hiyo ni siasa tu" or "hiyo ni propaganda tupu".

Corporate propaganda, which is unethical, manifests itself in rogue advertisements and branding campaigns that do not adhere to professional codes. The messages may be coated with deception and false claims; preying on the fears and anxieties of the audiences. This does not fall in the realm of public relations.

The creative industry including movies, films, music and computer games are awash with sponsored propaganda. This is more so, when history and past events are re-enacted through forms of art. George Orwell put it clearly, "History stopped in 1936 – after that, there was only propaganda."

Similarly, unauthenticated online content should be considered propaganda. Technology has empowered people and institutions with ulterior motives to monitor and harvest audience data. This in turn makes it possible to direct specific messages to the masses, with a view to manipulating them to serve the interests

of the propagandists

### **This is what the public relations industry needs to do to shed the tag**

Propaganda should be called out for what it is, and that is politics and other forms of unethical communication.

First, the industry should encourage honest two-way communication, and constant feedback on its messages.

Public relations professionals should balance between corporate and stakeholder interests, more so demonstrating accountability and responsibility to their stakeholders. They should not design messages that manipulate their stakeholders. The PRSK code of ethics provides guidance.

The industry should encourage organisations to present a wholistic picture of their institutions, with their ups and downs. It is not shortcomings that matter, but what the company does to address them. This builds trust with stakeholders, not a self-declared glamorous personality. Unfortunately, this advice is opposite of what branding manuals advise.

Lastly, the industry should seek to transform and not confuse audiences. It should not prey on the uncertainties, prejudices, anxieties and fears of the audiences. The industry should instead encourage use of messages that increase knowledge, reduce prejudices and eliminate hostility among its audiences.

### ***The writer is the President of the Public Relations Society of Kenya***





## JKUAT tops in 2019 annual boot camp

*The students take part in a competitive pitch challenge at the end of an intense 3-hour mentorship session with mentors from PRSK*

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) communication students emerged the champions in the 2019 Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) Students' Boot Camp. The event that was held on 25th October 2019 at the main campus of Multimedia University of Kenya was attended by over 700 students from 12 universities in Kenya.

Multimedia University came second, followed by Daystar University beating Moi, Riara, Catholic, Kenyatta, Mount Kenya, St Paul's, Africa Nazarene and Nairobi universities.

Created specifically for students, the Boot Camp brings together seasoned PR practitioners to share timely and relevant information with students. The conference was themed *Effective PR Practice in the Digital Era* with programming centred around how change is affecting the

profession and how best students can best prepare themselves. The students take part in a competitive pitch challenge at the end of an intense 3-hour mentorship session with a team of mentors from PRSK, where the winning University gets the opportunity to host the consecutive edition.

"Mentorship is a key component to career growth and at PRSK, we have invested in our career mentorship fora. No one took the time to share industry insights with us when we were growing up," PRSK Council Member Kamuzu Banda said addressing the students.

The students got insights from mentors drawn from public and private sectors, each bringing a vast wealth of experience to the table. Mr Moses Nyandika, OGW from the Ministry of Energy shared on how the Government has revolutionised communications due to audience segmentation and the changing digital space. "PR is not cat walking in offices. It is a strategic communication function whose outcomes are measured against

strategic objectives. These outcomes are determined by the level of awareness created, improved perceptions and behaviour of target publics," said Nyandika.

Mr Ken Kamau, an Account Manager at Hill and Knowlton Strategies, Kenya took the students through crisis and reputation management in the digital age while Edward Oyugi, Lead Copywriter at Sportpesa outlined the content creation and management in PR. General Electric's Lead Communication Specialist explained how the digital era has transformed internal communications with a key focus on digital tools available for the modern communicator. Creating and managing a public image is important to a communicator and Miss Kenya Plus World, Ms Tracy Nduati, explained the importance of this to the students.

With professionals expected to adhere to PRSK Code of Ethics, Lilian Kimetto the Head of Communications at ICT Authority reiterated the ethical use of the digital space as PR practitioners.



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# You need a mentor at every stage of your life, for my case, I give credit to women

By Joseph Ndengwa

*Schools, colleges, technical and vocational institutions, universities and the work place can all benefit from and must embrace mentorship. This can be done through old boys and girls associations, pairing old staff to new ones and encouraging workers*

As a freshman, I was unaware of the important role a mentor can play in my life. I focused more on the side issues that meant little to my student life at Kenyatta University. That was until I met Prof Edwin Gimode, the dean of students at the time and Prof Mary Getui, the dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (currently a lecturer at Catholic University of Eastern Africa).

I did not know I needed a mentor. As fate would have it, I was elected to serve on the Students Council as a congressman. We began a mentoring relationship over meetings and tea. These mentors recognised something extraordinary in me, and realised that I needed more than just books and family support to succeed.

I saw myself through them, which made it possible for me to dream, to take a path that is attainable. Prof Getui showed me how to behave in a community of men while remaining firm to personal ideals and chosen special values. She pointed me to the place of God in daily endeavours. Prof Gimode on the other hand inspired me to work hard, seek new knowledge, and to dream.

Other students also benefited from wise counsel and company. Isaac Mwaura, now a Nominated MP, was mentored by the then Sports and Social Services Minister, Ochillo Ayacko and later by Kisumu Senator, Prof Anyang' Nyong'o. As a student, Homabay Women Representative, Gladys Nyasuna-Wanga, was mentored by Kenyatta University Vice Chancellor Prof Olive Mugenda, while Henry Nyang'or of Airtel Kenya also gained from Prof Getui wise words and later Chris Oanda of the Procurement Association of Kenya.

During my work life, I met Eve Obara, the Kenya Literature Bureau managing

director (currently MP Kabondo-Kasipul Constituency) and founding trustee of NEWI, the Women's Initiative in Education, an organisation that brings together professionals to mentor girls. "Every child needs a mentor to be inspired, empowered and positively influenced to attain their potential," says Eve.

From the past were philosophers Plato and Socrates. Still, who would Henry David Thoreau be without Ralph Waldo Emerson, or jazz artist Miles Davis without Charlie Parker. Jazz perhaps "owes more of its current form to a vital tradition of mentorship than any other form," says Cornelius Litunda, a jazz enthusiast. This is ongoing among musicians such as Clark Terry, who in his 90s is still mentoring young musicians as seen in the recent documentary *Keep on Keepin' On* by Terry's own mentee, Quincy Jones.

In the film, Terry says: "I decided that if I ever learned enough about jazz I wouldn't keep it a secret from anybody." That is where mentorship is birthed. He says of young musicians: "Most of the time, they don't even know what they can do until you get it out of them." Herbie Hancock, his mentee, spoke of what it means to "feel the desire to excel from someone else."

At the workplace, mentorship first emerged as an affirmative concept to help younger colleague's catch-up and infuse into the old office networks. But this is changing as work becomes more tech-based and organisations evolve. Unlike in the 70s, it is now not enough to have one mentor. With new technology every six months, family to raise and the cross-cultural boundaries, there is a need to consider having multiple mentors.

Sometimes this means reaching out to people in front of you or those who are not exactly in front of you, more so if you want to leap. The PR Buddies Institute, a social media platform for top communication and public relations practitioners in the country, has done exactly that, enabling young practitioners to interact and learn from their seniors in the profession.

Schools, colleges, technical and vocational institutions, universities and the work place can all benefit from and must embrace mentorship. This can be done through old boys and girls associations, pairing old staff to new ones, and encouraging workers and corporate entities to bench-mark with the very best in their industry. Sustainable excellence is built through mentorship.

*The writer is a senior corporate communications officer at Kenya Literature Bureau*





# CHRIST IN MY HEART ... THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE!

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# Getting the right nexus in media relations



**By Peter Opiyo**

Most organisations often employ a number of strategies to build a relationship with the media. On the face of it, the media sees a potential news source keen on addressing its expectations on a needs basis.

But behind the veneer of media relations, organisations aim to improve their reputation by registering positive mentions. They therefore yearn for publicity both at the formative stage- when little is known about an organization and when managing reputations of well-established organisations.

While it is known that not all publicity is good publicity, organizations are now aware that the visibility they yearn for is positive publicity and they rely on the media to help them achieve this.

Public Relations and Communications professionals are intent in managing the reputations of their organizations. Indeed, the popular label attached to stories pitched by organisations is 'PR stories', an indication that such stories may not meet the news value threshold, but rather serve the interests of the organisations pitching them. This draws the line between what CEOs think may be newsworthy and what the media considers as news.

A quote attributed to Novelist and journalist Eric Arthur Blair, known by his pen name George Orwell, clearly captures what makes news, from the realm of journalism. "Journalism is printing what someone else does not want printed; everything else is

public relations," goes the quote. This may rub CEOs and PR practitioners the wrong way but it should act as a wake-up call as far as pitching stories to the media is concerned. Granted, sometimes stories pitched by organisations to the media have the potential of being newsworthy, in most instances the message that the CEOs want to hear kills this potential. The starting point then for organizations to successfully pitch their stories to the media lies on the CEOs embracing the advice of their communications employees. This is because they understand how the media operates and can give valuable advice on media engagement.

It is also important that CEOs understand the audience they are addressing. If an intervention by an organization affects the larger public, it is likely to make news. This puts public institutions, for instance, at a higher pedestal than private organisations as far news is concerned. Digitisation of government operations, for example will be newsworthy compared to a private company digitizing its operations. The journalist would look at the impact component of the news in such a scenario.

Another factor that will affect the uptake of your story is the time it is dispatched to the media outlets. Organisations should be aware of dry days in the media and push stories through, and early enough in the day. An environmental scan would also be another way of gauging whether you can pitch a story.

Sometimes, packaging of information plays a role in determining whether an organisation's

story will be published. Journalists operate in a pressure cooker environment, handling a number of stories from different sources in a single day. This means they only go for stories that are strong, well-written (in clear and simple language) and nicely packaged.

An introduction of what your organisation does and how it is structured may not be of immediately interest to a journalist who constantly works on crazy deadlines. The journalists would rather be interested in knowing something new or unique that your organization has done. Some organisations load journalists with a lot of information, some of them not newsworthy. To make making matters worse, they load the stories with trade jargons full of abbreviations and acronyms that are not explained. Such stories mostly end up in the waste bins at the newsrooms.

It is important to note that journalists deal with specific beats. We have journalists specifically reporting on environmental issues, parliament, business, crime, education, foreign relations, amongst others. Know the journalists who report on your areas of interest and work on how to engage them for effective media relations.

To increase uptake of stories by the media, organisations need to know how the media operates, what makes news and whether their target audience tallies with the media's.

***Peter Opiyo is the Manager External Communications for Office of Auditor General.***



# Newsroom prepared me enough for my current role in the corporate world



**By Mugambi Mutegi**

The move to Public Relations, especially at a State agency, presented an alluring but anxious shift in my career trajectory. As a journalist for Nation Media Group (NMG), I churned out articles from education, aviation, retail, financial services, and telecommunication.

Having practiced in my new field for about 18 months, I can confirm that corporate communications is just as exciting and fulfilling as journalism. Anybody seeking to make a similar jump must be exceedingly clear on their motivation. In my case, however, I was seeking to make an impact; I was hungry to get into a space where I could better utilize my skills to impact society in a different way than I was already doing in the newsroom.

The PR community and the media are sometimes at loggerheads, often due to misunderstanding resulting from the failure to create real relationships, built on trust. Transactional interactions result in rifts. Therefore, moving into to PR, given my

journalism background, gave me a special chance to harness my experience and align the media's needs with my organization's objectives.

Joining a space made up of non-journalists also presents a unique opportunity. Given my background, I often find myself in conversations where I am requested to explain why journalists write what they write. I believe sharing of information is good since it breaks some myths about the profession. That way, the media campaign ideas you propose are better understood by all stakeholders. One of the biggest differences noted between working in Public Relations and being a journalist is the amount of time assigned to planning and brainstorming. In the newsroom, decisions were mainly made between two people – my editor and I. In the Corporate World, especially in Government, concepts have to be reviewed by several people before execution.

Indeed, this accords one more time to develop and crystalize ideas. This is a good thing because the cost implication of such projects can be significant and it is important

to get value for money.

From a communication standpoint, I learned that extreme care needs to be taken when sharing information relating to Government. While we hold information in trust of the public, there are limitations to what can and should share, and the format adopted.

Further, messaging should not be personalized; you do not speak on your behalf, but on behalf of your immediate employer, and the Government. An important thing to note is that you are not the office, you occupy it in trust. Working for Government requires communicators to quickly acquaint themselves with its agenda, including blueprints such as Medium Term Plans, Vision 2030 and the Big 4 Agenda. While you have your specific job description as a communications practitioner, with objectives specific to your organization, it is important to note that you are just but a cogwheel in a big machinery.

***Mugambi Mutegi is the Manager, Communications & External Relations – Competition Authority of Kenya.***



# Likoni ferry tragedy offers vital lessons for Public Relations Practitioners



The recent tragedy at Likoni where a lady and her daughter painfully slid into the sea after their vehicle mysteriously slid from a moving ferry left many of us in shock, thanks to social media! The demise of Miriam and her daughter Amanda at the Likoni ferry was one of the most painful experiences to watch.

However, it provided Public Relations professionals with an opportunity to learn a few issues on crisis communication and social media management. It is important to note that during a crisis, there is need to have a single channel of communication. The office of the government Spokesperson delivered on this effectively. At the beginning, there was a lot of confusion where the Kenya Ferry Services, the Navy, County Government of Mombasa were all communicating to stakeholders, with conflicting messages. It mirrored a scene from the past where Kenyans have been treated to very interesting and uncontrolled communication by government officers. During the Westgate terror attack, the then Cabinet Secretary Joseph Ole Lenku claimed that the fire that Kenyans were seeing were as a result of terrorists burning mattresses. This was outrageous!

Likoni Ferry tragedy provided fresh insights on crisis communication. The golden rules: taking responsibility, accountability, preparedness and internal communication were obeyed. The way in

which communication is relayed is vital. The government through its Spokesperson, Rtd Col Cyrus Oguna, took charge until the mission was accomplished. He assured Kenyans that he would be present till the car and bodies are retrieved and, he did that! The body language is key when addressing the media. Often, there is no value addition in addressing the media while you flanked with so many people.

Colonel Oguna was the one addressing the members of the Fourth Estate. His relationship with the media was commendable and the way he articulated issues was impressive. That the man speaks

impeccable Swahili is not in doubt. And when it was time to speak to the Swahili nation he delivered. During crisis, its key for a single chain of command to be established to coordinate communication. Secondly, agencies must learn to communicate precisely, factually and only when necessary. Public Relations experts must also advise their bosses on managing stakeholders' expectations as well relaying the message in an organised manner.

*Christopher Okinda is a Communications Officer at the Geothermal Development Company*





# Communication is key in implementation of the Big Four

*By Evelyn Waweru and Malika Marion*

At its launch, the President said the Big Four Agenda will “provide young people with multiple avenues for self-improvement, economic empowerment, dignified living and service to country,” urging all Kenyans to support the plan.

Communication is vital for the success of affordable housing, food security, universal healthcare and manufacturing are the four pillars of President Uhuru’s ambitious plan, which was unveiled at the beginning of his second term in office. Effective communication between policy makers, project managers and stakeholders is important. It creates awareness and persuades people to support the programs. Perhaps this is the why the President established the National Development Implementation and Communication Cabinet Committee (NDICCC) chaired by Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang’i to oversee implementation of government programs.

Proper communication will facilitate meaningful participation of the citizenry for enhanced understanding and ownership of the development projects. It is important to assure people that the outcomes of the project will be allocated equally and that no one will be discriminated. It also helps the citizenry understand the financial impact of the project to the economy and individual households. At 83 percent internet penetration in Kenya, social media plays a crucial role content sharing and feedback generation on the Big Four Agenda. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest and Blast SMS’s can, for example, be used to sensitize the public on the importance of National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) in attainment of healthcare for all.

*Evelyn Waweru is a communication and media studies student at Laikipia University and Malika Marion a blogger*





# PR in the era of Gig Economy and massive tech advancement

By Hazel Kirigo

It is lunch time; I am seated at my desk scrolling through one of the many food-delivery apps. I select a meal from one of the many restaurants on the platform and order. I have had a seven-day work week and haven't managed to do any grocery shopping, so I log onto an app where I can shop and have the items delivered at my door step. I remember I need a gift for a birthday party I am to attend later this evening, I log onto another app where I search for an appropriate gift and request to have it delivered to me. And since I'll be too tired to drive or use public transport, I shall request for a taxi using one of the taxi hailing apps.

Welcome to the part-time (gig) economy in which freelancers support themselves and pay bills by sourcing for side jobs. All the apps mentioned above are a digital interface with humans on the other end doing the gigs.

Part-time work is not a new phenomenon. With the technological evolution, part-time working has cast a wider net and more people in more specialised professions, PR professionals included, engage in gig work.

If you think about it, PR work is essentially made up of various aspects which when put together form a multi-faceted initiative. Let us take a simple campaign for a new product as an example. There will be elements of media buying, creative work and production, writing, media relations, social media management and stakeholder engagement. Depending on how large the organization is, some of the skills required above may be in-house. Organisations that have lean in-house PR departments will prefer to work with an agency that will provide all these services. Some organizations may also choose to engage directly with the skilled persons.

Depending on how you look at it, this scenario represents both threats and opportunities. The threats here include companies laying off in-house staff to have a very lean team that will work with an agency to provide these services. In this era of cost cutting and maximising profits,



we have witnessed this script. Another threat to the agencies is when a company prefers to directly engage the various skilled individuals thus denying agencies business.

The opportunities in this scenario call for a change in mind-set and business models. PR professionals can choose to work as freelancers and pick up these gigs from companies and agencies locally and globally. In the advent of technology, location is immaterial and there are numerous digital market places that connect professionals with customers.

PR budgets are being slashed as companies focus on growing their bottom line [whether this is the right thing to do is another conversation altogether]. This means that agencies are also getting smaller contracts from clients. Agencies also need to rethink their business model, where instead of having full time staff, they have a pool of freelance professionals which they can tap into as and when they have projects. This will ease pressure on the payroll.

Like with any other change to the work place, the gig economy has the good and the ugly.

The good being the freedom that comes with working when and where you want. It also gives you the ability to take on multiple assignments or even incorporating that side hustle in your day-to-day schedule. When your work is personal to you, and the quality of your work determines your next gig, it tends to become more meaningful. If one is a full time PR practitioner, they can still engage in gig work to supplement their income. Unemployment in Kenya is an endemic, gigs present a good opportunity to both seasoned professionals and newbies.

The ugly part is the unpredictability of getting work, no benefits such as medical insurance, pension, or paid leave days and others. This puts freelancers in a precarious financial position. Several companies in the gig economy such as Uber have been accused of exploiting their workers' rights and pay and the frequent strikes are testament to their dissatisfaction.

A McKinsey study estimates that 20%-30% of the workforce in developed countries already engage in some form of independent work. As a developing Nation and one that is at the forefront of technological adoption, Kenya is also well on its way to embracing the gig economy. The Government has contributed towards this drive through the *Ajira Digital Platform* where people can access online jobs.

The Kenyan demographic is youthful and unlike past generations, the millennials and Gen Z do not like to be tethered to the office. They like flexibility and tend not to work for one company for too long. These generations are already driving the workplace of the future and companies will have no choice but to adapt.

Given all these insights, what then, is the future of the PR profession going to look like?

Growth and proliferation of new technologies is a juggernaut that cannot be stopped. PR professionals must therefore shift their mind-set and start dabbling in gig work. With the increased spate of redundancies in the country, this is a good time to sharpen those skills and jump into the digital market place.

*Hazel is the PR and Research Manager of the Association of Kenya Insurers*



# Elimu kuhusu mitandao ya kijamii yahitajika kwa mustakabali wetu

**Na Ngulamu Jonathan, Nairobi**

*Kulingana ya habari kutoka kwa mitandao mbali mbali, Facebook inatumiwa na watu wengi ikilinganishwa na Twitter au Instagramu kwa sababu ni rahisi kutumia na inawapa watu fursa ya kukutana na kuwasiliana.*

Matumizi ya mitandao ya kijamii yanaongezeka kila uchao. Hata hivyo, elimu juu ya mitandao hii bado haijawaliwa njuga ipasavyo. Kuna maswali mengi ya kujiuliza haswa ikizingatiwa kwamba watu hutumia mitandao kwa shughuli mbalimbali ikiwemo biashara na matumizi mengine ya kibinafsi. Matumizi haya yanaweza yakawa na madhara.

Matukio ya hivi karibuni kutoka kwa wanafunzi wa shule za msingi na viongozi kadhaa yanadhihirisha kuwa upo uozo unaochangiwa na mitandao ya kijamii. Huenda jambo hili linachangiwa na kutokuwepo kwa sharia na mikakati ya kuzuia utumizi mmbaya wa mitandao hii.

## Kutafuta habari

Kulingana na utafiti uliofanywa na wanafunzi wa chuo cha USIU Africa, mwaka wa 2018, asilimia 31 ya watu wanaotumia mitandao ya kijamii huitumia kupata habari, asilimia 28 hutumia kwa maswala ya kujiburudisha huku asilimia 24 ikitumia mitandao kwa maswala mengine ya kijamii. Kulingana ya habari kutoka kwa mtandao wa Statista, mtandao wa kijamii wa Facebook unatumiwa na zaidi ya watu bilioni mbili nukta nne kufikia sasa. Ikilinganishwa na Twitter au Instagramu, mtandao huu ni rahisi kutumia na unawapa watu fursa ya kukutana, kuwasiliana na hata kupata habari kutoka ulimwengu mzima kwa urahisi zaidi.

## Twitter

Hata hivyo, mtandao wa Twitter vilevile ni rahisi kutumia na yeyote aliye na simu pamoja na anwani ya parua pepe anaweza kuwa na akaunti sawa na mitandao mingine kama vile Instagram na Snapchat ambapo watoto wa umri mdogo wanapata kuitumia kwa njia zizizofaa. Matumizi kulingana na kiwango cha elimu yalionyesha Facebook kama

unaotumiwa sana na wanafunzi wa shule za msingi ukifwatiwa na ule wa Google pamoja na WhatsApp. Matumizi ya mitandao ya kijamii huenda yakachangia madhara ya kiakili na vilevile kitabia kutokana na mazoea. Hii ni kwa sababu kadri unavyozidi kutumia kitu ndivyo anuaathiriwa zaidi.

## Uozo katika jamii

Mitandao ya kijamii imedhihirisha uozo wa jamii kutokana na picha na sinema zinazoenea kwa mitandao hii. Kuna baadhi ya wanafunzi wanaotumia mtandao kupata umaarufu kwa kuweka picha zisizofaa ama kunasa video za kupotosha. Sinema za ngono huenezwa kwenye mitandao na kuchangia upotovu wa maadili.

Licha ya hayo, mitandao ya kijamii ina faida nyingi ikiwemo kurahisisha mawasiliano na kuyafanya yawe 'matamu' kuliko zamani. Biashara nyingi zimepata fursa ya kutumia mitandao ya kijamii na kutagusana na wateja wao na kuchangia ukuaji wa biashara zao. Kwa kiwango

kikubwa, Twitter imewezesha mabloga kuimarisha bidhaa za kampuni kadhaa kupitia mifumo ya heshtegi ambayo husukumwa na watumiaji ili kufikia walengwa.

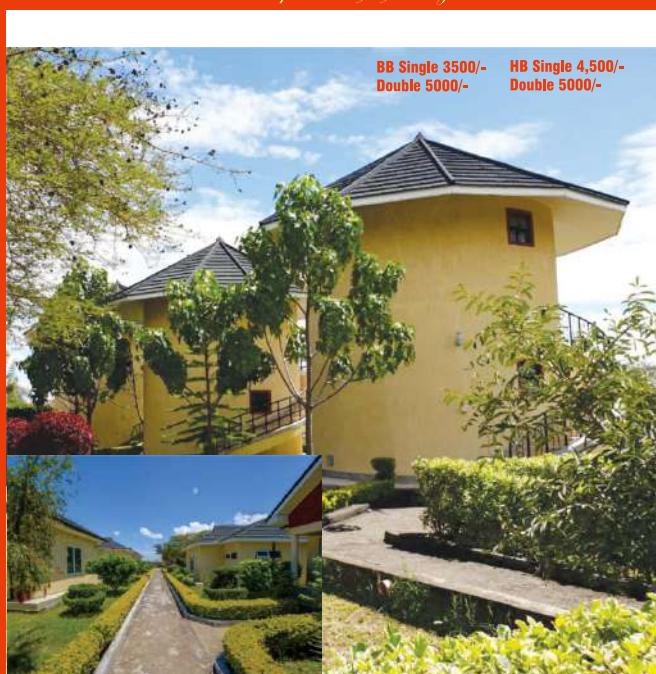
## Serikali na marais wamekumbatia mtandao

Katika serikali, mtandao wa Twitter umewezesha mawasiliano ya kiserikali kufanywa kwa njia ya upesi kwa kutumia maneno machache tu. Rais wa Marekani, kwa mfano, amejenga tabia ya kunena na wafuasi wake na hata wapinzani wake kupitia mtandao wa kijamii wa Twitter. Marais wengine vilevile wamevalia njuga mtandao huo na swala hili linaonekana kukua kwa kasi sana.

Licha ya kwamba mawasiliano katika mitandao ya kijamii hayawezi kudhibitiwa kama ilivyo kwenye redio, runinga na magazeti, ni swala la jamii pamoja na viongozi kuzidi kuelimisha watumiaji kuhusu faida na madhara ya mitandao ya kijamii ili kijenge maadili kwa mustakabali wetu kama jamii.

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# Conflict of interest: An ethical issue in public and private institutions



*By Ochula Michael*

Conflict of interest can be defined as the abuse of a public office for private gain. It involves a conflict between the public duty and private interests of a public official, in which the public official has private-capacity interests which could improperly influence the performance of their official duties and responsibilities.

It generates social equity problems that imply inequality. Conflict of interest is a key issue in both public and private sectors in Kenya today. It occurs when someone (an individual or a company) has multiple relationships or connections with another individual or company which could keep them from being independent in thought, action, or opinion.

When we consider corruption as any action that violates the rule of law, loss of loyalty and integrity and, lack of moral standards ; conflict of interest becomes a matter of ethics and potentially leads to more severe corrupt acts. When policy makers and government officials abuse their power for private gains, it affects public interest; which demolishes potentials and destroys

opportunities for long-term development in society.

The commonest phenomena are the abuse of power through interfering in development policies, projects and economic activities, which are key to the realization of Vision 2030. The abuse of political and administrative power for self-interest whether for individual, groups or parties, has damaged public and private sector institutions, general public and the Kenyan society as a whole. It also destroys sprouting future opportunities for sustaining long-term socio-economic development.

According to the economic theory, if government decisions on economic matters are influenced by business interests, then those decisions may not be the best for the country. For example, if a contract or concession is awarded to the firm which has the best political connections, rather than to the most efficient firm, then the national economy loses some benefit. A single such example may not be very damaging. But the effects can accumulate. Efficient firms which don't have political influence may eventually go

bankrupt because they can't get business. The politically connected firms don't have competitors and eventually the economy loses even more benefit.

Conflict of interest violates the country's laws and code of public ethical conduct. In a situation where personal advantages are involved, conflict of interest leads to manipulation of authoritative power to intervene in the decision making process for private interest. This unethical practice has negative results in the provision of public services since there is inadequate freedom, lack of neutrality and morality. This in turn contravenes the leadership and integrity values which are clearly stipulated in Chapter Six of the Constitution. It does not promote public confidence in the integrity of public office. It is this public confidence (and resultant goodwill) which vests public officials, the responsibility to serve the citizens of this country objectively and show impartiality in decision making without other improper motives or corrupt practices.

It also influences the public interest in a way because it abuses the primary interest of the agency, the organization,



the institute and society. The social loss may be in a financial form from the government or independent institution in form of kickbacks, poor quality of services and lack of future opportunities.

Conflict of interest relates to power on official duties, roles and value conflicts in the decision-making processes. It arises on two levels: policy and operational. At the policy level, policy makers have political intervention in making decision for their own benefits, either direct or indirect. While at the operational level, employees use official capacities to seek personal interests. There are several factors determining conflict of interest, including among others, private interest, ethical standards, discretion in using power, and lack of clear guidelines for official practices. Inefficient law enforcement and lack of effective measures to protect the common benefits of the society is also another crucial factor. Besides, conflict of interest is correlated with the Kenyan political structure wherever the patronage system allows the businessmen to get involved in politics and siphon common benefits from society.

Regulating conflict of interest in government and private sector is one of the aims of political and business ethics. Public officials are expected to put service to the public and their constituents ahead of their personal interests. Conflict of interest rules are intended to prevent officials from making decisions in circumstances that could reasonably be perceived as violating this duty of office. Measures to improve the situation lie with the strengthening of ethical codes of conduct of government officials at policy and operational level. Raising public awareness through socialization process with new officials is vital. Partnerships and mutual efforts among different sectors are necessary to bring about enhancing professional and ethical standards among policy makers and officials.

An increasingly commercialised public sector that works closely with the business and non-profit sectors gives rise to the potential for new forms of conflict between the individual private interests of public officials and their public duties. In the private sector, conflicts of interest have been identified as a major cause behind recent corporate governance

shortcomings.”At the private level, if you are seeking objective, independent advice which is as free of self-interest as humanly possible, then it is important to make strategic decisions regarding who performs what tasks for your organization.

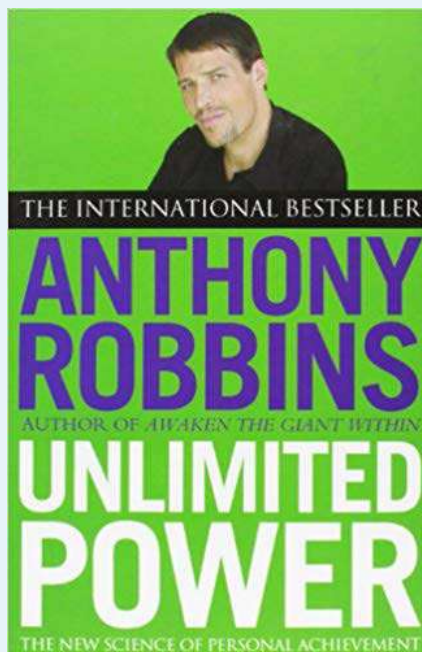
While a conflict of interest is not ipso facto corruption, there is increasing recognition that conflicts between the private interests and public duties of public officials, if inadequately managed, can result in corruption.”

There is need to encourage organizational leadership in all sectors to act as catalysts for change or change leaders in enhancing professional ethics and integrity management in public and private institutions.

Mere compliance with the letter of the conflict-of-interest policy or law, narrowly interpreted, is not generally sufficient to encourage public confidence in an organisation’s integrity. Those businessmen and politicians who benefit from conflict of interest have a vested interest in hiding their actions from public scrutiny.

## Book Review

*By Nicholas Mureithi, MPRSK*



*“How you feel is not the result of what is happening in your life—it is your interpretation of what is happening.”  
-Tony Robbins*

Unlimited Power is a self-help book by author and motivational speaker Tony Robbins. In this book, the author introduces concepts that he describes as ‘the science of personal achievement’. It is a book that is designed for individuals who yearn for personal development and self-improvement in their life situations.

This book is a must read for anyone who desires to achieve an extra-ordinary quality of life. Among the many great ideas in the book, Tony outlines that for you to achieve positive transformation in your life, you need to consistently put yourself in a state that supports you and

your achievements.

Unlimited Power is a revolutionary fitness book for the mind. It will guide you, step by step on how to perform at your peak while gaining emotional and financial freedom, attaining leadership and self-confidence and winning the co-operation of others. This book has instrumental aspects that radically changed my life upon reading it. I believe that if you have read other books by this author, you’ll agree with me that Tony never fails to inspire in his writing.

Additionally, Tony highlights the importance of having a fine mastery of communication. He notes that the way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives. I recommend that if you haven’t read it, please do.

### Message from PRSK Editorial Board:

If there is a book that you read and you’d like to share its highlights with the readership of the PR Digest, please feel free to submit the book review on [editor@prsk.co.ke](mailto:editor@prsk.co.ke)

# Public participation: Glue that binds County Governments and citizens

By Andy Munyoki

During a technical subject, a good number of the audience only remain as mere spectators in a game whose rules they do not understand thus the begging question: is citizen participation just a dispatcher?

The County Governments Act, 2012 enumerates the objects of devolution that birthed devolution in post independent Kenya. Two key objects that stand out amongst close to a dozen other objects are: the recognition of the right of Kenyan local communities to manage their own affairs and to further their development and giving powers of self-governance to the people.

These two objects cannot be better summed up in leadership and governance than in the aspect of citizen participation as governments. Basically, citizen or public participation is giving locals an opportunity to be seen and heard in the formulation and implementation of policies, laws and regulations that affect their daily lives.

Citizens must however, understand their

involvement in matters of (National / County) importance is not a privilege as misstated by a section of politicians but a constitutional entitlement and further, that they have an inherent right to petition their governments on any matter. In return, the governments are required to respond expeditiously to any petition or challenge raised by the public and act accordingly.

## More work to do

While County governments have excelled in the involvement of their publics in the identification of various projects and policies, there is still work to be done for locals to feel fully involved in the sharing of the county cake. In most occasions, a public participation forum is driven by government experts in the particular topical areas with the citizens playing the audience role and, in the event of a technical subject, a good number of the audience only remain as mere spectators in a game whose rules they do not understand.

The begging question therefore: is citizen participation just a dispatcher - recipient information play only? It is definitely not

and it must transcend information sharing to involvement of all participants. Whether they are literate or not is a different matter altogether.

## Ceding power

Citizen involvement must never be seen by administrators as ceding of their official authority to the citizens while at the same time citizens ought to remain careful not to appear as to deliberately frustrate a rather smooth exercise with farfetched proposals, responses and recommendations because it is such that educe mistrust in governance. Citizen Involvement will enhance the legitimacy of any government, foster transparency; encourage openness and prudence in the management of government resources among them budgetary allocations and the utilization of other state resources.

Citizen participation is therefore the glue that binds county governments and their publics during formulation and implementation of policies and legislations.

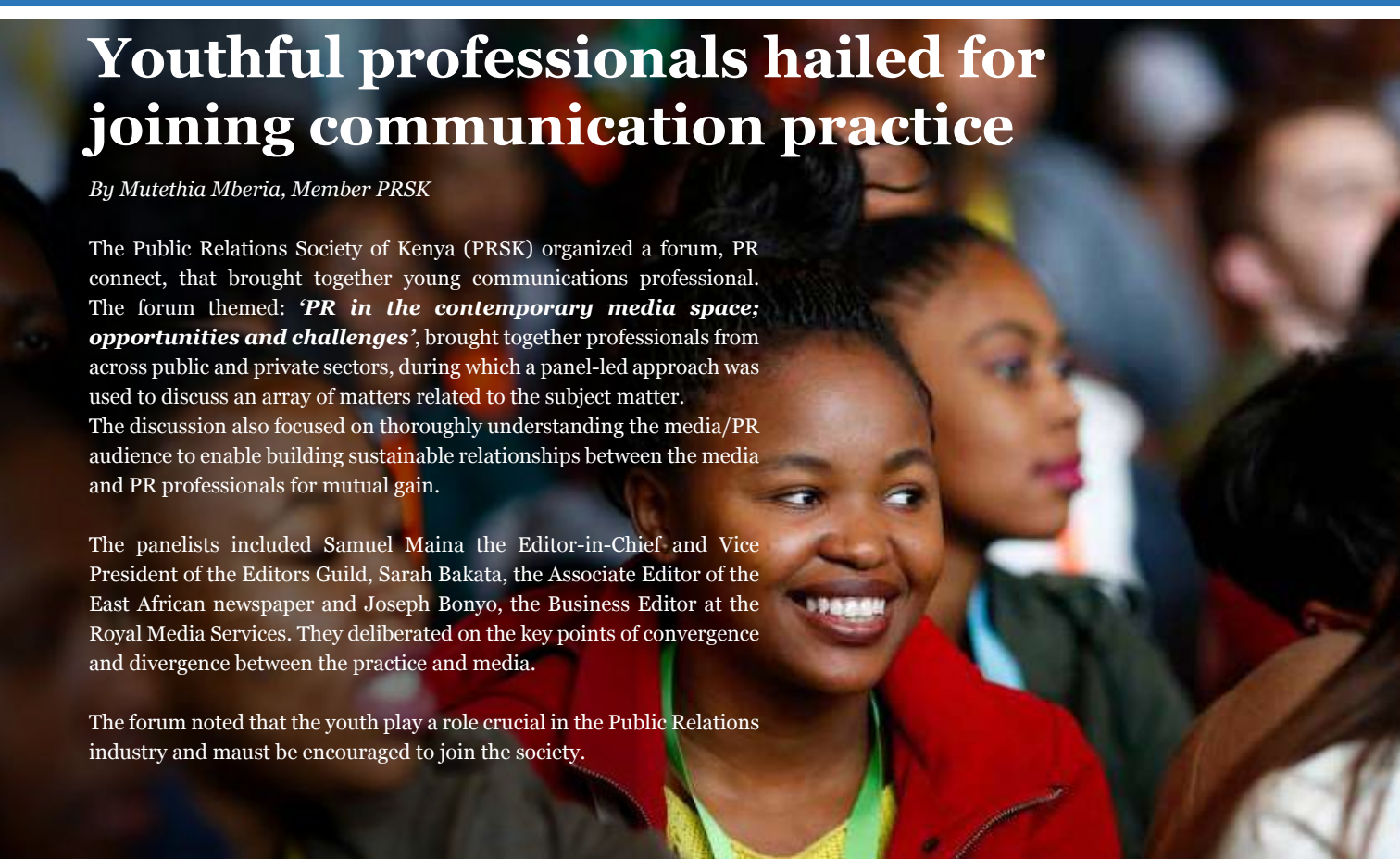
# Youthful professionals hailed for joining communication practice

By Mutethia Mberia, Member PRSK

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) organized a forum, PR connect, that brought together young communications professional. The forum themed: ***'PR in the contemporary media space; opportunities and challenges'***, brought together professionals from across public and private sectors, during which a panel-led approach was used to discuss an array of matters related to the subject matter. The discussion also focused on thoroughly understanding the media/PR audience to enable building sustainable relationships between the media and PR professionals for mutual gain.

The panelists included Samuel Maina the Editor-in-Chief and Vice President of the Editors Guild, Sarah Bakata, the Associate Editor of the East African newspaper and Joseph Bonyo, the Business Editor at the Royal Media Services. They deliberated on the key points of convergence and divergence between the practice and media.

The forum noted that the youth play a role crucial in the Public Relations industry and must be encouraged to join the society.





# Public Relations is about value addition

By Nick Mureithi, MPRSK

It is without a doubt that most people misconstrue public relations activities as merely the use of propaganda to influence perception. Many consider it as a crafty tactic to persuade people to think or act in a particular manner. It is, however, a management function that involves structured planning and a more elaborate and strategic thinking process.

An important point to note is that propaganda deals with information that is not objective and is used primarily to intentionally influence an audience. It is also used to deliberately advance a particular agenda.

On the other hand, however, PR is broadly concerned with managing reputation. In its purest form, PR is a strategic two-way communication process revolving around activities that help build and maintain good relations and trust between the organisation and its publics.

## Evolution of Public Relations

Traditionally, PR has been associated with simply issuing press releases, facilitating the media with information and safeguarding the reputation of the organisation. The industry however has drastically evolved and the roles have become more complex and tactical. Organisations in modern day are seemingly dealing with different crisis situations. PR professionals play a pivotal role in crisis management and communication to protect the brand image.

In his maiden speech as President of PRSK, Dr Wilfred Marube indicated that PR professionals in Kenya are now handling huge budgets both in the public and private sectors. This calls on them being properly equipped with basic fiscal management skills. This, Dr Marube noted, would consequently enhance the profile of professionals and of the industry.

PR is involved with ensuring that there is effective stakeholder engagement and smooth interaction with key publics. This is anchored on structured and systematic internal and external communication techniques.

## Art of value addition



PR experts should avoid acting like conveyor belts in organisations by reducing their roles as simply conveying of information and engaging in sheer photography. They should nonetheless aspire to add value to the organisation's mandate. Such value addition involves effectively shaping public perception through increased positive awareness of the brand image. It is similarly necessary to add value through online engagements that have an impact on the digital space such as on social media platforms.

The process of value addition cannot be complete without PR professionals promptly providing possible remedies to the organisations anomalies and advising on how to address problems. Incorporation of PR departments would instil a sense of inclusivity through activities such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), team building, forums for staff to interact with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and so on.

Current PR trends place focus on providing strategic advice and insights to the organisation's management. This is the reason why organisations need to recognise the important function of PR and position the unit appropriately within the organisational structure, to enable them to execute the strategic advisory role. PR has gradually evolved into a more systematic profession. It has successively moved from simply forwarding press releases and statements to increased and calculated media engagement. There is escalation from the traditional facilitation of communication channels to sophisticated and planned approaches of boosting the brand reputation.

PR professionals whether in-house or agency, should demonstrate value to the organisation through deliberate efforts to boost the entity's credibility. Specialists in the industry should carefully identify and align PR objectives with the organisation's strategic plan to ensure that they meet the

desired value addition goals.

They should harness and inject freshness in the organisation by ensuring that there is new and updated website content. The speeches drafted for senior management should moreover be eloquent, captivating and pleasant to listen to.

Messages crafted by these professionals ought to be compelling and clear.

## Measuring PR value

Individuals working in the PR departments should develop monitoring tools and techniques to establish the level of impact in their activities. The approaches could comprise monitoring of media space in terms of coverage. This may perhaps be based on the number of articles published or mentions on social media platforms and so on. Caution should however be taken to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation process does not only focus on quantitative features and figures, but on qualitative aspects as well.

Research is an integral component in the ever changing world of PR. It is based on this that PR professionals have a fundamental duty to conduct an elaborate trend analysis aimed at identifying whether the set objectives are meeting the preferred outcomes. Good PR should be measurable and balanced and this can only be attained through clearly understanding the dynamics in the industry. PR experts are therefore required to be good researchers with a love for reading too! After all, you cannot be a good writer if you do not like reading.

PR activities, must therefore be structured to ultimately ensure that they optimally support the overall organisational objectives. The bottom line is that through effective leveraging on PR activities, the organisation can skilfully create great opportunities that strategically position it to advance, promote and maintain a positive corporate image.

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## CHEVENING SCHOLARSHIPS

# Facts about Chevening Scholarship

**By Patience Nyange**

Chevening is a prestigious UK Government's Global Scholarship Programme that offers future leaders a unique opportunity to study in the UK. The fully funded scholarship is awarded to outstanding professionals from various countries to pursue a one year Master's degree in any subject at any of the top UK Universities.

After a rigorous process, Cardiff University emerged as my number one option.

This course promised a practical experience in global business strategy and leadership, and how this could be used to advance the interests of media and public relations brands, reflecting on innovation and entrepreneurship challenges, which are emerging as significantly important skills for media and PR managers all over

the world. Given that the programme is global in its outlook and reflects business systems, standards and practices from around the world, drawing upon international case studies and fostering intercultural fluency among students, this was a sure sell that pursuing such a course will help in my aspirations to join the diplomatic world in the future.

### **Cardiff School of Journalism**

The Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Culture (JOMEC) is one of the UK's premier centres for teaching and research in Journalism, Public Relations, Media and Cultural studies. The Centre for Journalism Studies within the School, founded in 1970 by Sir Tom Hopkinson as a center for the teaching of journalism, offered the first postgraduate training in Journalism in the UK.

In the past three years the School has

grown considerably, now housing 60 teaching, research and support staff, and more than 800 students each academic year. The Cardiff JOMEC is highly ranked within the UK and works alongside practice-based academics and professionals.

### **Diversify knowledge**

Though we might not all be lucky to get a chance at Cardiff University, I believe opportunities to diversify our knowledge in the field of IPR relations should be a key focus for anyone who wants a long lasting career in Public Relations.

*Patience Nyange is currently on Chevening Scholarship at Cardiff University where is is pursuing a Masters in International Public Relations and Global Communication Management*

# Employees are the first agents of the organisations's brand



**By Mutwiri Njagi**

*The magic bullet will do the trick now that your brand identity is out there and well known, but how well is your press release building identification?*

The year 1969 was an historic one on the global stage and locally: Neil Armstrong and Aldrin set on the moon. Tom Mboya, a trade unionist and one of the most promising African leaders of the century, was assassinated. Imagine if your brand were to stick on the minds of the consumers like these two historic events!

The question is: Why should a consumer choose my brand over the other one?" Identification is a key differentiating factor. It defines the extent to which the consumer relates with your brand. It tries to mesh the commonalities of an individual to those of a brand and organisation. The more consumers feel related to an organisation, the stronger their loyalty to the brand or organisation becomes. As in the pursuit of friendships,

consumers are always looking for brands that pursue similar interests to them. A brand's personality was defined by Jennifer

What symbols can your brand use that are relevant to you and your consumers? How can these symbols be integrated in the organisation's brand identity? Colors, for example, subconsciously imply to the consumer that your brand is homegrown and distinctly Kenyan.

Communicators need to recognize that every medium of communication for their brand is a new opportunity to build identification. This brings to the fore the importance of having a strong and unique tone of voice. A consumer needs to know how your brand's radio advertisement sounds without ever having to hear the announcer call it out. The tone of voice is a direct reflection of your brand's personality. It is that tone of voice that will create familiarity over time with consumers.

Finally, identification has to start from within the organisation. Employees are the chief purveyors of an organisation's voice. Employees that identify with an organisation are able to disburse that identification to consumers across consumer segments. The story of your brand should be well told by the CEO and be narrated even better by the company driver. These stories are what build identification. To give our brands and organisations a step ahead in the ladder of brand loyalty and preference, we need to cultivate identification. As the world becomes more and more connected, brands are getting more desperate to carve a niche for themselves in the hearts and minds of consumers and the trick lies with the magic bullet of identification. Now that your brand identity is out there and well known, how well is your press release building your brand?

*Mutwiri is the Lead Copywriter at KOKO Networks*



# PR People, just like journalists, must be excellent and demand nothing less

**By Frank David Ochieng**

*Jeff Koinange told me “Go get some experience my friend.” I wanted to ask him ‘where’, but I ran out of credit, thankfully, he was courteous enough to at least return my call.*

What you see in the media reflects the views and behaviour of the population. If you want to understand a people, take time and scan the media spaces. A comment online by Cynthia Nyamai that “Reporting Live is not easy! Butterflies, action all around you, your mouth goes dry, news director yells in your ears, then you remember that your family, friends and foes are watching!” summarises our attitudes.

Many colleges and universities offering journalism and communication courses are measly equipped with many students having to share one camera for examinable practical lessons. In the end one is expected to produce a documentary, news feature, and newsletter, magazine.

## **Lessons from Ouko Okusa**

We should pick lessons from one reporter I know in Kisumu. Anytime NTV carries a good story from the western region, it will be by Ouko Okusa. He is a one-man production crew! Okusa started out as a cameraman, worked his way up pulling himself up by his own bootstrap to become the household name that he is today. At that time when he was transitioning from a cameraman to the screens, we watched and laughed at him as he placed his camera on a tripod stand and once he was sure he had a good shot, he would dash to the other end, with a microphone in one hand and take the story away. Okusa hardly speaks Swahili but when called upon to do the seven o'clock news, he would show up in fluent Swahili.

## **Days at KNA**

I remember back then while on internship at the Kenya News Agency, working under tutelage of the late Olewe Owiti, we were expected to publish one news story every single day and do at least one feature story every week. If for some reason the university did a sloppy job with you, this process would certainly unclog your system and not only give you a strong nose for news but also nurture the journalist in you to constantly seek perfection.

## **Go get experience**

I remember an experience I had with Jeff Koinange when job hunting. At that time, he had just moved back into the country and partnered with Rose Kimotho to launch K24 TV. Those words still ring in my mind like it was yesterday. In his deep baritone he told me: “Go get some experience my friend.” I wanted to ask him ‘where’, but I ran out of credit and the line got disconnected. I was thankful that he was courteous enough to at least return my call. Not many get to be this lucky!

As Professionals in PR and Journalism, we must be excellent in our jobs and demand the same from others. A professional who cannot write a proper email or communicate better is a shame to the industry.





## *Kwa Ground Vitu Ni Different...*

*Mirror mirror on the wall,  
Who's the fairest of all?  
Public Relations!  
Error error on the call,  
Reputation on hold, or else you can fall  
Oh, come on crisis!  
Why show up when least expected?  
When all was glistening and the world listening to us?  
Rejoice not! For we have a plan  
A plan not to lie, but present our side of the story  
Whether to apologize or speak in silence  
Whether to call for the press or simply tweet  
How would you know I am a PR Pro?  
If not for my crisis management toolkit?*

*We may never forget  
How the world views public relations  
How our profession has been washed with muddy water  
How they only notice our balloons and banners  
Forgetting sleepless nights of the giant events planning and management  
How I wish they knew  
That we create what they can relate with*

*It takes two to tango  
But as the music goes, so we dance to the tune  
And so is with media relations.  
A well calculated move breaks no leg, but wins the dance  
For no amount can win a poor dance move  
Apart from honors in bad reputation  
So, we shall always endeavor to calculate proper media relations strategy*

*Time is of great essence  
In a world full of memes  
We are updated with the digital media  
Whether a pro or a P.R.O  
We strive to mine the digital spaces  
With Well-planned and professional digital spaces.  
Spiced with sugar and everything nice  
For that attention and retention  
Words may lose meaning  
But actions may amplify from generation to generation  
Through acts of charity  
That not only wins an audience but also creates a safe space in heaven  
Through the acts of corporate social responsibility!  
For the little things of this earth earns big rewards*

*My words may be sweet,  
But let me stop at this point, lest you say I have mastered the art of PR  
Well, you may refer to the first stanza  
For Public relations is a bridge to sustainable relationship  
And that's the situation on the ground  
So ignore the fallacy,  
Kwa ground vitu ni different*

*By Daisy Chepchumba Yator  
Communication intern at ACT Alliance and a Student member of PRSK from Multimedia  
University of Kenya*





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