

PUBLIC RELATION AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR CRISIS

RESOLUTION IN CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS

BY

.....

AWOTOYE MARIAN NIYI

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY [PhD
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION] IN THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
CITY UNIVERSITY, CAMBODIA

NOVEMBER, 2024

ABSTRACT

Public relation is the employment of effective communication to build, sustain and defend organization's reputation. The goodwill of an organization will remarkably assume a high rating if public relation is appropriately deployed as a potent arsenal to avoid, prevent and resolve crisis whenever they surface their heads. It is imperative to mention here that before the dawn of modern civilization, our ancestors had a way of conducting themselves and relating with and among themselves to ensure peaceful co-existence and settle disputes as well. As civilization sets in, organizations are being formed and unions as well are being created. These organizations and unions saw the need for a strategy to be established which will help in avoiding, curbing and resolving crisis. This strategy is called public relation. This study will bring to light the essential need of every organization to have an established and well equipped public relation department which must be manned by a public relation professional.

It will also show how organizations resolve their diverse misunderstandings by employing strategies that are quite different from what we have had in the past.

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

- 1.1 Background of study
- 1.2 Statement of research problem
- 1.3 Objective of the study
- 1.4 Significance of the study
- 1.5 Research question
- 1.6 Research hypothesis
- 1.7 Conceptual and operational definition
- 1.8 Assumptions
- 1.9 Limitations

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the literature

- 2.1 Sources of literature
- 2.2 Summary of literary review

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

- 3.1 Research Method

- 3.2 Research design
- 3.3 Research sample
- 3.4 Measuring instrument
- 3.5 Data collection
- 3.6 Data analysis
- 3.7 Expected Result

CHAPTER FOUR

Data analysis and result

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Recommendation and Conclusion

- 5.1 Summary
- 5.2 Recommendation for further study
- 5.3 Suggestion for further study
- 5.4 Conclusion

References

Bibliography

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Before the dawn of modern civilization, our forefathers had a way of conducting themselves to ensure peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding which is the focal point of public relations. Activities were mostly carried out individually because no one was a spokesman for the rest. But, as time went on, the people got the initiative of forming union, interest groups and organizations which impacted on the society at large in great measures.

To allay the fear of the publics, organizations saw the need to create an arm that would send and receive information from the public to retain their trust and co-operation. The arm so created is the public relation department.

According to David ideal (1983) public relations is the study of principles, philosophies, theories, attitudes and the ideas which govern human activities. The public relation practitioner employs effective communication to build, sustain and defend his organization's reputation among both its internal and external publics.

Public relation among other things is used as an instrument to resolve crisis which is the basis for this research work. This research is therefore an eye opener on the potency of the managerial tool of public relation in disputes settlement.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Many scholars and practitioners have presented various definitions of public relations, based on their knowledge, experience and perspectives. These definitions would assist us to appreciate and evaluate the role and functions of public relations. One thing that is common to these definitions is that public relations is undertaken to resolve crisis and settle disputes, create and sustain goodwill and harmony among the various entities and institutions of society.

Owing to the high level of disputes, crisis and misunderstanding between employers and their employees, between different communities, between government and the people and between governments at different levels, there is the urgent need of leaders, managers, traditional authorities and government at all levels to employ the tool of public relation at achieving peaceful resolution of disputes which by this research is super potent.

Public relation is relatively a new corporate function although like other corporate functions, it has its roots in ancient activities. Edward L. Bernays, one of the fathers of modern public relation posited that the three main elements of public relation are as old as society; Informing people, persuading people and integrating people with people. Bernays E. I. (1960) and he traced public relation from primitive society (in which leaders control by force, intimidation and persuasion), to Babylon where kings commissioned historians to paint favourable images of them.

The renaissance and reformation freed men's mind from established dogmas heading institutions to develop more subtle means to influence people.

In America, historical milestone for "public relation" include:-

- a. Samuel Adam's use of the press to unite the colonialists against the British

- b. The abolitionist movement use of public relations as a political tool to rally supports for block in the north, including the publication of Uncle's Tom Cabin.
- c. P. T Barnum's use of public relation to generate news worthiness about an event, the arrival of his circus, by placing articles in newspapers. Corporate public relation evolved more recently and passed through the following five stages. First stage, corporation established a contact function to influence legislations and newspapers to support position favourable to business. The legislative contact function is known as lobbying while newspaper is0 known as press relations. George Westing house is credited with the formal establishment of public relations when he hired two men in 1889 to fight the advocated direct current electricity and instead to promote alternating current. Chlip S. M. (1960 : 16). The next stage occurred when companies began to recognize the positive value of planned publicity to create customers interest in the company and its products. Publicity entails finding or creating events, preparing company or product, slanted news stories, and trying to interest the press in using them. Companies recognized that special skills are needed to develop publicity and began to add publicist to their ranks. Somewhat later, public relations practitioners began to recognize the value of conducting research into public opinion to develop and launching public relations campaigns. The emerging sciences of public opinion measurement and mass communication theory permitted more sophistications in the conduct of public relation. Forward-looking firms added specialists who could research public opinion.

Public relation has become a potent force in modern business management in recent times. Its influence is being felt in large companies and many small ones.

Recognition of the need to explain the activities of an enterprise in order to gain public favour and support is rapidly spreading to different parts of the world.

With the prospect of even greater expansion of public relations, it is important for management to understand its potential and limitations. There are two essentials in public relation; one is an understanding of existing public attitudes and what the enterprise can do to reach the desired goals. Management can readily find “do it” professionals to undertake public relation activities. But an understanding of what should be accomplished and the setting of realizable objectives cannot be delegated to others. These are management direct responsibilities because business can only thrive/survive by virtue of continuing public approval “with public sentiment nothing can fail, without it nothing can succeed” Cirving Smith Kogan (1972 : 2) quoting Abraham Lincoln.

Public relations is aimed at making friends for the organization and building internal and external goodwill on the reasonable assumption that these are strongly needed for an organization to remain in business and make profit with the increase in the activities of an organization becoming more imperative. An organization while wanting to remain viable need to have good relations with its employees and consumers of its product / services, future investors stockholders and the general public. As an organization specialized in manufacturing or services, it needs to show its staff existing or potential customers that it is up to date, forward looking, concerned to produce or order the best goods and services for the price it charges and to make sure that its customers are really satisfied.

Public relation is growing in importance and acceptance. Corporate bodies invest large sum of money in organized programmes, retain skilled public relations practitioners to execute them and the practitioners themselves are becoming part of the top management team.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are reported cases of several disputes and crisis between employees and their employers, organizations and their host communities, government and the governed etcetera.

Once of such disputes is the 2022 ASUU Strike which lasted for over ten months without meaningful resolution despite intervention from different eminent groups and individuals. The face – off was caused by disagreement between the Federal Government which is the employer and ASUU which is the employees union.

My own son who supposed to have completed his program in 2022 could not because of the industrial action; and as I speak with you, the boy is still in his final semester.

It is on this premise of the government – ASUU strike that I thought it wise to research into how industrial dispute can be resolved using the public relation template.

OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

This thesis is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. To find out whether organizations use public relation as a tool to resolve crisis.

2. To find out whether organizations create distinct department in their organizations to handle public relation matters.(Public relation department)
3. To ascertain the level of public awareness about the cogency of public relation.
4. To find out the efficacy of public relation in the resolution of crisis in different organizations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How can public relation engender cordial relationship between organizations and their employees?
2. How can public relation engender harmony between organizations and their host communities?
3. How can organizations create public relation departments in their organizations?
4. How can public relation be used to resolve crisis in an organizations?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1. There is cordial relationship between organizations and their employees.

H0. There is no cordial relationship between organizations and their employees.

H2. There is cordial relationship between organizations and their host communities.

H0. There is no cordial relationship between organizations and their host communities.

H3. Organizations are prepared to establish public relation department in their organizations.

H0. Organizations are not prepared to establish public relation department in their organizations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is important as it helps organizations, public relation professionals, as well as researchers to understand the appropriate tactics of deploying public relation to resolve crisis and disputes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This research is carried out to ascertain the potency of public relation at resolving crisis and settling disputes.

SOURCES OF DATA

The sources of the data used in this thesis are:

- a. Primary data
- b. Secondary data
- c. Questionnaire and
- d. Interview

POPULATION OF THE THESIS

The population of this thesis is made up of:

Proprietors or organizations

Employers of labour

Employees of organizations

Host communities of organizations

Managers and Administrators of both human and material resources

Government Agencies and Parastatals, and non-governmental organizations.

SCOPE OF THE THESIS

This thesis covers the relationship between organizations and their employees, organizations and their host communities, whether organizations are ready to establish public relation department in their organizations and finally how public relation can be used to resolve crisis and settle disputes.

LIMITATION OF THE THESIS

I am limited by time and financial constraint during the course of this thesis. Also, the uncooperative attitude of some respondents to my questionnaire is a serious challenge.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one takes care of general introduction, background of the thesis, objectives of the thesis, statement of problem, significance of the thesis, research questions, research hypothesis, scope of the thesis, limitation of the thesis and the arrangement of chapters. Chapter two deals with literature review, chapter three deals with research methodology and design, chapter four covers data presentation and analysis and finally chapter five deals with findings, summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

The proceeding chapters presented the analysis of information gathered from the various organizations I visited for the purpose of this study which focuses on Public Relations As A Tool For Crisis Resolution.

The analysis of data contained in the questionnaire given to respondents which comprises of the internal and external publics of different organizations revealed some interesting information.

These are that:-

Most of the respondents interviewed were between the age of 30 to 35 years as can be seen in table 1, 25% represented the percentage of respondents within this age bracket. The effect of this on this research work is that one can clearly say that the questionnaires were filled by experienced and matured individuals whose information could be relied on because they know what public relations information management is and its importance to any organization as required to foster sustainability of good will.

Finding out the rating of the public relation department of different organizations especially the effectiveness was 88% and the non-effective is 72% as displayed in table 2.

Table 3 revealed that 11% sampled individuals attested to the fact that their public relation departments had encouraged cordial relationship between the companies and their publics; this may be attributed to these organizations' public relation styles. It also shows that they constantly feel the impulse of their clients for effective planning and implementation of programmes and this has encouraged mutual relationship. Lastly table 4 asks about the rate of social responsibility in different organizations of which the percentage of responsibility socially is about 83% and the social responsibility is 88% which is concluded that these companies are not socially responsible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research revealed that public relations is an effective tool for conflict resolution and management and also imperative in running any business outfit. That it is the management function which gives the same organized and careful attention to the

asset of good will as is given to any other major asset of business. It emphasizes that public relations is a deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. It involves the collection and interpretation of facts formulation and putting policies into effect. The primary objective of which is to continuously foster mutual understanding and building good will between an organization and its publics through effective communication. Given the socio- economic development of the Nigerian nation, it becomes obvious that only a rationally coordinated and sustained information dissemination effort will be required to enlist the interest of these major recommendations.

The recommendations are:

- a. There is need for organizations to adopt public relations promotional efforts and this relates to the use of prospectus, literatures, exhibition and sale promotion for the purpose of educating their customers, prospective customers, their potential customers and the public at large. In this direction, organizations should develop information prospectus pentad in English and some indigenous languages stickers should be used and also participate in

selected trade fairs for the purpose of effective communication. Concerted efforts should be made to enlist the interests of the media for and also boost the image and credibility of organizations.

- b. The responsibility of fostering mutual understanding between companies and their various publics should not be just that of top management or solely that of officers designated as public relations officers designated as public relations officer. But a collective responsibilities. A messenger's attitude to work or the receptionist approach to receiving visitor and enquiries from clients.
- c. There is need to maintain a two way flow of information between organizations and the publics they are servicing for effective planning and implementation.

5.3 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY

The researcher feels that it is imperative to carry out more research work on the importance of public relations in both our businesses and social activities.

When this is done it will make investors and stakeholders understand better that the success or failure of any business depends largely on its public relations which is all about communication management.

The researcher is also recommending that any further study should be in the following areas.

- a. Misunderstanding public relations
- b. Differences between public relation and propaganda.
- c. Strategic communication and the operation towards achieving higher goal/better performance.

CONCLUSION

Effective communication management in an organization is the most potent tool for managing crisis. It is not exaggeration to say that the standard of an organization's corporate image and efficiency is directly related to the standard of its communication system and its operations. In every organization there are always some imperative objectives which the organization strives to achieve.

These objectives cannot be attained if all the necessary conditions are not in place or if they are wrong. One of such imperative conditions is effective communication. Communication is pertinent to effectively managing any organization. On this note, organizations will be able to enjoy all the attentions and benefits missed due to ignorance of public relation usefulness to management.

On management lies the bulk of the responsibility of communication administration, it must at all times remain on its' toes to ensure that appropriate channels are not only created but also kept functional.

Management would be enhancing its performance of this function by ensuring the availability of the prerequisite facilities and atmosphere for communication success.

Today's public relations must be a two way exercise- key publics must be able to communicate with their organizations and be heard to avoid crisis.

REFERENCES

Ayee W.K; Philip(1979), Ault, Edwin Emen

introduction to mass communication 5th edition

new York, Huper and Row publishers

Bowanp. and Nigoellis (1976), manual of public

relations- detain publishing company mc.

(minesota)

Bajoga B.G, Address Delivered In PHCN Annual Report

Booklet 1999

Bauby Cathering Ok Lets talk about it 1972

Cutlip-scott.m. And allen h. Centre;Effective Public

relation, 5th edition Eaphe wood.

Charles F.v(1976), Reputation realizing value from

coperte image

Dayo D; (1983), public relation in management media

land; mass communication in Nigeria 1979 page 215-252

Edeani D.D (1983), Class note on “principal and practice

of public relation IMT Enugu

Michealr. and David (1980), Martinson: function of

Executive: CAMBRIDGE

Micheal Ryan and David Mantism. (1980), “complaint

letter” prayer response Critical public relations Quarterly

Stewart Rosemary(1967), The publicity management

sub titled “No panacea But a challenge to management London Macmillan

Jerfking Frank (1988)

Public relation techniques oxford

Heinaman publishers.

Kogun, Smith Irving (1977)

Modern Business Public Relation

New York, Alexander Manilton

Institute p.g.

Kotter P. (1991)

Strategic marketing for non profit

organization Englewood cliffs, Wij practice Hall.

Nwosu I. K. (1996)

Public Relation management principles

issue and application p. 9.

Nwabuke P. O. (1986)

Fundamental of statistics Nigeria

Enugu Korona Books pg 16.

- Osuji, Chuks (1990) Principles of Public relations practice. The Nigerian approach Owerri Opinion Research Corporation.
- Rosenbeg M. J. (1983) Dictionary of Business and Management. New York John Wiley Sons Inc.
- Shehdin & Garrete (1986) Marketing Management A comprehensive Reader. West Chicago South West Publishing Company 3rd ed.
- Steer, M. (1985) Business Studies Dictionary London Pitman Publishing Limited.

JOURNALS

- Black, Sam (1990) Development of Public Relation and the Challenges of 1990's NIPR Sept., 24, 26.
- Modonx Alain (1990) Public Relations the process of creating social changes NIPR Sept 12 – 8.
- NIPR (1993) 30 years of practice relations in Nigeria.
- Obe, Taiwo (1994) All a bow PR media review April.

