

THE FUTURE OF PR PRACTICE IN KENYA

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1.0 Highlights of the Presentation

- ▶ 1.1 Historical background of PR Practice in the world
- ▶ 1.2 Background of PR practice in Kenya
- ▶ 1.3 PR Practice today
- ▶ 1.4 Future and Challenges of PR Practice in Kenya
- ▶ 1.5 IPCRM Bill.

2.0 History of PR

- ▶ 2.1 PR is a social science aimed at building, enhancing and protecting the image of an individual or institution.
- ▶ 2.2 The practice as known today started taking root in 1900 arising from negative publicity targeting corporate bodies.
- ▶ 2.3 PR was founded partly to defend corporate interests.
- ▶ 2.4 Declaration of Principles required PR to be done accurately, openly and focusing on public interest.
- ▶ 2.4 War time propaganda during the 1st and 2nd World Wars shaped early days PR practice.
- ▶ 2.5 By 1940,s, PR was being taught up to university level. It failed to get professional recognition earlier dues to history of deceit and exploitative behaviour. PR talent from wartime propaganda entered private sector.
- ▶ Radio and newspapers remained the key tools of PR until 1990s with the advent of the internet and the social media.
- ▶ By 2006, social media had been accepted in PR practice. Communication shifted from monologue to dialogue.

3.0 History of PR Practice in Kenya

- ▶ 3.1 PR practice in Kenya is associated with colonial administration.
- ▶ 3.2 The standard newspaper was established in 1906 as mouthpiece of the white settlers.
- ▶ 3.3 Africans also published their own newspapers to counter the colonial propaganda.
- ▶ 3.4. At the height of emergency in 1950s, PR became even more critical.
- ▶ 3.5 British multinationals employed PR so as to retain their customers.
- ▶ 3.6 PR consultancies established then were to serve the interests of the British.
- ▶ 3.7 Prior to independence and soon after, PR efforts were aimed at safeguarding the interest of the white settlers. They needed guarantees from the incoming government.

History of PR Practice cont....

- ▶ 3.8 Clamour for political change in the 80s heightened PR activities.
- ▶ 3.9 The government enhanced crackdown on subversive media. It also increased control on the mainstream media. It used its mouth piece KBC and the Kenya Times to demonise opposition. KANU activists and the Provincial administration entrenched the propaganda machinery.
- ▶ 3.10 In 1988, the Government established the Ministry of National Guidance and Political Affairs which was reminiscent of the Nazi propaganda Ministry.
- ▶ 3.11 Media censure became even more intense at the beginning of the 90s. KBC had a Kiswahili programme 'Hivi Ndivyo Iivyo' which was purely a propaganda 'tool'.
- ▶ 3.12 Prior, there had been gradual growth in private sector PR leading to establishment of the PR Society of Kenya in 1970.

History of PR Practice cont.....

- ▶ 3.13 With the nearing of political liberalisation, the media space was also gradually opened for private sector participation. In 1990, the licensing of KTN marked the freeing of the airwaves. This gave genuine PR practitioners an alternative avenue for channelling their messages.
- ▶ 3.14 Following the successful 1992 multi-party elections, democratic space and by extension space for PR practice was opened further.
- ▶ 3.15 The entry of the internet on the 1990's also dramatically changed the mode of PR engagement.
- ▶ 3.16 Liberalisation of the airwaves ushered in additional players in the broadcast media.
- ▶ 3.17 Competitive politics opened the way for PR as adversaries were seeking to outdo each other.
- ▶ Further the government had to engage PR in warding off negative claims from the opposition.

4.0 PR Practice in Kenya TODAY

- ▶ 4.1 PR practice in Kenya today has been significantly defined by changes arising from political regime change in 2002 and 2013.
- ▶ 4.2 The Kibaki government fully embraced technology. Computers, internet etc were broadly introduced in Government. It established a progressive ICT strategy.
- ▶ 4.3 Further, the government embraced sincerity and openness in communication by government officers. The government acknowledged the role of membership to professional organisations.
- ▶ 4.5 PR practice in the public sector too thrived.
- ▶ 4.6 The Kenya Constitution 2010 entrenched PR further by putting a premium on public participation in every aspect of governance. In addition there is commitment to accountability by government.
- ▶ 4.7 This set the stage for PR practice to the global standards.
- ▶ 4.8 PR function is fully entrenched in both public and private sectors. Virtually all government departments and a significant number of public sector organisations have PR functions. Establishment of the office of the Government spokesman in 2006 and Secretary for information in 2019 is a testimony to governments commitment to ensure access to information of public interest.

PR Practice in Kenya TODAY

- ▶ 4.9 With an open government, advanced technology and commitment to public engagement, PR practice in Kenya today can only grow.
- ▶ 4.10 To-date Kenya has over 60 PR practices with a minimum of \$100,000 per annum, double growth over the last five years.
- ▶ 4.11 With massive infrastructure development requiring need for public participation, the need for PR function has increased even more.
- ▶ 4.12 Virtually all major state corporations have PR functions with some sitting on boards.
- ▶ 4.13 The Big 4 agenda and renewed fight against corruption has given PR function the centre stage.
- ▶ 4.14 The IPRCM Bill aims at regulating the industry by weeding out 'quacks' and giving space to real practitioners.
- ▶ 4.15 Training of PR has been significantly enhanced. Virtually all universities offering social sciences offer PR discipline too. Continuous professional development has also been given priority by the central government.

5.0 Future of PR Practice in Kenya

- ▶ 5.1 The social media today has redefined PR practice. Communication shifted from monologue to dialogue.
- ▶ 5.2 The new face of PR expects practitioners to be communicators, listeners, story tellers and brand advocates.
- ▶ 5.3 PR war is not won by brands that shout at their customers, but by those which have conversations with them.
- ▶ 5.4 The profession has gained near full recognition. PR disciplines are taught in institutions of learning, PR heads have a place in decision making levels, and PR Bill is near completion.
- ▶ 5.5 Challenges encountered include; operations of quacks, minimal recognition in some institutions, unfair competition, inadequate education, corruption, gender bias and misunderstanding of the role of PR. Significant part of the challenges are addressed by the IPRCM Bill.

Future of PR Practice in Kenya cont.

- ▶ 5.6 The stage has been set for a greater future of PR
- ▶ 5.7 Technology and new media will be key drivers of PR
- ▶ 5.8 Search Data, Google Trends and News, Social Listening and Monitoring, Specialised Analytics Platforms.
- ▶ 5.9 Diverse use of the mobile phone will also provide additional communication avenues for PR practitioners.
- ▶ 5.10 Only people armed with requisite updated skills and knowledge will survive in the industry.
- ▶ 5.11 Only firms that have their fingers on the pulse of their customers will grow and survive.

6.0 IPRCM Bill

- ▶ .1 This Act may be cited as the Institute of Public Relations and Communication, 2018. Interpretation.
- ▶ 3. (1) There is established an institute to be known as the Institute of Public Relations and Communication. (2) The Institute shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal
- ▶ 4. Functions of the Institute shall be to a) To establish, regulate and promote standards of professional competence and practice amongst members and monitor and enforce compliance with, and delivery of, such standards by members;
- ▶ 5. (1) The Institute shall be governed by the Council of the Institute.

- ▶ (4) The Council shall and publish in the Gazette standards, codes, guidelines and other pronouncements for advancement of Public Relations and Communication profession.
- ▶ 6. There shall be a President of the Institute who shall be a fellow or full member of the Institute and who-
- ▶ 7.2
- ▶ 8. (1) There shall be Chief Executive Officer of the Institute
- ▶ 14. (1) There shall be established a board to be known as the Public Relations and Communication Practitioners Examination Board.
- ▶ 15. The Examination Board shall consist of eleven members appointed by the Cabinet Secretary through a gazette notice, of whom—
- ▶ 18. There is established a Registration Committee consisting of seven members to be appointed by Cabinet Secretary as follows
- ▶ .



THE END