

PR DIGEST

A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF KENYA



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6

JOB SWITCH

18

WHAT LIMITS YOUR SUCCESS

20

BE INSPIRED TO SEEK YOUR PASSION

27

Brands Grow. **So Should You.**
Find Out How...



Table of Contents



Oguna: I was forced to repeat Class 4 because I couldn't speak in Kiswahili **10**

Translating for missionaries earned me a scholarship – Dr Mutua **16**

- 6** PRSK partners with Trends Insight For Africa to launch state of industry report
- 7** Regional PR professional bodies revive EAPRA
- 8** Women in communication winning big in Kenya
- 8** Grayling PR shuts down operations in Kenya
- 9** Global Alliance launches Global Ethics Month
- 10** Oguna: I was forced to repeat Class 4 because I couldn't speak in Kiswahili
- 13** Office gossip: indicates failed personal brand reputation management
- 14** Public participation: Key to improved national values
- 16** Translating for missionaries earned me a scholarship – Dr Mutua
- 19** The Imposter Syndrome
- 21** Positive aspects of inspiring others
- 22** Be inspired to seek your passion
- 23** John Obiko's Battle with GBS: The Audacity of Medical Hope in our Lives
- 26** A New Era: Weaving Sustainability into Communications
- 27** Adopting value driven frameworks in public relations to enhance integrity
- 28** Broaden your minds, there are lots of jobs out there
- 29** PR is a critical component for of organisational success
- 30** Late President Moi and Moi University
- 31** How can a PR professional survive after a job loss?
- 32** Secrets that define captains of the industry: Electric heater analogy
- 33** Symbiosis: Journalists and PR Officers should work together
- 34** It's time to overhaul journalism and communication training
- 36** Why Public Relations is a necessary good
- 37** Why branding is a critical PR function for organizations
- 38** Connecting Behavioural Science With How People Communicate
- 39** The Case of the Mutuas in Public Relations 2020 and beyond
- 43** Want to be an excellent speaker? Build your vocabulary or borrow from Malcom X
- 44** How prepared are you to handle crisis?
- 48** The importance of Data Analysis and Analytics in Public Relations
- 49** Importance of communication in corporate governance

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the second edition this year of *PR Digest*, a well thought out publication that has drawn inspiration from legends and people like you around us. The legendary reggae musician Robert 'Bob' Marley said, the greatness of a person is not in how much wealth he acquires but, in his integrity and ability to affect those around him positively.

As a young girl, I dreamt of occupying the highest office in the land - the Presidency. Well, after I found my passion- communication- the dream has somehow died a natural death. However, when I ask my niece what she'd like to be, she has been consistent in her response: a doctor. I still have to be the inspiration she seeks and hold her hand in her journey.

Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) has mentorship programs for its student members and is currently working to anchor and build the mentor-mentee relationship, especially using the College of Fellows.

This Second Issue of the *PR Digest* presents stories of two great men- Dr Alfred Mutua, the two-time Governor of Machakos County and a communications professional and, the Government Spokesman Colonel (Rtd) Cyrus Oguna- who defied all odds to hold positions of influence in the Republic. We also take a look at the State of the PR Industry Report 2019; the role of PR professionals in debunking the famed Building Bridges Initiatives (BBI) and many more.

We hope this edition will inspire you or someone around you because sometimes what we lack is just that inspiring story to help us soar like an eagle.

Happy Reading!

**Maureen Koech, MPRSK
Editor**

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PRSK Partners with Trends Insight For Africa to Launch State of Industry Report

The Public Relations Society of Kenya in partnership with Trends for Insights Africa (TIFA) Research released a State of the PR industry Report in November 2019.

The report provided insights into the structure of the industry and its performance including the highs and lows; key among them, the under budgeting of the PR department with respondents revealing that a majority of institutions set aside less than one percent of the total running budget to PR and communication management programs.

Budget constraints is one of the reasons why public institutions and non-governmental organizations struggle to manage relationships with key stakeholders as well as deliver on their other mandates. This puts a caveat to organizations seeking to outsource expertise and capacity outside the organization.

The survey also estimates that the PR

practitioners in Kenya have combined budgets of more than 2.4 billion shillings, with the industry significantly contributing to small and micro-enterprise sectors in the country despite the meagre funding. There are reported to be approximately 105 agencies in Kenya. But according to the trade association, Association of Public Relations and Communication Management Firms (APReCOM), only 33 firms are registered with them.

The report though revealed some troubling findings that the finance and human resources practitioners are perceived as providing more value to organisations than PR practitioners. This perception is much higher in public than private sector according to the report.

Clearly, PR practitioners must now more than ever, assert themselves and demonstrate their value to top management. One way of doing this, is to start measuring and communicating PR results in a language that is understood by the C-suite, as well as build their

leadership skills on top of their technical competencies.

The report avers that practitioners in Kenya have more inkling to owned platforms, Facebook, twitter, websites and YouTube being the most popular channels.

Interestingly, the report stated that some of the skills that practitioners lacked were on digital communication, content creation, verbal presentation skills, measurement and evaluation and, use of Information Communication Technology; a gap that should be bridged with urgency. There are an estimated 8000 public relations practitioners in Kenya, majority aged between 29 and 40 years, a clear indication on the potential of this industry to grow.

The report is available on the PRSK website.



Regional PR Professional Bodies Revive EAPRA



The Public Relations professionals bodies from the East Africa region have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in an effort to revive and operationalize the defunct East African Public Relations Associations (EAPRA).

The three bodies: Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK); Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU) and Public Relations Society of Tanzania (PRST) have developed an MOU with areas of collaboration that will uphold the stature of PR in the region, a move that has been long overdue.

Regional unity is key to the growth of the profession and this timely collaboration

comes at a time that the profession is gaining traction in both private and public sectors.

“Reviving EAPRA will include coming up with relevant regional programs that target PR practitioners in the three regions and jointly seeking funds that will operationalize and finance proposed projects,” PRSK President Dr Marube noted.

As the East African community continues to seek ways of working together by establishing policies that will foster economic and political growth in the region, this MOU will see communication professionals explore the opportunities

available in the three countries. This could offer a solution to the current unemployment crisis in Kenya with the majority of youth decrying the lack of job opportunities.

“We welcome and are ready to support the proposed programs that will be run by the three regional bodies because challenges in the profession aren’t unique to Uganda.” PRAU President Sarah Kagingo observed. EAPRA chairmanship will be rotational with Kenya taking the first 1-year term from 2020 to 2021 during which a multi-organized regional EAPRA conference will be hosted in the country. The three bodies will collectively market and mobilize attendance for the conference. Subscribing to EAPRA would see professionals in the respective member bodies reap benefits galore. Notable among them would be personal professional growth that will encourage idea-sharing and benchmarking activities that will help professionals learn a thing or two in the profession.

“The communication profession is yet to come of age in our three countries because of the challenges that we face. I am glad PRSK is working towards regulating professionals through an Act of Parliament. Tanzania could largely learn from this experience and we are really excited to this renewed partnership,” PRST President Loth Makuza noted. Currently the region has over 7000 practising practitioners operating at different levels of the organization.

Edelman now sets shop in Kenya after acquiring Gina Din



Global Public Relations firm Edelman PR has set up shop in Nairobi after its recent acquisition of Gina Din PR that has been operational in Kenya since 1997.

The Kenyan office comes second after the firm set up in South Africa four years ago with plans to eye West Africa in the pipeline.

“The Kenyan office will serve as the east African hub as well as expose Nairobi to Edelman’s international clients and partners,” Mr Jordan Rittenberry, Edelman Africa CEO, noted during the launch of

the Kenyan office. “We believe there is significant opportunity ahead of us and entry into the Kenyan market is a step in realizing our ambition in Africa,” he added. Mr Rittenberry will oversee operations in both Kenya and South Africa offices.

Edelman boasts of over 6000 employees in over 60 countries having been operational for close to 68 years. Gina Din Kariuki will be the firm’s adviser across Africa.

Edelman’s entry into the Kenyan market adds to the number of internationally-affiliated PR firms in Kenya.

Women in communication winning big in Kenya



Ms Brenda Mbathi at a past event

Women in the Public Relations field have recorded some of the biggest wins in Kenya in the past recent months.

Ms Brenda Mbathi was recently appointed the Chief Executive Officer of General Electric East Africa, an American multinational conglomerate. Ms Mbathi who boasts of over 27 years of experience in government affairs, corporate social responsibility as well as corporate relations previously worked at the East Africa Breweries Limited (EABL) and Farmers Choice East Africa.

Kentice Tikolo, a Fellow of PRSK, was recently appointed to Chair the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) Electoral Board. This was a first appointment for a woman in a field that is otherwise considered male-dominated. She is also the previous Chair of the Wazito Foot club. The FKF Electoral Board has two members of PRSK, Ms Tikolo and Mr Samuel Karanja.

Transparency International (TI) recently appointed Sheila Masinde as acting Executive Director to take over from Mr Samuel Kimeu who'd been at the helm of the TI for nine years.

A big congratulations from all of us at PRSK

Global Alliance Launches Global Ethics Month



The Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA) has partnered with its member organizations globally to launch the first ever global ethics month in February 2020.

In this era of competition and unending business disruptions, code of ethics remains the back bone of any profession. This motivated GA to spread the word in a global coordinated campaign to not only educate but inform the world of ethics in communication.

Over 50 countries in US, Africa, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, Indonesia and

China have been actively participating in ethics themed workshops, seminars and training programs designed to support PR professionals integrate ethics in their daily practice.

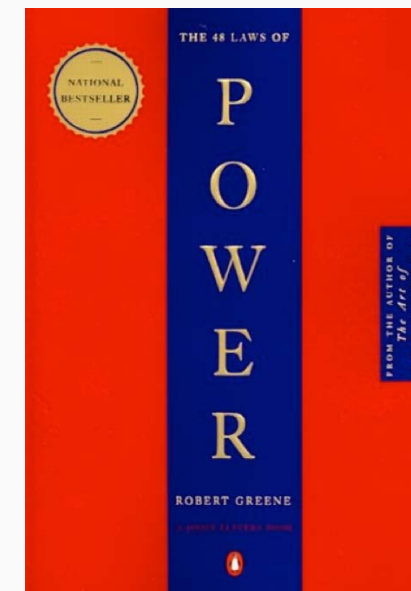
The unfolding details of Bell Potinger in South Africa and Cambridge Analytica in Kenya were harsh reminders of values. This campaign will ride on the importance of ethics in communication in all areas of business, government, non-profit and education and showcase all that our members are doing to educate and empower public relations professionals.

In Africa, Public Relations Society of

Kenya and Nigerian Institute of Public Relations have been active participants of the ethics matter campaign, with PRSK hosting a Twitter chat and recording a podcast on matters ethics while the Nigerian counterpart hosting an ethics-themed breakfast show. Ethical practice guides behaviors and the decision-making process is vital to the industry as a whole and fundamental to ethical conduct of PR professionals.

GA aims to make this an annual event with specific events dedicated to commemorate ethics month.

Book Review - 48 Laws Of Power



By Elizabeth Mulae-Mutemi

In an airport somewhere in Asia, I had a few foreign notes left on my purse, since I didn't want to come back with them, I rushed to the nearby bookstore and hurriedly looked for a book I would enjoy during the 16hr flight back to Nairobi, As I was previewing the counters, I came across the Robert Green book collection and picked on two, The 48 Laws of Power and Seduction. Everyone has power or craves for a certain source of Power, what is this power that everybody wants? Is it the one portrayed by the politicians?

A convoy of vehicles and security bodyguards surrounding them? Is it the big corner office with shining leather seats? Is it the power to say something and everybody follows?

As I read Green's book, I understood how this 48 laws of power can be useful in our day to day lives, in our relationships, in our workplace and networks, Just to pick but a few, Any professional would ensure they observe No. 1 which says "Never Outshine your Master", As PR professionals we design communication policies to ensure we have a spokesperson who shines before all the media events and pitched interviews, we lay low to ensure our bosses shine, On PR reputation Rule No. 5 guides that "So Much depends on Reputation, Guard it with your life" Just like the bible says, a good name is better riches.

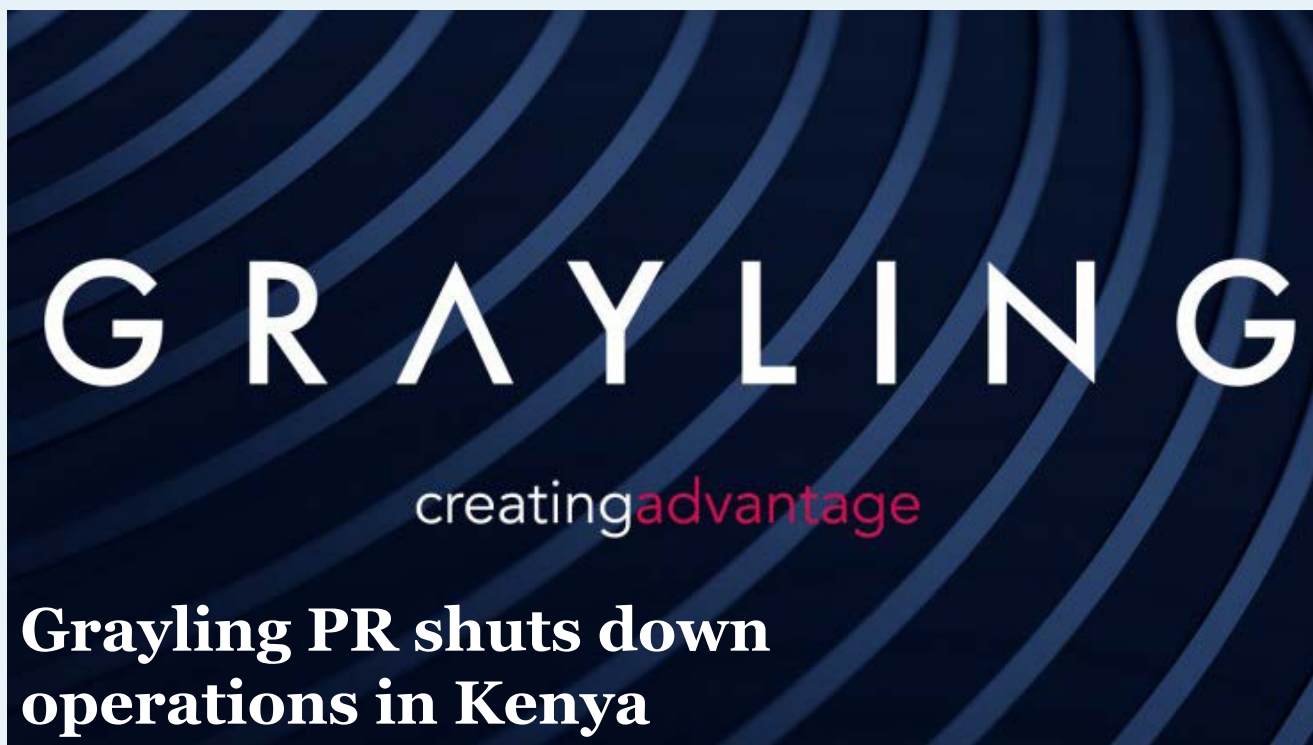
On ensuring our organizations shine, we work on rule No. 37 which focuses on "Creating Compelling Spectacles" during the planned media events and briefings and sharing of the success narratives in the different media platforms.

In regards to the theme of this month, This book encourages that we all have the "power to recreate our lives" by observing rule No: 25; During a crisis management

of any particular nature, we ought to observe the rule No. 4 to "Always say less than necessary" until we have all the facts. In terms of a group formation, saying less gives you time to learn the people in your team. We all have the power to make ourselves happy by choosing who we stick around to, stay clear of No 10, by "Avoiding the unhappy and unlucky", they can drain all your energy with sad stories and complains. When communicating for change, integrate Rule No 43 that recommends on "Work on the Hearts and Minds of Others" in all your campaigns to instill the message. Other rules that apply though sound selfish is No. 7 which says, "Make others do the work but always take the credit" this encourages teamwork, but only one person takes the credit!

A new perspective comes into play, every time you read this book, you get to understand more about human relationships, power play at work, you relearn a few things about personalities and get to know more about power and why human beings behave the way we do! Let's realize our inner powers and bring them forth and discover the strength within us, read the 48 rules over and over again!

Grab your copy today!



Grayling PR has shut down operations in the Kenyan office after a five-year stint in Kenya.

The firm that had bagged some of the biggest accounts in Africa like the Africa Green Revolution Forum (AGRF), Microsoft and Barclays, now Absa, closed shop in September 2019 citing harsh economic environment as one of the reasons for its closure. A previous employee of the firm who has sought anonymity, said that a lot of the firm's biggest clients resorted to use their in-house teams for some if not all of their PR functions, leaving the firm in a financial dilemma.

The firm that was home to fifteen employees was contributing to the larger 5% revenue stream that the Middle East and Africa regions contributed to the global Hunstworth PLC firm and is now focusing on the Dubai office after ceasing operations in Africa



Government Spokesman, Cyrus Oguna

Oguna: I was forced to repeat Class 4 because I couldn't speak in Kiswahili

By Maureen Koech

His day at work usually starts at 6.45am when he goes through the dailies, gets an update from the various state departments then proceeds to brief the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of ICT by 7am daily.

Some things happen to us and our lives change completely. This was the case one Saturday morning in 2011 when Colonel Cyrus Oguna received an unexpected call as he went about his duties in the CBD. This was a call from one of his immediate bosses. He was needed at the office at Department of Defence (DOD) in the shortest time possible.

On arrival at the Defence headquarters and with no preparation or media training, General Karangi informed him that henceforth he would be in charge of informing the Nation about the state of affairs in Somalia, after Kenya made the decision to combat al-shabaab militia in Somalia, a job he did for three years and made his former boss so proud that

when they recently met at the funeral of the former President Daniel arap Moi, General Karangi quipped, "I made him!"

The eloquent government of Kenya Spokesperson credits Charles Owino, the Kenya Police Spokesperson who told him to just look at the camera and "say something" about the Operation Linda Nchi at his first ever press address. However, when one journalist, as he recalled, asked him to speak in Kiswahili, he felt that maybe she was testing his mastery of the language considering that most soldiers are not known to speak good Kiswahili even though as a Swahili reporter, she was looking for a bite for her audience. He took up the challenge and, wowed many with his mastery of Kiswahili, delivered with an impressive Coastal lilt, which, surprisingly is not as a result of having lived or being born in the Coast or Tanzania in his formative years. The towering smooth faced man in his 50s admits that he only lived in the Coast for a few months in the course of his duty and in Dar-es-salaam as a diplomat.

That he is meticulous, though not pedantic is a glaring fact to anybody who walks into his office. He remembered both of us by name and engaged the photographer who he was meeting for the first time. When we were unable to begin our interview on time as agreed, he walked to the waiting room and apologised before ushering us into his modest office on the 11th floor of Teleposta Towers. His pin-striped grey suit fits into his lean frame perfectly and each response he gives is carefully thought through. His typical day at work usually starts at 6.45am. He goes through the dailies, gets an update from the various state departments then proceeds to brief the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of ICT by 7am. This he does every single day, a role that most Public Relations practitioners understand all too well.

According to his staff, he keeps time to all his appointments, making sure he is there fifteen minutes early to all his meetings.

Colonel Oguna was born in a small town called Pap Nyadiel, in Alego, where he schooled up to Class Four before moving

to Langalanga Primary School in Nakuru where he was forced to repeat Class Four. This was not because of his performance, but because he only spoke Luo at the time and the school administration was worried he wouldn't relate with his classmates well due to the language barrier.

"I was made to repeat because of Kiswahili language and I made a deliberate decision to speak the best version of it," he says. That marked the beginning of his Swahili speaking journey.

The military man

The alma matter of the University of Nairobi joined the Army, now the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), in 1982 as a cadet officer and later on graduated from the prestigious National Defence College. His story is that of a person who came from a humble background and rising to be one of the country's senior most government officials, without lobbying for it but because he believed in himself.

His first press conference was such a nerve-racking experience as he had no prior training in communication or journalism. But he still had to update the Nation of the progress of our gallant soldiers in Somali so he had to say something. "It was like being thrown into the deep end and you don't know how to swim," he says, and he indeed swam. It was during this press conference that a journalist challenged him to give his speech in Swahili, which he did with a surgeon's precision.

He is one man proud of his past and attributes a lot of his success to his military background and General (Dr) Julius Karangi. This is not only because it has shaped who he is but because the

values that were instilled in him have been his moral bible ever since. The Military live by five core values: discipline, professionalism, patriotism, apolitical and civil prerogative. These, he says, have made it possible for him to adapt in any work environment.

He is an ardent believer of team work because it is by learning group dynamics that one is able to fully understand the role of each person. "We are taught to never leave anyone behind and that everyone is important. The General is as important as the private," he says. There are many people who believe in lone ranging and working in silos as opposed to working as a team, not bearing in mind that a lot can be done in a team. "It doesn't matter who takes the credit, as long as it's the team effort," he adds.

No handouts

Many people believe in god-fathering, a disease that is common in most work places, where a lot of people are hired based on who they know in the organization and not on merit. This is what translates to a lot of unqualified persons masquerading as professionals and bringing disrepute to the profession. To Col Oguna, his success thus far can only be attributed to his track record from his days at the military and respect to his seniors.

He is one man who relates pretty well with members of the fourth estate, making sure he returns calls and emails whenever he can. "I believe in transparency and when you block journalists and media from talking to you, you brew resistance from them. Communication is life," he asserts. He believes that technology is the next big thing for communicators. Maximising on



owned platforms like Twitter, Facebook and website to amplify and tell your organization's stories is what most communicators need to adapt. Col Oguna is one man that is focused on revamping how the government communicates by gaining and building public trust.

He has however become more recognisable publicly with more people stopping him on the streets as compared to back in his KDF days. Often, he is be stopped by people addressing him as 'Bwana Msemaji'. This, he says, he has had to get used to because of the position he now holds.

Gets inspiration from his teachers

Col Oguna draws most of his inspiration from the Rtd General Julius Karangi who held his hand throughout his military career. He was a constant reminder that service to Nation comes before self. His teachers at the University of Nairobi played a pivotal role in his life too. Dr Mary Mwiandi, who chaired the Department of History and Archaeology before her recent appointment as Commissioner to the Public Service Commission, challenged him to research on what happens when the guns stop. This research focused on the lives of the people left behind by soldiers who die in combat and has since become a reference material on impact of war on military families. Prof Maria Nzomo, a professor of International Relations and Governance and Chair of Institute of Diplomacy at UON, to pursue his second Master's Degree on International Relations. In his words, she gave him 'wings to fly' and owes a lot to her.

Cultural intelligence

To him, communication professionals should be culturally intelligent. We operate in different environments and cultures; what we say and how we say it affects a lot on how the message is perceived upon reception.

An important message would be easily lost if it isn't delivered while bearing in mind age, environment, time and most importantly, the conveyer of the message. Communication should be clothed in that background for it to be effective, he adds.

"Audiences have become more impatient now and it is the job of Public Relations professionals to be ingenious in how to capture and captivate them," he asserts.

An outlook of Public Relations in 2020

By Ngulamu Jonathan

The 21st century has witnessed vast developments in various fields, with the same effect taking place not only in the technological and the economic world but also in the PR industry.

As we start the new decade, there will be a cocktail of trends happening around the communication and media industry. In an era where Twitter is breaking the news, undermining the power of the press conferences on the same role, this is a wake-up call to keep our eyes wide open for some of the trends that will continue to define the industry in 2020 and beyond.

The new media

According to the *Sprout Social 2019 Index*, the penetration of smartphones is fueling up the consumption of social media content, a reflection that many practitioners must keep an eye on for their key messages to reach their target audience. Data from the *Communications Authority of Kenya* report of Jan-March 2019 indicates that the net additions have seen the number of active mobile subscriptions hit 51 million up from 49.5 million.

As opposed to the traditional media where TV, radio and print media played a major role in reaching out to the target audience, the tables are gradually turning, positioning social media users as media owners.

The analytics aspect

89% of marketers use Facebook in their

brand marketing efforts (Sprout Social Index) and 70% of Kenyans use Facebook (Hootsuite). Google Analytics has equally been noted to have a huge impact in digital communication through measuring and tracking website traffic. That is the unquestionable power of analytics.

Going forward, the analytics aspect in measuring PR value as well as the benefits clients attain in return will prevail. As Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, puts it, data is that precious thing that will last longer than the systems themselves. This means that as professionals, analytics will continue to be the order of business for the clients to see and feel the impact of the services that PR practitioners provide.

Institute of Public Relations and Communications Management (IPRAC) Bill

Quacks in the PR industry in Kenya will soon be eliminated. The legislation of the Institute of Public Relations and Communications Management (IPRAC) Bill will lay emphasis on the need to establish a structured professional institute complete with an Examinations Board and the Registration and Disciplinary statutory committees. This is what a majority of the practitioners have been yearning for, to streamline the industry.

According to the Public Relations Society of Kenya, the Institute is expected to regulate and promote the practice of public relations and communication management in Kenya while the

Examinations Board will administer professional industry exams to individuals wishing to join the profession.

This will help in upholding professional standards in the industry.

Impactful short story telling

I doubt if you still watch a 5-minute video or a read a long WhatsApp message that exceeds more than 280 characters.

According to Olapic.com, majority of users are quickly adopting Facebook, WhatsApp and now TikTok based on a market survey done in February 2019. In 2020 and beyond, the art of telling short but impactful stories will continue to attract an upward trend.

As a practitioner, make it simple, clear, short and unique as the time span of the current audience has been reduced significantly.

Authenticity in news

One of the major words that dominated the 2016 US Presidential election was, fake news, an aspect that has continued to escalate not only in first world but also developing countries. Indeed, as much as the media, the audience and clients have continued to debunk fake news through various ways, there is still more to do.

In 2020, as the digital and social media space expands, markets are also looking for the blue verification icon on social media handles before sharing or liking content. This arises from the fact that unregulated social media content has continued to give individuals freedom to say whatever they want, when they want and to anyone in the world.

Other trends will include continued creativity in PR activation ideas, development of trusted media relations as well as determination by corporates to make their PR departments more vibrant for mutual benefits between their organisations and their publics.

The writer is a member of PRSK and a PR practitioner at IMG Kenya PR Agency, Nairobi.

Office gossip: a symptom of failed personal brand reputation management



By Simon Mwangi, MPRSK

Personal branding is simply defined as the values attached to an individual following a combination of their unique set of skills, personality and experience. At the office setting, there are individuals who are known gossipers and who have the solid reputation of being the bearers of any news that affects others. These are usually the main source of grapevine and always seem to know everything about everyone else including about Board members. Office gossip has become a prevalent occurrence in most companies and organizations, big or small. In some cases it causes work conflict and even destroys reputations both for the blabbermouth and the subject of the gossip.

Creating a personal brand can be a daunting task and one of the easiest ways to get lost in the process is to not know where to start. During World War II there was a warning appearing on office and factory posters: "Loose lips sink ships." Lightly translated to; be careful about what you say, and who you say it to. This is because gossipers never realise this until it is too late and it has brought them or their subjects down. In the process of being the conveyor belt for rumors and chatter, these individuals develop a strong personal brand which is however mostly negative.

Personal reputation has been known to follow people wherever they go but often times the realization comes a bit too late for the culprits. Although gossip is a natural desire, engaging in it reduces individuals' professional power. It demonstrates lack of self-control and creates undesirable

professional disturbance. Sometimes it goes further and tarnishes a professional brand that has taken years of hard work to build.

Office gossipers forget powerful words of one of the greatest American civil rights activist, Eleanor Roosevelt, who quipped 'Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people.' Creating a personal brand, however, can be an overwhelming task and one of the easiest ways to get lost in the process is to not know where to start. As common as it is, the fact of the matter is that office gossip kills the work culture of an organization.

In the process of trying to fulfill the need to be noticed, feel important or even achieve a certain, often narrow objective, gossipers at the workplace end up fuelling a need for information. In some instances, they are always relied upon to fill a certain gap especially in organisations where there is communication breakdown. In other words, they are a pointer to the non-existence of proper communication channels.

This spread of negativity has an undesirable impact on the self-esteem of employees. To those who engage in this practice, there is an easy way to have an original personal brand and that is to be honest and authentic in their conveying of the messages. In addition, such individuals can try and identify what it is that they want to be known for so that they easily find purpose within the workplace. Of course being known for the wrong reasons, such as being a blabbermouth, is never a status anyone would want to attain

in any organization. But unfortunately for those already in this category there is a chance at redemption and creating a positive personal brand.

Sometimes in such scenarios, the big question normally is; have you allowed others to define your reputation? If so, you are obligated to yourself to ascertain how you are presently perceived and, if necessary, re-brand yourself. It makes sense for an employee to be known as 'the person who always has a solution to problems' as opposed to be branded as 'the one with an acidic tongue.' Once this is done it is easy to align one's communication and actions with their brand.

Perhaps organisations also need to emphasize on the need for maintenance of a positive personal brand among employees. This is one of the surest ways through which to manage and prevent negative energy brought about by workplace gossip. In-house Public Relations and Communications practitioners have the task of ensuring that they constantly remind their top leadership and employees on the value of personal brand reputation. They also need to work on ensuring that there's effective communication to minimize office grapevine. It is their input towards ensuring there is cohesion and harmony within the organisation.

The writer is a student in International Diploma in Public Relations at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), London, UK



Public Participation an opportunity to tap into the public reservoir

By Grace Wandera

Public participation, as enshrined in our Constitution, is one of the virtues observed in the making of key decisions in this country. Public participation is an important avenue of ensuring that the voice of Wanjiku is factored in before a major decision that might affect the citizens in one way or the other can be made.

Apart from representation of the public's voice during public participation, the exercise avails an important learning opportunity for members of the public. According to researchers, public participation is also an opportunity for the professionals heading a given project or initiative to tap from the public's reservoir of ideas for advancement of the cause at hand. That way, public participation becomes a learning ground for both the government or a given government agency and members of the public.

As noted earlier, public participation is a highly valued process in Kenya before implementation of key projects. A major initiative that calls for public participation in Kenya is the annual budget making process where the voice of all concerned parties is factored in, before the budget can be presented to the August House for a nod or otherwise. Given the heavy impact of any legislation on taxation, taxpayers constitute the bulk of the stakeholders who hand in their contribution in the Budget making process. This is to ensure

that what the President assents to at the end of the process is a true reflection of the taxpayers' views.

Implementation of major public projects constitutes a classic example of an instance where public participation is key. For example, Kenya Revenue Authority's (KRA) implementation of the iTax system was preceded by a rigorous public participation programme to ensure that the system was in line with the views raised from the public.

The list of examples of causes that call for public participation is endless. According to *Uraia*, a programme that deals in civic education in Kenya, public participation ranges from the aforementioned initiatives to attending local meetings popularly referred to as *barazas* as well as public rallies. Back in the days when chief *barazas* were more popular, area chief would send out an invite for a *baraza*. The residents within the jurisdiction would turn up and raise their views concerning various matters that touched on their affairs. Whatever implementations that would follow would reflect the views of the said residents.

However, public participation in Kenya is not yet at par with the required standards that define effectiveness of the process. This is largely defined by the relatively low number of members of the public who come out to take part in the exercise whenever called upon. Low turnout is a common challenge that most agencies

have been grappling with whenever there is a need for public participation.

During the Budget cycle, for instance, different stakeholders are called upon to give their input on various matters touching on their day-to-day business. But, how many turn up to exercise their constitutional right on public participation? Is it utter apathy towards the exercise or we are just too busy to spare some time to take part in this democratic exercise? Is there another way that public participation can be conducted in order to register a higher number of participants for a bigger impact?

If you conducted a rough study to establish why apathy is so high when it comes to public participation, being busy will definitely constitute the bulk of the feedback. However, looking at the impact of public participation thereafter, sparing a few hours to have one's views considered and captured in a particular matter of national interest is invaluable. Based on the great value of public participation, an organization must put in place a raft of measures to ensure effective public participation on various matters.

Additionally, the stakeholder engagement framework has been an ideal platform for feedback collection on various issues touching on tax policies. The goal is to ensure that, in the long-run, any tax policy implementation outcome is a true reflection of the desires and the will of the parties concerned.

Going by the immense benefits of public participation highlighted previously, as Kenyans make this year's resolutions, there is a need to add this crucial activity in the list of resolutions for year 2020. If everyone adopts this, we will not only reduce the contemporary apathy, but also and most importantly, we'll ensure that every citizen's voice is clearly heard in the making of every decision or implementation of each policy that requires input from members of the public.

Ms Wandera is the Head of Marketing and Communication at the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)



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Translating for missionaries earned me a scholarship – Dr Mutua

By Nicholas Mureithi and Maureen Koech

We have known him from the days of Cobra Squad to the first official Government Spokesperson and now, the first Governor of Machakos County. He is the definition of a man of many firsts.

Ushering us to his tastefully furnished office in the new Governor's Offices near the Machakos People's Park, Dr Alfred Mutua seemed a man keen to detail. We meet him on a busy day when he is hosting two of his colleagues, Prof Kivutha Kibwana and Charity Ngilu, the governors of Makueni and Kitui counties respectively. The two had come on a benchmarking mission and were touring the recently built state of the art Cancer Centre during our interview.

Dr Mutua hailed from a poor background and grew up in Kibra, schooled at Toi Primary School, joined Dagoretti Secondary school and later Jamhuri High School for his O' Level education. He lived in a wooden shack and mud houses, but that didn't deter him from pursuing his dreams. "Even in my poverty and struggles, I realised that this wasn't my fate. This was

my parents' condition," Dr Mutua says deep in thought. This motivated him to be faster and better than the next person and that is what bore the man we see today. It was during his Form five, that he got a scholarship to study in the United States. "I used to translate for missionaries when they preached in churches and that how I landed my scholarship," he recounts. That was the beginning of his communication career.

Writing and broadcasting: things close to his heart

His first poem was published when he was 15 years and by the time he was 17, his features and stories were being published with the *Daily Nation*. He focused on Broadcast while studying in the US and made a film *An African in America* which he scripted, edited and shot all by himself.

He later came back home after his Masters Degree and worked at the Nation Media Group while teaching Electronic Media at Daystar University. He then went to Australia to pursue his doctorate and it was during this time that he published a lot on propaganda and public communication.

He has produced many docuseries and

movies, *Cobra Squad* and *Beba Beba* being two of his famous creations.

Dr Mutua, the Spokesperson

He became the first Spokesperson in June 2004 and served for eight years. It was during his tenure that he established the famed *Najivunia Kuwa Mkenya* public campaign to promote patriotism. He has since been the only spokesperson with a background in communication.

It was during his tenure that the Retired President Mwai Kibaki appointed him to chair the task force that was charged with ensuring that Mombasa was ready for the 2007 IAAF athletics championships held in Mombasa.

A man of the people

His motivation behind joining politics in 2012 was his passion to serve the people of Machakos county. "Our methodology of doing things is wrong. We have pegged money to service delivery and that is how we have enabled corruption," he says. That is how Maendeleo Chap Chap concept came into being. To him the bureaucracy levelled at getting services is what is making the country retrogressive.

A couple of years ago, Machakos was one of the counties that relied on relief food. But not anymore. Though we could not independently verify, he has drilled over 500 boreholes and provided tractors free of charge for farmers in a bid to encourage agricultural production in what was once a semi-arid area. To him, Kenyans have been getting a raw deal by electing leaders who have no capacity to deliver quality service to the people. "I'm not just keen on delivering my people from economic poverty, but mental slavery too," he adds, almost sounding like Joshua in the Bible.

He made news when he became the first county to date, to introduce emergency ambulance services in every location in Machakos. "One of my staff members had an accident the other day and our first response team got to him in ten minutes. That is how efficient the team is," Dr Mutua says. One can tell his passion to provide quality healthcare to his constituents as he explains the motivation behind setting up a Cancer Centre under the Universal



Healthcare Coverage banner.

How communication has helped him in service delivery

According to him, an effective leader should understand communication because it is through it that you are able to persuade and share your ideas explicitly. "The world's greatest leaders understood communication. The late Martin Luther King Jnr expressed himself clearly and that is why he was able to attract masses to his cause. That is how powerful communication is," he insists. Looking at him speak about communication, one can't help but marvel at how appreciative the role communication has been in his journey.

He boasts to be an action man and is not a believer of handouts. He explains that giving bribes is what has made the youth dependent on politicians who have no vision. He yearns for a nation that will be free of bribes, a fight that is close to his heart.

Communication has helped him sell his story and vision to the people of Machakos and to him, that explains why he is now on his final term as Governor. He has since become a household name and a brand enviable by many.

The engine that has kept his county

running

Dr Mutua has mastered the art of communication. He is keen on what message is sent out, from the tone to the content. "You can't ride on PR if you have no content because let's face it, you can't sell air," he says. He believes that having a relationship with the media is key to selling your story, but telling your story on your own platforms is even more powerful. Many might call this 'blowing your trumpet' but to him, it is about owning your narrative.

Tough Balancing Act?

Dr Mutua is one man keen on image. From his tailored suits to his taste for furniture in the office. But that isn't how he'd like to be identified, the best dressed man in the room. He wants his brand to be synonymous to quality service delivery. He has worked on his brand from his *Cobra Squad* years to Government Spokesperson to now the first Governor for Machakos County. Those are attributes that will be forever associated with his name.

But does his brand overshadow Machakos county? "I think they go hand in hand, but my brand has been in existence longer than the county," he says. A lot of PR professionals have this challenge in their workplaces. Sometimes the CEO is bigger than the organization and they don't know how to handle that. "Don't try to separate

the two. Encourage your CEO to grow your brand as he grows his, that way the organization can be able to survive once he exits," he advises.

Brown Envelope

Dr Mutua is one man who abhors the brown envelope vice concept. He says that PR people have enabled this concept for far too long. He advises that PR practitioners have to create value for the news editors to cover their stories.

Proliferation of social media has become a challenge to PR Professionals who have to handle crisis brewed by malicious users online. Sometimes the companies need to be called out but other times it is just a few users who have been paid to malign certain companies or persons. This has resulted in cyber bullying which is the highest cause of suicides in the country right now. While the government works on how to regulate this social space, PR practitioners have a duty to ensure that the people they interact with in their social circles adhere to ethical standards in digital communication.

President 2022

From his life story, Dr Mutua has dreams and aspirations of becoming the next President of Kenya come 2022. We can only wish him well. Imagine how it'd feel to have one of us leading the Nation?



Why PR and Social Media are inseparable

By Douglas Mwale

The world is changing fast and so is the Public Relations practice. This is based on the evolution and advancements in technology in the communications industry. The advent of social media and its rapid popularity has evidently revolutionized the practice and has consequently made the industry a fast-paced one and even more delicate. Gone are the days when public relations practitioners would merely give statements in press conferences, issue press releases for print publications or online outlets for the public to read.

the journalist writes and that's where you consider going straight to the source-via social media channels.

By using social media, you are able to cut off third party and engage with your audience by sending them direct messages. You don't even need to look too far to appreciate the role of social media in modern public relations practice as organisations and celebrities have official social media accounts that they use to disseminate information about themselves.

Social media effectively enables the PR

potential problems and devising possible solutions in case problems occur.

Social media has eliminated barriers between an organisation and its publics and blurred the line between marketing and public relations. The two functions of marketing and PR are nowadays noted to cross paths interchangeably on social media. It has similarly shortened the time to react to issues affecting their organisations. Brands now use their social media platforms to shape public opinion and create a positive image for their organisations online.



PR these days involves a two-way communication process, between an organisation and its publics or between an individual and the people they want to influence. Guess what social media does? Exactly that. Social media has drastically changed how people communicate, when they communicate and even who they communicate with. So when you incorporate social media in your public relations practice, you get the opportunity to strengthen your profile and reputation exponentially.

function to reach a much larger audience unlike previously when PR messages were targeted on specific people such as investors and business partners. However, social media has now expanded this target group to include all stakeholders. It also allows you to amplify your messages by allowing you to be more impactful. Content published on websites, press releases, emails and other PR related channels can be spread even further to reach a wider audience with the help of social media.

Social media has completely disrupted the old PR approaches which majored in engaging the public after a major change, announcing new things, minimizing reputation damage and reacting to industry changes as the face of their clients. The modern practitioner engages in a more diverse manner in managing the organization's reputation, identifying

Information travels faster on Twitter these days and can therefore be a very effective tool for PR practitioners to disseminate it faster and respond to issues about their clients appropriately and in a timely manner. Social media is therefore an effective tool that can be used to promote and protect brands and organisations. Normally and realistically, people will always say anything about your company, good or bad but the difference is whether you are a part of that conversation. This gives you a chance to intercept and implement damage control before the conversation gets out of hand.

The power and impact of social media is therefore an aspect that cannot be neglected by today's public relations practitioners. PR must also evolve through monitoring and keeping up with industry trends in order to remain relevant.

'If you want to be the boss, you got to change your game and act the part

By Peggy Achieng'

I once read that if you want to play with the big boys, act like you belong. You got to act like you have a right to have a seat at the table and act like you are better and above average. I once read. Is this true? Can I really do it? Can I really rise and be like everyone else? I'd run out of figures trying to count the number of times I have felt lesser as a person.

I have had so many good ideas in my head but they all end up staying in my head, unexecuted because I felt like the idea was too big for me to handle or because I felt it would be better off if someone else did it and, just like that, they took the path down the drain.

But what really puts us into a position of believing that we are not good enough? Is it an experience we've had before?

questions in my head. And sadly, none of them ever made sense to me. Then came the perfect opportunity to finally put an end to all the questions; field attachment. I was scared when I finally got a call from the organisation informing me that I needed to go for an interview. I wasn't sure if I would make it.

Then came the day of the interview. Weirdly enough, I was so relaxed; no adrenaline rush whatsoever. Twenty minutes later, the chance was all mine. The next day would have been my first day at work, I was excited, ready to learn and finally grasp what was expected of me in a working situation. The whole thing ended up being so interesting that I don't remember ever feeling like snoozing my alarm when it went off in the morning, telling me it's another day to go and learn. At times I would be assigned tasks that would get me thinking, "Don't you think



Could it be someone trying to push us into believing that we are never enough? Or is it that we don't have wings to fly like the rest? I would really love to understand this concept. When I look around, I see my friends, family and colleagues do it so well without even struggling. They just go for it. What is it they have that I don't? What is that extra feature that God created in them and left me out?

Well, last year I got a really good opportunity that would boost me career wise. Being a student and communication being my field, most of the time I was absolutely clueless on what was expected of me in a working situation once I get done with my degree course. Of course, I would consult Google once in a while to try and find answers to the millions of

it would be better off if someone else handled this task? Don't you think I am too inexperienced for you to be assigning me this?"

I once remember being told to cover a very major event all by myself, barely a month into the job. Was my boss not worried that the amateur in me was not going to deliver as expected? Little did I know that that the assignment was going to be the game changer. That I was finally going to take the win. I managed to put that feeling of inability and inadequacy to rest. And from that moment, I have never thought twice of what lies ahead of me so long as it results in a positive impact in my life.

I needed that one challenge to make me realize just how much potential I have. It

made me feel so much worth. I felt a sense of belonging. I believed that I could be trusted with "big" things. I felt worthy and valued every single second I have spent on this earth. It is during those three months that I learnt how to fight my fears. I learnt that things can effectively be done when you decide to put your mind into it, when you finally decide that enough is enough! I am now more willing to take up challenges. It is through the challenges that we really get to grow. It is through them that we get to discover who we really are, how much we can endure, how much we can rise above our fears and look at opportunities from a different perspective all together.

At the end of the day, what really matters, is for us to accept that we can truly rise above our fears. That we don't need to seek validation from other people to really know our worth. It can be done when we sit down and decide to put our minds into it, regardless of the imposter we are trying to fight. It is okay to scrap your knee on the pavement; to rise and fall; to try once more. We should never really be afraid or ashamed of the days when we feel unsure. It is okay to be afraid, but never should we give fear the victory. No matter how blank the page may seem, it can be full when we decide to put in the work.

So many thoughts, ideas have gone to waste simply because we felt unworthy of the call, or maybe unsure of the task at hand. We probably felt as if we are not up to the task.

Well, that's all in the past. The year 2020 is filled with so many opportunities, some that could change our lives forever. May we have the desire to rise above our doubts and truly outdo ourselves in every way possible. In the long run, it is the little milestones that really matter. Just look at how far you have come and tell yourself that this too, can be accomplished.

Finally, remember that for you to get out of a place you have been stuck in for so long, you need to boldly take the first step. No matter how small the stride might seem, consider it a step forward. Everyone struggles; don't let your own silence you!

PR departments must take the lead in disseminating information about Corona Virus

By AG Awino

'As a regular traveler with KLM, you trust us to not only take you where you need to go, but to do so safely, comfortably and responsibly. Today, as the world comes to terms with an unprecedented health scare in COVID-19 (Corona virus), I'd like to take this opportunity to share some insight into the different steps that we are taking to guarantee that our flights continue to meet and exceed the highest standards of safety and hygiene,' Said an email I received from KLM.

President Trump who initially downplayed the dangers around Corona was forced to act after CNN fingered him for not letting health professional deliver Corona message. "On the advice of health professionals, I have suspended flights from Europe, with exception of UK, for a period of 30 days from flying into the states," he said.

Just the other day, the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) presented a high-level advisory on COVID-19 communication to the Ministry of Health and National Emergency Response Committee (NERC) where they were asked to direct communication towards five critical areas which include restoring public trust and confidence, the state of preparedness, regular engagement with media and proper messaging, updates on screening and surveillance and response protocols in the event of confirmation of COVID-19 in Kenya.

I am glad that the Ministry has taken it upon itself to be sending regular updates through texts on Corona. However, this is not enough considering the level of misinformation and fake news around Corona Virus. The other day, I was sent into pearls of laughter from a story on the Sunday Nation of how some Kenyans dashed to safety when a Chinese national sneezed next to him. There were also unconfirmed reports about doctors taking to their heels when a plane landed at JKIA with hundreds of Chinese on board. It was therefore not too much for PRSK to ask the Government to execute robust, visible and effective communication to members of the public to mitigate the concerns, fear and ensure that the right messages are being shared.

What impressed me about the KLM message is the assurance it gave. It thus said: Before each departure, our planes are always thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. These procedures are designed to the highest standards and include both your personal space - tray tables, seat armrests and headrests, seatbelt buckles etc. - as well as communal areas such as the galleys, carpets and lavatories.

PR practitioners must hence invest in health professionals to help them understand facts and fallacies around Corona and seek to assure their clients that they have put enough safeguards to curb the spread of the virus. Blanket messages from the government alone and PRSK alone may not adequately deal with misinformation and fear around Corona.

What comes next after inspiration

By Keith Njiru

Inspiration comes about when one, consciously or unconsciously evokes a feeling in another person of admiration, a desire for success. Hence, one may say 'He inspired me so much' or 'She inspires me so much'

In the field of public relations, practitioners tend to draw their inspiration from successful PR campaigns or from practitioners who have evidently excelled in their fields. This can be exemplified through the practitioners attaining credentials in professional bodies such as Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) or Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR). Another way a PR professional can inspire is through working in reputable organisations which stand out in as far as communication is concerned. These two will serve to motivate the upcoming professionals who aspire to advance their careers in that they will see that it's possible to progress in their career ladders.

As students, we feel inspired to work for organisations which have excelled in their operations since we believe that at the heart of their success is strong and effective communication between the organization and their stakeholders. This is because working in such institutions will require an utmost expression of one's skills which have to employed to drive the organisation's mission, vision and core values. Along with that, student practitioners also benefit from being inspired by individuals whom they deem to have stand out in public relations. Therefore, networking is vital as students get the chance to interact with professionals whom they look up to or after interacting with them will feel inspired.

I believe that if you set out to inspire an individual, you should be truthful in what you share with the other party - this could be in various aspects such as how you rose through the ranks to where you are or how the career landscape is. Also, another area

to consider is to fulfil any promises you had earlier assured them.

To those who are being inspired, it's imperative that one gets past the emotional phase where one is excited about the possibility of being 'that' person to do the ground work which entails actively participating in activities that will progress your career. Examples of such practices include enrolling in a professional body (and being active in it), attending networking forums, sharpening your skills or learning a new skill advantageous to the workplace. In totality, one needs to implement the practices which are conducted by the people who inspire them.

To inspire is a positive aspect in that it provides that ray of hope, that light in a hazy atmosphere, that much needed drive to move an individual from one point to another. This forms the foundation of mentor-mentee relationships, and as such inspiration should shift from that 'motivational' stage to an actual implementation of the strategies shared or the practices observed. This is not to say that the road will be all rosy but navigating past the challenges and achieving the intended goal(s) will be the ultimate success.



Don't give fear a chance in pursuit of your passion

PASSION LED US HERE

By Margaret Migide

While learning the ropes of life I have fallen in love twice. I have loved someone but he didn't love me back so I left him. Deep down I keep hoping that someday he will come back to his senses and we will end up together.

Life had to move on anyways so I fell in love again. This time I wanted to do it right so I sought for relationship counselling and I got the best. They knew me and were kind enough to tell me what I needed to work on. So I accepted the challenge, started to learn again and with no time I had most of the tools I needed to love again. It took time I must admit.

The relationship was amazing until it was not. Initially, it was all about love and I honestly learnt the best skills of life. Little by little I realized it was getting worse by the day. My partner was not transparent enough and he had a lot going on around his finances. We had massive debts that kept piling up. We had to fake stories every other time to manage our creditors. I focused on the good side of it assuming this was just part of the process in all relations but I was wrong.

You know he was my source of income,

so every time he abused me emotionally I sought to persevere. How I would have survived without him was my greatest fear. I needed his financial help. I enjoyed the status quo that was associated with him. He helped me support my family. He had financed my education. I thought my life depended on him. I no longer had the will to work on this relationship. It affected my spirituality, my health and my social life. I had countless meetings with myself to let go and start all over again but these fears were too much.

So one day I made up my mind and no one has ever been able to change my mind. I made a resolve to walk out and save myself.

Before we lose it, this was not a real love story but a relationship with my job. I walked away from my stagnant job to save my Public Relations career. I had a lot to offer but I had begun to become extinct. My creative part was dying slowly. I had lost track of my career path. I no longer had a vision. I was just going to work for the cheque until it hit me that life was not all about what money could buy. I should have done this earlier but I'm glad I did, eventually.

I refer to it as a relationship because we

can all resonate. We have all fallen in love and we understand the kind of passion, energy, passion, time and resources we channel into these partnerships. We give it our all. My job and I were now like a bad relationship. My PR skills would be dead by now if I was not careful. The years of sweat and hard work were dying slowly. It was my only source of income and I feared what would happen if I didn't have a fall back plan. I put down my value, aligned it with my cheque. Compared it with the time and effort I put towards it. The job was routine every other day. I was not growing at all and that had to end.

This meant I was to start from zero. But at least that was somewhere. I was certain I would make it. I'd make money to get over this decision that the world thought was stupid. I must confess that was the best decision I ever made because I would have paralyzed my career just like that.

So if you are reading this, are you doing what you love? Are you in the right environment but the circumstances do not allow you to give the best version of yourself? I hope this story inspires you. Get out. Be the best you can be and never allow your fears to kill your career. You will be surprised by what you are capable of. Keep winning.

Battle with GBS: The Audacity of Medical Hope in our Lives

By Andrew Kiserema

It was a typical day on a Friday, 14th of February 2019; I was on my way to work – as a graphic designer, for Triple Edge Media, situated in Upper Hill. On my way to work, I felt very tired and decided to return home and take a nap. I woke up at 4:30 pm, still feeling tired and exhausted! I decided to visit Meridian hospital where I undertook some tests. The results came out and they all turned out negative. Furthermore, I decided to go to Nairobi West hospital, where the tests were equally negative. I was informed that it was a neurological problem—requiring the urgent services of an optician or perhaps a neurologist.

My world was about to turn for the worst since I couldn't eat, I kept throwing up and was seriously fatigued. I had no appetite at all and worst of all, when I drank any water it came through my nose. Breathing too became a problem indicating that clearly something was certainly going wrong. Realizing that my health wasn't in good shape, my cousin made arrangements for me to be rushed to The Aga Khan University Hospital, where at least the doctors likened my symptoms to a disease known as Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). I was informed that had I not arrived sooner, we would be discussing a very different story! Immediately, I was put on an incubator for approximately 3 months. For those who came to see me, they were seeing a somewhat dead man existing in the land of the living—for I was in a semi-coma.

What is Guillain-Barré syndrome? Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) is a rare neurological disorder in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks part of its peripheral nervous system—the network of nerves located outside of the brain and spinal cord. Fortunately, most people eventually recover from even the most severe cases of GBS. It can cause muscle weakness, reflex loss, and numbness or tingling in parts of your body. It can lead to paralysis, which is usually temporary. In fact, 85% of people with GBS make a full recovery within 6 to 12 months. Once you get better, the chance

of it recurring are minimal. In Kenya, only two hospitals can be able to correctly diagnose and treat GBS, we have Nairobi Hospital and The Aga Khan University Hospital. The rest of the hospitals lack the facilities and know-how. It is even dire for patients in the rural areas—who in most cases end up dying due to the lack of capacity.

The cost of treatment for GBS in Kenya is very expensive. It requires a comprehensive medical cover or adequate financial support from either family or well-wishers.

The journey of home care

I was finally discharged on 24th of June 2019, under strict and meticulous home nursing care around the clock. My condition has required physiotherapy and critical nursing care. In the beginning of this battle for my life, I had a tube that had been inserted from my trachea to my lungs to help with breathing. I also had a peg for feeding. The trachea was removed 2 months ago and the peg was removed 3 weeks ago. I am a living miracle—because I can now breathe and swallow solid foods on my own! I still have a long way to go; since I can't fully use my hands or my feet.

I am still dependent on others for feeding, and physiotherapy. I am very hopeful that I will be able to fully gain use of my hands and feet; to do something as simple as walking!

My family: my sure rock

My parents have provided the greatest support for me. It takes a lot of work and sacrifice to take care of me. My parents have borne this entire burden—when they should be enjoying their retirement. We are only 2 children in our home, my younger sister and I.

My future plans

I am still a very young man of 24 years and I have so much more ahead of me! I want to go back to school and study graphic design at a Master's level.

Now that I am on a path to full recovery, I am cognizant of the fact that I have a lot of time under my belt. Some of my favourite past times includes: reading a lot about graphic design, listening to pop, county and RnB music, playing board games with my parents and care giver as well as doing what comes most naturally to most patients—sleeping.



Government to come up with guidelines on corporate social investment

By Belinda Mulindi

Kenya Breweries Limited advert's in the local dailies outlining how the company is advancing socio-economic development and participating in the government's Big 4 agenda needs to be commended. If the Government came up with incentive schemes for companies propelling them to spend a percentage of their Corporate Social Investment budgets towards the Big 4 Agenda, that would aid government in realizing its ambitious targets.

Proper planning and integration of corporate social investments by both public agencies and the private sector backed up by a reward system for organizations by the government could spur quick realization of some of the targets in the Big 4 agenda. Several organizations have been spending massive budgets on social investments in counties, if this is well harnessed and structured, it could make a significant contribution to the country's development. The success of the Big Four plan will largely depend on an efficacious partnership between the national government, corporate entities and the county governments where the projects will definitely reside.

Consequently, the Government should come up with guidelines on corporate social investments for the country and a reward system for any organization that gears some of its Corporate Social Investment towards the Big 4. Rewards can be done through tax rebates, subsidies, creating and maintaining a viable operating environment and other ways that may inspire corporate Kenya to participate in this national initiative. The private sector on its part should single out areas in the Big 4 they have the specialization and expertise in and provide their services through the public private partnerships. Case in point Kenya Breweries Limited, in as much as it wasn't through its Corporate Social Investment arm the company singled out areas they undoubtedly impact in the Big 4 agenda namely in manufacturing and food security. As its today, many of the investments by public agencies and private sector through the corporate social investment, though running into millions annually, are not well planned, aligned to national development or community needs.

Corporate Social Investment initiatives can be used to promote development.


Granted, development has, is and will always be a government agenda, in recent years corporate organisations have vigorously embarked on it and with good cause. Government should welcome and work closely with corporates on mutually agreed initiatives, through laid down guidelines that state what development interventions are necessary and how they should be carried out. This will work for all parties involved, so that at the end of the day all are satisfied. Thankfully, the Government, through the President's Big 4 Agenda has laid out their development roadmap. With this roadmap, corporate funders, now have guidelines on what the issues are and what may be sustainable in a certain area and thus the community in question have programmes or initiatives that they truly require.

Through lessons learnt over the years, the corporate sector has established that to live in harmony with its hosts, it is better to plough back into the community. This is where corporate social initiative can be traced back to. This initiative has been used largely by profit making corporates to promote development and thus aid governments.

As is it today, Corporate Social Investments have not quite hit the mark in relation to development though many corporates including those in the public sector spend a bit of time and money on such activities. The challenge is always that they are not structured and aligned to the big national development goals; they are always taken as tokens and quick wins when it comes to building the image of an organization.

The distribution of developmental projects is grossly imbalanced based on where a company has its headquarters or satellite offices. Furthermore, what index do corporates use to measure the level of development? Are there any follow-ups with the beneficiaries of the said initiatives after the project or funding is done?

That said, Corporate Social Investment initiatives should not be taken as the silver bullet that will boost the country's development agenda however, it will surely make a huge difference in the long run.



One of the greatest skill to have these days is flexibility and adaptability to new and changing roles within business.

By Evalyne Awuor

I recently attended a seminar on personal branding. Expectations were low with conventional series of PowerPoint slides anticipated to reign supreme. Everyone was all set including the facilitator who started off by eloquently introducing herself to the team. She began with a striking anecdote about one of her mentees who she groomed into a high achieving CEO in one of the top banks globally. The well-told story painted a narrative that we all know so well – a young man/lady sprouting with potential mentored and guided to become an exceptional professional in their field. I was particularly amazed at how each participant applauded the efforts of the mentor and encouraged mimicking of the same behaviour with great enthusiasm. I found it ironic since currently, a better part of our time is spent with young people ready to take on the world yet some of us find a hundred different ways to put them down and not one reason to help them grow. While this is not always the case, most of us are not keen on developing people particularly interns.

As a graduate, the expectations for gaining valuable experience are immense. But this is highly dependent on personal initiative as well as the colleagues assigned to support you. In today's world, continuous learning is a necessity to thrive and succeed in the job market. In one of his articles, Bestselling author and Advisor Bernard Marr cites adaptability as a skill

in demand in 2020 and beyond. This, he says, is critical in enabling professionals sail through the murky waters of the ever-changing business environment. The truth is – no one is born an expert in their field. On the job learning and training provides invaluable experience to launch your career. Here are some helpful tips to consider while starting out as a professional

Having an open mind is key to learning.

The other day, one of our colleagues was assigned to our team. His educational background was different from our line of work yet with every task assigned, he yearned to learn even more. Over time, one of my supervisors took the initiative to mentor him allowing him to grow his experience in the field. Maintaining an open-mind and positive attitude presents endless opportunities not only for learning but also preparation of professionals for future opportunities and roles. Continually learning new skills, exploring new ideas helps in shaping our attitude towards work as an opportunity to chart your own course in life. We like sticking to things we know-it is safer that way. Taking up tasks you are not conversant with opens up your mind to critical thinking in an effort to complete it. While many people find this uncomfortable, it is essential in gaining knowledge through research and honing a new skill that could be invaluable in future roles. I find this particularly helpful in gauging your skills and expertise to establish what you are exceptionally good

and what isn't just for you. By taking up a new project, a colleague and I came to realization that she had exceptional organization and planning skills while I stood out in my visual communication and writing skills. This goes a long way in quickly identifying your strengths and weaknesses and working towards self-improvement.

Guidance and Mentorship

Seeking guidance is a crucial part of the learning process as it allows you to have clarity on expectations. There is no shame in asking for help. Professionals do this all the time. For your growth and progression seek a mentor who is invested in your success and growth with utmost clarity of areas that you need support and guidance on. This will allow mentorship sessions to be focused on the issue at hand.

Position yourself for the future.

In the advent of technology, a majority of our roles are quickly changing demanding professionals to quickly learn new skills. The World Economic Forum's annual Future of Jobs report cites massive transformation in job roles and skills in the next two to three years warranted by accelerated adoption of technology. With this in mind, the greatest skill to gain is flexibility and adaptability to new and changing roles within business. In preparation for this inevitable state, invest in acquiring the most sought after skills and knowledge. Being cognisant of this keeps you on track in their professional growth and advancement.



Guidelines



1 All Hail the winner of 2019 PRSK Awards- Media Edge PR

2-5 PRSK Awards 2019 in pictures

6, 7, 13, 14 #PRConnect 2020 in pictures

8. Members listen in during the Toastmasters awareness meeting

9. Members share a light moment during the 2019 PRSK Summit

10. Close your eyes...and smile for the camera

11. A member enjoying the first edition of the PR Digest

12. Lean in, I want to tell you something



PR professionals encouraged to weave sustainability into communications

By Judith Sidi Odhiambo

Sustainability is becoming more important for companies operating all sectors of the economy. 62% of executives consider a sustainability strategy necessary to be competitive today and another 22% think it will be in the future, this is according to MIT Sloan Management Review.

Simply put, sustainability is a business approach to creating long-term shared value by taking into consideration how a given organization operates in the ecological, social and economic environment. Sustainability is built on the assumption that developing such strategies foster company longevity.

As the expectations on corporate responsibility increase, and as transparency becomes more prevalent, companies are recognizing the need to take action on sustainability. Merely having good intentions is no longer enough.

As we settle into the new decade, it is imperative for companies to realize that communication remains at the core of building sustainable institutions. It is clear that sustainability has emerged as an influential corporate strategy, implying that our focus should now be on meeting today's needs with a special emphasis on financial, human, or natural resources that will be needed tomorrow.

Some scholars describe sustainability as an umbrella term which provides the means for connecting with society; broadening the customer base; lowering operational costs and being beneficial to the community in general. Hence, sustainability can lead to a competitive advantage in the market through communication.

Undoubtedly, communication drives sustainability strategy. When there is a lack of internal communication within an organization, it would be hard to implement the changes – and they are

sometimes painful changes – that are necessary to make an organization be referred to as a sustainable one.

Furthermore, external communication with customers, partners and the community is essential for sustainability strategies. Otherwise the organization may face operational hitches. There has been a global market shift towards embedding sustainability communication in organisations.

Typically, issues with respect to sustainability are characterized by high levels of complexity and uncertainty, thus communication plays a key role in delivering information across the agents. Typically, issues with respect to sustainability are characterized by high levels of complexity and in some instances, a touch of obfuscation. These issues therefore need to be distilled for staff members and other stakeholders, making communication essential.

The launch of the Global Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, set up a roadmap for organizations and governments to align their business objectives to. However, the alignment and realization of these goals in 2030 will only be possible if everyone is aligned. That is where broad-based communications approach is critical.

At this point, communication becomes essential for creating a common understanding about

societal values on sustainability and determining some concrete goals which require being followed

The beginning of this new decade means that communication will become even more essential in creating a common understanding about societal values on sustainability and determining some concrete measures that require actioning.

We are currently embarking on the implementation stage of the SDGs. This is likely to face headwinds in the initial stages since the capacities to govern sustainable development are not

centralized. They are highly dispersed among various actors in the society and involve multiple levels of decision making.

Some of the benefits associated with sustainable communication include information exchange, establishing consensus among divergent opinions and interests, and facilitating change of mindset. This is at the heart of the symbiotic cooperation between government, civil society groups and the private sector.

Sustainable development is a complex goal making the development of a strategy for sustainability an equally complex process. The effective engagement of stakeholders depends to a great extent on their understanding of the goal and acceptance that involvement in the strategy process demands changes in attitudes, behavior and institutions. Therefore, developing a strategy demands two-way communication between policy-makers and the public.

This requires stringent public relations initiatives through information campaigns and the media. It also needs commitment to long-term social interaction to achieve a shared understanding of sustainable development and its implications, as well as promoting capacity building to find solutions to the challenges.

As communications practitioners we need to realize that sustainable communication is the missing link between sustainable development issues and the related sociopolitical processes of policy making and public participation. It works best in combination with other instruments like economic incentives, laws and regulations or sectoral planning.

The Writer is KCB Group PLC Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs

Adopting value driven frameworks in public relations to enhance integrity

By Joyce Kamau

Over the years Governance and integrity challenges have been on an ascending high with our publics and present-day management models demanding for heightened transparency and accountability in our areas of operations. This then places Public Relations and Strategic Communications with a critical role of providing ethical counsel for effective corporate responsibility and issues management. Governance and integrity cannot be delineated from reputation and brand management.

Breach of integrity by an organization or its operatives damages trust, affects legitimacy and effectiveness of an organization creating a perfect recipe for crisis which devalues the brand and affects the organization's bottom line as well as the corporate conscience of the organization.

The demand on Public Relations (PR) and Communication practitioners to ensure that their brand stands for integrity and accountability is more real today than in the yester years. This is not to be construed to mean that the practice has been devoid of ethics and integrity. As a matter of fact, documented ethical practice dates back to as far as the 1960's. John W. Hill stands out as one of old age practitioners that advocated for and made a huge contribution to PR knowledge on ethics, issues management and corporate policy (Hill,1958). What then is the place for integrity in agenda setting, agenda building framing and angling of narratives in the modern day communication and PR arena? And how are practitioners positioning and equipping themselves to respond to these challenges whilst inspiring their spheres of influence to ensure that they espouse this value and that their organizations model Integrity to stir stakeholder and public confidence? For PR practitioners to be able to lend their voices to corporate governance and decision making they must be able to participate in organizational decision making in the C-Suite but to achieve this, they must then equip themselves with knowledge on organizational policy and culture coupled with distinct

understanding of the organization value system, have mastery of industry knowledge, profound understanding of risk and crisis management and development of organizational systems embedded with an ethical component. "Shannon A. Bowen in his literature on Ethics and Public Relations enlightens us that a single person or function cannot assume the ethical conscience of the organization but he also asserts the critical role that the PR function ideally plays in counseling top management about ethical issues.

In light of the above organizational listening to identify integrity and ethical discrepancies must take center stage in communicational planning to be able to effectively package Integrity Based Communications (IBC) that reflect the five dimensions of corporate integrity and that respond to the Integrity challenges therein.



Source: Marvin T. Brown, (2005) *Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership*.

This year the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communications Management (GA) is conducting an advocacy campaign dubbed #EthicsMatter. The Inaugural campaign intends to create global awareness on the critical role of ethics in communication.

As we reflect on the Communication and PR World beaming its light on Integrity in the month of February let us highlight some of the ethical dilemmas that those in practice find themselves. Practitioners must endeavor to craft solutions to specific challenges relating to accountability and integrity in the spaces through which they operate. As the industry gains traction in positioning PR as a strategic management function, alignment of strategic communications to an ethics and values driven framework is inevitable. As Dwight Eisenhower famously said,

the qualities of a great man are vision, integrity, courage, understanding, the power of articulation and profundity of character. This compounds the need for adoption of values driven frameworks in the delivery of our mandate.

Which is our moral compass?



Source Buzzle.com

Governance is changing rapidly and the changes bring with them compelling, ethical challenges that PR practitioners and organizations must surmount to match and exceed stakeholder expectations whilst inspiring public and stakeholder confidence.

One of these challenges is how to uphold integrity and accountability in the dynamic environment that we operate in. It is critical that we explore the role that PR plays in fostering an organization's level of integrity and how that impacts on trust and performance in the eyes of its peers and publics; as well as how to resolve cross-level integrity discrepancies and the resultant impact of such decisions on the bottom line. Having said that the need for organizations and those operating in the PR space to model and live through the integrity value cannot be overemphasized.

As we develop and package strategic communications and provide advisory on topical issues, corporate culture and policy in our organizations, we have to ingrain them to an ethics and value driven framework by institutionalizing and upholding integrity and ethics as strategic values. Challenging as it may be, we need to mainstream integrity inclined systems through advocacy and behavior change strategies that will inculcate a mind and attitude shift on ethics and integrity both at a personal level and organizational level.

The writer is a Development Communication specialist passionate about Integrity & Governance

Broaden your minds, there are lots of exciting opportunities in the market

By Henry Lusege, Jonathan Ngulamu and Hilda Malowa

Not everybody is gifted so it is important to go to school to broaden our minds and get the exposure, and not just to get employed as employment these days is not the only source of income

Two articles in the media this past year still depress and elate me in equal measure. They show how the world has changed while some of us are clueless about the changes. The reality is that your technical qualifications may no longer be useful in making sure you have food on your table: the world has moved to soft skills. The biggest impediment to this new phenomenon is the unaware, undiscerning employer who does not want to be bold enough to urge citizens to develop soft skills, but is quick to blame the education system for churning out irrelevant skills into the job market. Of what use are conclusions that doctors, lawyers, teachers, or engineers are trained badly when all you need them to do in your environment is public relations and customer care, the world's top-dollar career?

Samuel Gachini, a PhD student, lamented

that he is jobless in an article titled *Learned but jobless: PhD student makes ends meet in taxi business* (Daily Nation, Friday, July 19, 2019). The unawareness of what the world needs today in this article is so depressing, but Gachini has done well: it is the dream of many a youth to go to school and to get to drive their own cars. Gachini has done both, ironically, courtesy of his joblessness situation.

Mary Muthee is a trained medical doctor, an article titled *The medical doctor with a passion for customers* (Saturday Nation, July 13, 2019) says, that she left a well paying job in her field because the bug of customer experience and public relations hit her. The awareness of the doors soft skills can open today in this article is so refreshing, though Mary is driven by passion, it goes to show that technical skills alone may not be the be-all and end-all especially in the new decade that just begun.

The life stories of Gachini and Muthee speak to broadened minds, only that Gachini has not realised this and is still looking for a job! Circumstance or passion led both Gachini and Muthee to work in customer care and public relation jobs where repeat customers are key. Largely, quality customer care and public relation skills, are also equated to great leadership which the late safaricom CEO Bob Collymore phenomenon has worked wonders on the corporate scene today.

Collymore is celebrated today on account of his soft skills. While you are still hankering after qualifications from Ivy-league universities, he gave up an opportunity to study at a leading university in the United Kingdom because he was ineligible for scholarship. But this did not stop him from making a name for himself on the world stage. I have argued that not everybody is gifted and so all of us should go to school to broaden their minds and get the exposure, and not just to get employed. This, I believe, is what informs the change of the education curriculum in Kenya to Competency-based in order to bring out our talents.

I work in the telecommunications industry and there are legion sales, public relations

and marketing job opportunities, I am depressed when I read in the media about qualified graduates looking for jobs they say they cannot find. In this industry, the driver is sales and marketing and the customer care and public relations bug. Basically, success in sales is about repeat customers, and a good sales person earns more money in commissions than any fixed-salary employee in most organisations would ever earn in a lifetime. When all is said and done, life is about money in the pocket and not the technical skill in the briefcase! We should urge graduates to broaden their thinking and dissuade them from waiting for the government to create technical jobs for them.

According to a survey by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) of 2018, 7 million Kenyans are unemployed with the number of university and college graduates being churned out to the job markets being steadily on the rise while available job opportunities are becoming scarce. According to LinkedIn learning survey of 2020 on the skills needed by most companies recently, creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability and emotional intelligence are dominant across the world.

Your communication skills is probably the most important skill everyone must have and that cuts across all industries. It is the backbone of your profession. As John. D. Rockefeller, in the heyday of his activity remarks, the ability to deal with people is purchasable a commodity as coffee or tea. He would pay for it than any other under the sun. This is the narrative driven by communication skills. Take an instance like the first time you are meeting your prospective employer or potential attachment boss, your hard skills or competent abilities are invisible, right? What matters at this point is how good your verbal and nonverbal communication is.

Another key aspects such as discipline on matters time, resources are important for your career growth.

It is time for a paradigm shift. Technical skills alone may not get you anywhere in the job market today as those jobs are few

and far between: you do not necessarily have to work as a teacher, doctor, lawyer, or engineer if you are so trained. Grass will grow between your legs if you hope to get the job of your technical skills, and this is akin to preparing to live in penury all your life: pecuniary benefits have since moved to soft skills. The world today is interested in how well you can communicate and articulate issues; your analytical and critical-thinking skills; your interpersonal and public relations skills and how well you can work in a team setting; your initiative, leadership, confidence, and problem-solving skills; your adaptability

and flexibility; and your attitude and work ethic.

With new trends and dynamics setting in, corporates and organizations are moving from paying for just the job, service and seniority to paying for skills, knowledge, competency, performance and productivity. All these can be delivered through different innovations. This has led organizations to seek new and creative ways to improve employee performance, as well as remain competitive and relevant in the market. Just as customer satisfaction will motivate consumers to use a certain

product, better remunerated employees will always have a working morale and even go an extra mile in perfecting their work. Therefore, it is important for an organization to have a well-designed compensation plan, which gives equity a high priority to all employers. This can be based on, commissions, bonuses and a comprehensive benefits package to complement a basic salary.

Mr Lusege works for Simba Telecom while Jonathan Ngulamu is a member of PRSK a public relations practitioner at IMG Kenya.

Public Relations is a critical component of organisational success

By Grace Awuor

Georgina was in a privately owned company before she moved into a Government institution. She felt it was where she needed to be as she was earning more, was under less supervision and was given a lot more room to explore her mind in as far as decision making was concerned. Naturally, she felt a sense of obligation and indebtedness to her employer and she would give more than was required, at times surpassing her targets within the first quarter. Her immediate supervisor would give her good appraisals and recommend her for various trainings.

Georgina would also get performance based bonuses constantly. This did not go down well with her colleagues Sharon and Emma as she was considered a threat by these colleagues. They resorted to backbiting and defaming her and she was constantly battling accusations from them. Sharon's and Emma's attitude towards work also changed. They were missing work. While present, they would misuse their employers' resources such as time, they would also arrive late evidently demotivated. This was an expression of

their feelings in their own special way. Arising from the toxic environment, Georgina productivity eventually diminished.

The attitude was the same across all the branches, including the organisation's model branches

The Human Resource team would constantly express their authority through circulars and warning letters. These strategies however did not seem to work. Much effort and resources are invested in attracting and training staff. To retain them, organisations have to keep them inspired and motivated. An organization will fail in realizing its goals, if it is unable to communicate its vision, mission and strategic direction as employees will eventually lose their support and enthusiastic participation.

Employee Relations (ER) is relationship management that refers to company efforts to manage relationship between organisations and its employees. It aims to build mutual understanding and encourages employees to fully participate in fulfilling its goals and objectives. ER provides a platform for corporate

image as employees can be presumed brand ambassadors. Organisations must therefore constantly remind themselves that their relationship with employees is key to upholding its image.

Some of the strategies to improve employee relations include communicating through newsletters/magazines. Employees feel appreciated when they are recognized for their contribution. PR professionals should therefore suggest mechanisms through which employees can be honored. Constant Feedback-One simple way to gather feedback is by sending out a survey. PR practitioners in collaboration with HR officers can help craft survey questions that will offer most value.

Investing in Employees-In an effort to get employees to work towards a common goal, PR practitioners can help plan activities such as team building. Companies exist to make profits, as such and as the greatest asset of any organization, success and failure will depend on human resources. When employing Employee Relations, staff interest should be of strong consideration in order to reach business goals.



Late President Moi and Moi University



By Dr. John Oluoch

When I completed my undergraduate studies at Moi University, the first job offer I got was to be a Public Relations officer in the same institution. My duties among others included managing the office of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor (VC) and the Chair of the university Council. At the time, President Moi was the Chancellor, Dr. Nathaniel Tum the Chairman of Council and Prof. Raphael Munavu the VC. Being the head of state, Moi, as per the previous Universities Act, doubled up as the Chancellor for all the other four public universities that Kenya had at the time namely: the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Egerton and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

As our Chancellor, President Moi had a stately, fully furnished office located on the first floor of the Mackay Building within the campus. Though he would use it only when he came to preside over the university's graduation ceremonies, the office had all the paraphernalia befitting the stature of a president, including a state chair, executive desk and a specially designed table, complete with rod brackets where he would place his trade mark rangu whenever he called in.

The nature of my work and the seemingly privileged pedestal it accorded me put me in a position to once in a while engage with the OP on matters speech writing, internal protocols as well as the monthly reports that the VC was required to file to the chancellor on the university's affairs. In all these, I came to truly understand and appreciate how deeply the former president cared about and loved Moi University, the only university that he envisioned, designed and built from scratch during the twenty-four years of his rule as Head of State. A university that bears his own name! Established on the backdrop of the 8-4-4 system of education, it was often mentioned that he intended it to be purely a university of science and applied technology and personally coined its slogan of Moi university, A University with a difference.

In 1987, when Moi University was just three years old, he personally brought the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to tour the institution. It did not have any of the modern infrastructure and the paved streets it boasts currently, but Moi nevertheless implored upon Lady Thatcher to go and "see his university". During this visit, Thatcher pledged to support the construction of a library and the faculty of information sciences complex which were completed in 1994 and handed over to the university by the British High Commissioner Kieran Prendergast. This made Moi University to be first university in Africa to offer information sciences. To date, Moi University remains the only university in Kenya to ever have hosted a sitting British Premier.

President Moi loved to watch the University choir perform. There was no presidential function in any part of the country where "the great" Moi University choir, as he used to call it, missed to perform. He developed personal friendships with the two choir directors Fred Ngala and later on Mellitus Wanyama, both of whom he later took with him to Kabarak University where they are professors currently. During their shows, Moi would smile, tap his foot, nod his head and lip sync along, almost word for word.

One day, he invited the choir to his Kabarak home for a performance. On the

way, our old bus broke down, occasioning a serious delay and near panic. When the choir arrived at Kabarak, he politely asked why they arrived late and was informed of the breakdown. He simply smiled and replied that he would look into it. A few weeks later, he dispatched four brand new green coloured 63 seater Volvo buses to the university, each christened Mzalendo, Amani, Upendo and Umoja.

Moi had genuine interest in the university. The students used to complain that being far away from Eldoret town, they needed to have a place for recreation, shopping and relaxing. When he learnt about this, he lobbied the Kenya Reinsurance Corporation to construct a modern students' centre with shops, banks, student leaders' offices, hotels, gymnasium, indoor games arena and a full post office with telephone facilities for students use. After every graduation ceremony, mostly in the month of December, he never once failed to donate bulls for the students to feast on.

President Moi was also very keen about his choice for the person to lead Moi University as VC. It had been said that during her visit to the university in 1987, Margaret Thatcher who had studied chemistry at Somerville College, Oxford, asked the then VC Prof. Douglas Odhiambo what his area of specialization was. Odhiambo replied that he was a chemist and Thatcher told Moi that if he ever wants the university to be led well, he should always appoint a chemist as the head of the university.

This advice seemed to have stuck with Moi since he ensured that all the other subsequent vice chancellors, like Prof. Odhiambo, were chemists too. After Douglas, he appointed Shellemia Keya, a soil chemist followed by Justin Irina, an inorganic chemist and eventually Prof. Raphael Munavu, an industrial chemist who headed the university until the year 2002 when he retired as president of Kenya and chancellor of Moi University. May you rest with the angels, Mr. Chancellor Sir!

Dr. John Oluoch is a senior lecturer of communication and Dean, school of information, communication and media studies at Rongo University

How to survive after a losing a job?

By: Sandra Belyon

Every day around the world, job losses and employment downsizing occurs either caused by the employee himself/herself or based on other factors. These could be also through recessions, the company closing down or an unfavorable business climate. It is no secret that there is a huge comfort a pay cheque and a consistent income or cash flow gives to every adult. You can afford to meet your basic needs, pay bills as well as enjoy a few extra luxuries. So what happens when the paycheck tap runs dry and bills start piling up and you are chocking in debt? What happens when your key skillset is writing and media relations?

Other than the practical things that you need to do as soon as you lose your main source of income or job like scaling down, controlling your expenses and having only good debt; this is how you stay afloat as you work on getting back on your feet:

Be very frugal about your spending - get rid of unnecessary expenses and those you cannot reduce or eliminate always ensure you control them; as the only money you have at this point is your savings.

Tap into your existing network and contacts. When you were working you definitely had made a good network of contacts in your industry or related fields. Make use of these old contacts, reach out to them, let them know that you are actively looking and if they have work openings or business opportunities they can involve you. Be it assisting in organizing an event, editing their content, managing their social media pages, developing a communication strategy or even writing articles. It could be a one-off job or continuous project. This does not only keep you busy and make you some money but also keeps you top of mind in your industry circles should an opportunity arise.

Start looking for new sources of income. Fine, it's given that job loss is a very stressful and deeply emotional experience. But don't sulk too long as life has to go on and bills still need and have to be paid. And at first it won't be easy. The challenges of not having that monthly paycheck will be many but don't stop looking. Try bringing

in any income instead of just spending your savings. Find easy and practical things you can do that require no capital to start and that can generate you a quick income.

Build new contacts- Use this time and opportunity to build and develop new contacts and friendships. You can join a club i.e. a book reading club, the Rotary club etc. Attend trainings, keep up with events happening in your industry and around you. Network, network, network! These new contacts will be one of your pillars to building a new net worth; they could be your window to amazing opportunities or a new job opportunity probably even much better than the one you initially had.

Volunteer – volunteer your skills to

organisations starting with church or any faith-based organisations, children homes, hospitals, schools near you, community centers and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This helps to keep you busy while at the same time putting your skills and expertise to good use. You will also through volunteering, make key contacts who can in the process refer to you some work, projects or job opportunities to you. They are also vital as your referees as you job hunt.

Use your skills to look for work opportunities. Send your portfolio to PR firms, consultancy agencies, printing houses, newspapers, magazine, academic and online writing forums such that, should anyone be in need of your skills they can easily reach you. Constantly post blogs on various topics, write articles, concept documents, whitepapers, even feature articles, as many as you can especially on topical issues affecting your industry and peer organizations.

Be very proactive on your Social media accounts, be intentional, creative and diverse on how you communicate with your followers and network. Let people know you are available and open for collaboration and available opportunities, but let them also see you getting your hands dirty; share some of your work with your followers and offer mentorship. Just don't allow your social media footprint to look idle, lazy or disorganized or even desperate.

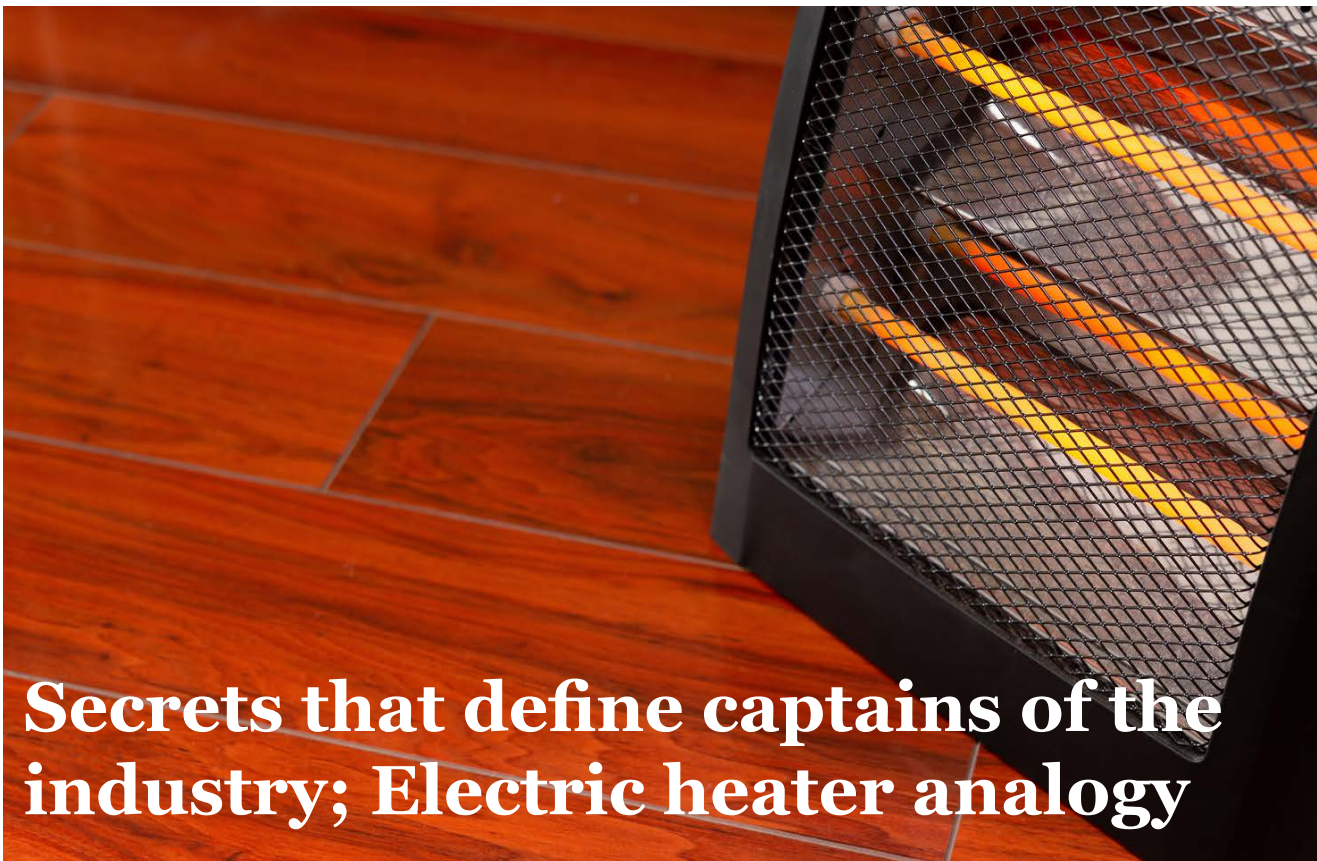
But above all while you work at getting back on your feet, do prioritize self-care. Surround yourself with positive people always, and when need be, reach out to those you trust to stay strong. I know the most natural thing is to crawl into bed, shut out the world, throw pity parties or



spiral out of control.

However, it is also quite easy at this point to fall into or develop bad habits like partying in excess, binge drinking or overeating. Please don't shy from reaching out to loved ones. Let your family, friends or mentors know what you are going through, tell them your worries, your pains and don't be afraid to express exactly how you feel.

Do not be embarrassed or ashamed, these things happen and should not determine who you are or your self-worth. In dire situations, ask for their help and support. Never be afraid to ask especially because of pride or shame. It's definitely not easy to handle some circumstances and some situations can be pretty embarrassing and could even strip you of your dignity but it is better to speak out rather than suffer in silence. Happy 2020 fixers!



Secrets that define captains of the industry; Electric heater analogy

By James Ratemo

Leadership is not a rank, it's a responsibility. - Simon Sinek

The great statesman Nelson Mandela of South Africa is gone but his legacy lives on. In his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, he said that the most effective leaders should not lead from the front but behind, a statement i come to agree with.

As most captains of the industry would agree, the days of command and control are fading fast. The next generation of workers is seeking independence to do their work with minimal supervision. Relentless micromanagement suffocates the innovation and authenticity that you desire from your employees, and subsequently prevents you from focusing on the highest objectives of the organisation.

Meghan Biro the Chief Executive Officer, Talent Culture, believes that leadership is about influence, guidance and support – not control. Look for ways to do your job and then get out of the way so that your people can do theirs.”

According to J.A.C Brown (1954), the earliest types of machine were, for the

most part, of such a nature that, once started, they went on carrying out certain actions with mechanical precision until the man controlling them stopped the engine or until they ran out of fuel.

The most modern heating system, however, is controlled by a thermostat, so that in a very cold weather, the temperature of the room will remain reasonably constant because the system is controlled by messages from the environment.

Lesson from the thermostat analogy:

The inefficient leader is like the old-fashioned machine. His personality is rigid and fixed, he receives no messages from the environment, and his leadership only has an impact when the emotional climate of the group happens to coincide with his own peculiarities.

On the other hand, the effective leader is like the thermostatically-controlled heating system. He is receptive and his power is under the control of the incoming messages which inform him of the changing emotional climates of his group.

Do not be one-man orchestra type of leader

The leader who is, in effect, a one-man orchestra is what we shall describe as an autocrat. The autocrat man shows the following characteristics: he gives orders which he insists shall be obeyed, he determines policies for the group without consulting them, he gives no detailed information about future plans but simply tells the group what immediate steps they must take, he gives personal praise or criticism to each member on his own initiative, and remains aloof from the group for the greater part of the time.

In other words, like the old-fashioned heating system, he gives out energy without regard for the emotional climate which surrounds him.

Contrasted with this type of leader is the democrat who gives orders only after consulting the group, see to it that policies are worked out in a group discussion and with the acceptance of the group, never asks people to do things without sketching out the long-term plans on which they are working, makes it clear that praise or blame is a matter for the group and participates in the group as a member.

Of a third type of leader, the laissez faire type, little need to be said, except that this leader does not lead, leaves the group entirely to itself, and does not participate.

A genuine democrat is an effective captain of industry. He is the conductor of an orchestra rather than o one-man-band, and he realizes that his job is to coordinate the willing work of his employees or to borrow from the political field, is to lead a coalition of the willing. He realizes , too, that a firm should be something beyond individual personalities, and that it is the sign of good leadership that things will go quite smoothly when he is temporarily absent.

His employees know what they are doing and why, and they do not have to pretend in order to get on.

Authority is delegated all down the line, and all levels of management feel sufficiently secure to consider the well-being of their subordinates instead of constantly looking up the line to make sure they are being approved.

“An effective leader discusses problems with the group and treats his men as co-workers rather than instruments; he keeps them informed about future plans, so that they know what they are doing and why they are doing it; he delegates authority and see to it that nobody is indispensable,” argues Mr. Brown.

In summary it is clear that an effective leader does not think he is a special kind of man, but rather that he is one of the group; he never gives orders without explaining why they are necessary.

Replace compulsion with cooperation

It is clear that that in modern industry compulsion has to be replaced by co-operation or else be ready for sabotage which may do a great deal of damage. To succeed, a leader must have the power of

the group behind him.

Cooperation cannot be produced by force. The workers by reason of their informal authority have the much greater power of accepting or rejecting cooperation with the formal hierarchy.

As a leader ask yourself not whether you can lead but also ask if those that you intend to lead will actually follow. Also know that if the led cannot follow, it is much easier to change and replace the leader than the followers.

No leader can increase productivity, raise morale or improve social conditions in the workplace without the joint co-operation of others.

The writer is the Head of Corporate Communications, Retirement Benefits Authority

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NEWS

It's time to overhaul journalism and communication training

By Kennedy Oliver Mwenda

The Media industry has long enjoyed a stellar reputation of independence, professionalism and integrity. No one can question the central role the industry has played in shaping the political, socioeconomic landscape of the country. We owe it to ourselves as professionals in the industry, whether plying our trade in the private sector, the NGO or in government, to critically introspect and evaluate the quality of students that are joining this profession.

We cannot simply sit back and fail to question the philosophy underpinning current training offered in our institutions of learning. We cannot fail to critique or offer valid ideas on how we can better this noble profession that is currently under threat from technology and changing patterns of media consumption among consumers in a robust apolitical way.

The media industry model has changed and evolved in many different ways. The evolving business models has compelled the industry to completely do away with the traditional notion of how we define a journalist or communication profession. The implications from this go far and wide as Journalist and Communication practitioners are now required to be competent on delivering news on digital, print and electronic Media.

Take for example The rise of Vernacular speaking TV and radio stations. The ability to articulate and write news in your native mother tongue is now a marketable skill in today's newsrooms. But has this been indoctrinated in the syllabus? Your guess is as good as mine

Each and every day, Media houses executives ponder on ways to launch new revenue generating business models to sustain the industry. Quite a large chunk of boardroom executives asks themselves just how their respective media houses can hold on to viewers, readers and listeners in the face of debilitating competition from content creators and social media?

Journalism and Communication, in my opinion, long ceased to be a civic duty driven profession. Under the current business climate, one cannot afford to be singularly focused on solitary craft. The ability of a professional to be competent across multimedia platforms places a media house and by extension journalists at an advantage. This is because Advertisers, who generate the most revenue for media houses, are now exploring creative ways to get their messages to targeted demographics. Sponsorships, online advertising, product placements and online viral campaigns are increasingly important for media buys.

Sadly, this has ushered the death of specialization within the profession as media houses and the corporates world now demand more from journalist and communication professionals. No longer are you entirely a print media journalist focused on business or political stories, the field now requires you to be equally competent in delivering news either through radio, TV or through social media channels.

We are in the age of content and information sharing. The audiences are now consuming information in so many different ways. You are more likely to come across breaking news first

though the social media before it finds itself in mainstream. This consequence of this means more and more people are turning to the Internet for news and entertainment, for media houses to compete, they must evolve with the trend by ensuring that they provide rich content and employ the use of multimedia adequately.

There is merit in indoctrinating Media and Communication executives from the industry in the training and teaching of students. I have absolute respect for the integrity and competence of my colleagues in the academia, While I do not seek to denigrate them in any way, the lessons that emanate from work experience, especially the 'industry streets' remain a vital ingredient in shaping a student for the market place as compared to theoretical knowledge. The 6 or 3 months' attachment in workplaces isn't just enough for students to develop experience to meet the market expectation.

In my observation, there seems to be haphazard dichotomy between the academia and the media industry. The Media and communication industry is a world on its own; while the education institutions remain entirely on their own. There needs to be a proper conversation to find a solution to this.

I find it ideal to urge the industry to consider post graduate professional training much like what lawyers go through at the Kenya School of Law. It is time for a fundamental pivot.

The writer is a Lawyer and a Communication Specialist

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Why Public Relations is a necessary evil

By Ngare Kariuki

For a trade that is designed around building reputation, Public Relations (PR) has had its share of bad press. Many people think of PR as simply the fire extinguisher in your building, the friend you only call in bad times, the insurance policy for when things go south.

We understand that PR is important and necessary, but we would do without it if we could. It also doesn't help much that PR agencies tend to make headlines only when they mess up. The communications department seldom gets a seat at the table during board meetings and key company decisions. They are often seen as only good for "broadcasting" the final decisions to the public.

Often, during organizational budgeting, the PR departments are usually the first casualties during a cash crunch. The following are three reasons why I am convinced PR or communications is one of the most important departments an organization could ever invest in.

We are living in the middle of an information explosion

This first half of the 21st century may easily be described as an information economy. Whether one works in manufacturing, transport or the service industry, we have seen an increased emphasis on informational activities and aspects of any trade. The democratization of the internet, proliferation of social media platforms and the low cost of content sharing platforms have made this the most "informational" period in history.

It has never been more important to be intentional about what you communicate. Beyond the company bottom-line, how do

board decisions affect the organization or how transparent are your procurement processes? The fact that the public is now empowered to share information about your organization out there means that you are better off leading or influencing that conversation.

This is not just about managing and controlling what information gets shared; it is also about making decisions with the reputational implications of those decisions in mind.

Business is about people

At the heart of every business idea is the objective of solving a given human or social problem. Businesses are (ideally) about making life better, easier, liveable, and about making the world a better place. This may seem naive considering the harsh realities of capitalism, but it is the core principle behind all economic activity.

It is easy to forget about people, especially when the business succeeds. Facebook started as a college campus information-sharing solution but turned out to be a multi-billion business. In the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, it is now more common to see Mark Zuckerberg in a suit than a hoodie. This is because "boosting profits" quickly overtook "connecting the world".

Today, Facebook still connects people, but the company seems more concerned with connecting people in a way that will avail as much user information (and profits) to Facebook as possible. No business is immune to mission creep. We all start out as humanists and idealists and end up as profit-chasing-capitalists and realists. It is therefore important to keep asking yourself important questions about why

your company exists.

Why are you here? Your work is about people, no matter your job or industry. If your business activity is ever going to be sustainable, you need to always focus on the "public" and the "relations" in public relations. Your communications department exists to keep you sane. It exists to keep you on mission and reset you when you start deviating from your purpose.

People do business with people they know

This is the most basic and obvious purpose of PR: people need to know you exist if they are going to do business with you. This is also the reason PR often gets conflated with marketing. PR helps your brand get noticed in a way that is more authentic than mere advertising or marketing. PR helps your brand "earn its place" in the public consciousness and leads to more trust by the public.

Many PR agencies describe themselves as "conversation-starters", "sales-drivers", "reputation-guardians", "brand-builders". While these are catchy taglines which make for good company web copy, they don't capture the essence of the practice.

The real work of PR happens not in starting conversations, but ensuring you have something worth saying; not in getting attention, but keeping it; not in simply guarding reputations, but ensuring those reputations are worth guarding in the first place. Beyond eye-grabbing headlines, PR ensures you have a worthwhile story underneath those headlines.

The writer is a Director, Red Planet PR

Branding, an extremely critical PR function

By Bernard Kimani

Warren Buffett's well-known quote about reputation, "20 years to build, 5 minutes to ruin," aptly describe what organisations face daily today. In Kenya, there are several cases of companies that have become common with Kenyans, only to suddenly fade. While several reasons have been advanced for the woes facing these companies, they are mostly underpinned by poor Public Relations (PR) management. Branding for organizations is not only important but a critical PR function. Indeed, one of the reasons why these organizations have collapsed is because they are engaged in brand 'window dressing' rather than strategic branding which increases organizations value and ensures longevity. PR can no longer be confined to traditional media relations but as the unit that knows how to manage content, how to circumnavigate the new media, and how to guard the most valuable asset any organization has – its reputation. Undeniably, when it comes to brand management, PR is everything.

Certainly, now more than ever, organizations are appreciating that to achieve objectives and goals they must deploy PR to create, manage and refresh their brands. In Kenya however, most organizations are still grappling to understand what branding entails and how it relates to PR management. This is because the evolution and growth of PR industry in Kenya has been very slow. However, a critical analysis reveals

that, many organizations are gradually appreciating the need for PR. To manage PR, organizations either employ PR practitioners or outsource PR by hiring PR consultants to handle their PR needs. However, the industry continues to endure several challenges such as, poor recognition by organization's top leadership that PR is a management function. The increase of quacks posing as PR practitioners, unfair competition, lack of adequate education for the practitioners, lack of proper laws and structures to govern the profession are just but a few examples of what the industry is facing. The future of proactive PR lies in the industry's capacity to counter these challenges for the benefit of the industry. Otherwise all there will be is the same old reactive PR that achieves no meaningful results.

As a keen observer and PR practitioner in Kenya, the biggest challenge in PR is the way it is currently positioned in organizations. There is also some level of misunderstanding of what PR entails and its role in organizational management. One of the identity challenges facing Public relations is how it defines its relationship with marketing. In Kenya, several organizations position PR as a sub department of marketing and or administration among others. As a matter of fact, many PR practitioners are regarded as operators rather than managers in planning and decision-making levels. For example, in most organizations, PR Managers do not report directly to the CEO. This is a huge gap that lead to serious PR mismanagement

within organizations. Many of them report to managers such as general managers – strategy, corporate affairs directors or marketing directors and so on who have no understanding of what PR entails. This indicates that there is dire need for PR to gain recognition and respect from top management in organizations.

Accordingly, for organizations to earn maximum benefits from Public Relations, PR managers should be accorded the executive privilege like engineering, human resource, marketing and so on of being in top management where they can influence decisions. Further, in most organizations, most PR managers lack the necessary training/skills in PR, and this usually affects their performance and injure the overall performance of the organization. In the long run, it ends up costing the organization needless expenses because in many cases such managers will outsource PR consultants because they must maintain an image of "knowing PR".

Additionally, it is evident that majority of organizations in Kenya do not appreciate nor completely understand the importance of PR. Indeed, the PR practice in Kenya today is facing competition from other professions. The profession is getting competition from the so-called management consultants, quack event managers, who are eager to portray PR practitioners as operators. Further, the PR units are faced with inadequate budgetary allocation owed to the fact that top management undermine potential and importance of the department in comparison to others. Compounding the challenges above is the intrusion by other professionals thus inhibiting growth of PR practise in Kenya. Placing non-PR professionals in top management positions in Public relations affects the performance of organizations in terms of meeting the objectives.

Finally, it is important for organizations to understand PR as deliberate, planned and sustained effort to create and sustain shared understanding between an organization and its publics. One of the reasons why most organizations fail to realize their objectives is the fact that Public Relations profession is never given much consideration, yet it is

The writer is a Communication Specialist and Certified Public Relations Analyst in Kenya



Connecting Behavioural Science With How People Communicate



By Louise Wanjohi

A recent report by Gartner on the upcoming marketing trends in 2020, indicates that in an effort to better understand the rapidly changing behaviours of customers, plan better and develop more effective campaigns, 25% of marketing departments will have a dedicated behavioural scientist or ethnographer as part of their full-time staff. Increasingly, the rapidly changing behaviours of consumers will require those in the creative space to better understand their audience using strong data, instead of what has previously been relied on, which is intuition. What does this mean for PR and Communication practitioners?

Walk into any public relations and communications agency or communications department of various organisations and the catch phrase you will hear during the development of a proposal or strategy is the “big idea”. Organizations or clients are always looking to fit a big idea into their strategies and campaigns. Once the big idea is incorporated into the document, what immediately follows is another buzzword, measurement.

Public relations and communications as a practice is hard pressed to show its relevance in a climate where the media landscape is evolving. The challenge therefore lies in not only displaying the relevance of the practice but also in supporting our intuition driven ideas and strategies.

As communicators, we are always fascinated by how people make decisions, which makes the development of

strategies and campaigns much fun and engaging.

For instance, the pursuit of understanding why people smoke when they know it is harmful, should drive us to understand human beings more, which would make our work as communicators more interesting.

Human behaviour

Over the past decade or so, a fascinating field has allowed us to understand why people act in the manner they do. This field is behavioural science.

According to Prof. Heather Kappes of London School of Economics, human beings are not driven by rational thoughts alone. She maintains that even though statistics and numbers are important, human beings tend to be driven more by their emotional thinking than their rational behaviours.

The effectiveness of the use of our emotional side over the rational is captured across various literary documents and communications campaign executions.

In Kenya, for instance, over the festive season, we saw statistic filled or threatening messaging from the National Transport Safety Authority on the dangers of drunk driving. The adverts, posters were placed everywhere yet, we continue to see drunk drivers. Alcohol brands asked consumers to make pledges saying no to drunk driving by using alternative means of transport like taxis.

The science of human behaviour in communication strategies and policy formulations is gaining traction across

the world. Former US President, Barack Obama once gave a directive that behavioural science be applied in the development of government policies. The former President believed including the patterns of human behaviours in policy formulation would make them more effective.

In the United Kingdom, a Behavioural Insights Team works (BIT) with the cabinet office to develop impactful policies that make public services cost effective by applying a realistic model of human behaviour to policy. The BIT is recorded as the world’s first government institution dedicated to the application of behavioural science in policy formation.

Locally, in a publication written by the founder of the Busara Centre for Behavioural economics he mentioned that one key benefit that behavioural science brings is in ensuring cost effective strategies. The science ensures that the messages developed in strategies, campaigns or even products are tailor made to suit the right audience. In ensuring that you have your messaging correct at the onset of a campaign, you get your return on investment.

Moving with time

It is clear that human behaviour has had and continues to have impact in various fields and as such, the PR and communications field needs to move with the times.

In the past, the measure of success in PR relied heavily on media clippings and media outcomes. It was imperative that practitioners understood how the media worked to ensure they knew who

to engage to get the desired output. As much as this still holds, it is imperative that PR practitioners understand how people think, make decisions and process external influence so as to link the media hits with their impacts on target audiences.

While the approach from communication practitioners has always been to use facts, the application of behavioural science nudges us to see the facts that human beings are driven more by emotional communications. However, this is not to say that the intuitive thoughts and ideas that have governed and been the backbone of our strategies should be thrown out the window.

What the science of human behaviour does is that it allows us to identify which emotions are of value and the ones that matter. It also gives direction on which decision-making processes matters. The light bulb ideas and outcomes of brainstorming sessions that we are so quick to incorporate into our strategies will now have backing from science and research. However, for the impact of behavioural science to be truly felt,

communication practitioners will need to work outside of their comfort zones and change their ways of thinking, and their approaches.

More often than not, communication practitioners do not take the time to evaluate their campaigns and the impact that they have had on the target audiences. Behavioural science will ensure practitioners revisit and evaluate the campaigns or strategies that they had implemented. In doing so, we not only become more precise in how we approach our strategies but we also ensure that we are impacting and changing perceptions, as we should be.

Behavioural science will challenge several, if not all the intuitive and emotionally driven analogies that we currently have. This does not mean that they are wrong; it will more than likely just mean that they have been unnecessary. This science has a lot of potential as seen in elevating the communications field, which as the media landscape continues to evolve requires that we show case the value and the importance communication and public relations offers.

It is no doubt a field that can help implement new strategies, improve old ones, redesign existing ones and provide great insight into the irrational and unexplainable things that human beings do. As such, I believe that the application of this science as seen in developed countries will influence the practice of communications and public relations invaluablely. It will help back our intuitive and emotionally driven strategies if only we apply it and the beneficial insights that it has to offer.

An emerging science that has very clearly affected many fields and organizations; caused economists to evaluate their current models, it has revolutionized the field of criminology, and in some governments resulted in impactful policy changes

Therefore, it would be bold and brave enough to let it challenge our thinking as communicators and to better the PR profession in Kenya.

The writer is a PR professional and a member of PRSK

The Mutuas are an aspiration to PR



By Christopher Okinda

Often time, the most powerful PR professionals are the ones you never hear of, they are working behind the scenes, providing critical and valuable advice to CEOs and presidents. As we celebrate the new century, Public Relations (PR) experts, as I have always argued, must now seek the higher leadership position beyond management.

It’s important to understand the role of PR in an organization and evaluate our score towards achieving our goals as professionals.

We need to generate content and start working towards leading the organization.

The case of H.E. Dr. Alfred Mutua, the governor of Machakos and Dr. Ezekiel Mutua should be inspirational for industry players to think beyond the desk.

Dr. Ezekiel Mutua has transformed the Kenya Films and Classifications Board from a boardroom organization to an international moral house. He is now the ‘moral cop’ as he is fondly referred to and Dr. Alfred Mutua is now a County chief, we must celebrate them.

PR professionals who are expected to advise the Chief Officer must now dream of sitting on that seat and taking the mantle of the organization. We need to understand and appreciate that communication is more “art” than science and thus requires skills, only developed through practice, regardless of the field. We can lead whether in corporate or political fields. A CEO with a PR background is more inclined to deliver

despite the circumstances, be it in crisis situation or advocating for government regulatory scrutiny.

I urge PR professionals to take up this challenge, work on extra responsibilities and stop being advisors or just managers. As Dr Ezekiel aptly put it “Believe in yourself and remains honest, you will rise to the top.”

The writer is a Communication Officer at GDC



There is need to support the communication internship process

By Ronald Ngéno

Internship is a period of learning, a time when students apply their skills in the 'real' world and is a key part of the process of completing tertiary training. Within the communication field, internship is an indispensable phase for one to become an effectual communication professional. This is because the communication field is very practical and through the process of apprenticeship, interns learn how to practically apply skills they have learned in school by working hand-in-hand with a communication professional.

However, there are certain challenges facing the communication internship process within organisations (government, private and NGO fields) which need to be addressed so that both the student (intern) and the organisation benefit fully from the process.

First, within several organisations, treatment of interns is less than optimal. In some organisations, treatment of interns is analogous to office messengers; they are sent on various errands both official and personal, that have no relationship to their training. Case in point, I have heard of interns who prepare tea, carry out shopping, etc. for their supervisors, which neither helps them nor the organisation. This should not be the case as interns are learning and need our support. We should remember that most if not all of us were interns at one point and should strive to make the experience better for someone else.

In addition, interns are our future leaders. This is an opportunity to instil a skill, a virtue in them, which may eventually be of value to society in future. Give them space to grow. They need to make mistakes in order to grow; don't limit this experience. Instead, look at the value they add to your organisation, and value them back by providing opportunities for growth by, for example, allowing them to participate in field work, make presentations and even represent the organisation in various matters.

Second, the practical skill-level training

communication interns receive in institutions of higher learning varies so much that one wonders about the quality of the standards of training/curricula in these institutions. Communication interns range from those who fit easily in an organisation and within a week or so can be assigned projects of increasing difficulty, to interns who have a very long learning curve and even after a month or two can hardly be assigned any duty, and instead still require training on basics of communication and office work.

Certain basic skills in communication are expected to have been imparted at college/university level, such that by the time a student goes on internship, they can apply them and learn more complex skills. In my view, in the communication field, basic skills include understanding how to use a digital camera for photography/videography, knowledge of basic writing skills such as writing a press release/news article, and basics of design of simple publications.

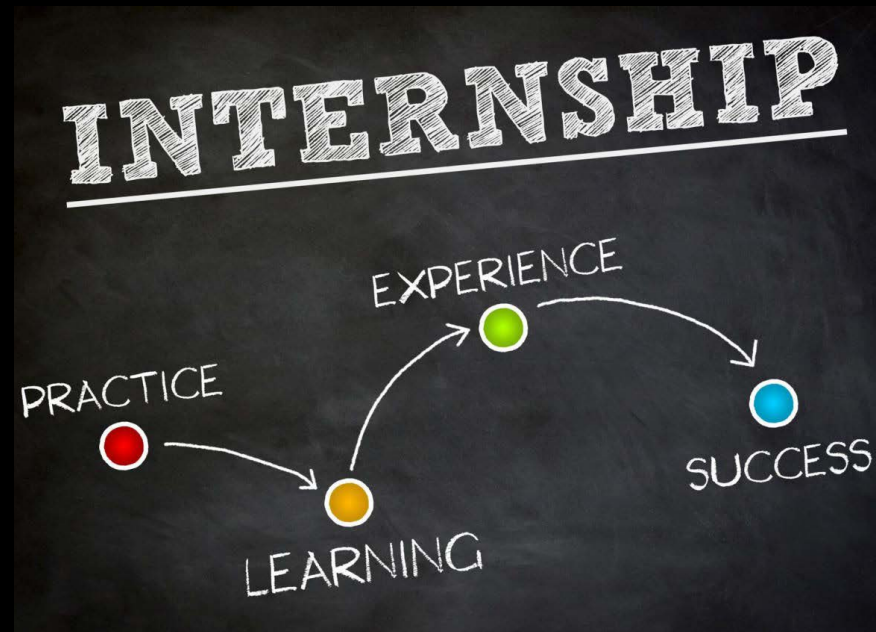
Indeed, receiving a student who needs to be trained in basic skills leads to a lot of delay, time which organisations lack. This may lead to organisations labelling colleges/universities, identifying those that train students well versus those that do not. Based on this, organisations may avoid taking in students from institutions

viewed as not doing a good job. Hence, such organisations may find it difficult to receive placement for their students, which may lead to a large number of students failing to get the prerequisite experience. One possible solution to this is the passage of the PR Bill and formation of the eventual PR institute which, among other functions, will regulate communication training and curriculum standards and the certification process.

Finally, I would like to advise students who are looking for internship positions to always have a learning attitude. I have had an intern who did not have most basic communication skills when she joined and had difficulty writing even a simple email. However, she had the right attitude and was able to learn a lot in a few weeks and after a month she was up to speed. She eventually outperformed most of the interns we had, and became an important asset to the organisation.

Keeping the right attitude is the best thing an intern can have and institutions of higher learning can teach and model this as they prepare the next generation of communication professionals.

The writer is a communication officer at the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA)



In the shoes of the secretary

By Catherine Warui

I recently sat in for a colleague when she went for her annual leave in December. This is not unusual – people fill in for others all the time across all organizations. What made it interesting for me was that my job description and hers are not related in the least. She is a secretary, while I am a keyboard basher (creative writer) in Corporate Communications.

I usually don't like to make preimpressions, but like many other people, I erroneously assumed that her job would be a walk in the park. I could not have been more wrong. On my first days on the job, I felt so far out of my depth that I thought I would need to grow fins and a tail. It was akin to entering those home-made safari rally cars, created with hanger wire, maize cobs, cut-up flip flops and tons of India rubber, into the world-renowned Safari Rally.

Much of the work done by a secretary is public relations related. From telephone etiquette: "Good morning, this is Corporate Communications, Catherine speaking, how may I help you?" to how one receives guests, some of whom may not have made appointments, yet still deserve to be treated like VIPs. You require pizzazz in a plethora of communication methods, such as being a whiz at typing up a memo or circular in the blink of an eye, complicated formatting notwithstanding. An executive secretary must be abreast with all forms technology – conference lines, diverse communication tools and the like.

During my sojourn into the world of being a PA, I learned that your physical presence at the office every day is a must. Strictly speaking, my actual job does not require me to be physically present at the office. I can dash off a couple hundred words on my laptop and WiFi them over to the boss, regardless of my location or the time of day.

As a sit-in secretary, I could have sworn that on some days my brain bluescreened severally, before a forced reboot brought it back to form. I dare say I discovered the reason behind my bosses' long hours at the office. The amount of correspondence and decision-making, the

endless meetings and safaris to the field - which management deals with, is mind-boggling. On my part, there were tons of emails to sift through and print out for the boss's attention, once I got to the office.

On particularly busy days, PA's will be found clacking away at their keyboards, eyes on the shorthand scribbles in their notebooks, while mainlining coffee. For instance, did you know that the gazillion buttons found on office telephones sets all have uses? And that you need to understand them all?

with Administration Office regarding office furniture and fittings; follow up claims for the boss's official expenditures; arrange for requisite transport; order refreshments for meeting attendee, the list is literally endless.

The secretary is expected to fulfill all her bosses work-related needs proactively. She must have an eidetic memory, since the boss might ask questions or seek clarification on some issues, she is expected to provide answers upfront. A secretary, I noted is the backbone to



It also dawned on me why the ladies in this line of work are ever decked out in killer official outfits which are sometimes incongruent with the flat shoes/sandals they wear around the office. Upon arrival at work, stylish office shoes are set aside, to be retrieved at time-to-go-home. The amount of walking around one needs to do as a secretary is quite simply unbelievable. You have to register and deliver umpteen letters to far-flung offices throughout the day; take others to the Registry for dispatch, answer the boss's phone, manage his diary and visitors, ensure sure he /she gets his daily victuals; file correspondence; liaise

the boss's success. I kid you not; office operations would grind to a halt in the absence of PA's.

Being in Public Relations may not be as challenging, nevertheless, it is a tough job. You require saint-like patience.

I wonder if anyone else has sat in for a colleague in a different department, how was the experience? I would certainly be glad to hear!

The writer is a corporate communications officer at Kenya Wildlife Service.

The role of PR in building the society

By Leonard Khafafa

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some hire public relations officers- Daniel J. Boorstin, American historian.

Public relations (PR) has been defined as the professional maintenance of a favorable public image by an organization which is created when a company delivers on shareholder value.

PR professionals or Corporate Communications as they are often called, have two main functions. The first is an

organization is dropping the ball.

Governments operate like companies, with legal, financial and PR teams. They mirror corporate objectives in the sense that they exist to deliver value to citizens. The Jubilee administration has made decisions that have had legal, financial and reputational ramifications. Whereas a good communications team would have easily explained some of these decisions, in other instances, government has been left fumbling for answers or making commitments it cannot keep with the net effect of a tremendous trust deficit in the citizenry.

result of bank foreclosures.

Nobody is talking about food security when there is a surfeit of imported staples from neighboring countries. No one is addressing the dam scandals or the failure of the Galana-Kulalu irrigation scheme that would have shifted the country from rain-fed agriculture to irrigation. Hardly any mention is being made of efforts to combat the scourge of desert locusts that could potentially decimate the country's strategic food reserves.

Many industries are closing shop because of high power tariffs and reduced demand



advisory role to the leadership team. The head of an organization cannot make a major decision without consulting the legal and financial departments because both have implications that affect the bottom line. Similarly, PR people have a seat at the leadership table because of reputational implications. They act as custodians of the organization's trust by advising the CEO on what to do. Second, they help to the organization to build mutually beneficial roles with stakeholders. They bring the outside in through: speaking to journalists, observing global trends and finding out when and where, if at all, the

For instance, the President, in an interview on national television, promised to reveal the details of the controversial Standard Gauge Railway contract. More than a year later, he is yet to do so. His PR team has not come out with a cogent explanation. Then there are the four pillars of Uhuru's legacy; Affordable housing, affordable healthcare, food security and manufacturing. To deliver 500 thousand houses in the remainder of the president's term would require a fantastical rate of a house every minute. Besides, the economy is performing so deplorably that one out every three houses in the market is as a

for goods as a result of a depressed economy. Even then, there is no reassuring spin from the government to stem the inexorable downward slide. As for healthcare, the less said the better. But it is not lost on ordinary citizens that the wealthy cast their no confidence votes in the country's healthcare system by opting for treatment overseas.

The writer is a public policy analyst. This article was first published in The Standrd newspaper

Want to be an excellent speaker? Build your vocabulary or borrow from Malcom X

By Ruth Dero

Words are vital to thinking so effective communicators respect language and how it works. They are the tools of a speaker's craft. Thought and language are closely linked. We do not get an idea and then come up with words to express it. Rather, we usually think in words. People often say, "I know what I want to say, but I just don't know how to say it." In fact, if you truly knew what you wanted to say, you probably would be able to say it. On most occasions when we are looking for "just the right word," what we are really looking for is just the right idea.

Have you watched a carpenter at work? The job that would take you or me a couple of hours is done by the carpenter in 10 minutes - with the right tools. You can't drive a nail with a screwdriver or turn a screw with a hammer. It is the same with public speaking. You must choose the right words for the job you want to do.

Words have two kinds of meanings - denotative and connotative. Denotative meaning is precise, literal and objective and simply describes the object, place, person or event referred. Connotative is more variable, figurative, suggestive, implied and subjective. It has to do with the meaning suggested by the associations or emotions triggered by a word or a phrase.

An effective public speaker must be aware

of the meanings of words and know how to use language accurately, clearly, and appropriately. For you to be accurate, ask yourself, "What do I really want to say? What do I really mean?" Prepare your speeches. Choose words that are precise, exact, accurate. When in doubt, consult the dictionary or thesaurus to make sure you have the best words to express your ideas. In order to be clear, a speaker should work out a systematic plan to improve their vocabulary. Years ago Malcolm X, the famous African - American leader, did this by copying the dictionary, word by word! This method is extreme, and few people would take the time for it. A less arduous plan might be to try using one new word everyday - and using the word correctly. The purpose of this is to learn a lot of big words, but to "learn when certain words should be used and when to avoid others."

Still on clarity, the public speaker must always remember that people are different. What makes perfect sense to some may not make sense to others. You cannot assume that what is clear to you is clear to your audience. This is particularly true in speechmaking. Listeners, unlike readers, cannot turn to a dictionary or reread an author's words to discover their meaning. A speaker's meaning must be immediately comprehensible and so clear that there is virtually no chance of misunderstanding.

You can ensure this by using familiar words, by choosing concrete words over

abstract words, and by eliminating verbal clutter. You cannot go wrong by following the advice of Winston Churchill to speak in, "short, homely words of common usage." A speaker must also be vivid in their language use helps bring speech to life. One sign of a vivid language use is the ability to create word pictures or imagery, that get the audience totally involved with the speech. Three ways to generate imagery are by using concrete words, simile and metaphor. Rhythm created by the choice and arrangement of words is another great evidence of vivid language craft. Four stylistic devices employed by Winston Churchill and other fine speakers enhance speech rhythm and prose and should be encouraged. They include parallelism which means the similar arrangement of a pair or series of related words, phrases or sentences.

The effective public speaker must also use language appropriately by developing their own language style instead of trying to copy someone else's. Finally, good language use requires that one avoids sexist language in a speech. Such language that may be seen by a section of the audience to promote the stereotyping of people on the basis of gender must be avoided.

Ruth Dero is the Senior Corporate Communications officer at National Industrial Training Authority [NITA]

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



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- ICT
- Peace & International Relations
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- Media Studies
- Graded Certificate Course in Music-GCCM

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- Human Resource Management
- Information Communication Technology
- Business Administration & Management
- Entrepreneurship
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- Communication - requires a C (plain) in English

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 - Development Communication,
 - Corporate Communication
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- Bachelors of Education (Arts)
 - English / Literature
 - Kiswahili / Christian Religious Education (Bible)
 - Kiswahili/ Music

- Christian Religious Education(Bible)
- Kiswahili/Bussiness Studies
- Christian Religious Education/ Bussiness Studies

- Early Child Development and Education (CBE)

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- Bachelor of Commerce
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 - Business Administration & Management
 - Marketing
 - Purchasing & Business Logistics
 - Management Information Systems
- B.Sc. Economics

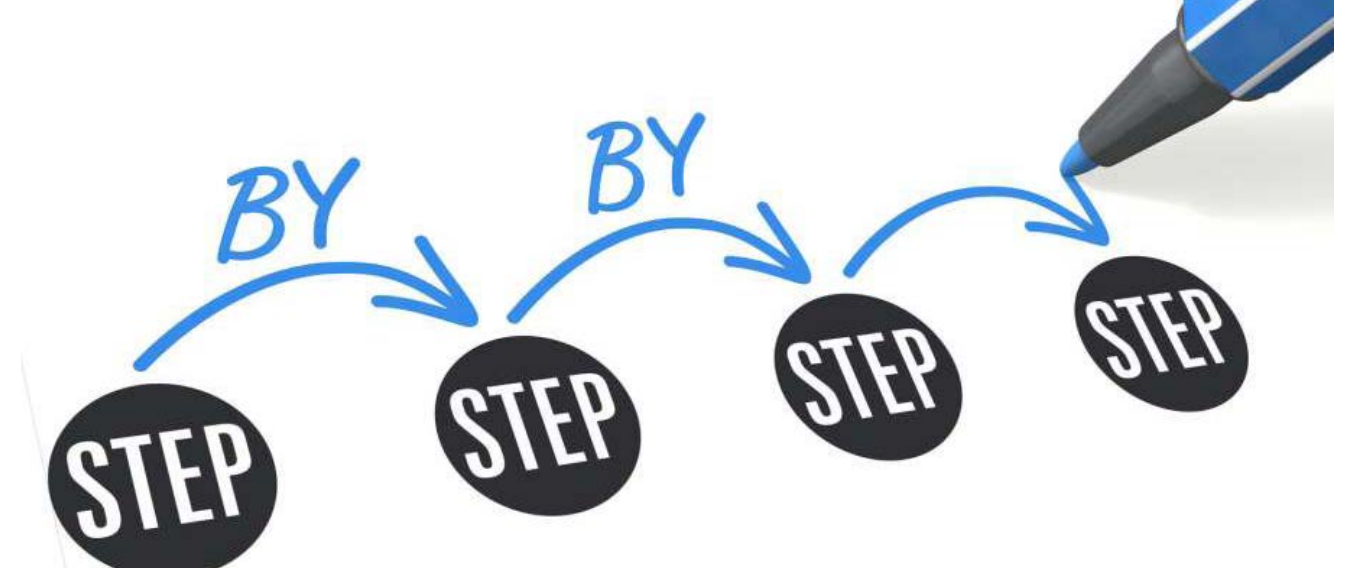
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Processes or Results? What defines PR?

By *Chrispine Onyango*

Let's get thinking about these questions: Did you have a PR campaign? How many customers called to inquire about your products or services? Are more people recommending your brand than before? Are you generating more deals? Is your site receiving more traffic from a media placement, how many of those visitors are taking action (purchasing, calling your customer support number, et cetera) and did you follow the laid down processes for the campaign?

If you find the questions confusing, then that is exactly how PR is confusing in the current world. PR professionals and agencies are torn between using their laid down processes and achieving results for their organizations and/or clients. Which one is more important? Results or processes? I hold the conviction that PR activities should be about growth and no matter how you look at it, growth means client retention and revenue growth where this metric applies. If a PR campaign doesn't have this outcome, it has failed.

Now, back to the subject of this article. Many, if not all PR professionals and agencies, have set out their own methods and processes for achieving success for the PR activities they undertake. It is right to always have a plan of what you want to do and how you want to do it so that once it is done, you can come back and have look back at what was done and see if it was rightfully done as set out initially. This is the principle of many PR professionals and agencies. At the end of it all, the processes are always geared towards achieving the desired results. By this virtue therefore, if followed well, the plans bring about

success.

Could this be the time to rethink of the RACE model proposed by John Marston in 1963 as a PR model? Because you – the reader, you are a PR specialist, you know that the model can be a helpful tool for developing a strategic PR plan.

It is however important to keep in mind that Public Relations is a dynamic process and keeps changing thus requires constant attention and focus. There are a few variations of the model, but it is essentially a linear process involving Research, Analysis, Communication and Evaluation. For the best results, all the four steps in the RACE model need to be executed continuously and simultaneously. This is the case of the processes producing the desired results.

Let's have a quick look into the components of the RACE model. Research is an important step in the beginning stages of any type of a PR campaign. Some good things to know in the initial stage of a PR plan include understanding the target audience, demographics, what those audiences like, how they like to communicate, and where they go to get information. This could be televisions, radio, newspapers, magazines, social media, etc. The next step is action planning.

At this step, a strategic plan is developed from the research that determines what information to communicate and the best ways to reach the desired audiences with that information. The information needs to be newsworthy. It needs to be able to capture the attention of the desired audiences and contain content that they

can find value in. A truly strategic plan aligns the communication not only with the goals of the PR plan, but also with the core values, mission, and vision of the company.

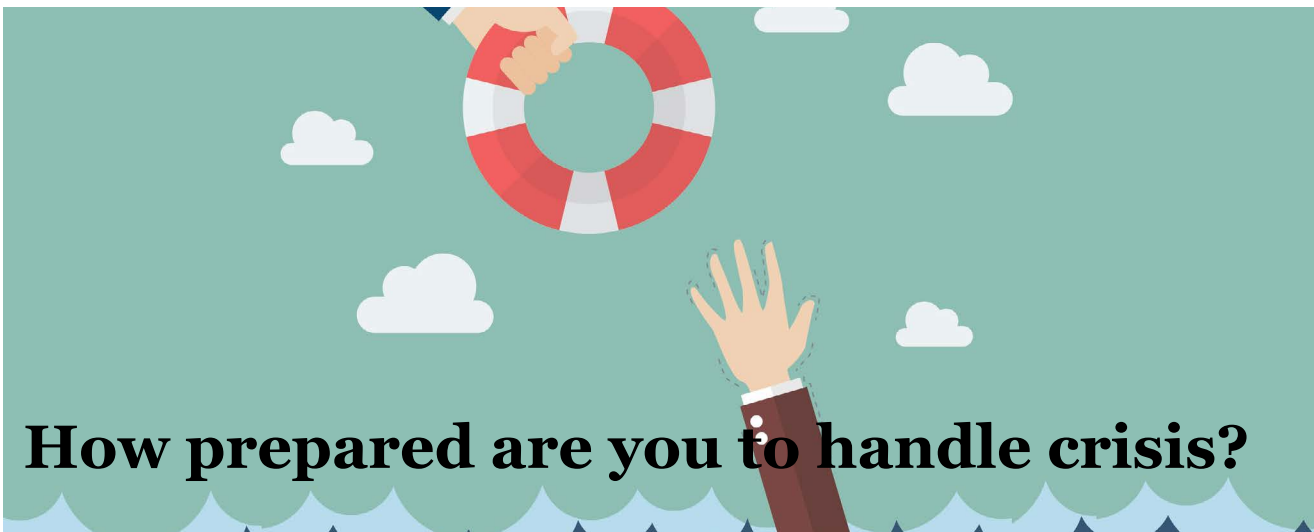
The third step of the model is communication. It involves getting the information and content developed in your action plan to the appropriate and most effective media outlets. Media contacts and contact lists can be very valuable resources in this step to help you distribute information efficiently. When that is done, it is time to do the evaluation. This is the final step. It is important to track the results of your PR campaign and analyse its effectiveness. Determining a Return on Investment is a good way to evaluate the effectiveness of your plan. To do this, you must monitor all the press generated by your campaign like the media placements, their quality and impact, then estimate a value for that press and compare the value of the PR to the expenses associated with generating that PR.

There is no better way to end this article than to remind us that PR is a persuasion business. It is about trying to convince an audience, inside your building and outside your usual sphere of influence, to promote your idea, purchase your product, support your position, or recognise your accomplishments. To do this, we need to have our PR tools with us. The RACE model is one of such tools. The model encourages the use of the processes to attain the desired results. This should be the basis of Public Relations.

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By Paul J Ojier, MPRSK

Knowing how to respond quickly and efficiently in a crisis is critical to ensuring the safety of our schools and students. The midst of a crisis is not the time to start figuring out who ought to do what. At that moment, everyone involved – from top to bottom – should know the drill and know each other –Margaret Spellings

On 17th January, 2020, a sitting Member of Parliament (MP) allegedly shot a popular Deejay in an apparent altercation. The shooting not only brought into question the conduct of politicians and the rationale for allowing them to carry firearms, but also, the security checks and the overall safety of revelers.

Weeks later, another unfortunate tragedy unfolded when 15 pupils died of apparent suffocation in a stampede at Kakamega Primary School, in what remain unclear circumstances still under police investigation. This incident, like the shooting incident, was one of public safety, specifically, that of children in our learning institutions. The ages of the deceased pupils made the public outrage more severe than the shooting incident.

Barely a week after the Kakamega Primary School tragedy, the Nairobi Women's Hospital found itself in a crisis over allegations of commercially exploiting patients under the guise of prolonged admissions and treatment costs. This has since resulted in financial losses for the institution with major insurance companies withdrawing their accreditation and the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) censuring the hospital. The incident brings into question ethical practices in treatment facilities.

Crisis

These events fit the description of crises, which generally speaking are events that could result in negative consequences to an organization, its stakeholders and industry as whole, if not handled well. Crises can either be sudden or simmering. Majority, except accidents and disasters are simmering.

The negative effects or threats emanating from crises can fall into three broad categories according to Coombs: public safety, financial loss and reputation loss. Public safety threats relate to accidents, product harm, negligence, injury and in serious cases, death; while financial loss threats take the form of disruptions to normal operations, loss of market share or purchase intentions and in worse cases, lawsuits with heavy and crippling financial implications.

It is also accepted that while reputational loss often reflect to a loss of trust and the brand value, it is also intrinsic in all crises. Meaning, therefore that all crises carry with them some degree of reputational damage, especially where responsibility has been ascribed to the organization or individual in question.

Crisis Management

In most organizations crisis management and communications, is entrusted to the Public Relations and communications function, and as such, we need to reflect and ask ourselves, what could have been done better in the management of the crises presented above?

From a management perspective, it is clear that each of the crises brought into question public safety in each of the three facilities: B-Club, Kakamega Primary

School and Nairobi Women's Hospital. What policies were in place to ensure that human life and well-being is given first consideration above commercial, political or such considerations?

The hospitality, education and healthcare industries, respectively, have a case to answer on how they manage or intend to manage crises. The education industry in this case, has an elaborate policy framework in the form of the 2008 Safety Manual for Schools launched in 2008, and the 2017 Education Sector Disaster Management Policy launched in 2017 – all of which are inspired by the United Nation's 2015 – 2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Safety Manual in particular outlines in detail how to make schools safe for learners and contains guidelines that should be followed in doing so. However, there is little evidence that it was followed during the crisis, leave alone prior to the stampede. From school infrastructure to transport and safety drills, the guidelines are thorough and practical, but are not implemented to the letter.

Why are the Boards of Management (BoM) of these schools silent on these issues? Didn't we learn from the horrors of Kyanguli Mixed Secondary School in 2001, Moi Girls Nairobi in 2017 or Precious Talent Academy in 2019? Would it be too much to charge these BoMs with the oversight for implementation of the disaster management policy and safety manual in their respective institutions as part of their governance mandate?

In the case of B-Club, is the establishment a member of the Pubs, Entertainment & Restaurants Association of Kenya

(PERAK) which in turn is affiliated to the Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF)? KTF has a Safety Centre which monitors threats to tourists and revelers alike. However, we have not heard any report from them following the shooting incident. What guidelines if any, do they have on safety of revelers and standards to be met by such establishments to achieve the same? It's the least that a KES 99.7 billion a year industry could do.

As for the Nairobi Women's Hospital, are they are part of the Kenya Healthcare Federation (KHF) and if so, what measures has KHF put in place to address crises of this nature? Is there a standard that private hospitals are supposed to adopt to avoid exploitation of patients and is it being enforced even if it is a free-market economy?

Similarly, what are the state regulatory agencies and county governments doing about it all? The Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA) needs to give policy guidance and enforcement on the B-Club incident from an industry perspective; the Ministry of Health, the Kenya Medical & Dental Practitioners Council, Public Health Officers & Technicians Council and the Clinical Officers Council of Kenya need to tell us the actions they are taking in the case of the Nairobi Women's Hospital incident and the Ministry of Education, needs to ensure compliance with set policies, guidelines and manuals for student safety in educational institutions.

Crisis Communication

Apart from the crisis management element highlighted above, there are also considerations to be made in terms of crisis communications. It is noteworthy that all news of these crises was broken on social media. Social media is the new arena for crisis communications.

According to W. Timothy Coombs, social media crises generally take three forms: customer service, venting and challenge. Customer service refers to when a customer decides to publicly reveal a customer service problem they are experiencing with an organization. Venting is when that public revelation is put on steroids with the sole aim of hurting the organization in some way, while challenge is the most difficult to assess, but generally refers to when a customer publicly claims that the organizations actions and practices were

irresponsible.

It is clear that all the social media activity reflected venting and challenge effects in as far as all the three incidents are concerned. Perhaps, it may be worthwhile investigating whether this was as a result of these organizations not paying attention to the customer effect stage where revelers, patients and parents alike may have publicly (on social media) expressed reservations about safety in these establishments, but they were not taken into account or even acknowledged.

If that was indeed the case, then an effective issues management strategy could have diffused the situation and set the management on a course to address the impending crises, by addressing the associated risks before they blew up. Instead, the issues evolved into red-flag reputational risks that bore a full-blown crisis putting people in harm's way, with the most vulnerable losing their lives.

The crisis communications responses were predictable and premised on self-preservation and avoidance of any responsibility under the guise of legal consequences. This comes from the misconception that crisis communications only takes place in the realm of media relations where one has to address the press. While this is important, since the media convey information to a wider public spectrum, it is not the only communication that needs to happen during a crisis.

What were first responders, pupils, teachers and parents told during and after the Kakamega Primary School stampede and was it effective? What were revelers, security and first responders told during the B-Club incident? What did the management of Nairobi Women's Hospital tell staff, stakeholders and patients in the wake of the revenue scandal? All these actions have an impact on how the crisis is managed and how reputations are restored after a crisis.

Investigations

What is most regrettable though, like in other crises before, there is always the promise of investigations, as a way of silencing and appeasing the public. But how often do we hear of the outcomes and recommendations of these investigations? That is a crisis communications faux-pas!

PR Professionals are Essential

Schools, hospitals and tourism establishments need the input of public relations and communications professionals to address these shortcomings. This recognition needs to come from the top – their governance bodies whether at ministerial, departmental or regulator levels as well as from an industry lobby-level. Whether embodied in disaster management, safety or business continuity policies, they can no longer afford to ignore crisis management and communication.

The Mwongozo Code for public sector bodies in Kenya and the Institute of Directors Kenya, as well as the King IV Code all acknowledge the role of reputation management and corporate citizenship and puts the responsibility squarely on governance bodies. Ethical and effective governance is now the cornerstone of corporate citizenship, shareholder and corporate brand value.

Seat at the Table

In line with that, the PRSK needs to lobby and ensure that its professionals are represented on the boards and regulators of these industries to give this much-needed input. It is unfortunate that there is no evidence of consultations with public relations professionals nor listing of such professionals as stakeholders in both the Safety Manuals for Schools and the Disaster Risk Management Policy for schools. This should not be the case. PRSK must pick this up for the sake of public safety, financial prudence and reputational dividend of both public and private institutions interested in true and effective corporate citizenship.

If appreciation can be built at all levels for the important contribution public relations and communications professionals make to issues management and risk management, business continuity and reputation management, then we will be on the road to having better mitigation, preparation, responses and recovery from corporate crises, through effective management and communication of such crises.

Paul is PR Professional with expertise in Crisis Management & Communication in both the public and private sectors.



How to successfully seize Africa's many opportunities

By Jordan Rittenberry,

Opportunities abound on the African continent. It's home to six of the world's fastest-growing economies; and has an average annual GDP that has consistently outpaced the global average. In addition, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) — ratified in July 2019 — holds the promise of greater economic development, job creation and poverty reduction, as well as a healthy return on investment for those looking to expand into developing nations.

It is clear that these factors, and others, have encouraged global investors to sit up and take a closer look at Africa as an opportunity for growth. The UN Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2019 stated that Africa has not only defied the previous year's global slump in foreign direct investment (FDI) but it actually saw an 11 percent increase in investment up to June 2019.

In order to achieve meaningful growth by harnessing the opportunities the continent has on offer, companies need to take calculated risks, and expand their footprint and capabilities. It's important to understand which countries are appealing to investors, and why. Ideally you want to focus on strong markets, with a large pool of potential customers. Countries that are making it easier to do business there, by

offering rebates, or shortening the length of time it takes to register a business, are also attracting investment. Countries that can act as hubs, potentially opening supply chains into different regions, are equally as important.

Apart from regulatory compliance, one of the biggest challenges you'll face as you move into the continent is understanding how to identify and speak to local stakeholders, and connect with local audiences. The ability to address them — not in a homogenised, global voice — but rather one that is localised, authentic, and relevant will prove a critical step in your expansion journey.

Where the opportunities lie

There are 54 countries on the African continent, each one as diverse as the next, and each one offering different opportunities, in different sectors. If you're planning on expanding your company's footprint across the continent you need to confront this diversity and work towards understanding the accompanying nuances, and the regulatory environments that can affect your ease of doing business.

As we've worked towards our own expansion into Africa, we've made a point to consider markets that are consistently growing, that are attracting sizeable international investment, that offer us the opportunity to connect with the different regions from a logical and strong base, and

very importantly — growth in sectors in which we are well-experienced in servicing. According to UNCTAD's report, much of the continent's FDI comes from France, the Netherlands, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China, and it is interesting to see which regions, and specific countries and sectors are drawing the bulk of inbound investment.

FDI in North Africa rose by seven percent to \$14 billion spurred on by investment into Morocco which increased by 36 percent. In Sub-Saharan and Southern Africa FDI rose by 13 percent to \$32 billion. FDI held steady at \$9 billion in East Africa — the fastest-growing region of the continent. West Africa's overall inflow of FDI, dropped by 15 percent to \$9.6 billion

Notable countries included Kenya, and Nigeria. Kenya's FDI grew by an impressive 27 percent during the reported period, with investors favouring the manufacturing, hospitality, chemicals and oil and gas sectors. Their progress in facilitating private enterprise and foreign investment has improved the country's Ease of Doing Business ranking, and its export processing zones (EPZs) are also proving appealing to investors.

Nigeria experienced a 43 percent drop in FDI, with most investment going to extractive sectors including oil, gas and minerals, however it was among one of

the world's top improvers in The World Bank Group's latest Doing Business Study, having conducted reforms that impacted six indicators in the study. Kenya also carried out six reforms including improving the reliability of its electricity supply and introducing an online system for social security contributions, positioning it third-highest in the regional rankings.

Expanding your footprint and capabilities

One of the most important lessons to learn when you're thinking of expanding into Africa, is that it's not a one-size-fits all scenario. You are not simply expanding into Africa, more specifically you are expanding into Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, or Rwanda, etc. Each country has its own set of rules and regulations, culture and traditions, legacies that need to be embraced or enhanced, and most definitely its own unique ways of communicating. Each market is different with varied dynamics. Each audience is unique. Your strategy for expansion will need to be well-researched, and appropriately focused, and the communications strategies will need to be created with each specific market and industry in mind.

Expansion is always a risk — no matter who you are — and when you do decide to take the plunge and invest in new operations in a new country, realise that you will need to give it time to gain traction, sometimes years. Growth is about the long-term view.

You will need to be prepared to weather any temporary storms that might result in a subdued income, such as an election, or a sudden rush for your product or service that could cause problems on the production side of your business, requiring you to suddenly scale to respond to demand — which may not be possible. At such times, you'll need to quickly manage the risk and protect your brand's reputation too, to ensure the sustainability of your business, not just in that region, but in your home market too.

You will need to stay current with local market trends and consumer behaviours, as well as regulatory developments, all of which can have a huge impact on your bottom line. This is something that you can achieve by developing deep local connections and partnerships that can not only give you solid insights into your market and but also help you connect with customers.

By having the right partners in place at the start of your journey or acquiring local assets, expert talent and localised business models, you can gain a more solid foothold as you begin your journey, and can increase your organisation's skillset, abilities and offering across a diverse geography. Building relationships and partnering with trusted local advisors who are able to assist you by providing context into local culture, regulations, working practices, and insights into your customer-base is hugely valuable.

Be brave

Working closely with partners and affiliates across the continent will bring localised insights that really make a difference, enabling you to take bigger risks with your business solutions. It will also create truly unique and carefully targeted communications. Having insights into infrastructural and regulatory challenges in the countries that you're operating in will enable you to build comprehensive risk profiles, and craft specific and strategic reputation management plans. Fostering these important relationships allows an otherwise impossible level of oversight, and the ability to talk authentically to your audiences in their own language could be lost. This could be detrimental since it may result in having your overall success impaired.

Growth is brought about by change, by taking risks, and by giving your business the best possible chance to succeed, and it all starts with confidently taking that first step. Let 2020 be the year you take that risk, that you set your business on a path to growth. Allow yourself to try something new — especially because you can't be entirely sure of the outcome — and see where it takes you. You'll certainly learn something new, and who knows, you might discover strengths and capabilities you didn't know existed within your business — and that's growth.

The writer is the CEO of Edelman Africa

The importance of Data Analysis and Analytics in Public Relations

By Eglina Jeptoo

According to Get Smarter, data analysis refers to the process of examining, transforming, and arranging a given data set in specific ways to study its parts and extract useful information. Data analytics, on the other hand, is defined as an overarching science or discipline that encompasses the complete management of data. This includes not only analysis but also data collection, organization, storage, and all the tools and techniques used.

Data analysis and analytics provides PR professionals with landscape analysis of their past and present working environments hence being able to forecast the likelihood of future occurrence. Moreover, with big data analytics, PR professionals are able to know competitive PR activities, their clients and competitor's business results, industry trends overall economic.

PR professionals can use data from different sources, such as social media data and web data, to get real-time sentiment analysis. There are a lot of different sentiment analysis tools in the market that PR professionals can make good use of. By using the sentiment analysis tools and creating alerts, PR professionals get real-time alerts of the brand they are managing and they can monitor them effectively. The beauty with sentiment analysis tools is that they show data on what people are talking about your brand. It classifies them as Positive, Neutral, and Negative. Therefore, these data analytics help PR professionals to act fast on negative sentiments before it spreads like wildfire on the internet. They can also ride on positive sentiments about their brand. Although the main aim of a PR campaign is to gain media coverage and influence on how people view the brand, PR professionals can use it to generate leads. For instance, they can

incorporate tools like Google Analytics to track leads generated from brand websites or social media platforms. By sifting through this type of data, PR professionals will be able to know the kind of content that is generating more leads or platforms. From there, they can use the data insights to create more relevant messages and ensure they generate more leads such as email signups, newsletter signups, or eBook downloads.

Having a vibrant social media account is becoming a necessity for brands today. Brands use social media for social interactions, creating brand awareness, publishing press releases, customer support, and generating leads. PR firms can use social media analytics to determine how people are talking about brands. Moreover, with the social media data, PR professionals can mine info about its audience in terms of demographics, behaviours, interests and time when they are online. As a result, the data analytics from social media allows PR practitioners to know which kind of messages they will create to suits their audience and the right time to send out messages. When designing a PR campaign or strategy, there is always a goal that you are aiming to achieve. In the past, it was difficult to track and measure the success of PR campaigns effectively. However, with technological, analytical tools, we can get data insights on how the PR strategy or campaign is performing. By gleaning through these data insights, PR professionals can then optimize their strategy or campaigns.

Data analysis and analytics are growing vital among PR professionals. Those who are making good use of data are getting an edge over competitors with data-driven PR strategies, real-time brand alerts, measurement of PR strategies & campaigns, etc.

Importance of communication in corporate governance

By Angela Njeri, MPRSK

Business Review, 2018

In the wake of the economic meltdowns of such once great companies as Nakumatt Holdings and ARM Cement, enormous attention has been shifted towards companies' boards. Were the directors asleep at the wheel? What really went wrong? It seems inconceivable that business disasters of such magnitude could happen without gross or even criminal negligence on the part of board members. And yet a close examination of those boards reveals no broad pattern of incompetence or corruption.

As a matter of fact, the boards followed most of the accepted standards for board operations: Members showed up for meetings; they had audit committees, compensation committees, and codes of ethics were all in place; the boards weren't too small, too big, too old, or too young. According to a 2018 study conducted by Harvard Business Review, while some companies have had problems with director independence because of the number of insiders on their boards, this was not true of all the failed boards, and board composition was generally the same for companies with failed boards and those with well-managed ones. So what exactly is the underlying problem?

From scheduling events to approving consent agendas to completing board self-assessment surveys, technology makes it increasingly easier for board members to do their jobs. While access to timely information absolutely helps, it's not everything. The key to ensuring optimal job performance by board members is recognizing that board service is, in fact, a job.

Because a board is made up of a diverse range of characters, the need to develop a strong culture is vital. Members don't need to be friends, but they do need to be respected colleagues. Unlike most teams, dissent and robust individual opinion is an important trait on boards as it helps members consider all possible options in order to arrive at the best possible decision.

"What distinguishes exemplary boards is that they are robust, effective social systems." – Harvard

It's difficult to tease out the factors that make one group of people an effective team and another, equally talented group of people a dysfunctional one; well-functioning, successful teams usually have chemistry that can't be quantified. They seem to get into a virtuous cycle in which one good quality builds on another. Team members develop mutual respect; because they respect one another, they develop trust; because they trust one another, they share difficult information; because they all have the same, reasonably complete information, they can challenge one another's conclusions coherently; because a spirited give-and-take becomes the norm, they learn to adjust their own interpretations in response to intelligent questions.

There is no better way as a founder to get your board to take hard decisions than if they all have strong working relationships. By building "outside the board meeting" relationships one finds that it is easier to resolve difficult issues when they arise. It is an invaluable source of future deal flow, future recruiting and future decisions about the future of the organization

Communication is broadly defined as a process by which information is exchanged between two parties through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior. It is considered very important falling at 6.2 on a scale of 7 according to a study done by JWC partners in 2018. Directors identify technology, corporate strategy, and CEO and leadership succession as increasingly important board topics. In retrospect, communication can be interpreted as a catalyst to the process of strategy, risk management, financial planning; just to mention but a few.

A good deal of board directors are simply reactive and wait to be engaged by management or show up at board meetings. Effective communication boosts a proactive nature in organisations. Questions like; "is there anything I should be doing, even if I haven't been asked yet." are bound to pester directors consequently leading to a dynamic and effective board.

Good corporate communication does not purely serve the need to protect the public face of the company but more fundamentally, aid the smooth running of the company – specifically the delivery of the strategy and goals of the organisation.





What limits your success?

By Pauline Wanyoike

Every day you wake up to a story of a successful man or woman, on the internet or news. You probably have reached a point where you wondered why your success can't be loud. You desire to succeed but after trying and trying harder, there are no better results. Wondered why? Brian Tracy says;

"There are no limits to what you can accomplish, except the limits you place on your own thinking."

You can succeed when you maintain a mindset of success in every situation. Think about success and work towards it, failure should never be an option. Instead of trying it out, work it out. Others have worked and made it so you too can, only focus in your mind that you must succeed. There are challenges that may hold you back, but remember successful people will always overlook them. Here are a few key factors that will limit your success.

Lack of Goals

A goal is a result you plan and purpose to achieve. You need to set achievable goals that you will constantly work towards. It is frequently said that failing to plan is planning to fail. Do not be a victim, successful people will set their goals and priorities right.

Setting goals gives your life direction, self-confidence and motivation. Goals help you plan your time and guide your thoughts. Achieved goals always serve as a benchmark for higher goals.

Failure to Research

You need knowledge for better results. For every idea that you have, you need to do thorough research about it. Good research will give you findings that will guide but not dictate your plans. You need to know what others have achieved in the field of your research in order to go an extra mile. Research can be done through reading books, serials, audio and visual Materials.

Negativity

Life is like a rose flower on its tree. It is has a beautiful end but a thorny start. When thorns present themselves so loud, you need to consider that successful people learn to walk on the thorns.

John Wooden once said, *"Things work out best for those who make the best of how things work out."*

You need to overcome negativity both internally and externally. Learn to be positive, focus on success and not failure. When negativity is drawn from others set a limit to their influence on your progress.

Thoughts of others

People will always compare you to others, either based on your education, career or age. Never compare yourself to anyone. You are an independent person and a mastermind of your destiny. Consider that people will always talk about you, your success or your failure.

Successful people find their self-worth from within. They are always happy about their achievements and they do not let the view of others count. They acknowledge that paying attention to the views of

others drains their energy and waste their precious moment. Time is a precious jewel for them that have to be well scheduled.

Toxic People

It is always said that, show me your friends and I will tell you who you are. Everyone is an average of those you spend time with. If you find that your efforts do not bear much fruit, check who surrounds you. Spending time with successful people will always draw you towards success unlike the law of attraction.

Most successful people in the world have been as a result of great minds pulled together. Mark Zuckerberg a co-founder of Facebook knew that he needed like-minded people to succeed.

Fear

"Security is mostly a superstition. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing." Helen Keller. Danger may come from your environment. Fear may result from past mistakes or unknown future occurrences. If your colleague is sacked or retrenched, that spills fear in you at your work place. The economy too may be through hard times.

Successful people will always pay attention to their personal jobs and put effort towards better results. They do not give room to the environmental state that they have no control over. You need to walk out of fear and work towards success.

To sum it up

Success is a mindset that stands-out of other circumstances. It is a personal decision. With smart work, focus and discipline, you will not let anything deter your success.

Be a success story too!



Symbiosis: Journalists and PR Officers should work together

By Nicholas Mureithi

In the previous edition, Mutegi Mugambi wrote about how the newsroom prepared him to the PR world. He argued that he jumped from the newsroom to PR in order to impact on the society in a different way. The comparison, however between journalists and PR officers has been hotly debated in the field of communication studies even as more scribes continue to leave the newsrooms for PR. Could it be that journalists have recently discovered that PR is a more promising career? Liz Ntonjira, Bony Odinga, Emmanuel Talam, David Mugonyi, Kanze Dena are some of the journalists who have left the newsroom for corporate organisations and public service.

The relationship between Journalism and Public relations has been described as close and symbiotic. One of the most important aspects in PR is story telling. The pertinent question to ask is, 'are journalists make better story tellers?' While it is true that PR practitioners are excellent in developing PR strategies and managing campaigns, journalists are well equipped in news judgement skills that enable them to distinctly pitch the right

stories targeted at the right audience. Journalists are also more adapted to working under strict timelines based on the nature of newsrooms and this provides them with an added advantage.

Ethical Standards

Public Relations is founded on certain ethical standards that guide PR practitioners just like journalism. The industry has however become quite challenging with the rapid changes in the communication field. This has given rise to an increased number of impostors joining the industry. PR personnel are frequently trained and prepared to manage unpredictable events and occurrences that may have a negative impact on the corporate brand image. They effectively design measures to mitigate any negative incidence that threatens to harm the organisations image.

It is however not clear, who between the PR specialist and the journalist is better in tapping and engaging the audience more effectively. While the two roles are interdependent and jointly share a synergy, their functions are also just as distinct. The debate as to whether journalists are better suited for PR jobs

or not is endless. Journalists and PR personnel are mutually proficient and skilled writers. But are they equally gifted in properly packaging the message to achieve the intended meaning?

Complementary Roles

The conclusion is that a blend of knowledge and skills in both fields is important for one to excel in public relations and communications. There is need to exhibit the ability to research and adapt to a dynamic world of communication especially on the digital space.

Journalists and PR officers can and actually should complement each other's skills and expertise. Both PR and journalism fields are facing an immense force through evolution and expansion in relation to swift information exchange. The audience is more informed and exposed which calls for more sophisticated ways of persuading and conveying messages. The complementary skills would greatly result in effectively responding to the expectations of the audience.

The writer is a Communications Officer in the Office of the Auditor-General.



Sports bonanza to boost Kenya's profile in 2020

By Wausi Watya

A series of high profile international sports events this year presents Kenya with significant promotional and marketing opportunities. Hosting visitors, some who will be coming to the country for the first time, will be a perfect chance to put our best foot forward and showcase the splendor of our country.

In March, Magical Kenya Open, which is now part of the European Tour's "Race to Dubai", is expected to attract many participants and lovers of the game.

A month later, in April, the whole world will stop to watch our living icon Eliud Kipchoge and other Kenyan elite runners at the London Marathon. There is no doubt this will be a moment for the world to continue to stamp Kenya's acclaimed position as the athletics powerhouse. We can bet that they will play our national anthem, may be not once. The event will bring many memories of the INEOS challenge in October last year where Eliud captured the global attention in Vienna, Austria, when he broke the two-hour racing barrier, again giving Kenya global focus and likely to be the greatest attraction at the London Marathon. We applaud Kipchoge, all our athletes and stakeholders as they prepare for this event. We are banking on them, for yet another opportunity to endorse the strength of our country brand.

In July, Kenya will host the World Athletics U20 Championship, a biennial competition for athletes who are under 20 years, will be another major sporting event that will bring many visitors to the country. Ahead of the event, many athletes from various parts of the world are expected to jet in to train in Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet counties. They will undoubtedly get a chance to mingle with the locals and perhaps discover the magic of their success in athletics, another opportunity to share the Kenyan warmth with these young athletes. This year, more than 1,000 participants from more than 100 countries will participate at the week-long event at Kasarani stadium.

The return of the Safari Rally to the World Rally Championship for the first time since 2002 will be a major boost to the image of the country.

All these events will draw in huge global media coverage. Millions of eyeballs will be glued on screens relaying the events live. The teams preparing for these events must feel the pressure of the expectations of so many fans worldwide.

Apart from participants, many visitors will be visiting the country to either participate or watch these activities. These visitors will be a boost to our economy. We must prepare well to give the best services possible.

They need to feel welcome right from the airport. The meals we serve should be delicious and authentic; the welcome should be heartfelt. We must leave all our visitors with a genuine welcome and memorable experiences. This will be our opportunity to recruit additional positive narratives to be shared with the rest of the world.

The decision by the government to bid for these events will pay off both in the short and long term. These are opportunities that endorse Kenya's international acceptance by global actors and serves to strengthen Kenya's global presence, relevance and reputation.

To complement the teams that will be burning many hours in planning these events, let us make deliberate individual efforts to show up or follow the events with our usual enthusiasm online and cheer on the participants.

Let us all embrace the season as the world turns all the attention to us throughout the year. Let us radiate our usual charm and make the best of our privileged position in the global scene.

The writer is a communication practitioner and a PhD student in International Relations at United States International University (USIU-A).



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