

## **CHAPTER 4: CARRYING OUT CORPORATE IMAGE STRATEGIES**

Unit of learning code: BUS/BM/CR/03/5

Related Unit of Competency in Occupational Standard: Carry out corporate image strategies.

### **4.1 Introduction to the unit of learning**

This unit specifies the competencies required to carry out corporate image strategies. It involves carrying out public relations and CSR, maintaining stakeholders' relationships, developing partnerships for innovation, coordinating corporate image through virtual platform and preparing functional corporate image report.

### **4.2 Summary of Learning Outcomes**

1. Carry out Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) tasks
2. Maintain Stakeholders Relationship
3. Develop Synergies for Innovation
4. Coordinate Corporate Image through Virtual Platform
5. Prepare Functional Corporate Image Report

#### 4.2.1 LEARNING OUTCOME 1: CARRY OUT PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) TASKS

##### **Introduction to the learning outcome**

This learning outcome specifies the content of competencies required for identifying Public Relations activities, determining Public Relations expenditure, carrying out Public Relations activities, identifying CSR areas, incorporating CSR dimensions, determining CSR targeted benefits and determining the Scope of CSR.

##### **Performance Standard**

- 1.1 Public Relations Activities are identified in accordance with the strategic plan.
- 1.2 Public Relations expenditure is determined in accordance with the PR Budget
- 1.3 Public Relations Activities are carried out in accordance with PR Policy and Procedures
- 1.4 CSR Areas are identified in accordance with the Strategic Plan
- 1.5 CSR dimensions are incorporated in accordance with the CSR policy
- 1.6 CSR targeted benefits are determined in accordance with Cost Benefit Analysis
- 1.7 Scope of CSR is determined in accordance with the budget allocation

##### **Information Sheet**

###### **Definitions of terms**

- **Accountability:** It refers to an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions.
- **Activities:** Things you do or just the state of doing
- **Corporate Image:** This is the image that people have in their minds about a company, its products, and its services. It is also the product of a company's performance, media coverage and its activities.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility:** Is the act of incorporating environmental and social concerns into a company's planning and operations. This helps the company to be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders and the public.

- **Cost Benefit Analysis:** A Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is a systematic approach that can be used to get an idea of the strengths and weaknesses of, for example transactions, investments, business processes and other activities. This mostly monetary evaluation method is used to identify effective options and make responsible choices, which are both advantageous and save costs..
- **Evaluation:** Is the process of determining the effect, worth, impact or significance of a certain plan or activity
- **Expenditure:** This is the act or process of spending money on something
- **Functional Corporate Image Report:** This is written information that is useful and precise to deliver its purpose to the end users.
- **Goal:** Is commonly described as the desired outcome of a plan of action.
- **Implementation:** Is the process of putting a decision or plan into action.
- **Innovation:** It's the practice of developing and introducing of new things with an aspect of improvement and also the spread. It includes introduction of new products, new services, new methods of production and even opening of new markets.
- **Market Relations:** Also known as business relations and are the connections that exist between all entities that engage in commerce.
- **Objective:** Is the expected outcome of research
- **Planning:** Is the process of thinking about the activities required to achieve a desired goal?
- **Policy:** Is a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business entity, or individual.
- **Practitioner:** Is a person engaged in the practice of a profession or certain occupation.
- **Public Relations:** It is the art of managing how information about an individual or company is disseminated to the public. It includes the practice of deliberately managing the release and spread of information

between an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency, or a nonprofit organization) and the public

- Stakeholder: Is either an individual, group or company who is impacted by the outcome of a business/project of a company. It could be positive or negative impact. These include employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, communities, government and even trade associations.
- Strategy: Is the road map or approach to reach objectives.
- Synergy: Is the combination of effort and performance of individuals or companies (through power, profits) in order to be more successful. It could be greater financial benefits, growth in sales, increase of impact and growth.
- Research: Is the careful consideration of study regarding a particular concern or a problem using scientific methods.
- Tactics: These specific activities conducted to implement strategies of a program.
- Transparency: This is an attribute of company culture that is revealed through the behavior of an organization's managers, employees and other stakeholders.
- Virtual Platform: Refers to the technology used for the creation and development of tools on the Web (sibal) used broadly in the Web 2.0 such as communication tools (forums, chat, emails), authorization management tools, productivity tools (calendars, bookmarks), student tools (evaluation, group work areas, profiles) and tools of course (bulletin, evolve). It is also a system that allows different applications to run under the same environment, allowing users to access them via the internet.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **Introduction**

This is the art of managing how information about an individual or company is disseminated to the public. It includes the practice of deliberately managing the release

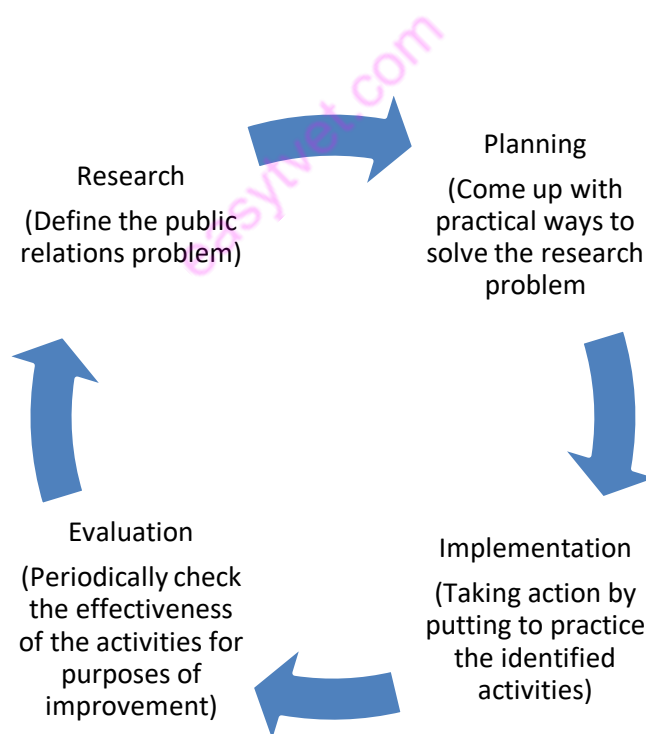


and spread of information between an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency, or a nonprofit organization) and the public. Therefore, every company in modern day business has to come up with a way to manage their PR activities so as to ensure there is a positive image out in the market place. They also have response mechanisms for dealing with any eventualities that could bring the company to bad light and otherwise tarnish the image of the company.

In light of the above it is important for a company to identify and develop a PR management system which consists of the actual activities to be carried out in accordance with the Strategy Plan.

### **HOW TO IDENTIFY PR ACTIVITIES?**

**Fig. 31: Steps to follow to come up with effective PR Activities**



#### **1. Research**

The importance of research in public relations Research **establishes a foundation for a public relations plan.** Research allows public relations

professionals to learn and understand an organization, its goals and its target market.

These are the questions to ask yourself.

- Who is your target audience?
- What do you want them to do?
- What messages do you want to communicate to each category of persons that will encourage desired behavior, increase brand knowledge and change attitudes?

## **2. Planning**

This involves several steps in order to identify the PR activities to be undertaken by a company.

### **Writing a PR Strategic Plan**

Steps for writing a public relations plan will give you the framework to assess any public relations situation even if you are faced with a case study from an industry with which you are not familiar with.

#### **i. Set Goals**

Goals are longer term, broad, more global. Goals are a futurist state of “being.”

EXAMPLE: To become a recognized leader. They must also be clear and SMART.

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Attainable

R – Realistic

T – Time bound

#### **ii. Identify Target Audiences**

PR is about building positive relationships with key audiences that are connected to the company in one way or another. These may include not only the general public but also:

- ✓ Current or potential customers
- ✓ Investors and analysts
- ✓ Vendors and suppliers
- ✓ Government regulators and policy makers
- ✓ Employees and their families
- ✓ Trade, consumer and news media.

These are the groups or sub-groups with whom you need to communicate (both by talking and listening.)

Who needs to know or understand?

Who needs to be involved?

Whose advice or support do we need?

Who will be affected?

### **iii. Set Objectives for Those Targeted Audiences**

They should be for a shorter term (3 – 6 months).

Define what behavior, attitude or opinion you want to achieve from specific audiences,

; how much to achieve and by when. Also think in terms of the awareness, attitude or action you desire. That is the end result.

Objectives MUST:

- ✓ Address the desired result in terms of opinion change and/or behavioral outcome. Designate the public or publics among whom the behavioral outcome is to occur.

- ✓ Specify the expected measurable level of accomplishment or outcome.  
Identify the time frame in which those accomplishments are to occur.

### **Types of Objectives**

**Outcome Objectives** — they change behavior, create awareness, form an opinion, support; and require high-level strategic thinking.

**Output Objectives** – They measure activities or outputs such as the number of news releases. (This metric has no direct value in measuring the effectiveness of a campaign.)

### **Example of an Objective**

To increase by 8 percent, the ridership of public transportation in the Nairobi City Metropolitan area by workers earning less than Ksh45,000 per year within the first six months of the communication program.

#### **iv. Establish the Strategies**

Choosing the right PR strategies will depend on clear understanding of your objectives, target audience and budget allocation. People often confuse PR strategies and PR tactics, but there's a big difference. Strategies are general approaches to achieving objectives while tactics are day to day activities a company implements to carry out each strategy.

Do not indicate specific actions. Use verbs such as demonstrate, collaborate, etc.

EXAMPLE: Demonstrate that riding public transportation is an attractive, affordable alternative to driving.

#### **v. Develop Tactics**

Use the knowledge of your goals, target audiences, and key messages to identify the best tactics for your PR Plan. Your PR Plan may include various tactics across multiple platforms and channels from traditional media relations (pitching stories

to the press), social media, PR events, digital storytelling and more. It is also good to develop multiple tactics for each objective and target audience, because no matter how carefully you research and plan you cannot be certain a particular tactic will work. In addition, make sure your tactics accurately reflect the image you want people to have of your company.

This will help you know how you will use your resources to carry out your strategy and work toward your objectives.

EXAMPLES: Meetings, publications, news releases, websites, billboards.

**vi. Establish Activities with Key Messages**

Design your key messages that not only educate and inform but also to change people's perceptions or compel them to take action. Messages should be direct and to the point. Also develop key messages for each of your objectives and target audiences.

Include specific activities required under your tactics to carry out strategies. Ensure that PR activities are in line with the company's brand. Informal plans often jump from objectives to activities.

Vehicles or channels you will use to communicate are listed here.

**vii. Define Evaluation Process**

This is for purposes of measuring results.

Ask yourself these type of questions while making an evaluation process.

How will you know if you are reaching your objectives?

How will you measure an expected outcome?

What are the expected observations to consider?

What opinion is required?

How is feedback given or received?

Before implementing your PR plan, establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure progress and achievements.

### **viii. Determine a PR Expenditure Budget**

Budgeting in PR refers to setting up the cost for the campaigns to be carried. This incorporates costs for all the PR activities that are to be carried. It needs one to set up priorities and give importance on being cost-effective. In most cases, it depends highly on budget allocation for PR Budget by the company. In essence, it is prudent to budget on what is available for use.

It is important to put into considerations the goals, objectives, tactics, strategies, targeted and actual activities to be undertaken in order to prepare a good expenditure budget that is all inclusive. Every activity must have a monetary value to it to ensure effective planning and expenditure.

### **Basic factors that relate to public relations budgeting:**

#### **1. Overall income for the PR activities**

These are sales generated, interest and dividends earned from positive image gained from the PR activities

#### **2. Competitive necessity focuses**

It is important to factor competition in order to ascertain company market share in order to create a niche' through the targeted audience.

#### **3. Goal or task model to be followed or used**

This helps to ensure expenditure equals increased income in the long run. As every activity has an expected outcome.

#### **4. Excess profit model to be applied**

This helps to avoid wastage of resources.

### **ix. Prepare a Timetable and Task List**



This should include:

Who does what and when?

Have a work formula. Either work backward from deadline or forward from start date.

### **3. Implementation**

This puts into consideration actual messages sent through stipulated communication channels.

It also includes monitoring tools for execution.

### **4. Evaluation**

At the evaluation stage, you are required to measure effectiveness of the program against objectives.

Identify ways to improve and recommendations for the future.

Adjust the plan, materials and methods whenever needed as a continuous way forward to ensure set PR objectives are met.

### **Carrying out pr activities**

PR practitioners undertake a variety of PR activities throughout the communications life cycle as they seek to identify and build relationships with the media and understand and also influence the conversation about them, their industry and competitors across print, broadcast, online and social media. The PR activities to be carried out should be in accordance with company set PR policy and procedures so that they are measurable.

**Activities to be carried out are as follows:**

- a) **External Communications** – Messages disseminated through paid, owned or earned media to external audiences.

- b) **Internal Communications** – Planned messages disseminated to employees through a variety of communications channels, including newsletters, bulletin boards, payroll stuffers, posters, etc
- c) **Media Relations** – Dissemination of purposefully planned and executed messages to selected media to further the interest of an organization or person without specific payment to media. This is also known as organic media. Media relations relies on finding and connecting with journalists and influencers who can help amplify messages.
- d) **Paid Advertising** – Preparation, purchase and placement of purposefully planned and executed messages in selected print, broadcast, online or social media to further the interest of an organization or person.
- e) **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** – Recognition of a corporation's obligations and responsibilities to communities by making monetary and resource contributions to charitable organizations.
- f) **Corporate Sponsorship** – Providing support to an event or a cause by devoting corporate resources in exchange for an opportunity to enhance good will, product image and sales.
- g) **Lobbying** – Direct attempts to influence legislative and regulatory decisions in government.
- h) In Kenya, many organizations tend to voice their opinions in line with political parties or certain politicians to influence government decisions that favor their respective industries. However, in Canada, the Lobbyists Registration Act governs who and how lobbying can be done and in the US, there are stringent lobbying disclosure regulations.
- i) **Promotion** – Using techniques such as events, promos, ads and stunts to create and stimulate interest in a person, product, organization or cause.

- j) **Publicity** – Information about an organization, person, issue or cause published or broadcast in the news media because of its value or relevance/importance to the community or the media outlet’s audiences.
- k) **Public Relations Research** – The term public relations research does not describe specific types of research methodology such as content analysis, public opinion polls or readership surveys. Instead, the term refers to any type of research that yields data for use in planning and evaluating public relations efforts. Four basic categories of public relations research activities are most common: media monitoring, public relations audits, communication audits and social audits. Public relations research can be formal or informal, primary or secondary, qualitative or quantitative, etc.

### **Determining Public Relations Expenditure**

In order to come up with an effective expenditure budget it is important to look at the actual expenditure areas.

The expenditure areas to consider in PR are as follows:

#### **1.1 Transportation**

This includes all transport costs related to the PR activities being implemented in the department or PR agency engaged. It also includes any applicable taxes, duties, fees and assessments and the **costs** in obtaining insurance in relation thereto.

#### **1.2 Hospitality**

This being the relationship between a guest and a host, where in the host receives the guest with goodwill, including the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or even strangers. This could mean the actual stakeholders. Therefore, hospitality includes the costs of entertaining the stakeholders involved in the PR activities such as meals, accommodation where needed, hiring of entertainment such as comedians, artists etc.

#### **1.3 Branded merchandise**

These are items that carries a company’s logo or brand statement printed on them. Examples are T-shirts, umbrellas, caps, pens, notebooks, etc. They are used as part of

the PR activities and depend on budgetary allocation. They are distributed at little or no price to promote a company brand.

#### 1.4 Personnel expenses

This is the value of expenditure related to the personnel in PR including salary, commissions, allowances, training, payroll taxes, and benefits to be incurred by the department in relation to PR activities.

#### 1.5 Communication

These are costs incurred in the communication process between your company and the stakeholders involved in the PR activities to be carried out. It includes cost of advertising, airtime, data, social media, phones, tablets, laptops etc.

#### 1.6 Exhibitions/shows / activations/open days

This includes cost of registration fees, merchandise to be used, allowances, meals to be paid to personnel during these events. Cost of transport may be included if need be.

Figure 32: Corporate Social Responsibility areas



## **Identifying CSR Areas**

CSR refers to the moral and ethical efforts made by a company for the betterment of the society in some way. Now a company can contribute to different types of CSRs to improve the society ranging from donating money to nonprofits or charitable organizations or implementing environmentally-friendly policies in the workplace.

Corporate Social Investment can give you a competitive upper hand over your competitors and help you to build a reputation as a responsible business. Companies should maintain responsible and ethical policies because they will heavily influence the way customers are going to judge them. At present customers prefer to associate with responsible companies and insist businesses get involved in philanthropy.

## **Different Types of CRS Areas**

There are several areas that a company can choose to engage in CSR activities. However, it is important that while identifying CSR activities to ensure they are carried out in accordance with the company's Strategic Plan.

CSR Initiatives are based on four different dimensions:

### **1. Economic**

This is crucial in our day to day business activities as it is a necessity required by society. This focuses on practices that facilitate the long-term growth of the business, while also meeting the standards set for ethical, environmental and philanthropic practices. By balancing economic decisions with their overall effects on society, businesses can improve their operations while also engaging in sustainable practices. An example of economic responsibility is when a company modifies its manufacturing processes to include recycled products, which could benefit the company by potentially lowering the cost of materials and also benefit society by consuming fewer resources.

In this context, companies try to find out solutions that can facilitate their business growth and generate profits by benefitting the community and society at large. Here economic decisions are made by considering their overall effects on society and

businesses at the same time. Hence, economic responsibility can improve business operations while engaging in sustainable practices. Considering Training and Development programs that explain the connection between the company's core products or services and the society at large, their value to the local community and ways in which employees can get involved in appropriate CSR projects would sustain and direct these initiatives to ensure longevity.

Being socially responsible includes remaining profitable. Businesses support a lot of people, including shareholders and investors, employees and partners. It is socially responsible for the company to thrive and meet its revenue goals. In addition to increasing revenue, businesses need to work to reduce expenses and costs so they can maximize their profits.

However, economic interests are not the only guideposts and should not be viewed in a vacuum. Businesses maintain profitability and minimize expenses by keeping the broader community in mind and not taking any actions to harm it. This means ethical sourcing of products, using sustainable business practices, treating employees and customers fairly, and taking responsibility for business actions.

Sustainability and CSR initiatives will therefore, continue to be prevalent in years to come.

## **2. Legal**

It is important to look at CSR initiatives from a legal perspective as it required by society at large. It is critical for a business entity to follow the laws to the letter. In addition to being aware of local, federal and international laws, companies also need to understand the rules of regulatory bodies for their industries and adhere to the rules and regulations. All businesses have a legal responsibility to do so. For example, if a small business sells toys for children, it needs to ensure that the products meet all safety regulations specified by the regulatory bodies. In addition, it needs to check that any international manufacturers used appropriate materials, since businesses in other countries may have different rules and regulations.

## **3. Ethical**



This area is very much expected by society. In a company, the primary focus on ethics is to provide fair labor practices for businesses' employees as well as the employees of their suppliers. Fair business practices for employees include equal pay for equal work and living wage compensation initiatives. Ethical labor practices for suppliers include the use of products that have been certified as meeting fair trade standards. For example, Lyons Made Ice Cream uses fair trade-certified ingredients like sugar, cocoa, vanilla, coffee and bananas.

Ethical actions define the core values of a business. Instead of merely abiding by the law, a business that focuses on CSR needs to **go above and beyond** that and make choices based on what is right, not just what is legal. For example, if a business pays its employees minimum wage, that action follows a legal directive. However, if an employer chooses to pay its employees more than minimum wage in the belief that the employees do important work and deserve to be compensated accordingly, that is making a socially responsible decision. In addition to the compensation, employers can offer paid vacation, education and training benefits and health coverage to improve the lives of their employees.

#### **4. Philanthropic**

This simply means to serve humanity. It is one area that is desired by the society. This criterion pays attention to the wellbeing of the unprivileged or needy people who require our support to sustain their lives. Companies fulfill their philanthropic responsibility by donating their time, money, or resources to charities and organizations at national or international levels.

A company can take actions that improve the society around them, such as donating money or products and volunteering time. By helping those in need, businesses make a positive difference in the lives of people in their communities

Figure 33: **Four Dimensions of CSR**

## FOUR DIMENSIONS OF CSR



**The following dimension is a bonus as our modern society has become environmentally aware and putting it in consideration as you carry out business if prudent.**

### **5. Environmental**

Here, we need to focus on two main areas of our environment: limiting pollution and reducing greenhouse gases. A company is bound to fulfill its economic responsibility because awareness of environmental issues is growing largely among the consumers and today they want businesses to take necessary steps to save our planet and preserve all the lives in it. Companies that are concerned about reducing air, land, and water pollution have increased their standing as good corporate citizens while benefiting society.

### **Different Types of CSR**

Companies running the business organizations must understand that CSR has become a mandatory practice and they cannot ignore or deny it anymore. For companies that are small or medium size and do not have a budget for this, they may encourage their employees to practice CSR from an individual basis that could in turn improve the corporate image of the company. They could support individual initiatives that are within company budget and in accordance to their Strategic Plan.

Corporations, business houses and entrepreneurs can improve their public image by supporting nonprofits through volunteerism and making monetary or materialistic donations to build strong partnerships with their consumers and the community alike. When these philanthropic efforts make headlines and get good media coverage, companies increase their chances of becoming favorable in the eyes of their consumers.

Human Psychology says that consumers feel good and satisfied while shopping at institutions that help the community. It is important that companies take building their image seriously and set out to incorporate CSR in their business strategies to improve a better relationship with the consumers. Companies that demonstrate their commitment to society, humanity, and the environment are perceived as philanthropic and positive which ultimately boost their long term growth and profits. CSR ensures their business sustainability even in the future. Companies that are inattentive about their philanthropic responsibilities and have no CSR strategy will soon stand on the verge of becoming nonexistent.

### **Dimensions of CSR:**

The facets and dimensions of CSR include the obligations a business has to its interest groups also called 'stakeholders.' The stakeholders in a business include shareholders / owners, customers, employees, government agencies, social action organizations such as trade associations and financial institutions, etc.

When determining the dimensions for CSR to be considered by any organization, it is important to consider the company's CSR Policy that is in place.

### **1. Business ethics**

These are moral principles that act as guidelines for the way a business conducts itself and its transactions. It is also considered as determining Right and Wrong.

Acting ethically means determining what is "right" and what is "wrong" when it comes to business practices. Basic standards exist around the world that dictate what is wrong or unethical in terms of business practices. For example, unsafe working conditions are generally considered unethical because they put workers in danger. An example of this is a crowded work floor with only one means of exit. In the event of an emergency such as a fire, workers could become trapped or might be trampled on as everyone heads for the only means of escape.

### **2. Accountability and Transparency**

When organizations are accountable, they understand and accept the consequences of actions undertaken by their legal representatives in which they assume responsibility. Accountability exists in a relationship between two parties where one has expectations of the other, and the other is obliged to provide information about how they have met these expectations or face the consequences of failing to do so.

There are two components of accountability:

- **Answerability** – which means providing information and justification for how one's actions align with expectations; and
- **Enforcement** – which means being subject to, and accepting the consequences of, failing to meet these expectations.

Accountability in an organization is likely to involve multiple parties, it is important there to be clarity about who is accountable to whom and how. The way this

accountability is achieved will generally be set out in an organization's governing documents, such as its constitution, CSR Policy and any laws that apply to it. For example, an NGO may be required to provide an annual financial report to its regulator and the penalty for failing to do this may be a fine.

It is important that the documents and policies that enable accountability are made available to relevant stakeholders. Subject to necessary confidentiality, usually this is done by providing such information on the organization's website, but it should be readily available on request by any stakeholder. For accountability to be achieved, there must be transparency.

Transparency is how values of a company are embodied and demonstrated on a day to day basis.

Organizations are transparent when they enable others to see and understand how they operate in an honest way. To achieve transparency, an organization must provide information about its activities and governance to stakeholders that is accurate, complete and made available in a timely way.

Transparency enables accountability.

This does not mean all information should be made publicly available. There are certain types of information that may not be provided publicly such as private information (such as client records) and 'commercial in confidence' material (such as tender submissions).

An organization should be accountable to the following stakeholders.

- Regulators, police and the courts;
- Government and non-government accreditation bodies;
- Clients and customers;
- Financial institutions such as banks;

- Funders and government departments through funding and service agreements; and other individuals and organizations through contracts for service or employment.

### **3. Social Economic Development**

This is a process that seeks to identify both the social and the economic needs within a community, and seek to create strategies that will address those needs in ways that are practical and in the best interests of the community over the long run. The general idea is to find ways to improve the standard of living within the area while also making sure the local economy is healthy and capable of sustaining the population present in the area. Socio-economic development occurs in neighborhoods in metropolitan areas, sections of smaller cities and towns, and even in rural settings.

There are a number of factors that must be considered as part of any socio-economic development effort. Understanding the current circumstances that prevail in the area is the first step toward regional development. By assessing the potential of human resource in the area, allowing for the current unemployment rate and looking at the laws and regulations currently in place that may be impeding the introduction of new industry into the area. This will then make it possible to begin developing a plan that will ultimately mean more jobs, stable employment for more households, and more money flowing through the local economy.

Socio-economic development may involve making changes in current laws and regulations in order to attract new growth and enhance the standard of living for local residents. Changes in laws can make it easier for new industry to move into the area and offer employment at equitable wages. This in turn can aid in motivating the creation of more services that citizens can enjoy, allowing the area to prosper. With the right type of motivation and improvements to the infrastructure, residents are not tempted to move away in order to earn a living or enjoy desirable services, and there is a good chance more people will move into the area and provide further stimulation for the local economy. While there is no one right way to pursue socio-economic development, the process is essential to preventing decline and the eventual extinction of a community.



When looking at this, it is important to look at the budgetary allocation for CSR activities to avoid engaging in activities that may not be cost effective for the organization.

#### **4. Environmental**

The environmental dimension considers the environment where the business organization operates in. It is also known as ecological or natural dimension, its objective is the search and preservation of biological scenarios and all the inherent aspects of these.

All companies are subject to environmental laws and regulations regarding pollution emissions, handling of dangerous materials, and protection of natural resources. CSR movements ensures that companies may go above and beyond compliance with the law to make a positive contribution to environmental quality.

#### **5. Human rights**

They are rights human beings have simply because we exist as human beings. They are not granted by any state. These universal rights are **inherent** to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental; the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty. Companies are expected to adhere to this even when coming up with CSR activities or even how they treat their employees and other stakeholders.

#### **6. Workers welfare**

It is an **important aspect of industrial relations** which looks to give satisfaction to the worker in a way that even a good wage cannot. Welfare programs are aimed at promoting the physical, psychological and general well-being of the working population. Each company is expected to put one in place for its workers. This helps in employee retention.

#### **7. Market relations**

This includes the relationships between various stakeholders in any business network, such as those between employers and employees, employers and business partners, and all of the companies a business associates with.

Market relations may also include a long list of customers, suppliers, sales leads, potential customers, banks, stockbrokers, the media, and service providers. They can also involve county, state, and governmental agencies. Essentially, market relations are all of the individuals and organizations with which a business is connected or expects to have a connection, whether internal or external.

- Market relations may include customers, suppliers, potential customers, banks, stockbrokers, the media, and service providers.

County, state, and government agencies are also included in a company's market relations network.

- Social media, as an integral part of market relations, can give users and companies a competitive advantage and therefore improve business performance.
- Trust, loyalty, and communication are hallmarks of solid market relations.
- Effective market relations include communications strategies that can lead to greater employee satisfaction.

## **8. Sustainable development**

This is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of needs goes beyond simply material needs and includes values, relationships, freedom to think, act, and participate, all amounting to sustainable living, morally, and even spiritually

## **CSR TARGETED BENEFITS**

Every company should consider the benefits targeted from the CSR activities being undertaken by putting into consideration the CBA. This is to ensure that the activities will bring the expected gains in a cost effective manner that lead to a win-win scenario.

1. CSR initiatives can be the best way to contribute to the society and its people. Through local or national charitable contributions businesses can help the society. Businesses can get involved in the society and help it to progress by taking social initiatives on behalf of the company such as investing in education programs for the poor and street children and homeless care activities for homeless people or refugees. They can support a local charity making financial contributions in effective charitable projects. If you are a restaurant owner, you may provide food to local homeless groups or to orphanages free of cost.
2. Businesses can pay attention to material recyclability, develop better product durability and functionality and use more renewable resources at lesser costs to keep the environment as clean as possible and contribute to the ecology of the country.
3. CSR is the way to show the human face of your business. Businesses deal with humans so you can only connect with them through human language by showing some humanity. For most businesses, it makes sense to get involved in progression of the community solely, depending on CSR initiatives related to your product or service.
4. CSR is the thoughtful and practical way to give back to the society. When businesses are walking extra miles to do good to the people, do good to the environment and society.
5. When businesses decide to make positive contributions to the society they are actually benefitting the company in the process. The companies benefit through lower operating costs, increased sales and customer loyalty, greater

productivity, gaining ability to attract and keep skilled employees, getting access to more capital through more willing investors etc.

6. CSR has strong and direct impact on business performances as well. Sales are likely to go up by at least 9%.

Contributing to social value has become the first and foremost condition to creating a successful business. Companies need to establish themselves as socially responsible and good corporate citizens to add greater value to their business.

### **SCOPE OF CSR**

The scope of CSR is conceptually quite unbound at the present time in Kenya. The debate between the private sector, civil society and governments focuses on a few key issues as there is no single commonly accepted classification of the main components of CSR. Often, CSR is related to: Environmental protection, human rights, community development, enterprise development, health promotion, and human disaster relief amongst many more. Selection and focus for different businesses is reliant on the Strategic Plan fit required by the concerned organization. Therefore, when determining the scope of CSR. It should be done in accordance with the budget allocation to maintain a balance.

It is important to note from our above study, the benefits of adopting CSR policy are worthwhile and is the way for the futuristic business model.

### **Learning Activities**

#### **Field Visit**

**Table 3:** Field visit to a nearby Investment Company

<b>Visit Objective/Aim</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Special Instruction</b>
<b>To establish their PR Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sales module they use</li> <li>- Relevant PR budget</li> <li>-PR plan being implemented by the company</li> </ul>	<b>Must have evidence of the actual visit such as photographs</b>

<b>Ascertain the CSR activities they undertake.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detailed contents/information contained.</li> <li>- Authorization by PR officer</li> </ul>	Written Report must be authorized by PR officer
-----------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------

### **Practical activities**

Develop PR plan targeting middle income earners with a view to increase sales of the company product by creating awareness of company CSR activities undertaken in the community.

### **A case study**

**Carefully read the case study presented in this excerpt and answer questions that follow.**

The Grace Well Ltd., an international company that deals with sale of locally made clothes in Kenya has been struggling with making sales. Their desired target market is young families that have young children. In their area of operation, they are facing competition from mtumba vendors. Assume they hire

you as PR agency to assist in branding and boosting their image in the Kenyan market.

Required:

**Which are the critical issues you will need to consider while evaluating PR activities for this company to undertake?**

**Develop a PR plan for them that will help them meet their desired goal which is to increase sales.**

### **Self-Assessment**

1. Why is carrying out a research important when determining the PR activities?
2. What is CSR?
3. How do you implement CSR?
4. What are the tools to communicate CSR Activities?
5. Why do you need a PR Expenditure budget?
6. How can you measure the benefits of CSR?

### **Tools, Equipment, Supplies and Materials**

The following resources are provided

- Computers
- Internet connectivity
- Printer
- Projector
- Camera
- Tablet
- Mobile Phone
- Classroom and classroom resources
- Stationery



- Sample logo designs
- Print media

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## Self-Assessment Responses

1. Why is carrying out a research important when determining the PR activities?

**Because it establishes a foundation for a public relations plan. Research allows public relations professionals to learn and understand an organization, its goals and its target market.**

2. What is CSR?

**It is the act of incorporating environmental and social concerns into a company’s planning and operations. This helps the company to be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders and the public.**

3. How do you implement CSR?

**As the company has defined its key stakeholders, you should determine what your company wants to achieve through relations with each chosen groups, and accordingly look for activities to achieve these goals. You should measure the activity with properly selected indicators**

whether a given activity is for your benefit or not. Then, you should be continuously monitoring and evaluating your CSR activities.

Examples of each step in the implementation of CSR			
Key Stakeholders	Goals	Activities	Indicators
Investors	Transparency	Provide reporting on CSR (use of quantitative and qualitative indicators as methodology of its creation)	Validation report by certified CSR auditor
			Number of published indicators
Customers	Increase customer satisfaction and loyalty	Customer Care development	Customer Satisfaction Index
		Expanding after-sales service	Number of loyal customers
		Emphasis on quality of products and services	Number of complaints
Employees	Allowing reconciliation of work and personal lives of employees	Flexible working time	Number of alternative working modes
		Work at home	Number of actively participating employees
		Engaging employees on parental leave in corporate activities	on parental leave
Local Community	Community support in place of business	Corporate giving	Financial or material contribution
		Corporate volunteering	Number of awards
		Community education	Feedback from local community
Environment		Sorting waste	

Minimal burden on the environment	Utilization of waste	Water purity
	Double sided printing and copying	Amount of emission
	Use of environmentally clean fuel	Quantity of unsorted residual waste
	Gentle handling of water and electricity	

4. What are the tools to communicate CSR Activities?

**They are posters, meetings, newsletters, emails, payroll stuffers, press releases, news conferences, billboards, websites and publicity. Sponsorships, product placements, and social media also generate a lot of positive PR**

5. Why do you need a PR Expenditure budget?

- ✓ **Have costs in perspective**
- ✓ **Helps to set up priorities**
- ✓ **Gives importance on being cost effective**
- ✓ **Helps to measure outcome in monetary terms.**

6. How can you measure the benefits of CSR?

**CSR is perceived as an investment in intangible assets of the business, which can be evaluated using indicators. In the long term view CSR activities could provide measurable financial benefit as well (see examples in the table).**

Intangible Assets	Evaluation using indicators	Long-term measurable manifestations
Good reputation	Questionnaire survey	Strengthening the market position

	Group discussion	Possibility of new business opportunities within local partnership
	Widely in the media	Getting socially sensitive consumers as new customers
		Streamlining risk management
Customer satisfaction and loyalty	Customer surveys	Strengthening the market position
	Number of repeated orders	Increased turnover
	Number of complaints	
Business flexibility (creativity in bringing new products, services or processes)	Number of product or service modification	Expansion of product range
	Added value of the product or service	Increase in market share
Satisfaction and workforce skills	Employee survey	Higher motivation, satisfaction and performance of employees
	Number of off-site day	Lower employee turnover
	Number of trained employees	Greater opportunity to recruit new employee
Ecological corporate culture	Power consumption	Opportunity to bid for tenders of large corporation or public administration
	Percentage of recyclable waste	Obtaining environmentally sensitive consumers as new customers
	Amount of emission	Increase in eco-effectiveness (reducing the negative environmental impact on a product)

easytvvet.com

#### 4.2.2 Learning Outcome 2: Maintaining Stakeholder's Relationship

##### **Introduction to the Learning Outcome**

This learning outcome specifies the competencies required to identify stakeholders, develop stakeholders register, maintain stakeholders' communication, Analyze Stakeholders feedback, carry out response to stakeholders' feedback and maintain stakeholders' register.

##### **Performance Standard**

- 2.1 The Stakeholders are identified and categorized in accordance with the stakeholders' policy.
- 2.2. Stakeholders register is developed based on stakeholders' information and other reliable sources.
- 2.3. Stakeholders' communications are maintained as per organization procedures.
- 2.4. Stakeholders feedback is analyzed in accordance with procedures.
- 2.5 Response to stakeholders' feedback is carried out according to procedures
- 2.6. Stakeholders' register is maintained as per organization procedures

##### **Information Sheet**

##### **Definition of Terms**

- **Influencers:** Are people or groups that are not directly related to the use of the project's product, but can influence, due to their profile. They can be positive or negative influencers.
- **Feedback:** Positive or negative (including complaints) observations related to services and/or supports that are provided by SPC. Feedback may be solicited (such as information and comments collected through a satisfaction survey or a comment box) or unsolicited (such as a letter from a person or family member). Feedback may be formal (like the survey or letter noted above) or informal (such as a verbal complaint expressed to a staff person)
- **Shareholder:** Is a business owner. Can be the sole owner in a sole proprietorship or stockholder in a company where they own one or several shares in that business.



- **Stakeholder:** Is an individual, group or company who is impacted by the outcome of a business/project of a company. It could be positive or negative impact. These include employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, communities, government and even trade associations.
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** Is a technique to identify stakeholders and their needs in a company, system, project or other processes.
- **Stakeholder Identification:** is the process of finding all the individuals, groups and organizations that can affect or are affected by the achievement of the objectives of an organization.
- **Stakeholders' Matrix:** Is visualization where the stakeholders from the stakeholder analysis are plotted in a matrix. The matrix assesses the stakeholders in terms of power and interest.
- **Stakeholders' Policy:** Is the course of action adopted by an organization as a commitment to be good citizens to its stakeholders. It honors the rights of stakeholders and treats them fairly, listens to their opinions and concerns, builds understanding with stakeholders, encourages cooperation constructively in matters that interest stakeholders, and takes part in developing society and environment so that Company continues developing its business sustainably.
- **Stakeholder Register:** Is a document that contains a list of external and internal project stakeholders.

### **Introduction: stakeholders**

In business perspective, stakeholders are important because they affect major changes within a company, from financial decisions to how an organization runs. Therefore, it is important to identify them from an early stage to ensure smooth running operations. Stakeholders are the people who play a direct role in shaping a policy, business practice or decision that negatively or positively helps in the operations of a business.

Stakeholders usually have a vested interest in a company, and these interests can be intellectual, social, financial or environmental.

Identifying a stakeholder's interest and involving them in a business gives the organization more ideas to work with, creates new partnerships and gives a company support from the outside. In a publicly traded company, stakeholders make up the board of directors and directly influence major decisions about staff and investments as well as minor issues concerning policy and management.

On another level, stakeholders are customers and employees, providing revenue from using an organization's services as well as the manpower to create those services.

Investors and large-scale stakeholders are a company's watch dog, analyzing financial data and making decisions to correct its course, monitoring business policies and bringing issues based on vital interests to the table.

## **HOW TO IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS**

Stakeholder Identification being the process of finding all the individuals, groups and organizations who can affect or are affected by the achievement of the objectives of an organization. All these parties are forming a force field surrounding an organization. SI is part of stakeholder management and forms the basis for stakeholder analysis and is often seen as the first step of it. When carrying out SI, it is important to know and understand the organization's SP that is in place. As it guides the scope of the stakeholders to be considered.

### **Stakeholder Analysis Plan**

It's essential to map the various stakeholders because they might have a significant impact on the success of an organization, project or other process. Conducting a stakeholder analysis via a stakeholder map tool or a template as a fixed part of effective stakeholder management. There are three steps that can be followed in the stakeholder analysis.

#### **1. Identify all stakeholders**

To be able to communicate with the stakeholders, they must first be identified. Therefore, it is important to make sure that both the primary and secondary stakeholders have been identified. When making a list, think of everyone who might have influence on or might be influenced by the project. People who benefit from the success or failure of a project or organization are also important.

- Who might have a negative impact on the success of the project or organization?
- Have both the supporters and opponents been identified?
- What is the relationship between these stakeholders?
- Major Stakeholders in any business organization are as follows:
- **Customers**
- This is a person or organization that buys a product or service from your business. The main goal of attracting customers is to make them purchase what is being sold and also encourage them to keep coming back for what is called repeat sales. The relationship with this stakeholder is mutual. The customer gets their needs met while the business benefits through sales and profits made.
- **Shareholders**
- These are business owners. It can be sole owner in a sole proprietorship or stockholder in a company where they own one or several shares in that business. They are the ones who fund the business by injecting capital. This can be done by buying shares in the company or by having a business idea and actualizing it by yourself.
- **Employees**
- These are the people a company hires and pays to work in that business. They are in different levels such as managers, receptionists, accountants, messengers, drivers, marketers etc.
- **Suppliers**

- Are people or businesses that provides a product or service to another entity. The role of a supplier in a business is to provide high-quality products from a manufacturer at a good price to a distributor or retailer for resale.
- **Government agencies**
- These are administrative units of national, regional or local governments that are tasked with specific responsibilities
- **Social action organizations**

They are action oriented organizations, usually as a part of an organized group or community to create positive change. Often they have led to noticeable change in society as in the case of Civil Rights Movement. Some advocate for better pay for workers, perseveration of the environment etc. Examples are; The Greenbelt Movement, Trade Unions etc.

## **2. Assess the stakeholders and sort them by influence**

When the stakeholders have been identified, it's important to sort them based on their impact and power. The groups of stakeholders can subsequently be divided across the stakeholder matrix. This will be explained in the next section.

## **3. Understand the stakeholders**

It's important for the project manager or business manager to know what the stakeholders think of a project, and what they like or dislike about it. This enables the manager to develop a perspective on what the stakeholders expect to gain from the project.

The information that is gained here is used to get an idea of exactly which stakeholders exert how much influence, and how these stakeholders can best be handled. After all stakeholders and their interests and influence have been established, these can be included in the stakeholder matrix.

## Stakeholder Matrix

The stakeholder matrix is visualization where the stakeholders from the stakeholder analysis are plotted in a matrix. The matrix assesses the stakeholders in terms of power and interest.

Power

Meet needs	Manage closely
Monitor	Keep Informed

Interest

Figure 34: Stakeholders matrix analysis

### Stakeholders Matrix Analysis

**a) A lot of power, a lot of interest (manage closely)**

These stakeholders should be involved in as many activities as possible and great effort should be put into keeping this group satisfied.

**b) A lot of power, less interest (meet needs)**

These people should be kept satisfied, but not too much information should be shared with them that they're not interested in.

**c) Less power, a lot of interest (keep informed)**

These stakeholders should be kept informed, because they can often offer creative ideas or other input thanks to their interest or stakes in the project.

**d) Less power, less interest (monitor)**

This group of stakeholders should be monitored, but it is not necessary to deploy a lot of resources to keep them happy.

### **How to Maintain Stakeholders' Communication**

You must come up with a plan on how to continuously maintain communication with stakeholders as per company set procedures. This plan describes your strategy for providing the right information, to the right people, in a useful format, with the proper frequency. The knowledge gained about stakeholders during the Stakeholder Identification and Stakeholder Response Development steps will inform the communication strategy for each person or group. The mere act of consciously planning communication can transform stakeholder management from reactive to proactive.

Stakeholder consultation and engagement typically follows a recognized three-step process:

- ✓ Notification
- ✓ Consultation,
- ✓ Participation.

The public has the right to be concerned about your project, to ask questions about it, and even to oppose it. But every person should have the correct information to form her or his opinion.

Meaningful consultation that involves ongoing two-way communication with a project representative increases understanding, clarifies the community's preferences and values, and allows the proponent to understand how the public's views can and should lead policy decisions. However, organizations often struggle with communication with their stakeholder groups.



Factors that negatively influence communication include:

- Not understanding how to set up a stakeholder engagement project so it effectively communicates the organization's intentions
- Suffering from a lack of focus when engaging stakeholders – and failing to define the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why)
- Having the wrong person representing the organization. This can be someone who is inexperienced or whose strengths lay outside the field of communication
- Company and stakeholder groups involving multiple representatives that change over time. Relationships get lost and communication history, or commitments that were made can be forgotten.

### **Effective Communication Strategy for Stakeholder Engagement and Maintenance**

**1. Make sure all information regarding your project is presented in a transparent way.** The more you share in an honest, factual and easy to comprehend format, the more likely it is that stakeholders will take the time to comprehend your intentions, what their role is, and how it may affect them.

**2. Communicate with stakeholders in the manner that works best for them.** Recognize that each person or community is different and select the most suitable communication channel – email, online platforms, social media, phone, or in-person group meetings. People should be offered a variety of options to communicate with you and provide their input.

**3. Do not judge what your stakeholders value, instead seek to understand why.** Keeping an open and curious attitude will help your team understand the history and concerns of your stakeholders. This open, curious attitude will help both sides reach creative solutions to overcome roadblocks, aligning values and interests in the process.

**4. Provide feedback to stakeholders on how their interests and issues are addressed and resolved.** Track commitments made to them and ensure project team members coordinate consultation events, share information, and assign tasks and follow-up actions.

**5. Keep a careful record of all aspects of stakeholder communications that occur over time.** This includes meetings, phone calls, emails, and commitments made. Misunderstandings and delays can be prevented if you can easily demonstrate the history of all aspects of communication with your stakeholders which is especially challenging with multi-year projects that where representatives change over time.

Detailed consultation will identify a community's views on your project and how this perception changes over time. It will allow you to anticipate issues and develop ways of addressing them. Ultimately, it will help develop trust and generate solutions with your stakeholders and rights-holders.

### **Analyzing Stakeholders Feedback**

It is important to analyze feedback from the stakeholders as part of the evaluation process. This is done in accordance with the company procedures. This is for purposes of tracking whether the set goals and objectives are being met and for continuity and implementation of any needed change or improvement in any particular area.

Stakeholders' feedback is the best way to find out what they think about your product or service. Whether it is in the form of survey responses, social media mentions, product reviews, or chats with the customer support team, listening to the voice of your customers should be a central part of any business strategy.

Analyzing customer feedback provides valuable insights for product improvement, and leads to a better understanding of your customer's needs and expectations. And when you monitor feedback on a regular basis, you can measure customer satisfaction over time to see if your business is going in the right direction.

### **Stakeholders' Feedback**

This refers to the information and opinions provided by stakeholders about a product or service. You can get feedback from different sources: surveys, social media, product

reviews, chat interactions with your customer support team, among others as set in your PR plan.

For companies, understanding what their clients think is key for providing the best customer experience possible. By analyzing feedback, you can find out which aspects of your business are working well and which ones require improvement, and use those insights to make data-driven decisions that align your product or service to your customers' needs.

### **What are the Benefits of Gathering Stakeholders' Feedback?**

Collecting and analyzing customer feedback has a number of benefits:

- it can help you measure customer satisfaction,
- improve your product or service,
- show your customers that you care about their opinions, and much more.

### **Measure Customer Satisfaction**

Reaching out for customer feedback consistently is the best way to measure customer satisfaction. We all know how it goes: the happier your clients are, the more likely they'll stay loyal to your brand and help you attract new clients through recommendations. In fact, 77% of customers say they would recommend a company to a friend after having a good experience.

Analyzing what your customers say about your business can help you understand what drives customer satisfaction. Often, customer service plays a very important role in this. According to a Microsoft report, 56% of customers say they have stopped doing business with a brand due to a poor customer service experience.

### **Improve Products and Services**

Customer feedback comes directly from the people who are using your products and services. Therefore, it can provide many insights that help you improve particular features and the overall customer experience.

At the same time, customer insights can help you understand client behavior by showing you how they interact with your product or service. What features do they find most useful? What are the main issues they have while interacting with your product? Are they suggesting new functionalities?

Making improvements based on customer feedback allows you to create products and services that really solve your clients' needs.

### **Show Customers that their Opinions Matter**

Customers want to be heard. In fact, 77% of customers have a more favorable view of brands that ask for and accept customer feedback.

By asking your clients for feedback, you are letting them know that you care about their opinions and ideas. This helps build trust and strengthens their relationship with your brand.

However, you need to make sure that you take action on that feedback. If a customer complains about a flaw in your system, for instance, you should try to fix the issue as soon as possible, and send a follow-up message to let them know that you've listened and taken care of the issue.

### **Improve Customer Retention**

For a company, it costs 5 times more to acquire new customers than it does to keep the existing ones. This proves that focusing on customer retention is an effective and profitable business strategy. Getting feedback is a great way to find out which aspects of your business are making your customers happy or unhappy. This builds better

relationships with other stakeholders as the business ends up being profitable for everyone.

Perhaps you are taking too long to respond to customer issues, or you're not solving their problems effectively. By analyzing this feedback, you can prevent customer retaliation, as it enables you to take action on the aspects that your clients are most frustrated with.

### **Make Better Data-driven Decisions**

By gathering and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative feedback, you can get actionable insights and use them to make smart data-driven decisions. For example, you can decide which areas require more investment, validate a business strategy (or not), or innovate based on customer requests (develop a new feature, for example).

### **Discover New Opportunities**

Please note, whether you are doing marketing research, following new trends within your industry, or trying to find new areas for growth, examining customer feedback can help.

There's a lot of public feedback available on product review websites, forums, or social media channels. You can easily take a look at what customers are saying about your competitors, identify new business opportunities, and find out more about your clients' preferences and practices.

### **Organize and Categorize Feedback**

Once you collect feedback from the targeted stakeholder, the next step is to organize and categorize the results. By turning unstructured data (which can be quantitative, qualitative or a mix of both) into meaningful and actionable information, you can



understand what they are saying about your business and use those insights to make better business decisions.

Analyzing quantitative feedback is about the numbers; the bigger challenge resides in finding the most effective way to analyze qualitative data, especially when you have to deal with large volumes of *open-ended responses*.

### **Analyzing Quantitative Feedback**

Quantitative customer feedback can be gathered from surveys with closed-ended questions. These survey responses provide hard facts and show a broad overview of the customer's opinions and motivations.

Quantitative data is expressed in a numerical way and reflects concrete and quantifiable aspects of a business, for example the data you collect might tell you the percentage of customers that would recommend your company, or how many clients gave low scores following their latest customer service interaction with you.

When it comes to analyzing closed-ended questionnaires, assigning a numerical value to each response (a process known as 'coding') allows you to turn that data into indicators, metrics, data tables, and graphs.

For example, you might notice that most of your Detractors mention negative experiences with your customer service. Cross-tabulation can easily be done using an Excel spreadsheet, the results of which you can export to a data visualization tool to present in a more attractive way

### **How to Categorize Feedback?**

Categorizing feedback provides a sort of structure to the data, and makes it a lot easier to understand the main topics your stakeholders are referring to.



However, there's no standard way to tag feedback: the right solution will depend on your goals. What kind of insights would you like to get from your feedback analysis? Are there any specific problems that you would like to address?

A useful way to organize customer feedback is by splitting it into three main categories:

- *Product,*
- *Customer Service,*
- *Marketing & Sales.*

Then, within each of these main categories, come up with subcategories by scanning your data. For example, subcategories for product feedback could be *UX/UI, Bugs or Feature Requests*, while for customer service you could use tags that reflect common issues raised by users such as *Account, Billing, or Usability*.

Product feedback can be put into 3 categories: *Reliability, Usability, and Functionality*.

- **Reliability:** feedback about performance issues, bugs, downtimes, incidents, or things that aren't working as expected are tagged with this category. For example, "X isn't working".
- **Usability:** feedback related to how easy (or difficult) to use is the product, how easy it is to navigate, etc. For example, "Not sure how to do X".
- **Functionality:** feedback about specific features within the product. "I Wish X did Y"  
You can consider the way customers ask questions concerning a certain type of issue and then classify their feedback into three categories:
- **User Experience Issues:** customers asking how to get things done with your product. This includes questions like "How do I customize this feature?" or "I tried to

customize this feature and now everything is broken”.

- **Product Marketing Issues:** questions related to what things your product can do. “Can I use your product for this?” or “How do you compare with this other product when it comes to doing this?”.
- **Positioning Issues:** customers asking if your product is for them. Questions starting with “I’m probably not your target customer...” or “I’m sure I’m wrong but I thought your product might be able to help me solve this problem...”

### **How to carry out responses to stakeholders’ feedback**

It’s a learning opportunity for an organization, whether the feedback received is negative, positive, neutral and sometimes even irrelevant. This is because you get to see the business through their eyes and that brief glimpse can change the course of the relationship for better. The direction it will take depends on how you handle the situation. Response to any stakeholders’ feedback is to be carried out according to company procedures.

It is therefore important to respond to feedback before they drive your customers away.

Responses should be:

- ✓ Polite and respectful
- ✓ Apologetic
- ✓ Precise and to the point
- ✓ Must be prompt. (It is advisable to respond within the first 72 hours of receiving the feedback where possible.)

### **How to Respond to Negative Feedback**

Responding to negative reviews is difficult. Bad reviews can be hurtful. Sometimes they can hurt the organization. It's natural to get upset, but when you have lost your composure, or if you feel like retaliating, it's wise to step away from the situation. You can't let your emotions dictate what you're going to write in your response to a negative review.

It is good to note that when the feedback is negative, as a business's focus more on engaging directly with the customer, showing the willingness to understand and sympathize with their experience, and offering them an easy way to access the business — usually including direct contact information.

Notice that while businesses do apologize, that's a relatively small part of the response (13 percent)—and that makes sense: it can come across as unprofessional to be overly apologetic. Instead, brands focus on their commitment to service and “next steps” (e.g., how a consumer can contact them directly).

### **1. Take responsibility**

Don't make excuses. Even if what happened was an uncommon instance, an isolated case, an unfortunate incident, an off day — acknowledge the customer's experience. At the same time, provide reassurance that you hold yourself to high standards.

- **Make things right**

Avoid responses that do not resolve or address any specific issues raised in the review. Be as specific as you can about the customer's experience, and communicate any changes or improvements you have made or will make as a result of their feedback.

### **2. Take the issue offline**

It's best for you and your customer to talk directly about the problem they had and take the issue offline. For this reason, brands will provide direct contact information for their customers in their review response.

## **2 Ask for a second chance**

Do not shun negative reviewers; extend a hand. Invite them to come back; when they do, welcome them with open arms.

Not only does this create an opportunity for you to change the conversation; it also establishes confidence in your ability to deliver an experience worth raving (instead of ranting) about what you can say

Identify people in your organization who will be directly involved with responding to bad reviews. This is actually complicated, because reviews live at the intersection of marketing, operations, social media, and customer service. There are a lot of stakeholders.

Typically speaking, we see that branch or location managers, social media teams, marketing teams, and customer service staff are typically the people who are put in charge of review response.

Clarifying who is in charge of responding to reviews is important not just because it simplifies the process—it will also increase your review response time, a key customer success metric.

Whoever steps up as the head of your review response program should understand the guidelines of each review site, be able to transform the collected feedback into valuable insights for your company, and — perhaps most important of all — display the right tact needed to address complaints and represent the brand well.

### **Create a review response policy**

If you operate in multiple locations, chances are more than one person will be assigned to respond directly to online reviews.

This makes it crucial to have an organization-wide policy that guides how your company should proceed whenever new customer reviews are posted online.

Your policy should cover things like what language and tone you should use, what the timeline is for getting back to customers, with whom the reviews will be shared in your organization, when do escalations become necessary, what the ideal response rate is, and other items that may affect how your company handles reviews.

### **How to Respond to Positive Reviews**

Positive reviews are likely not to drive your customers away like bad reviews do. So why respond? The short answer is: responding to a positive review directly translates to seizing an opportunity.

### **Ways to come up with the Right Review Response: Positive Reviews**

#### **1. Say thank you**

Show appreciation for the customer who took the time to share their positive experience. After all, great reviews and high ratings serve as powerful social proof for attracting new potential customers and influencing their decision-making process. Your customer in this instance has given you a free marketing exposure to other stakeholders.

#### **2. Reinforce the positive**

Often, positive reviews cite specific things that the customer liked best about their experience. Identify them — then mention them in your response. This lets you do some subtle marketing and hype up a specific product, service, or feature.

#### **3. Pass along the compliment**

When the reviewer mentions someone at the business by name, always pass along the compliment.

#### **4. Let customers know you would love to see them again**

Make happy customers feel welcome by extending an invitation for them to return. This does two things: first it turns *customers* into *repeat customers*. And secondly, it shows other online users that yours is the kind of business that people come back to.

#### **5. Mention other products or services**

You have to be careful with this last step as you don't want to come off as pushing a product to the client in an obvious manner.

That said, the savviest replies often include some mention of another product, service, or feature worth trying.

### **Practices to consider When Responding to Positive Reviews**

#### **Respond publicly**

Your response to a positive review may be intended for one specific person. But on websites like Google, Facebook, Yelp, and TripAdvisor, thousands of other people will be reading what you write.

So don't limit yourself to sending private "thank you" messages to customers. Seize the opportunity to reinforce the positive and show the world how much you care about reviews (good or bad).

#### **Share the review with your team**

There's nothing like anecdotal evidence to show your team exactly what makes customers happy; by sharing the review, you encourage more of that behavior.



This also has the effect of boosting employee morale, so be sure to share the positive review (and your support) for your team's success.

### **Share the review with the world**

If you consistently receive 5-star ratings and glowing reviews on online review websites, don't hesitate to show them off. Handpick your best reviews and share these on social media. .

Please take note that the impact of user-generated content, such as that found in reviews, is more powerful and effective than loud sales messages or promotional brand content.

### **How to Respond to Neutral Reviews (3-Star rating)**

As you might expect, neutral reviews usually combine positive comments with negative feedback — which means that you'll have to take what you can from the previous two sections and determine review response techniques most applicable to your situation.

Oftentimes, however, 3-star reviews are brief and lack details. They happen because customers don't feel strongly enough either way to describe their experience in great detail.

### **Coming up with the Right Review Response: Neutral Reviews**

#### **1. As always, say thank you**

Before you write out the rest of your neutral review response, start the right way by showing appreciation for the time the customer took to write the review.

#### **2. Reinforce the positive**

If the 3-star review contains positive feedback, be sure to call attention to it by mentioning it in your response: "We're glad to hear that enjoyed \_\_\_\_\_."

Even if the review includes a critical comment, start your response with an affirmation of the review's positive aspects.

### **3. Address the negative**

If you receive a neutral review with negative feedback, acknowledge the specific issues the customer had with their experience. You may also issue a short apology and provide a brief explanation on what happened.

### **4. Take it offline**

If you're asking the customer for more details, do so with the intention of taking it offline. That way, you can investigate the situation more thoroughly while preventing details of a possibly negative experience from becoming public.

This type of response will work because it reinforces the positive ("So glad you enjoyed the cupcakes and liked our jewelry..."), while also providing information that's useful to the customer who wondered about the price, as well as to readers of the review who might be curious why the nail salon's prices are slightly higher than that of her competitors. The response also gives an idea of the great lengths the business goes to in order to provide quality services and products.

## **How to Respond to Employee Reviews**

Crucial to the success and growth of any organization is its ability to attract and retain the best talent. That's why it's so important for your leadership and HR teams to embrace, instead of fearing online reviews and public employee feedback posted online or even on company response platforms.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to show current and prospective employees that your company is open to and appreciative of feedback, values the employee experience, and is constantly working towards make the work environment better.

## **Coming up with the Right Review Response: Employee Reviews**

### **Respond in a timely and organized manner**

The first step to responding to reviews is developing an organized way to do so. Timeliness is crucial: whether it is once a week or once a month, find the most appropriate timeframe that works for your team's bandwidth.

### **Show your appreciation**

When responding to employee reviews, make it a priority to thank the reviewer, regardless of whether they're singing your praises or highlighting areas for improvement.

### **Respond professionally and with authenticity**

The strongest responses to employee reviews show respect for the reviewer by addressing feedback in a way that's professional and authentic.

### **Take action**

Correct any organizational problems discussed in online reviews or otherwise posted by your employees. By using their reviews to improve the employee experience, you can build not only a stronger employer brand but also a happier and more productive workforce. Do not victimize any employee especially if they have given a negative response.

### **Ask for more feedback**

Asking for more details can be tricky when you're dealing with employee reviews which are anonymous but where the identity is known, please do so. You'll want to respect that anonymity and encourage the reviewer to give private feedback to your HR team.

For example, an employee may feel comfortable offering negative feedback about their boss while on using an anonymous platform, but not in person. Direct them to your HR team so that you can get more details about their experience, but make sure they also feel comfortable. They must be assured that they will not be victimized in any way.

### **Responses to Negative Employee Feedback**

When you give your employees a chance to give you their feedback, there is a good chance that some of them will be negative. Instead of getting defensive, you must handle negative employee feedback in a better way.

#### **Ways to Respond to Negative Employee Feedback**

##### **Don't React Immediately**

When you get negative feedback, understand that employees are pointing out flaws and issues with management. Don't consider it a personal attack.

When you receive negative feedback, don't rush into responding right away. Take a breather and relax. This ensures that your emotions don't get the better of you. You don't want to say something to your employees that you will regret later.

##### **Ask the Right Questions**

To fully understand the employee feedback survey, you need to ask the right questions.

When you get the feedback, ask:

- Is the feedback factual or not?
- Are there any instances to support the negative feedback?
- How can you change things to resolve the mentioned issues?

##### **Focus on Important Issues**

Don't try to fix everything at once. Focus on a few key issues that were repeatedly raised by the employees.

Gather as much data as you can for the issues you want to focus on. There is no right or wrong way to choose what you want to focus on first. You can choose either issues across all the departments or the top problems that each department faces.

### **Clarify with Employees**

Before you take steps to work on the issues, get clarification from the employees. You and the employees may have different ideas about the same thing.

For example, the employees say they are not happy with the flexibility offered at work. You might think they want to choose their working hours, but maybe they want the option to work from home few days a month.

### **Speak with Actions**

Show your employees that their feedback matters. There would be no point of asking for feedback if you don't work on resolving the issues.

Come up with solutions that you think would work best. Schedule a follow-up meeting, and discuss if those solutions would work. Brainstorm with your employees, and discuss potential solutions to the raised concerns.

Listen and acknowledge their suggestions, and implement their ideas if you think they would be effective. This gives your employees a sense of ownership and will also increase employee engagement levels.

### **How to give positive feedback**

Positive feedback is a form of evaluation that focuses on an employee's strengths and accomplishments. When you provide positive feedback, you are telling your team

members what they're doing correctly and should continue to do. Negative feedback is the opposite, as it focuses on what they did wrong or what they need to improve.

Though constructive criticism is important to utilize sometimes, providing positive feedback is often more beneficial. It can help your team feel motivated and engaged in their work. It also helps them understand your company's standards.

Too much criticism can decrease morale and make team members feel self-conscious about their ability to fulfill their roles. With the right mix of positive feedback and constructive criticism, they can instead feel proud of their accomplishments while understanding what skills they need to develop.

It's important to provide thoughtful positive feedback to your employees. Most people want in-depth evaluations instead of simple praise. They want to know why it is good, what is working and what skills they excel at.

**Here are a few things to consider when writing positive feedback:**

1. **Make it specific.** If your positive feedback is vague, they won't know which of their skills are good and which ones they need to improve. Tell them specifically what they've been doing well and what you liked about it.
2. **Give it in a timely manner.** If you notice they're doing something well, say something right away. If you wait too long, they may decide to do the project in a different way. Immediate positive feedback can boost their morale and motivation, helping them continue to do good work.
3. **Let others see it.** You can give positive feedback in many ways, whether that be verbal, over email or in your company's instant messenger. By writing it somewhere everyone can see, your other employees may feel motivated to work harder so they can receive similar feedback.
4. **Praise everyone eventually.** Make sure to praise all your team members when they deserve it. This can help you ensure that everyone feels like an important



part of a team.

5. **Explain their impact.** When your team members know their work is contributing to the company's success, they feel that what they are doing is important.
6. **Give the right amount of praise.** Only give positive feedback when it is earned. By giving the right amount, it is still special and noteworthy to employees.

### **Maintaining the stakeholder's register**

Identification of stakeholders is one of the critical processes in any company. The stakeholders are individuals, groups or organizations that may be affected by the decision, outcome or even a small activity related to a particular project.

The Stakeholder register is a project management document that identifies, assess and classifies the stakeholders of the company and any project being undertaken at any given time. It is also a document that provides information used to plan different ways on how to engage the stakeholders. Therefore, it should be maintained as per the organization procedures.

As a project management document, the stakeholder register is often subjected to many updates as part of the maintenance process. The updated information on the change of the stakeholders is also noted in this particular document. The changes of updates may include the identification of new stakeholders or if the registered stakeholders are no longer impacted in or involved in the project.

The stakeholder register is one of the essential documents used as an input to create the different project management processes. Processes like the Plan Stakeholder Management, Plan Procurement Management, Plan Risk Management, Plan

Communications Management, Plan Quality Management, Collect Requirements and Identify Risks all require the Stakeholder register as one of their inputs.

**Table 16: Developing a Stakeholders' Register**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Project phase</b>	

<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Role on the project</b>	<b>Title of the stakeholder</b>	<b>Type of the communication</b>	<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Influence on the project</b>

A Stakeholder Register is a document that contains a list of external and internal project stakeholders. It is usually developed based on the stakeholders' available information and other reliable sources.

The register typically addresses the following questions:

- What are the stakeholder names, contact information, designation, and company name?
- What are the stakeholder expectations, interests, impact, and requirements?
- Which stakeholders are critical for the entire project and which ones are more active for specific project phases?
- How often do stakeholders require communication and what is the preferred communication method?
- What type of communication is required?
- Is there a reporting relationship between stakeholders?

These are some of the questions that a Stakeholder Register addresses. You can customize this list as per your project communication requirements. The act of getting answers to these questions is called Stakeholder Analysis. In Stakeholder Analysis, you'd typically create a list of all project stakeholders and then determine their expectations, impact, and influence on the project. The Power/Interest grid and the Influence/Impact grid are useful during stakeholder analysis. Note: A stakeholder can also be an entity, such as an organization.

### **Project Stakeholder Management**

The stakeholders are very important in project management. Different projects need different stakeholders thus the project stakeholder management is employed. It includes all the processes that are needed to identify the people, groups, and organizations that can impact or can be affected by the project. It also involves analyzing the expectations of stakeholders and their impact on the project itself. Moreover, it also involves developing managing strategies to engage the stakeholders effectively when it comes to making project decisions and executions.

This particular process in project management also focuses on how to establish continuous communication with the stakeholders in order to understand their expectations and needs. It also deals with managing the conflicts and fostering engagement of the stakeholders during the entire project lifecycle.

The project stakeholder management includes different types of project management processes which include Identify Stakeholders, Plan Stakeholder Management, Manage Stakeholder Engagement and Control Stakeholder Engagement.

The project manager can use all these processes so that he or she can accurately identify and manage the stakeholders using appropriate methods to ensure the success of the entire project.

## **Control Stakeholder Engagement**

Stakeholders are very important to the success of any project. Engaging stakeholders is an important project management activity. To engage them, it is crucial for the project managers to communicate effectively all throughout the project life cycle. Moreover, managing and controlling the stakeholder engagement is more than just responding to their concerns but also anticipating different project requirements and making sure that the engagement plan of stakeholder is maintained.

The control stakeholder engagement is a process in project management that monitors the entire project and also the stakeholder relationships. It is done by adjusting different strategies in engaging the stakeholders. The main benefit of this project management activity is that it helps improve the efficacy of the stakeholder engagement activities as the project life cycle continues to evolve due to the different changes of the environment and project requirements.

The control stakeholder engagement process requires inputs of information to create the management plan and these include the issue log, work performance data, and other required project documents. All of these inputs will be used to create the work performance information, change requests and updates on the management plan, project documents, and organizational process.

The control stakeholder engagement ensures the commitment of the stakeholders during the entire stage of the project. It also ensures that their expectations are met as well as anticipate any future problems so that that they can be addressed during the project's lifecycle.

It is important to take note that the stakeholders have high influence during the implementation of the project as well as during its progression. This is the reason why the control stakeholder engagement process is very important in project management

as it keeps the stakeholders involved with the life cycle of the project—including its changes—at all times.

### **Plan Stakeholder Management**

Engaging the stakeholders is useful and beneficial during the entire project lifecycle. This is the reason why project managers utilize the Plan Stakeholder Management. This process is used to develop the right management strategies to engage the stakeholders effectively all throughout the life cycle of the project. This process also involves analyzing the needs, interests and impact of stakeholders on the success of the project.

It is under the Project Stakeholder Management that encourages the continuous communication and commitment of the stakeholders to the project. The benefit of this particular project management process is that it gives clear and doable strategies and plans on how to interact with the stakeholders of the project so that they will provide continuous support.

The Plan Stakeholder Management also identifies how the project will impact the stakeholders. It also helps project managers develop means to engage them as well as manage their expectations to eventually achieve the objectives of the project. It is more than just improving the communication but it is about creating and maintaining a good relationship between the project team and the stakeholders.

### **Register**

The risk register details all risks, provides descriptions of them, categorizes them, and also discusses potential causes as well as probability. Also discussed are potential responses as well as who would be responsible for dealing with the risks. The risk register is part of the project management plan. It is used to ensure any given project goes on despite known or unknown risks that may emerge in the life cycle of the particular project. This helps to advise on stakeholder management.

## **Maintenance of the Stakeholders Register**

Due to the constant and continuous changes that happen in any given project being undertaken by a company, using SR templates is useful as a way of maintain them successfully.

A stakeholder register template is a predesigned stakeholder register that contains typical categories and stakeholders for a particular type of project. You may develop and maintain your own stakeholder register templates for tasks you perform, functional groups may develop and maintain stakeholder register templates for tasks they typically conduct, or your organization's project management office may develop and maintain templates for the entire organization.

Regardless of who maintains the template, it reflects people's cumulative experiences. As the organization continues to perform projects of this type, stakeholders that were overlooked in earlier efforts may be added and stakeholders that proved unnecessary removed. Using these templates can save you time and improve your accuracy.

If you prepare the budget for your department each quarter. After doing a number of these budgets, you know most of the people who give you the necessary information, who draft and print the document, and who have to approve the final budget. Each time you finish another budget, you revise your stakeholder register template to include new information from that project. The next time you prepare your quarterly budget, you begin your stakeholder register with your template. You then add and subtract names as appropriate for that particular budget preparation.

## **Guidelines for Maintaining Stakeholders Register Templates**

- Develop templates for frequently performed tasks and for entire projects. Stakeholder register templates for individual tasks that are part of projects are available or can be developed to suit the purpose such as awarding a competitive contract or printing a document. Many times, projects that appear totally new actually contain some tasks that you've done before. You can still reap the benefits of your prior experience by including the stakeholder register templates for these tasks in your overall project stakeholder register.
- Focus on position descriptions rather than the names of prior stakeholders.



Identify a stakeholder as accounts payable manager rather than by the name of the Stakeholder. People come and go, but functions endure. For each specific project, you can fill in the appropriate names.

- Develop and modify your stakeholder register template from previous projects that actually worked, not from initial plans that looked good but lacked key information. Often you develop a detailed stakeholder register at the start of your project but don't revise the register during the project or add stakeholders whom you overlooked in your initial planning. If you update your template with information from an initial list only, your template can't reflect the discoveries you made throughout the earlier project.
- Encourage your team members to brainstorm possible stakeholders before you show them an existing stakeholder register template. Encouraging people to identify stakeholders without guidance or restrictions increases the chances that they'll think of stakeholders who were overlooked on previous projects.
- Use templates as starting points, not ending points. Make clear to your team that the template isn't the final register. Every project differs in some ways from similar ones. If you don't critically examine the template, you may miss people who weren't involved in previous projects but whom you need to consider for this one.
- Reflect your different project experiences in your stakeholder register templates. The post-project evaluation is an excellent time to review, critique, and modify your stakeholder register for a particular project.
- Keep updating the registers depending on laid down procedures. This is for keeping track of the stakeholder's feedback and actions.

### **Learning Activities**

**1. Trainees to visits any nearby institution or company .Through the management of that entity they should note who are the stake holders ,their duties and interest in the that organization or institute**

## **2. Field/Visit to nearby Media house**

Have a recorded interview with the Relationship Manager. Thereafter, write a written report:

1. Identifying their five stakeholders
2. Prepare a stakeholders' register for the media house capturing the five stakeholders following set guidelines.

### **Practical Activities**

- a) Identify 6 stakeholders for an investment company and develop a stakeholders' register using the templates given.
- b) Develop a stakeholders' register for the above stakeholders.

### **A Case Study**

Read the case study presented below and answer questions that follow.

FA Company Ltd has been manufacturing peanut butter for the last five years. For the past 3 months, they realized that their sales have been dwindling due to bad publicity brought about by a faulty product that went out to the market without passing through quality control measures. The employee involved was fired but they did not give feedback to their stakeholders as a stop gap measure. They handled the issue by recalling the product upon getting numerous complaints. Several clients posted their complaints on Facebook.

Ann from Nakuru,

“Have you tasted the FA peanut butter. Tastes like grease”. I want a refund.

Kamau from Naivasha.

“I hear you Ann. It's bad.”

Mwanaisha from Nairobi.

“I do not know what all you people are talking about. FA peanut butter, is my best choice. The kids love it.”

- b) How should FA PR team have handled this matter in the first place in terms of giving communication to their stakeholders?
- c) Analyze the stakeholders' feedback to ascertain whether the feedback was negative, positive or neutral.
- d) Develop a press release in attempt to remedy the situation.
- e) Prepare a response for the negative feedback they got on Facebook following the guidelines given.

### **Self -Assessment**

You are provided with the following questions for self -assessment, attempt them and check your responses:

1. a) What is a Stakeholders' Analysis Plan?
  - b) What are the 3 steps to follow in the stakeholders' analysis?
2. What does a stakeholders' register document contain?
3. What are the factors that negatively influence communication with stakeholders?
4. What are the 3 benefits of gathering stakeholder's feedback?
5. Why is it important to respond to employee reviews? Outline at least three.

### **Tools, Equipment, Supplies and Materials**

The following resources are provided

- Computers
- Internet connectivity
- Printer
- Projector
- Camera
- Tablet
- Mobile Phone
- Classroom and classroom resources
- Stationery

- Sample logo designs
- Print medi

easytvvet.com

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## Self-Assessment Responses

1. a) What is a Stakeholders' Analysis Plan?

**It's essential to map the various stakeholders because they might have a significant impact on the success of an organization, project or other process.**

b) What are the 3 steps to follow in the stakeholders' analysis?

### 1. Identify all stakeholders

**To be able to communicate with the stakeholders, they must first be identified. Therefore, it is important to make sure that both the primary and secondary stakeholders have been identified. When making a list, think of everyone who might have influence on or might be influenced by the project. People who benefit from the success or failure of a project or organization are also important.**

- **Who might have a negative impact on the success of the project or organization?**
- **Have both the supporters and opponents been identified?**

- **What is the relationship between these stakeholders?**

## **2. Assess the stakeholders and sort them by influence**

**When the stakeholders have been identified, it's important to sort them based on their impact and power. The groups of stakeholders can subsequently be divided across the stakeholder matrix. This will be explained in the next section.**

## **3. Understand the stakeholders**

**It's important for the project manager or business manager to know what the stakeholders think of a project, and what they like or dislike about it. This enables the manager to develop a perspective on what the stakeholders expect to gain from the project. Ask yourself the following questions:**

- **Do stakeholders have a financial or other interest?**
- **Which information is valuable to them and how can this best be communicated to them?**
- **What is their opinion?**
- **Who or what influences their opinion?**
- **Are there mutual relationships between stakeholders that might change this opinion?**
- **How could possible hostile actions be avoided?**

## **2. What does a stakeholders' register document contain?**

**It contains a list of external and internal project stakeholders.**

## **3. What are the factors that negatively influence communication with stakeholders?**

- **Not understanding how to set up a stakeholder engagement project so it effectively communicates the organization's intentions**
- **Suffering from a lack of focus when engaging stakeholders – and failing to define the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why)**



- **Having the wrong person representing the organization. This can be someone who is inexperienced or whose strengths lay outside the field of communication**
- **Company and stakeholder groups involving multiple representatives that change over time. Relationships get lost and communication history, or commitments that were made can be forgotten.**

4. What are the 3 benefits of gathering stakeholders' feedback?

- **It can help you measure customer satisfaction,**
- **Gives feedback that can help you improve your product or service,**
- **It helps to show your customers that you care about their opinions, and much more.**

5. Why is it important to respond to employee reviews? Outline at least three.

i. **You can drive engagement with employees as well as support efforts to improve the overall employee experience.**

ii. **Responding to employee reviews also provides job candidates with an extra measure of reassurance, particularly when they see that you, as an employer, are active on employee review sites.**

iii. **It show current and prospective employees that your company is open to and appreciative of feedback, values the employee experience, and is constantly working towards make the work environment better.**

#### 4.2.4 LEARNING OUTCOME 3: DEVELOP SYNERGIES FOR INNOVATION

##### **Introduction to the Learning Outcome**

This learning outcome specifies the content of competencies required to develop partnerships, determining partnership benefits, form beneficial partnership and also form partnership for innovation.

##### **Performance Standards**

- 3.1 Partnerships are developed in accordance to collaborations policy and the strategic plan
- 3.2. Partnership benefits are determined in accordance with the Strategic plan
- 3.3 Beneficial Partnership is formed in accordance to the collaboration procedure
- 3.4 Partnership for innovation is formed in accordance to the collaboration policy

##### **Information Sheet**

##### **Definition of Terms**

- Action plans: These Are set specific actions that are expected to lead to the implementation of your goals.
- Benchmark: This is a strategic management tool of that allows organizations to set goals and measure productivity, on the basis of the best industry practices. It is a practice in which quality level is used as a point of reference to evaluate things by making a comparison.
- Collaboration: Is a formal relationship where the partners agree to work together on a specific project for an agreed purpose. Collaboration has mutual benefits for the partners.
- Collaboration policy: This is a framework of how a partnership will be ran in collaboration with all stakeholders.

- Collaboration procedure: This is the model of action set up to ensure the collaboration runs effectively to achieve set goals and objectives for a partnership.
- Cooperation: This is working in parallel ways on a task, sharing ideas, activities and resources, with a commitment to collective outcomes.
- Equity participation: This refers to how an individual or company can own shares of a company or property. One can purchase the shares by allowing partial ownership as against financing or through other available options of ownership.
- Execution: This is the actual implementation of strategies and action plans into real actions in order to accomplish the strategic goals and objectives.
- Information Sharing: Is the act of exchanging data, reports, facts and similar resources with people or organisations with whom you may, or may not, interact in other ways.
- Innovation: Execution of a new idea, method or device.
- Joint distribution: This is a business model where it involves facilitation of distribution of goods or services from the producers/manufacturers to the end user/customer in the most cost efficient manner.
- Joint venture: Is a business entity created by two or more parties and is generally characterized by shared ownership, shared returns on investment and risks, and shared company governance.
- Merger and Acquisitions: These are transactions in which the ownership of companies, business organizations or their operating units are transferred or consolidated with other entities to form one company. It is an aspect of strategic management that allows enterprises to grow or downsize and change the nature of their business or competitive positions.

- **Mission:** This is a special assignment that a business sets out to achieve and can be explained as a mission statement.
- **Mission Statement:** It states what line of business a company is undertaking and why it exists and what is its purpose it serves. It may include their corporate strategy.
- **Need equity:** It refers to the provision of varying levels of support based on specific organizational needs so as to achieve greater fairness of treatment and outcomes in a partnership.
- **Networking:** This is connecting with people with similar interests to exchange information, explore opportunities and share best practice.
- **Partner:** Is a person/organization who takes part in an undertaking with another or others, especially in a business or company with shared risks and profits.
- **Partnership:** This is an association of two or more people/organizations as partners.
- **Partnership agreement /deed:** This is usually an agreement that is made between partners when establishing a new or existing business. It clearly states the actual operations, responsibilities and procedures to deal with any conflict that may arise in the lifespan of the partnership. It also shows the procedure to be followed in the event the business must be dissolved.
- **Research and Development:** Is a term used to describe the effort a company devotes to the innovation, improvement of its products and processes.
- **Score card:** Tool used for measuring performance of the strategic plan objectives/goals

- **Strategic Objectives:** These are the long term, continuous strategic areas that help an organization connect their mission to their vision.
- **Strategic Plan:** This is a document that is written to outline the process of documenting and establishing a direction of your business by assing both where you are and where you want to go. It gives you a place to record your mission, vision, and values as well as long term goals and the action plans you will use to achieve them.
- **Supply relationships:** Is a business venture where you have affiliations with companies that supply your business with good and services for purposes of maximizing profits because the basis of the partnership is reduced prices for goods/services offered.
- **SWOT Analysis:** This is a renowned tool for audit and analysis of the overall strategic position of the business and its environment. Its key purpose is to identify the strategies that will create a firm specific business model that will best align an organization's resources and capabilities to the requirements of the environment in which the firm operates. It is an acronym standing for Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- **Synergies:** This is the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.
- **Vision:** Is a written clear direction that provides a concrete way for stakeholders, especialy employees, partners to undertsnad the meaning and purpose of your business. It can be presented as a statement.
- **Values:** These are set principles that govern the basic code of conduct for a given company e.g. integrity, passionate about people, accountability, etc

### **Developing Partnerships**

Entering into partnership is not a decision to be made lightly by any organization, nor is it a process to be undertaken without adequate planning and appropriate resources. This is because collaborative partnerships have the potential to deliver positive benefits for organizations, clients and communities. Two heads are better than one when it comes to strengthening communities in a holistic way. By thinking, planning, and working together it is possible for organizations to accomplish far more than they could achieve alone.

When it comes to developing partnerships, it is crucial to know that partnerships are developed in accordance to collaboration policy and the strategic plan to ensure they are in line with company goals and objectives.

### **Ways of coming up with a successful collaboration**

Once a successful collaboration policy has been developed, that becomes the standard against which to develop lasting partnerships that are sustainable and effective.

*Things to consider: when coming up with collaboration policy.*

### **Have a Clear Purpose and Expectations**

Desire to achieve the same outcomes with your partners. Work towards a definite goal or outcome, identifying what is mutual so as to avoid overlaps and gaps. Also clarify the expectations of each organization. Then make it a choice to recognize that working together is for the good of everyone.

Avoid collaboration without an expected out. Do not it for the sake of it. Carry out a SWOT analysis first so as to come up with guidelines and modalities for running the partnership.

### **An overview of the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats):**

1. **Strengths** - These are the qualities that enable us to accomplish the organization's mission. These are the basis on which continued success can be made and continued/sustained.



Strengths can be either tangible or intangible. These are what you are well-versed in or what you have expertise in, the traits and qualities your employees possess (individually and as a team) and the distinct features that give your organization its consistency.

Strengths are the beneficial aspects of the organization or the capabilities of an organization, which includes human competencies, process capabilities, financial resources, products and services, customer goodwill and brand loyalty. Examples of organizational strengths are huge financial resources, broad product line, no debt, committed employees, etc.

2. **Weaknesses** - These are the qualities that prevent us from accomplishing our mission and achieving our full potential. These weaknesses deteriorate influences on the organizational success and growth. Weaknesses are the factors which do not meet the standards we feel they should meet.

Weaknesses in an organization may be depreciating machinery, insufficient research and development facilities, narrow product range, poor decision-making, etc. Weaknesses are controllable. They must be minimized and eliminated. For instance - to overcome obsolete machinery, new machinery can be purchased. Other examples of organizational weaknesses are huge debts, high employee turnover, complex decision making process, narrow product range, large wastage of raw materials, etc.

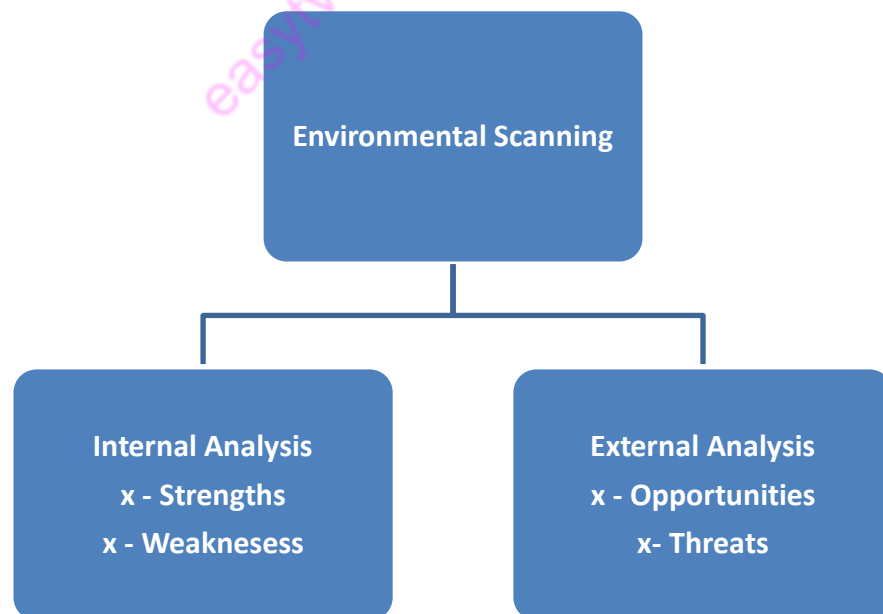
3. **Opportunities** - They are presented by the environment within which our organization operates. These arise when an organization can take benefit of conditions in its environment to plan and execute strategies that enable it to become more profitable. Organizations can gain competitive advantage by making use of opportunities.

Organization should be careful and recognize the opportunities and grasp them whenever they arise. Selecting the targets that will best serve the clients while getting desired results is a difficult task. Opportunities may arise from market, competition, industry/government and technology. Increasing demand for

telecommunications accompanied by deregulation is a great opportunity for new firms to enter telecom sector and compete with existing firms for revenue.

4. **Threats** - They arise when conditions in external environment jeopardize the reliability and profitability of the organization's business. They compound the vulnerability when they relate to the weaknesses. Threats are uncontrollable. When a threat comes, the stability and survival can be at stake. Examples of threats are - unrest among employees; ever changing technology; increasing competition leading to excess capacity, price wars and reducing industry profits; etc.

Once you have done a SWOT Analysis, come up with modalities on how the partnership can capitalize on the strength areas, purpose to build up on the weaknesses. Maximize on the opportunities available and eliminate threats. Where they cannot be eliminated, prepare to deal with any eventualities to minimize any negative effects.



**Figure 35: SWOT Analysis Framework**

**Ensure all Partners Are Committed to the Working Relationship**

Organizations must want to work together with mutual understand and a common interest which is to maximize profitability. If the relationship is not established the partnership will not be successful. All stakeholders need to be involved so as to maximize on the all available resources. Each partner must be clear about the nature of the relationship. They must also know what each company has to offer, personally and professionally. Understand each service involved in the partnership that is need equity, transparency, respect, profit sharing margins, and courtesy.

### **Develop Clear Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines**

This is good practice so as to ensure there is no over lapping or repetition of roles being done to avoid wastage or underutilization of any resource made available for the partnership. Clear roles and responsibilities should be set out. Formal agreements and good documentation should be formulated. Good communication and decision making processes established to avoid misunderstanding and breakdown of any communication lines.

It is important to note that set structure that ensures partnership relates to positions not personalities. Ensure you also come up with clear processes for all members to participate in the management of the partnership/project. Establish workable review and feedback processes. Strong financial and statistical accountability procedures should also be developed for sustainability of the partnership.

### **Ensure Shared Values and Goals**

To ensure compatibility, values and working approaches need to match. They must have the same attitudes towards stakeholders. Develop shared values, goals and outcomes. There should be need compatible philosophies put in place to ensure a clear understanding of the frame of reference being followed or adopted for the partnership.

### **Appoint a Designated Driver**

You must appoint a project driver who is not tied up in service delivery. The appointed project manager should have the motivation and energy to 'keep it rolling' that is to say, he ensures the partnership project is running effectively and efficiently for the benefit of all the partners. Responsibilities should be delegated for oversight of

consistency and quality issues. Then allow plenty of time to develop all the processes for purposes of building up a strong collaboration that will be successful.

### **Determining Partnership Benefits**

Every partnership must have an end game outlook that is to say, what are the expected beneficial outcomes to be considered. This is important because it helps to put a purpose to the partnership and is used as a benchmark for sustainability.

The Partnership benefits are determined in accordance to the company's strategic plan. A well written strategic plan plays a pivotal role in the company's business growth and success because it helps to guide you and your employees how best to respond to opportunities and challenges. It as helps partnerships to derive expected benefits for sustainability. For many partnerships, the set objectives are to increase revenue and profitability.

### **Benefits of Partnership to an organization**

#### **Sustainable beneficial relationships**

This can be achieved with the help of suppliers, other similar organizations, and customers. This is by building brand awareness and trust.

Brand awareness and recognition is hugely important to all businesses, regardless of size. Even if you are extremely small, customers like to have the confidence that they know and recognize who they are dealing with and that they have aspirations to grow and therefore undertake the necessary activities to achieve this. By partnering with a similar organization and your suppliers, you are immediately increasing your brand awareness by accessing different routes to market and being exposed to the marketing strategies of the partnering business.

#### **Streamlining objectives**

This is the process used to simplify or eliminate unnecessary work-related tasks to improve the efficiency of processes in business or organizations. Streamlining objectives may require the usage of modernizing techniques, technology and other possible approaches. This will help in choosing partners that can help you achieve this

without necessarily adding more capital. The other partner brings this angle to the business and helps to access new customers.

Sharing of resources becomes a direct benefit. Companies, specifically the smaller ones, often find it difficult to recruit or afford the roles and resources necessary to grow a business. By creating the right strategic partnership this can be overcome by sharing resource, particularly where those resources are of a technical nature and may expose the business to new and innovative solutions.

### **People skill connection**

This is well done in mergers and acquisitions as one brand adopts the name of the other and vice versa thereby creating opportunities to reach new markets and sectors.

While it's likely that any chosen partner will be working in a similar or associated field to you, it is more than likely that their customers will be in different markets and sectors to you. It is advisable to choose partners where this is exactly the case. The bottom line is that if you are looking to grow your business and increase revenue and profitability, strategic partnerships can have a major influence on the speed and ease with which you can achieve your goals and objectives. Working and collaborating with likeminded businesses can provide significant benefits and cost savings

### **National goal focus**

When you bear this in mind, an organization can expand without having to move from their domicile location but through partnership, they can broaden their reach for their much needed products/services in other geographical locations within a country. This will in turn create options of added value proposition for your existing customers.

### **Disadvantages of partnerships**

#### **The business has no independent legal status**

It is important to note that a business partnership has no independent legal existence distinct from the partners. By default, unless a partnership agreement with alternative provisions is put in place, it will be dissolved upon the resignation or death of one of

the partners. This possibility can cause insecurity and instability, divert attention from developing the business and will often not be the preferred outcome of the remaining partners.

### **Unlimited Liability**

When a business does not have a separate legal personality as indicated above, the partners are liable for the debts and losses incurred whether directly by them or their employees in line of duty. So if the business runs into trouble, your personal assets may be at risk of being seized by creditors.

The partners are jointly and severally liable for any liabilities by the partnership. One partner can end up binding the partnership into unexpected liabilities.

### **Potential for differences and conflict**

By going into a partnership business, you are likely not to always have your own way. Each partner will need to demonstrate flexibility and the ability to compromise for the good of the business.

### **The partnership may experience slower, more difficult decision making processes**

This is because there's need for consultation and discussion of matters with other partners to ensure all needs are met for each partner involved. Where there are disagreements, more time will be needed for negotiation to build an agreement consensus. Sometimes, this could mean opportunities are missed altogether. This scenario is likely to frustrate a partner who had been used to making all decisions for their business.

### **In a partnership, it dictates that profits are to be shared equally**

Under the Partnership Act 1890, profits are to be shared equally amongst partners. This position can only be amended by a partnership deed. Sharing profits could raise difficult questions such as;

- What happens when one partner is seen to be putting less time and effort in growing the business yet is still taking their full share of the profits?
- How do you value different partners' respective skills?

Resentment from partners can arise if there doesn't appear to be fair balance between effort and expected reward.

### **Formation of Partnership**

Effective and beneficial partnerships are formed in accordance to a set collaboration procedure.

A well-executed collaborative procedure brings together the right people who are like minded, with the right information and process structure to drive informed, insightful, and sustainable outcomes in a partnership agreement.

Factors to consider when forming a partnership.

- Ensuring objectives are clear

Once you have set clear goals, you are able to identify like-minded people or organizations with similar objectives to form partnerships that bring mutual benefits to all the partners involved. Come up with a partnership deed to deal with any eventualities that could jeopardize the growth and sustainability of the partnership.

- Characterize your situation

Establish the real cause why you want to get into a partnership.

- a. Is the business struggling?
- b. Is it in a good place just that it needs a boost in sales to grow to greater heights?
- c. Do you need more capital resources in terms of money, skill, expertise or human resource?
- d. What is it you are looking to benefit from in a partnership agreement?

### **The process of identifying and connecting with interested parties**

- Design and manage a credible partnership process

This involves coming up with a strategic plan as detailed above. This will be guiding tool.

- Facilitating productive and engaging meetings with prospective partners



This must be done intentionally with an expected outcome that is definite. It involves asking the right questions, expecting to get feedback that will direct your decision of the right partner that is suitable for your type of business and in line with the set objectives.

- Signing a partnership deed or deeds with identified partner(s)

Drafting an all-inclusive kind of partnership agreement will help shield the business from unexpected eventualities that can bring to an abrupt end of the business.

- Chartering the way for the partnership

This should be a detailed course of action that is set. It includes

- a. Coming up with aligned goals and objectives of the partnership.
- b. Identifying a suitable manager/driver who will drive the partnership. He/she should be charged with the success of the partnership.

### **Forming Partnerships for Innovation**

Partnering for innovation is a business idea that is being embraced in the now. This is because, the time when companies used to innovate and deal with challenges by themselves is long gone. Many, look for suitable partnerships in order to foster innovation. Case example was the merger between Old Mutual Kenya, UAP Holdings and Faulu Kenya in July 2015. Their prime goal was to offer a one stop shop for financial solutions in modern Kenya. The idea is to combine experience, efforts and resources, thereby bettering the chances of effective, successful and sustainable innovations.

This must be in line with the collaboration policy that is in existence within the company. A collaboration between innovators can exist in various forms depending on their agenda and intended outcome i.e.

- i. Others seek to create partnership for innovation for purposes of moving towards a sustainable future while others
- ii. Seek an opportunity to create a next generation product or service.

Strategic partnerships can also act as a form of open innovation but in a more secure way. The protection provided by mutual agreements can decrease potential financial risks and ensures that the partners are safe. Whether the partnership is between a company a research institution, a startup, or another company with similar products/services; a partnership will allow creation of a full innovation picture, where all elements are intact i.e. financial strategy, ideas and implementation process.

**Types of partnership/;**

1. Equity participation
2. Joint ventures
3. Supply relationships
4. Joint Research and Development partnerships
5. Mergers and Acquisitions
6. Joint distribution

The basis of that choice should drive a clearly defined agenda, strategy and forecastable results of the partnership. When it comes to innovation, collaboration is about sharing mutual interest in order to provide a much needed product or service by joining forces and focusing on the essence of what the current market truly wants and how best you can successfully innovate in disruptive times other than about any rivalry that could potentially exist.

**Partner Engagement Process for Innovations**

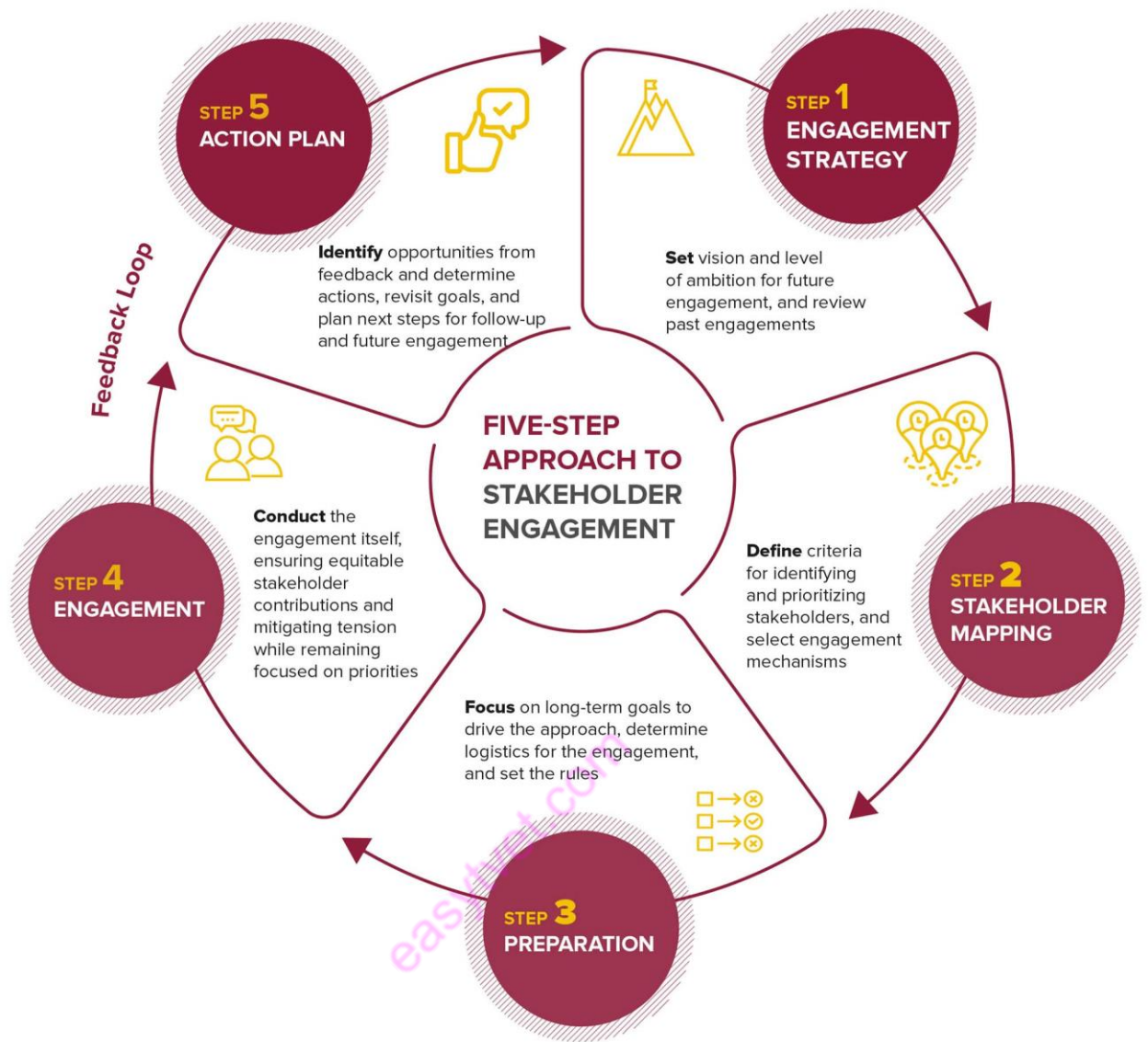


Figure 36: Steps to Stakeholder Management

### Learning Activities

. Field/Visit to a nearby manufacturing company.

Write a written report of the findings of your assignment.

7. Carry out a SWOT analysis their five stakeholders
8. Come up with guidelines and modalities of running a partnership having in mind the outcome of the SWOT analysis carried out.

### Practical Activities

a) Outline ways of coming up with a successful collaboration for a supply chain venture.

b) Give an example of a successful partnership through collaboration.

### **A Case Study**

Read the case study presented below and answer questions that follow.

Mzima Springs is a water bottling company based in Kwale county. They have a fresh water well and they have been bottling water without proper approval as they do not have adequate capital to put up a water processing plant required by law in Kenya today.

- f) How would you advise them so that they can be able to achieve their vision which is to be the best fresh water distributor in the Coastal Region?
- ii) How do they go about forming a partnership so as to achieve their vision and increase profitability?

### **Self -Assessment**

You are provided with the following questions for self -assessment, attempt them and check your responses:

1. What is a partnership agreement/deed?
2. What are the benefits of a partnership?
3. What can be the expected disadvantages of a partnership?
4. Briefly describe the partnership engagement process?

### **Tools, Equipment, Supplies and Materials**

The following resources are provided

- Computers
- Internet connectivity
- Printer
- Projector
- Camera
- Tablet
- Mobile Phone
- Classroom and classroom resources
- Stationery

- Sample logo designs
- Print media

## References

Pearce, J. A. and Doh, J. P. (2005) The high impact of collaborative social initiatives.

MIT Sloan Management Review 46(3) 29-39. Pearce J.A & Robinson R.B (2000).

SIIA, Marketing in Today's Economy 2012, Amy K. Muringer

Strategic Management, Formulation, Implementation and control

<https://www.managementstudyguide.com/swot-analysis.htm>

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/creating-and-maintaining-coalitions-and-partnerships>

## Self-assessment Responses

1. What is a partnership agreement/deed?

**It is an agreement that is made between partners when establishing a new or existing business. It clearly states the actual operations, responsibilities and procedures to deal with any conflict that may arise in the lifespan of the partnership. It also shows the procedure to be followed in the event the business must be dissolved.**

2. What are the benefits of a partnership?

### **i. Access to new customers**

A major goal for most businesses is to grow their customer base. Once you have a good customer base, focus changes to how do you retain them. By partnering with another company with a similar product set or services you can immediately access a pool of warm customers who have already purchased and are being serviced by the partner. The same is true for the partner in their accessibility to your customer base.

### **ii. There are Opportunities to reach new markets and sectors**

While it's likely that any chosen partner will be working in a similar or associated field to you, it is more than likely that their customers will be in different markets and sectors to you. It is advisable to choose partners where this is exactly the case. Expanding into new markets and sectors where you

already have a warm base of clients is far easier than starting from scratch with limited credibility or trust in those type of markets.

**iii. Options of Added value proposition for your existing customers**

Whilst accessing a new customer base is attractive to any business looking to grow, it is equally important (if not more in some cases) to retain your existing clients and build on their existing expenditure, thus encouraging them to remain with you rather than seek alternative suppliers. By associating yourself with partners who offer similar products to you can reduce the risk of other ‘unknown’ companies approaching your customers and introducing organizations that compete with your products and services.

**iv. You can Build brand awareness and trust**

Brand awareness and recognition is hugely important to all businesses, regardless of size. Even if you are extremely small, customers like to have the confidence that they know and recognize who they are dealing with and that they have aspirations to grow and therefore undertake the necessary activities to achieve this. By partnering with a similar organization, you are immediately increasing your brand awareness by accessing different routes to market and being exposed to the marketing strategies of the partnering business.

Adding additional products and services to your portfolio through partnerships and being seen to be trusted by other will also increase customers’ views of you as industry experts and trusted advisers.

Customers always like to know that you empathize with their individual challenges. By utilizing the knowledge and experience brought by the partner, it can also help in demonstrating the requisite domain knowledge to successfully compete in certain markets, particularly where the offering may be viewed as specific to that particular market.

**v. You can expand the Geographic Reach**

Whilst direct presence in a particular location or geography is arguably becoming less and less important due to the ability to transact business remotely through online marketing platforms, some customers still take comfort from dealing with local businesses. Choosing to work with partners in different

geographic locations will help to open up those locations to your business by allowing the partner to represent you as the local presence.

**vi. Shared resources**

Companies, specifically the smaller ones, often find it difficult to recruit or afford the roles and resources necessary to grow a business. By creating the right strategic partnership this can be overcome by sharing resource, particularly where those resources are of a technical nature and may expose the business to new and innovative solutions. Collaborating with partners and sharing ideas and resources can also introduce innovation in terms of new ways to approach business processes and overcoming specific internal issues or problems without the need for additional investment.

**vii. Ability to Win more business**

The bottom line is that if you are looking to grow your business and increase revenue and profitability, strategic partnerships can have a major influence on the speed and ease with which you can achieve your goals and objectives. Working and collaborating with likeminded businesses can provide significant benefits and cost savings. It can also be a major factor in your ability to win more business and increase order values.

3. What can be the expected disadvantages of a partnership?

**a. The business has no independent legal status**

It is important to note that a business partnership has no independent legal existence distinct from the partners. By default, unless a partnership agreement with alternative provisions is put in place, it will be dissolved upon the resignation or death of one of the partners. This possibility can cause insecurity and instability, divert attention from developing the business and will often not be the preferred outcome of the remaining partners.

Even if a partnership agreement is in place, the remaining partners may not be in a position to purchase the outgoing partner's share of the business. In that case, the business will likely still need to be dissolved and bring unexpected end to the business venture.



## **b. Unlimited Liability**

When a business does not have a separate legal personality as indicated above, the partners are liable for the debts and losses incurred whether directly by them or their employees in line of duty. So if the business runs into trouble, your personal assets may be at risk of being seized by creditors.

The partners are jointly and severally liable for any liabilities by the partnership. One partner can end up binding the partnership into unexpected liabilities. You can end up finding yourself paying for the actions of the other partners. If your partner(s) are unable to settle debts, you as a partner, will be expected to take the responsibility of settling them. In an extreme example where you could only be owning 10% of the partnership, if your partners have no assets; you might end up having to settle 100% of the debts of the partnership and may need to sell your possessions in order to do it.

## **c. The Potential for differences and conflict is high**

By going into a partnership business, you are likely not to always have your own way. Each partner will need to demonstrate flexibility and the ability to compromise for the good of the business.

There is always potential for differences, large or small with other partners. These might relate to:

- The strategic direction in which the business should go or how to get there
- How to handle any number of discrete business issues that may arise.
- Emergence of different views on how partners should be rewarded when they put different amounts of time, skills and level of investment into the business that is contrary to the initial partnership collaboration agreement.
- Shifted ambition.

Some partners may want to dedicate every waking moment growing and developing the business, while others may want a quieter life that may not be acceptable for everyone.

Differences might not be evident immediately but over time, partners' preferences, personal situations and expectations may change. Disagreements and disputes can

therefore harm the business and the relationship between the individuals/organizations involved in the partnership. Conflict can end up being a major distraction that might end up absorbing the partners' time, energy and money. It is generally advisable to draft a partnership deed when forming business partnerships. It ensures the partners' respective rights and responsibilities are stipulated and that there is common understanding of the procedures to be followed in case of disputes. In the event the partnership must be dissolved, the process of dissolving the business will have been articulated in this document.

**d. The partnership may experience slower, more difficult decision making processes**

This is because there's need for consultation and discussion of matters with other partners to ensure all needs are met for each partner involved. Where there are disagreements, more time will be needed for negotiation to build an agreement consensus. Sometimes, this could mean opportunities are missed altogether. This scenario is likely to frustrate a partner who had been used to making all decisions for their business.

**e. In a partnership, it dictates that profits are to be shared equally**

Under the Partnership Act 1890, profits are to be shared equally amongst partners. This position can only be amended by a partnership deed. Sharing profits could raise difficult questions such as;

- What happens when one partner is seen to be putting less time and effort in growing the business yet is still taking their full share of the profits?
- How do you value different partners' respective skills?

Resentment from partners can arise if there doesn't appear to be fair balance between effort and expected reward.

4. Briefly describe the partnership engagement process?

**1. Engagement strategy – Set vision and level of ambition for future engagement and review past engagements**

- 2. Stakeholder Mapping – Define criteria for identification and prioritizing stakeholders and select engagement mechanisms.**
- 3. Preparation – Focus on long-term goals to drive the approach, determine logistics for the engagements and set the rules.**
- 4. Engagement – Conduct the engagement itself ensuring equitable stakeholder contribution and mitigating tension while focusing on priorities.**
- 5. Action Plan – Identifying opportunities from feedback and determine action, revised goals and plan next steps to follow up and future engagements.**

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#### **4.2.4 LEARNING OUTCOME 4: COORDINATE CORPORATE IMAGE THROUGH VIRTUAL PLATFORM**

##### **Introduction to the learning outcome**

This learning outcome specifies the content of competencies required to Identify Virtual platforms, Develop Virtual platforms organizations account, Train Virtual platforms personnel and Manage Virtual platforms.

## **Performance Standard**

1. Virtual platforms are identified as per ICT policy
2. Virtual platforms are developed in accordance with prevailing legislation and provider's terms and conditions
3. Virtual platform personnel are trained in accordance with training policy
4. Virtual platforms are managed in accordance with PR policy and procedures

## **Information Sheet**

### **Definitions of terms**

- **Blog:** Is just a website
- **Blogging:** Refers to a virtual platform for someone to create content with passion and build a community around it.
- **Corporate Image:** This is the image that people have in their minds about a company, its products, and its services. It is also the product of company's performance, media coverage and its activities.
- **ICT Policy:** Is a roadmap to ICT implantation strategies.
- **Independent Software Vendor:** They are also known as software publishers. They are organizations specializing in making and selling software to suite individual clients need.
- **Micro blogging:** Is an online broadcast medium that exists as a specific form of blogging. A micro-blog differs from a traditional blog in that its content is typically smaller in both actual and aggregated file size. Micro-blogs "allow users to exchange small elements of content such as short sentences, individual images, or video links", which may be the major reason for their popularity. These small messages are sometimes called micro posts
- **Virtual Platform:** It refers to the technology used for the creation and development of tools on the Web (sibal) used broadly in the Web 2.0 such as communication tools (forums, chat, emails), authorization management tools, productivity tools (calendars, bookmarks), student tools, (evaluation, group work areas, profiles) and tools of course to improve teaching and learning, (bulletin, evolve). It is also a system that allows different applications to run under the same environment, allowing users to access them via the internet.

## **Introduction**

### **The Concept of Virtual Platforms**

The arrival of the Internet has brought the cost software development down tremendously, making it easier for the creation of materials to be used online. However advanced programming skills are still needed to create a course or a training module, and therefore these courses are not accessible to everyone. Since the mid-1990s, they begin to emerge educational platforms that enable the creation and management of full Web courses unless they are required in-depth knowledge of programming or graphic design.

### **The Virtual Classroom**

The virtual classroom is not only a mechanism for the distribution of information, but it should be a system where the activities involved in the process of learning can take place, i.e. which should allow interactivity, learning, application of knowledge, evaluation and management of the class.

Virtual classrooms today take different shapes and sizes, and even are called with different names. Some are closed systems in which the user as an instructor of a class, will have to abandon their contents and limited to the options which were intended by the creators of the virtual space, to develop its course. Others extend along and across the network using Hypertext as their best ally to stop students not to visit or learn about other resources on the network in the class.

### **The Virtual Platform**

Platform is a concept with various applications. It is usually a base that as certain height or what provides support, either physical or symbolic. The most common use of the term virtual, on the other hand, is linked to what exists either apparent or simulated, and not physically.

A virtual platform is a system that allows different applications to run under the same environment, allowing users to access them via the Internet. This means that, when you use a virtual platform, the user should not be in a particular physical space, they only need to have a connection to the Web that allows you to enter the platform in question and make use of their services.

Virtual platforms, usually used for distance education and try to simulate the same conditions of learning in a classroom. It is also a powerful tool for communication that can lead to corporate collaboration in business. Although each platform can present different characteristics, typically allow the interaction between students and between students and the teacher and all other users. For this, they have various avenues of communication, such as chat, forums, etc. Permit systems allow the efficient management of virtual platforms. The administrator, who is usually the teacher or the head of the education, you can access all the information available on the platform; students, on the other hand, do not.

### **How to identify virtual platforms**

Identification of virtual platforms for any given company is based on its ICT Policy. The company also needs to develop policies to ensure the acceptable uses of ICTs within the organization. Developing an ICT policy for an organization is as important as having any other policy within the organization. Note also that, an effective policy allows the organization to define how and for what purposes ICTs will be used, while also providing the opportunity to educate employees about ICTs and the risks and reward associated it.

Developing and implementing an ICT policy can also be difficult as there are no quick-fixes or one-size-fits-all solutions that can suffice for every organization. This is because every organization is different, and the approach taken to meet objectives and/or ensure compliance will vary from one environment to another, even those in the same industries. But several basic things need to be done to ensure that the organization's ICT policy works. These include: building executive support, building consensus among stakeholders by involving them in the process, including the right contents in the policy, performing an internal and external research, drafting and ultimately disseminating the policy.

Building executive support means gaining the blessings of top management. No policy will succeed without the support of senior leadership. Therefore, the senior leadership is needed to understand the necessity of developing and maintaining an ICT policy; whether it is for compliance, cost reduction, security, total Cost of Ownership (TCO), return on Investment (ROI), avoiding liability, and so on. In fact, the senior leadership

should participate in the introduction of the ICT policy to the organization to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy.

Building consensus among the stakeholders is also very important since the policy will affect them. As the policy is being developed all stakeholders must be involved in the discussion of its establishment, and this can be done by creating a committee. This committee should consist of the owner of the policy, subject matter experts, frequent users of the policy, and representatives from groups affected by the policy. Including the Human Resources, Financial, and Legal departments.. This will ensure the policy being developed is fully understood by everyone concerned and that it has their backing once it is implemented. A broad base of support is one of the best assurances for policy success.

The contents of the policy are another “component” that must be taken seriously since policies differ from organizations to organizations. But basically, the policy should include a statement of purpose, description of the users affected, history of revisions (if there are any), definitions of any special terms, and specific policy instructions from management. Additionally, performing an internal research is also imperative to developing a good ICT policy. This means an understanding of the organizations mission, goals, and culture must be gotten prior to the development of the policy. This will ensure that the policy works for and with stakeholders, rather than against them. Now, while the goal of the policy is to create a more compliant and secure environment without making things overly difficult or incomprehensible for the stakeholders, the contents of the policy should clearly state that inconveniences in terms of usability will be inevitable.

Upon drafting and finalizing the policy, the policy should be reviewed by the organization’s legal counsel to ensure that it complies with Liberian laws before disseminating it to employees. The completed policy should often be reviewed to make sure it continues to comply with applicable laws and the needs of the organization. New laws, regulations, and court cases that emerge after the completion of an ICT policy have the potential to affect it.



When it comes to dissemination, it is advisable to request the Human Resource department to provide a hard copy of the ICT policy to users and have them acknowledge receipt of it. Require users to sign a document of acknowledgement to be placed in their individual personnel files. Subsequently, the policy must be placed on the organization's Intranet, if there is one, or somewhere prominent. Stakeholders must be reminded about the ICT policy periodically through e-mails and short training presentations either on the intranet or during workshops.

A good and regularly reviewed ICT policy can be both an effective employee relations tool and a helpful defense against lawsuits. This policy should explain clearly what kind of user behavior is acceptable and what is not. For example, no user is allowed to install his/her own copy of Windows 7 on the organization's computers; or chat on Facebook during work hours. Hopefully, the injection of an ICT policy in your organization will save the organization from litigation, reduce cost, etc., and not make users/stakeholders hate the ICT department!

Features: of a good virtual platform

- **Insight:** Make sure that the virtual meeting platform that you choose to use has features that can accommodate future needs
- **Dependable and Superior:** Consistently quality service and high-resolution visuals ensure that online meetings run smoothly which can lead to an increase in productivity for a business
- **Desktop Sharing:** An important aspect of team collaboration is not just being able to see fellow team members work, but having the ability to interact and edit the work in real-time
- **Video Conferencing:** This is the main feature that a virtual platform must have in order for online meetings to take place
- **Streamlined Instant Messaging:** Tools for communication between team members must be easy to use, can be used on various platforms, and can be synced with popular devices
- **Sign-On button:** Is it easy for a new user to create an account and log back in for use of service?

### **Benefits of Virtual Platforms**

- **Enhanced communications:** Face-to-face interactions helps to enhance how messages are given, taken, and interpreted even if it is behind the computer screen
- **No time wasted:** To keep team members engaged, it is encouraged for hosts to have virtual meetings be no more than 30 minutes. The features of virtual platforms help to alleviate potential time that could be lost.
- **Enhanced efficiency:** Productivity increases when communication is clear, goals are known, and everyone has a voice.
- **Spread knowledge:** Virtual meeting software helps a business (both employees and higher-ups) know what is going on with operations when everyone is working remotely
- **Giving infinite invitations:** No matter how many stakeholders a business has, as long as the host has the ability to give access to virtual meetings through its features, all can be involved without duplication of resources.
- **Different meeting schedules:** Despite the earlier advice to have virtual meetings on Tuesday afternoons, last-minute work updates and emergencies might require pop up meetings that can be scheduled and conducted using various platform features.
- **Lessens traveling costs and time:** There is no need to travel across the city, state, or even country lines when a user can talk to anyone from anywhere in the world with the touch of a button.
- **Easy to use interface:** A virtual platform's level of usability is essential to whether a meeting was productive or an unorganized mess
- **Live recorded meeting:** Although note-taking is useful during a meeting, being able to record not only exactly what has been said but who said it and how they said it is a godsend to employees and supervisors who are already incredibly busy. It is also offers a good record of meetings that one can refer to from time to time.
- **General productivity increases:** Short meetings, being able to stay in one place, recording everything that is happening, and easy collaboration between employees and supervisors ensures a guaranteed increase in work that is able to get done within a short while.

### **Disadvantages of Virtual Meeting Platforms**

- **Less direct interaction:** Although virtual platforms allow users to technically be face-to-face, the physical work environment cannot be replicated
- **Unstable connection:** No matter how advanced a technological platform is, there still is a possibility of technical difficulties to occur due to poor internet connections that vary from place to place or even time to time.

- **Less human contact:** Employees interacting with each other online does not compare to the personal relationships that can form from being physically present in one space
- **Hacking:** Trolls are not just on social media platforms. Zoom recently had an incident occur where people hacked into online learning sessions and spewed racially insensitive comments toward its users, many of whom were children

Types of Virtual Platforms commonly used

### 1. WhatsApp

It is an American freeware, cross-platform messaging and Voice over IP service owned by Facebook, Inc. It allows users to send text messages and audio messages, make audio and video calls, share images, documents, user locations and other types of media such as photos, videos etc.

It runs on mobile devices but it is also accessible from desktop computers, as long as the user's mobile device remains connected to the internet while they use the desktop app. The service requires its users to provide a standard cellular mobile number for registering with the service. In January 2018, WhatsApp released a standalone business app targeted at small business owners called WhatsApp Business so as to allow companies to communicate with customers who use the standard WhatsApp client.

### 2. Facebook

Facebook is an American online social media and social networking service based in Menlo Park, California. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg along with his fellow Harvard College students and roommates Eduardo Saverin, Andrew Mc Collum, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. It can be accessed from devices with internet connectivity such as PCs, tablets and smartphones. Upon registration, users can create a profile revealing information about themselves. They can post text, photos, and multimedia which is shared with any other users that have agreed to be their "friend" or with a different privacy setting with any reader. Users can also use various embedded apps, join common-interest groups, buy and sell items or services on Marketplace, receive notifications of their Facebook friends' activities and activities of Facebook pages they follow.

### Instagram

It is commonly abbreviated to Insta or IG. It is an American photo and video sharing social networking service owned by Facebook, created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and originally launched on IOS in October 2010. The Android version was released in April 2012, followed by a feature-limited desktop interface in November 2012. The app allows users to upload media that can be edited with filters and organized by hashtags and geographical tagging. Posts can be shared publicly or with pre-approved followers. Users can browse other users' content by tags and locations and view trending content. This can help in communication with people globally as a marketing platform or means of creating awareness of your business activities

### **3. Twitter**

This is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as tweets. Only registered users can post, like and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. Users are able to access Twitter through its website interface through SMS or its mobile-device software application.

### **4. Snap chat**

This is an American multimedia messaging app developed by Snap Inc. One of the principal features of Snapchat is that pictures and messages are usually only available for a short time before they become inaccessible to their recipients. However, the app has evolved from originally focusing on person-to-person photo sharing to presently featuring users' stories of 24 hours of chronological content along with discover letting brands that show ad-supported short term content..

### **5. Video Conferencing**

The influence of video and chat apps in our daily communication, business owners and employees are increasingly becoming more comfortable with using video and audio conferencing to get work done.

There are many other reasons that video conferencing is good for business including

1. Improve client and co-worker interaction,
2. Convey concepts or goals in a clearer and concise manner,

3. Ensure the non-verbal is not misunderstood, and
4. Combat isolation from remote work locations.

### **How to Develop Virtual platforms organizations account**

The Virtual Reality has become the new norm in these times. Many sectors are therefore, finding and pioneering bold applications or finding the best virtual platforms that will best suit their needs

People are able to engage all their stakeholders in this way in an effective and efficient manner. The virtual platforms are being used for training, collaboration and

As an organization, you will need to decide whether you are ready to adopt it because, the need for it as a way of doing business today is evident. VPs are usually developed in accordance with prevailing legislation for a particular industry and the service providers' terms and conditions. The IT leader will first need to evaluate hardware, software, and the processes they will need in order to implement it and manage its use. They might need to adopt an independent software vendors (ISVs) in order to develop the software needed and guide the effort if what is available locally is not going to suit their organizational use of the VP.

### **Process to follow when developing an organization Account**

As an organization, you must appoint a team leader who will act as the project manager who will be accountable for the establishment and effective running of the VPs. The person has to be conversant with the organizational needs that are to be served by this venture.

1. **Project manager** will first establish a feasible timeline for the team to research, test, and introduce Virtual hardware and software or readymade platform that can be used at the organization, which includes schedules for securing the budget and identifying the optimal ISV.
2. **The team leader** will lead strategy on determining the right initial use for VP, such as training management, coordinating teams, building 3D models, or handling cargo. This role will identify which audience at your organization will

test this technology; which milestones to use to measure success; and which developer has the closest potential offering to help.

3. **The executive sponsor** must establish and maintain the support of the organization's executive officers. Not only is their buy-in essential for funding the project, also team will need their feedback to hit the right goals, and their promotion of the cultural change VR will bring to every level of your organization.
4. **If you decide that to suite your organizational needs you are better off developing your own, then your ISV developer** will build your first VP application by following your specifications and incorporating your initial and evolving goals and user feedback to iterate and improve the software before launch.
5. **The launch team's IT lead** begins testing your application, taking the VP hardware and software online to the trial audience and maintaining and troubleshooting as those employees identify necessary changes.
6. **The Project Manager** is now able to manage VP and ascertain its effectiveness in line with the needs to be met. With the technology having being launched, the business leader analyzes the results in the data, adds KPIs, and identifies additional uses to develop VP as you scale it across the organization.

If as an organization you have chosen the mentioned mainstream platforms to use such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc., you just need to get in touch with the service provider and subscribe to their services by opening accounts and paying the subscription fees to make it useful and effective for your use. It is mandatory that you appoint someone responsible to manage the platforms in order to ensure they yield expected results.

### **Handling Training for Virtual platforms personnel**

If no one is an expert in handling the VPs, Training of staff will be mandatory for smooth running of this project and effectiveness in its intended use. However, this is to be conducted in accordance to the Training policy that has been set up in the organization. Training can be out sourced or in house depending on the type of VPs identified or developed. One can get online free training offered by the service

providers that can be cost effective yet efficient.

## **Managing Virtual platforms**

You must identify which platforms are suitable for your organization. That is, is Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat? All these are social media platforms. Some of the service providers have management models that can assist you manage your VP in accordance to your need. You might need more than one to be effective bearing in mind management of VPs is in accordance with your PR policy and laid down procedures.

Steps to follow in managing your VPs:

### **1. Come up with your Social Media Strategy**

If you have a team of people running multiple accounts, it can be difficult to get everybody to stay on brand. But by drafting a social media strategy, which includes policies, procedures, and a style guide in line with your PR policy you can give everyone involved in management to have a set guide to follow at all times.

Even if every account has different goals, a documented strategy can help everybody stay in sync and not stray away from your company's message.

### **2. You can adopt the use of Social Media Management Software**

It can be time consuming to copy and paste the same content to multiple accounts on different social media platforms. Therefore, investing in social media management software such as Buffer will help you manage publishing and engagement all in one place. This again will depend on PR budget expenditure.

These programs can help you post similar or identical content to different accounts on different networks simultaneously with the click of a button thus making work easier.

### **3. Monitor Activity and Engage**



Here you must keep track of mentions and keywords especially if you set up a support-related account. You want to know if a customer needs your help, or if you can jump on a trending topic related to your business. Just as importantly, you don't want to overlap with any of your co-workers working similar accounts.

Social media management software should be able to help with monitoring while providing a space for collaboration within your team. It is not good if a brand replies either to a years-old post or if an inquiry receives two replies from different people in the same organization.

#### **4. Create an Editorial Calendar**

Editorial calendars are useful for providing direction and making sure you are on track with your social media strategy. This can be done through social media management software or even by sharing a simple document with your social team.

It puts everything in one place and provides a reference for social media managers. Also, it can be helpful for spotting gaps or missed opportunities in your posting schedule.

#### **2. Analyze Your Own Strategy**

This should be done regularly so as to implement new or better ideas for improvement. It's important to analyze the results of your own social media strategy so as to answer simple questions.

Are some accounts doing better than others?

How can you help ones who are lagging behind?

Does every account contribute to your brand?

You won't know without looking at it analytically. Employing your strategy and reading the results is the only way for you to make improvements to your approach to social media as you manage your VP accounts.

## Practices for platform management

- Set clear expectations: When employees know what you want them to do, as well as how you expect them to do it, it's easier for them to meet company standards and produce high-quality work
- Conduct regular meetings: Meeting with team members on a regular basis (once per week is ideal) helps to foster good communication practices and create a more collaborative work environment
- Collect feedback: During your weekly meetings, you shouldn't be the only one talking; allow your team members to provide feedback and talk about their experiences so they can get more helpful advice and feel more comfortable speaking up
- Use the right tools: The right virtual team management software will simplify the process of communicating and setting expectations for your workers

## Learning Activities

### Practical activities

Identify a VP bearing in mind the necessary features to consider in the process.

### A case study

**Read the case study presented below and answer questions that follow.**

Havilah Eze Ltd has been experiencing low sales due to Covid 19 interference on how they have been marketing their brand and receiving feedback from their clients. Which has been handing out fliers for new price offers and sales promotions. This has worked well for them over the years because their main market is the local community within their location. They need to quickly adopt the new norm of doing business online yet ensuring all stakeholders are incorporated as per their collaboration policy.

- a) Explain what are VPs?
- b) Advise them on the benefits of VPs in business?
- c) Elaborate to them the possible VPs they can adopt:
  - i. So as to improve awareness of their products
  - ii. So as to communicate with other stakeholders
  - iii. So as to get new clients

**Field/Visit to potential individual clients at a nearby firm to analyze their preferred VP so as to come up with establish how they can maintain their VP accounts**

- a. Identify **10** employees in businesses near your locality whom you will give the Questionnaire attached to fill in.
- b. Compile a report on the preferred VPs they use using the questionnaires filled in. The Report should be on the format provided.

**QUESTIONNAIRE: CLIENT PROFILE S. No....**

**Name of Organization.....**

**Your Department/Office.....**

**Please answer the following 10 Questions by a circle in the selected response**

1. Do you use social medial as a virtual platform for communication and engagement with stakeholders?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes

2. How long have you engaged in Virtual Platforms?

- a) Less than 6 months
- b) Less than 3 years
- c) More than 5 years
- d) Never used

3. Which are the Virtual Platforms you specialize in?

- a) WhatsApp
- b) Video conferencing mediums like zoom, Microsoft teams
- c) Facebook
- d) Instagram

4. Are you familiar with any restrictions or limitations on the said platforms?

- a) Yes, I am

- b) No, I am not
- c) I don't know

5. Are the platforms you use for?

- a) Only Personal use
- b) Only for business
- c) Both for personal and business use

6. What is your opinion on use of virtual platforms as a marketing tool?

- a) It is effective
- b) It can be effective but takes time to yield results
- c) It promotes fraud

7. Do the virtual platforms used in the organization measure success of the business?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

8. Do you alert your clients of new opportunities using virtual platforms?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

9. Can you give me an example of a limitation of a virtual platform that you have experienced and overcome or you are still working on?

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10. Would you recommend the use of virtual platforms as a forward strategy to doing business?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

*End of questions*

Remarks

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**Self-Assessment**

1. Which is the process to follow when developing an organization's VP account?
2. Why is training important for VP personnel?
3. Elaborate how to manage a VP account?
4. . What is video conferencing?
- 5.. Why is it good for business?

**Tools, Equipment, Supplies and Materials**

The following resources are provided

- Computers
- Internet connectivity
- Printer
- Projector
- Camera
- Tablet
- Mobile Phone
- Classroom and classroom resources
- Stationery
- Sample logo designs
- Print media

## References

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Original document, “151160912 Snapchat Reggie Brown Declaration”, Sam Biddle Document cloud, July 10, 2013. Retrieved March 27, 2016.

## Self-Assessment Responses

1. Which is the process to follow when developing an organization’s VP account?
  - **Appoint a project manager who will establish a feasible timeline for the team to research, test, and introduce Virtual hardware and software or readymade platform that can be used at your organization, which includes schedules for securing the budget and identifying the optimal ISV.**
  - **The PM then has to lead strategy on determining the right initial use for VP, such as training management, coordinating teams, building 3D models,**

or handling cargo. This role will identify which audience at your organization will test this technology; which milestones to use to measure success; and which developer has the closest potential offering to help.

- **The person heading the project must establish and maintain the support of your organization's executive officers. Not only is their buy-in essential for funding the project, you also will need their feedback to hit the right goals, and their promotion of the cultural change VR will bring to every level of your organization.**
  - **If you decide you need a VP to suite your organizational needs you are better off developing your own, then your ISV developer will build your first VP application by following your specifications and incorporating your initial and evolving goals and user feedback to iterate and improve the software before launch.**
  - **The launch team's IT lead then begin to test your application, taking the VP hardware and software online to the trial audience and maintaining and troubleshooting as those employees identify necessary changes.**
  - **After this, the PM is able to manage VP and ascertain its effectiveness in line with the needs to be met. With the technology having being launched, the business leader analyzes the results in the data, adds KPIs, and identifies additional uses to develop VP as you scale it across the organization.**
1. Why is training important for VP personnel?
    - a. **To be able to identify your own company audience**
    - b. **To be able to create a compelling structure that works and is effective in content and delivery.**
    - c. **To learn to communicate in a simple and brief manner**
    - d. **To be able to make the experience with your audience visual and interactive**
    - e. **To be able to measure effectiveness of the VP being used in comparison to set goals**
  2. Elaborate how to manage a VP account?
    - a. **Come up with your Social Media Strategy**  
**This should include policies, procedures and a style guideline for everyone involved to follow at all times.**



- b. **Adopt the use of Social Media Management Software to help you manage publishing and engagement, all in one place. This will help you post similar or identical content to different networks simultaneously thus making work easier. However, this will be dependent on the PR budget.**
  - c. **You must monitor activity and engage. Here you keep track off mentions and keywords especially if you set up a support related account so as to know if the customer needs help. It also helps to respond promptly**
  - d. **Create an editorial calendar which is useful for providing direction and making sure you re on track with your social media strategy. This can be done using social media management software or use of a simple document in your social team. It can also be helpful for spotting any gaps or missed opportunities in your posting schedules.**
  - e. **Analyze your own strategy on a regular basis so as to implement new or better ideas for improvement and also to answer simple questions.**
3. a. **What is video conferencing?**

**It is the use of video and chat apps to communicate to stakeholders in your business. It has proven to be more comfortable to get work done. It is an important way to communicate verbally and brings connectivity and a face to face touch in the scenario. Most people feel that if you can't meet face to face, a video conference is the next best thing. As a younger generation of more mobile and technologically advanced users enter the workforce, companies find it necessary to change the way teams communicate and collaborate with each other.**

b. **Why is it good for business?**

- 1. Improve client and co-worker interaction,**
- 2. Convey concepts or goals in a clearer and concise manner,**
- 3. Ensure the non-verbal is not misunderstood, and**

#### **4. Combat isolation from remote work locations.**

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## 4.2.5 LEARNING OUTCOME 5: PREPARE CORPORATE REPORT

### Introduction to the learning outcome

This learning outcome specifies the content of competencies required to identify corporate image components of the functional unit, obtain feedback from stakeholders, evaluate corporate image from analyzed marketing information system, undertake corrective action and prepare and share corporate image report.

### Performance Standard

5.1 Corporate image components of the functional unit are identified according to corporate image policy guidelines

5.2 Feedback from stakeholders is obtained according to Organizations policy and procedures

5.3 Corporate image is evaluated in accordance with analyzed marketing information system

5.4 Corrective action is undertaken in accordance with the policy and procedures

5.5 Corporate image report is prepared and shared in accordance with procedures

### Information Sheet

#### Definitions of terms

- Corporate Image: This is the image that people have in their minds about a company, its products, and its services. It is also the product of company's performance, media coverage and its activities.
- Corporate Image component: Is an element that makes part of the corporate image such as goods and services.
- Corporate Image policy: a principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization to govern how they build and manage their corporate image.
- Corporate image report: This is written information that is useful and precise to deliver its purpose to its end user.
- Brand: It is the image and personality of a product or service that a business provides. A product's features, such as logos or slogans, make it unique and different.

- **Functional unit:** It is a quantified description of the performance requirement that provides reference.
- **Jingle:** It is a short slogan, verse, or tune designed to be easily remembered, especially as used in advertising
- **Logo:** This is a graphic mark, emblem, symbol or stylized name used to identify a **company**, organization, product, or brand
- **Marketing Information System:** It is a permanent arrangement system or set up for provision of regular availability of relevant, reliable, adequate, and timely information for making marketing decisions.
- **Marketing Intelligence:** It includes everyday information about developments in the marketing environment that help managers to prepare and adjust marketing plans and short run tactics
- **Marketing Research:** It is a process that identifies and defines marketing opportunities and problems, monitors and evaluates marketing actions and performance, and communicates the findings and implication to management.
- **Mascot:** This can be a person or thing that is supposed to bring good luck or that is used to symbolize a particular event or organization such as brand name, sports team, trophy etc.
- **Pseudonym (fictitious name):** It used by the company but it is not the actual registered company business name.
- **Slogan:** This is a short and striking or memorable phrase used in advertising of a certain company.

## **Identifying Corporate Image Components of the Functional Unit**

### **Introduction**

A corporate image is considered to be the perception that the general public holds about a particular organization. Many companies invest a great deal of time and other resources in an effort to influence the opinion that consumers hold about the products offered by the business, as well as the business itself.

The process of cultivating positive public relations extends to not only interaction with consumers, but also ongoing interaction within the organization, with the media, labor unions, industrial associations, and other entities that have a direct and indirect impact on public opinion.

**Corporate Image components of the Functional Unit are as follows:**

- Department – This is the PR department that handles all matters to do with the creation of a positive corporate image of any given company. It could also be a PR agency that has been recruited to handle this aspect of the business.
- Section - This is the actual office handling the assignment. In most organizations, it is called the Corporate Affairs section.
- .Activity – This is the actual objective to be undertaken by the section which in essence is building a strong brand with a good corporate image that is sustainable.
- Program – These are the planned series of future planned activities lined up as approved by organization for undertaking in any particular financial year.
- Project – This is planned work or activity that is to be finished over an agreed period of time and is intended to achieve a particular purpose e.g. to improve brand image from 10% penetration to 30% or to increase target audience from 100 participants to 500 etc.

**Creating an effective corporate image involves the following steps.**

1. **Mission Statement.** Create a mission statement that makes it clear
  - (1) What your company does,
  - (2) Who the target audience is, and
  - (3) What makes your company unique.
2. **Corporate Identity tools.** Create corporate identity tools that include
  - (1) Name: You can use the registered company name or a pseudonym
  - (2) Logo: This is a graphic mark, emblem, symbol or stylized name used to identify a **company**, organization, product, or brand.
  - (3) Slogan: This is a short and striking or memorable phrase used in advertising of a certain company. e.g. Safaricom The Better Option
  - (4) Colors: It is important to choose corporate colors that are synonymous to your brand

(5) Type fonts – To use in every formal writing that is letter heads, branding merchandise such as T-shirts such as Times Roman, Calibri, Arial etc.

(6) Mascots –They are used as fictional, representative spokesperson for consumer products such as wheat stalk for Weetabix.

(7) Jingles – These are used mainly in advertising to bring association to a certain brand when the phrase is made such as “The Better Option” which is synonymous with Safaricom.

3. **Training.** Train your employees and other internal stakeholders on your mission and corporate identity tools so they can transmit them via their word-of-mouth communication platforms and social media circles.
4. **Promotion.** Promote your mission and corporate identity tools to people outside your company using traditional, online, and social media. You put them on business cards, letterhead, signs, company vehicles, packaging, brochures, and all corporate communications.
5. **Measuring results.** Using your MIS, you need to use it to measure how effectively your corporate image is working.
6. **Corrective action.** Using the same system, you need to make necessary adjustments to the above if they are not working according to policies and procedures.

### **How to shape corporate image**

1. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with the general public. This effort usually begins by offering products that successfully meet the needs of customers, thus generating goodwill. As consumers come to know and trust the product lines offered by the business, they begin to share their opinions with others. This positive word of mouth helps to introduce other consumers to the products offered by the business, and makes it easier to establish a favorable perception in the minds of more people.

2. Becoming involved with the communities where their goods and services are sold. This can involve anything from sponsoring a local sporting event to supporting some type of local charity. By choosing to be a part of the community, the business

establishes a perception among consumers that the company is interested in the quality of life of everyone in the community, and not just attempting to turn a profit.

3. Working with the media. Journalists in both print and electronic media hold a great deal of influence with the general public. This means that businesses that want to be perceived in a positive light by consumers will want to cooperate with media professionals. Doing so helps to ensure that when new product lines are launched, or significant events happen in the life of the company, the media is much more likely to convey the news to consumers

Figure 37: Working with the media



It is important to note that Organizations of all sizes will want to carefully create a corporate image that inspires confidence and trust in consumers. In the event that some event occurs to negatively impact that trust, taking steps to effectively deal with the situation and find ways to restore the confidence of the general public is essential if the company is to survive. For this reason, a number of companies engage the services of



public relations professionals or establish an in house PR department to build their brand and maintain a good corporate image. They should also be equipped to manage just about any situation that may arise that could affect the corporate image of the company.

When it comes to identification of corporate image components of the functional units it is done according to the corporate image policy guidelines that have been developed by your organization.

**The corporate image components can be tangible or intangible.**

### **Tangible Components**

The tangible components of your corporate image are the things people can touch or see like: your logo, brochures, website, letterheads, vehicle signwriting and hoardings on site etc. You cannot overestimate the importance of getting these well designed. Communication from a good logo, a well written brochure, a coherent website, and a well set-out letter is immense.

In this case, it is advised not to underestimate the negative impact of an off-the-shelf logo, a badly written letter or brochure, or a website that is hard to use. These may lose you the business before the potential client has read a single word. Someone might dismiss expenditure on design as an indulgence, something that can be easily cut to improve the bottom line. But just think about your own role as a client: how many of your purchases are influenced by good or bad design and packaging? How often are you put off by something that is poorly presented? Which would you trust more, a generic 'no-name' product or a branded one?

Good design is usually the end of a long intentional process, but it is worth investing in. It does not have to be flashy, but get it done professionally. Good design makes you more memorable, and it communicates reliability and helps to build trust.

### **Intangible Components**

These are mainly formed by perception. It is also shaped by people's experiences of dealing with you, and by the gossip of others who have worked with you. This is why it's so vital to get everyone in your firm on board with your marketing strategy so that everyone is on the same page. Your receptionist is on the front line of marketing. First impressions are essential and how they answer the phone and deal with visitors powerfully impacts their impression of your firm, for good or ill.

It's not just the receptionist. Every member of your staff affects your corporate image every day. Do they answer the phone politely? Do they deal with queries promptly? Do they do what they have said they will do? Do they make a good impression on site visits? Do they manage the contracts well? Do they know what they are talking about?

A good experience for clients leads to a good corporate image. And a good image will help clients to be willing to trust you with their business, and that in turn will lead to repeat business.

These could include but not limited to (bearing in mind, it highly depends on the corporate image guidelines set by an organization):

- a. The corporate name and logo
- b. Ideas and beliefs of your corporate personnel
- c. The employees
- d. The package and the label



Figure 38: **Components of corporate Image**

## **Tangible Components**

### **1. Goods and Services**

These are the products that a company offers to its clients. Goods are items that are usually but not always tangible such as pens, fruits, machines etc while services are activities offered by mainly professionals like cleaning, financial advice, treatment by a doctor, legal services by a lawyer etc.

### **2. Factories**

This is an industrial site where goods are manufactured or assembled. It can be a building or group of buildings.



Figure 39: Kenyan EPZ factory

### 3. Communication media

This refers to different media that are employed for transmitting data from one computer terminal to the central computer or to other computer systems inside some kind of network.

There are two forms of communication media:

- Analog: Includes conventional radio, telephonic and television transmissions
- Digital: Computer-mediated communication, computer networking and telegraphy

### 2. Name

This is the registered name of the business. It should be catchy and inline with the business being conducted. Other companies adopt trade names. This is when the business name is a pseudonym (fictitious name) used by the company but it is not the actual registered company name. Example Kenya Airways is commonly known as KQ. Kenya Electricity Generating Company operates under the name KENGEN.

### 3. Logo

This is a graphic mark, emblem, symbol or stylized name used to identify a **company**, organization, product, or brand. It may take the form of an abstract or figurative design. It may present as a stylized version of the **company's** name if it has sufficient brand recognition.

Logos have become an integral part of a **company's** brand identities.



Figure 40: Examples of logos

#### 4. Packaging

This means the wrapping or bottling of products to make them safe from damages during transportation and storage. It keeps a product safe and marketable and helps to identify, describe and promote a product. It is an integral part in creating a company's corporate image.



Figure 41: Example of Packaging food stuff

## 5. Employees

These are individuals who is hired by an employer to do a specific job. An employee is hired by an employer after application and an interviewing process resulting in his/her selection as an employee. These individuals exchange their skills, knowledge, experience, and contribution in exchange for compensation from their employer in form of salary and other agreed upon allowances and benefits.

They are an important resource in a company because they are the tangible face of a company and act as effective brand ambassadors too. They have the ability to build a strong corporate image if they have been sold out to the vision of the company, have job satisfaction and are happy in the organization. Many organizations, train and equip them as a corporate image tool. They are provided with merchandise such as T-shirts, caps, umbrellas that promote the company brand in their respective communities. They also receive training to strengthen their brand knowledge in order to build a strong brand.

### Intangible Components

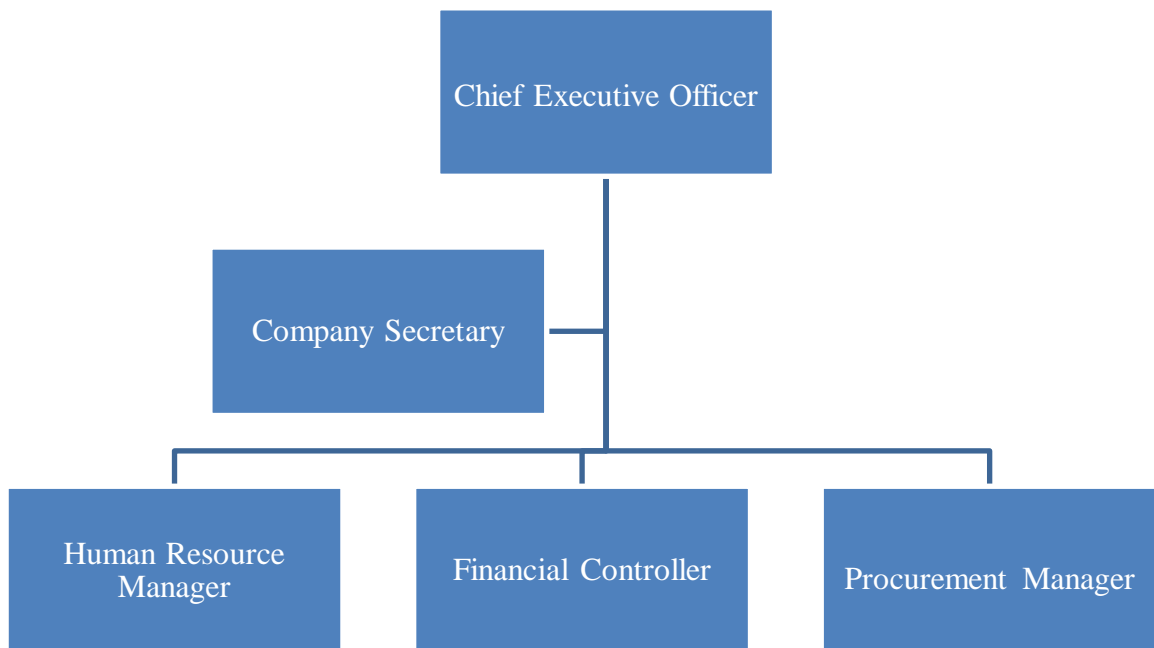
#### 1. Policies

These refer to business' approach to a given issue. The approach is generally detailed and may include components such as acceptable business ethics, rights, dispute procedures and forbidden behaviours.

Basic Policies that can be adopted by any given company.

1. **Employee Position Descriptions** – Define the role of every employee, including their level of responsibility, amount of authority for decision-making, overarching goals and specific tasks. Also create methods for monitoring performance and developing employees through training.
2. **Personnel Policies** – Clearly state business hours, terms of employment (hiring and termination), wages or salary (and bonuses, if any), insurance and health benefits, paid vs. unpaid vacation days, sick leave, and retirement.
3. **Organizational Structure** – Create a chart with each person's name and title showing how each person fits into the structure of the organization.





**Figure 42: Organizational Chart**

4. **Disciplinary Action** – Address issues of honesty, performance, safety and misconduct, and determine what constitutes a violation of company policy, as well as how employees will be disciplined if they violate certain rules.
  5. **No Retaliation** – Make sure to have a no retaliation policy to protect your employees and the company.
  6. **Safety** – Use industry best practices and relevant local, state and federal laws as guidelines to create rules detailing what safe behavior at work looks like, how to use safety equipment, how to report safety hazards, etc.
  7. **Technology** – Establish what’s acceptable and what’s not in regards to Internet, email and social media usage for personal purposes at work.
- Policies for Customers Doing Business with Your Company
8. **Privacy** – Protect employees, the company and your customers by establishing a policy that encourages transparency and trust with your customers.
  9. **Credit** – Determine the terms of opening an account and building good credit with your company. Set an acceptable amount of time for payment, and establish consequences when payment is overdue or not received.



**10. Confidentiality** – Protect sensitive information, and be sure to cover relationships with vendors, customers and other suppliers.

Such policies come along way in strengthening a company's corporate image as set code of conduct is established for stakeholders..

## **2. Ideas and beliefs**

An idea is a formulated thought or opinion while on the other hand a belief is an idea that one accepts as being true or real. These form an important aspect when formulating corporate image strategies that are effective within any community. Some of the beliefs that are standard are that love is good, giving is better than receiving, stealing is bad, you should always brush your teeth, you should help people in need, you should not lie, murder is wrong etc.

Ideas and beliefs tend to dictate what may or may not be acceptable in any given community.

## **3. Country culture**

This is the customs, arts, set of ideas, anti facts, social institutions and achievements of a particular nation that is adopted by its citizens. It also includes meaningful symbols such as flags, national anthems etc that help individuals communicate, interpret and evaluate as members of a particular society. It tends to influence how organization's are managed and run in a given country.

Attitudes and Behaviours Influenced by Ones Culture

1. Personality i.e. sense of self and society eg the Luo community
2. Language and communication
3. Dressing – Influenced by western culture due colonialism
4. Food habits – In Kenya, production of maize is crucial as ugali is considered the basic standard/staple food for the majority of the people.
5. Religion and religious beliefs – Kenya is considered predominantly Christian though we have Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and even atheists.

6. Customs of marriages, religious and special social customs – these mainly depend on the different tribes.
7. Social relationships such as marriage systems, family structure and relations, social and religious organizations including government
8. Education systems, role of churches, temples, mosques etc on education system i.e mental process of behavior (formal and religious symbols, colleges, technical institutes, universities, etc)
9. Work habits and products. They differ from country to country, religion to religion.
10. Time value (punctuality, late coming, working hours, rest hours, public holidays and so on
11. Values and norms
12. Beliefs and faiths in religion such as rebirth, resurrection etc
13. Festivals such as Christmas for Christians, Diwali for Hindus, Eid for Muslims
14. Art, music, pictures, TV, radio, movies, theatres etc
15. Technology and innovation
16. Products and services.
17. Knowledge
18. Government laws and social traditions and laid down laws by religion

All these factors dictate how a corporate image campaign is perceived or even formulated.

#### **4. Media reports**

They are media monitoring and analysis reports that collect data provided by media monitoring tools in one document. They are customizable and while creating, you have 100% control over what is in it. The report is usually prepared in PDF format which makes the document easy to read on every electronic device able to read such files. They contain content on how media portrays people, products/services or issues. They are especially helpful to non profit organizations and businesses that work with stereotyped groups or issues. Understanding how media reflects your products/services or customers helps you improve your marketing and public relations in line with building your corporate image.

### **The purpose of creating a good corporate image**

- Positive consumer response

It is important to know that consumer response can be both negative or positive. The response is what will determine the overall outcome. To all his friends and family. By this quick and positive response, the manufacturer turned that customer to a business ambassador to increase the sales and productivity of business.

Before developing the strategies for customer responses it is important to understand the master plan which indicates how the responses should be modeled according to customer's attitude which is different in different situations. Giving the right response at right time is the only key factor for successfully building the relationships with customers and influencing them to have long-term business deals.

### **6. Portray business and products**

When creating a good corporate image, giving correct details of the type of business you do and the products you offer is crucial. Explaining your products and services in layman's terms will allow you to reach out to a wide range of investors, including those who know little about your industry but can spot a potentially profitable business opportunity. Sharing this information, it gives all stakeholders a clear understanding of the business and its products and services. This in turn helps to create a strong brand awareness.

### **7. Higher pricing**

**By creating a straightforward, easy-to-understand pricing.** Many companies use a complicated pricing structure and try to hide their prices from their customers. It is important to streamline your pricing and make it clear, especially if you run a service business. Exactly how much can your customers expect to pay for which services? A pricing menu is often a good idea. When the company has a good corporate image, there is trust in the brand and people are willing to pay more because they are assured, value for money.

### 8. Repeat purchase

This is also known as repurchase or replacement sale. Here the consumer purchases the same brand that replaces the previous purchase which has already been consumed. This is to say, satisfied clients keep coming back for more. They also influence others to join them by word of mouth. Having a good corporate image means that the brand is selling not by pure advertising but by meeting the needs of its consumers. This builds brand loyalty over a period of time. Consistency is therefore crucial for this cycle. That means maintaining quality and good customer service.

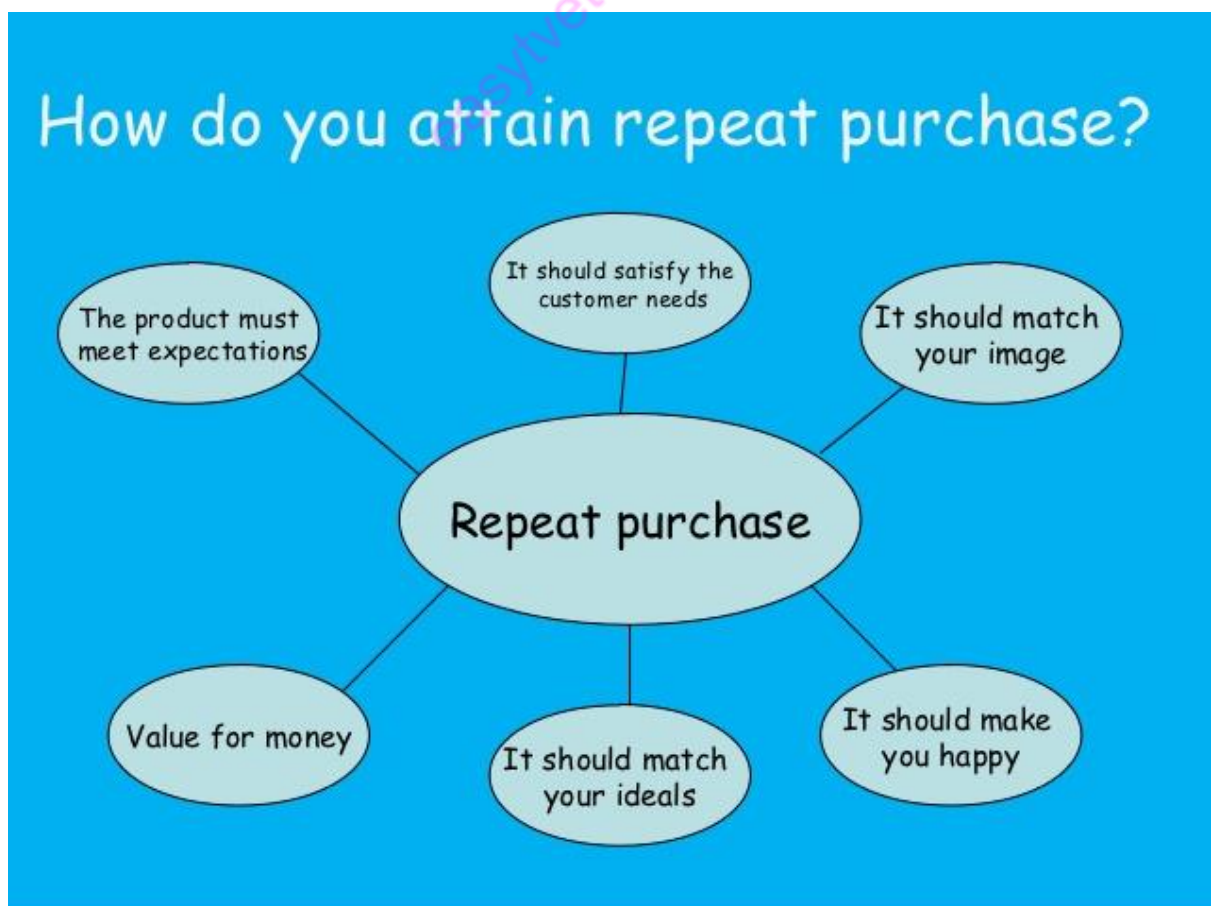


Figure 43: **Repeat purchase process**

### **9. Quality employees**

A company with a good corporate image attracts high quality employees. These are people who are self motivated, have good communication skills, team players, hard working, polite, disciplined, influencers, ethical and adopt easily to an environment. These in turn end up being strong assets to your marketing strategy and enhancing your brand image. Employees who love their jobs and believe in your business will not only display, wear and use your merchandise or services, they will also recommend you to their friends and families. Part of maintaining your corporate image is by treating employee's right, and they could be the foundation of your personal recommendations web.

### **10. Financial viability**

It refers to an organizations ability to generate sufficient income to meet operating payments, debt commitments and, where applicable, to allow growth while maintaining service levels. It also measures your business' ability to start, grow and survive. It factors in target markets, competition, sourcing and overall financial potential.

### **11. Public ranking**

This is the position or level tht your company has in list that compares its imporatnce, quality of service, value and general success. When people know you in a business sense, they tend to rank you in comparison to your competitors and other similar ranked businesses. A reputable firm with a strong corporate image alwys tends to emerge in the public limelight and public ranking arenas such as safaricom.

### **How To obtain feedback from Stakeholders**

Here we are looking at feedback that entails to all the efforts being made to build and maintain a positive corporate image. This is important as it is obtained in accordance to an organizations policy and procedure.

### **Steps that you can follow to obtaining feedback:**

## 1. Define your goal of expected Feedback

Standard goal for most organization is to get a clear and accurate picture of the things you are doing well, the things you can improve upon, and suggestions for taking the proper steps to get there. Good feedback will help you avoid repeating the same destructive patterns in the workplace that only hold you back instead of propelling you forward. Good feedback enables you to grow in management thereby harnessing what you do well, and providing a path to improve upon in the areas of weakness

Feedback with an open mind and a positive, accepting attitude. Remember, it is just as hard for many people to provide feedback as it is for you to receive it.

## 2. Identify the Right Feedback Givers

Not everyone can provide the specific kind of feedback you're looking for. When determining who can offer the best constructive criticism, think about the people who have the most interaction with your brand on a daily basis. Feedback with more perspective may result in a well-rounded point of view regarding your path forward.

As an organization, your feedback should come from employees, customers, community and media.

### **Employees**

These are people who interact with the brand internally and know the products/services being offered. They form part of the larger community that the organization is interacting with, therefore, they likely to give a good perspective of the organizations corporate image and useful feedback. However, you may need to approach them with the reassurance that you want to hear their honest opinion and that they will not be victimized. Choose employees of different positions and points of view to obtain well-rounded observations and views.

### **Customers**

Your customers provide a unique perspective of your work since they interact more with the final product or service and your role in delivering it. They are outside looking in on your company, which means they can provide a picture of how the customer base,

on the whole, views the face or your organization. How you represent your company image is just as important as the work you're performing every day internally.

### **Community**

This is considered a social unit that share a sense of place situated in a given geographical area such as a village, town or neighborhood. They share commonalities such as norms, religion, values, customs or even identity. These include other companies, banks, suppliers, local government authority etc.

### **Media**

These are the main means of mass communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data. It consists of broadcasting (TV, radio), publishing (Newspapers), cinema, photography, advertising and internet (Social media). From here you can get both positive or negative feedback. This feedback has proven to be effective to build and maintain a good corporate image.

### **3. Prepare Questions**

Keep your goals in mind as you think about what questions to ask. What specific questions do you need to ask to achieve your goals? If your goal is to improve relationships with customers/suppliers, ask questions that specifically pertain to the current working climate and interactions. Think about your specific goal, and fashion the questions that help you identify and formulate the answer. It may be that you want to see how you're doing on a whole. A range of open-ended questions will help you obtain the relevant responses that will aid evaluation.

Sample questions to formulate depending on the stakeholder you are targeting.

What do you like about our product/service and why?

What would you like to see changed?

What is your ideal version of this product?

In what way does this product/service live up to your expectations?

In what ways has it not met your expectations?

### **4. Ask for feedback in the Right way**



When the time comes to ask for feedback, you must be willing to accept the answers with an open mind. Perception is reality. If you become defensive or affected negatively by comments other professionals provide, you will be far less likely to receive honest responses in the future.

This doesn't mean you have to have a face to face with every person to hear what could be the ugly truth right then and there. Many people are more honest when they are not confronted directly with the situation. Feedback can be given in a variety of forms, as long as the understanding exists that you are asking for honest input to become a better service/product provider. You may need to reassure your stakeholders that you are ready to hear what they have to say without negative consequences.

### **How Should You Ask for Feedback?**

Direct face to face interaction is typically the most effective way of receiving feedback, however it may not work for everyone or in every environment. This is especially relevant if your team is spread out geographically or if you're asking for feedback from a variety of stakeholders such as client partners or customers, and whether your feedback is project/product specific or a more formal perspective on the work environment as a whole. Here are some popular means of soliciting feedback.

### **Online Communication Feedback**

This refers to how organizations or individuals communicate with each other through the internet. It happens via email, live chat, online forms, comments on websites, instant messaging, social media sites and forums.

### **Direct Files**

Here you have contributors annotate comments, suggestions, changes, recommendations, etc. directly into files such as Google Docs or Word documents so that you can receive immediate feedback on a particular project/process/product/service. Used effectively in office setups when you need particular changes in a document.

## **Email**

You can ask for professional or project related feedback by merely sending an email containing the appropriate questions.

### **Feedback Email template**

Requesting Feedback for X Product

Dear Esteemed Customer,

I'm passing this product to you for the purposes of soliciting your honest opinion and insight into it. The more information you can provide regarding your opinion of this product, the better we can continually improve on our processes in producing it.

At your convenience, please help us by answering the following questions:

(insert questions here)

To make this product exceptional, I will review your feedback soonest and follow up with the actions we took based on your recommendations.

Thank you.

### **Survey/Poll**

A great way to solicit feedback from a wide variety of people about a particular project, process, or service is by using tools such as Survey Monkey or Type Form These are global leaders in software survey. They are easy to use and feedback is immediate. It can also be called an opinion poll.

### **Live Chat**

This is an online customer service software with online chat, help desk software and web analytics capabilities. It was first launched in 2002 and is currently developed and offered in a SaaS (software as a service) business model by Live Chat software S.A.

Companies use Live Chat as a single point of contact to manage from one software all customer service and online sales activities that are normally provided using different channels (chat, Email, Messenger, WhatsApp, SMS, Apps and even websites.

### **Virtual Platforms/Social Channels**

You can use of the mainstream ones such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. You are assured to cover a larger scope of targeted stakeholders within a short time. Each of them has a feedback response mechanism that is easy to use.

## **Offline Feedback**

### **Physical Survey**

These are an effective way of getting a consensus from a group of people quickly, such as your employees/customers, particularly if you're managing a large team. It may provide the basis for topics you can explore further and improve upon in the future with your stakeholders.

### **Calls**

The best way to achieve the most comprehensive feedback from your stakeholders merely is by having a conversation with them. Ask them open-ended questions to allow them to expand on their answers. And, ask questions that elicit a balance of positive responses as well as potentially negative ones. In other words, ask them what you're doing well and what you're doing not so well.

People are more willing to open up about their concerns if they're given an opportunity to highlight what you're doing well. And you may be more open to receiving the criticism this way, too. Just remember to focus on what you can do better in the future instead of fixating on past behavior. You don't have to agree with what they're saying, as long as you accept it without reservation.

## **4. Make a Commitment and Follow Up**

Collecting feedback and doing nothing about is the biggest waste of time. Not all feedback you receive will be truly indicative of the quality of your performance, a particular project, process, service or product, but you will notice recurring themes across the different feedback processes that should serve as indicators of what specific things need to be improved upon in the future.

Act upon these things. Make the changes you need to in order to improve processes in the future with all stakeholders involved. And when you have made those changes, circle back with those who have contributed input, and tell them what you have done.

This will send them the message that you value their input, which will encourage them to continue contributing in honest and straightforward ways in the future.

## **Evaluating Corporate Image from analyzed Marketing Information System**

### **Introduction to MIS**

An MIS consists of people, equipment, and procedures to gather, sort, analyze, evaluate, and distribute needed, timely, and accurate information to marketing decision makers. The MIS begins and ends with marketing managers, but managers throughout the organization should be involved in the MIS.

First, MIS interacts with managers to assess their information needs. Next, it develops needed information from internal company records, marketing intelligence activities, and the marketing research process. Information analysts process information to make it more useful. Finally, the MIS distributes information to managers in the right form and the right time to help in marketing planning, implementation, and control.

#### **1. Assessing Information Needs.**

A good MIS balances information that managers would like to have against that which they really need and is feasible to obtain.

#### **2. Developing Information.**

Information needed by marketing managers can be obtained from internal company records, marketing intelligence, and marketing research. The information analysis system processes this information and presents it in a form that is useful to managers.

a. **Internal Records:** The information consists of information gathered from sources within the company to evaluate marketing performance and to detect marketing problems and opportunities.

**b. Marketing Intelligence:** It includes everyday information about developments in the marketing environment that help managers to prepare and adjust marketing plans and short run tactics. MI can come from internal sources and external sources.

- **Internal sources:** These include the company's executives, owners, and employees.
- **External sources:** These include competitors, government agencies, suppliers, trade magazines, newspapers, business magazines, trade association newsletters and meetings, and data bases available on the internet.

**c. Marketing Research:** It is a process that identifies and defines marketing opportunities and problems, monitors and evaluates marketing actions and performance, and communicates the findings and implication to management. MR is project oriented and has beginning and an ending. It feeds information into the marketing information that is ongoing.

## Steps in marketing research

### 1. Defining the problem and research objectives

There are three types of objectives for a marketing research project.

- a) **Exploratory.** To gather preliminary information that will help define the problem and suggest hypotheses.
- b) **Descriptive.** To describe the size and composition of the market.
- c) **Casual.** To test hypotheses about cause-effect relationships

### 2. Developing the research plan for collecting information

- a) **Determining specific information needs.** Research objectives must be translated into specific information needs. To meet a manager's information needs, researches can gather secondary data, primary data, or both. Secondary data consist of information already in existence somewhere, having been collected for another purpose. Primary data consist of information collected for the specific purpose at hand.

b) **Research Approaches.** Three basic approaches are observations, surveys, and experiments.

i) **Observational research.** Gathering of primary data by observing relevant people, action and situations.

ii) **Survey research** (structured and unstructured, direct/indirect). Best suited to gathering descriptive information.

iii) **Experimental research.** Best suited to gathering causal information.

c) **Contact methods.** Information can be collected by mail, telephone, or personal interview.

d) **Sampling plan.** MRs usually draw conclusions about large consumer groups by taking a sample. A sample is a segment of the population selected to represent the population as a whole.

e) **Research instruments.** In collecting primary data, marketing researchers have a choice of primary research instruments: the interview (structured and unstructured), mechanical devices, and structured models such as a test market. Structured interviews employ the use of questionnaire.

f) **Presenting the research plan.** At this stage the marketing researcher should summarize the plan in a written proposal.

### 3. Implementing the research plan

The researcher puts the marketing research plan into action by collecting, processing, and analyzing the information.

### 4. Interpreting and presenting findings.

The researcher must now interpret the findings, draw conclusions, and report them to management.

d. **Information Analysis.** Information gathered by the company's marketing intelligence and marketing research systems can often benefit from additional analysis. This analysis helps to answer the questions related to "what if" and "which is best."

### **III. Distributing Information.**

Marketing information has no value until managers use it to make better decisions. The information that is gathered must reach the appropriate marketing managers at the right time for evaluation purposes.

### **Evaluation Process**

The Corporate Image of a given company is evaluated in accordance with analyzed MIS. This can be done every time there is new analyzed information to ensure the brand is selling and remains relevant in the eyes of the relevant stakeholders.

#### **1. Analyze MIS Feedback**

You are required to measure effectiveness of the corporate image components adopted against the set goals and objectives. The information received from the MIS is precise and often points out the actual threats and weaknesses that need to be mitigated. It also points out the opportunities and strengths that can be strengthened to ensure longevity and posterity.



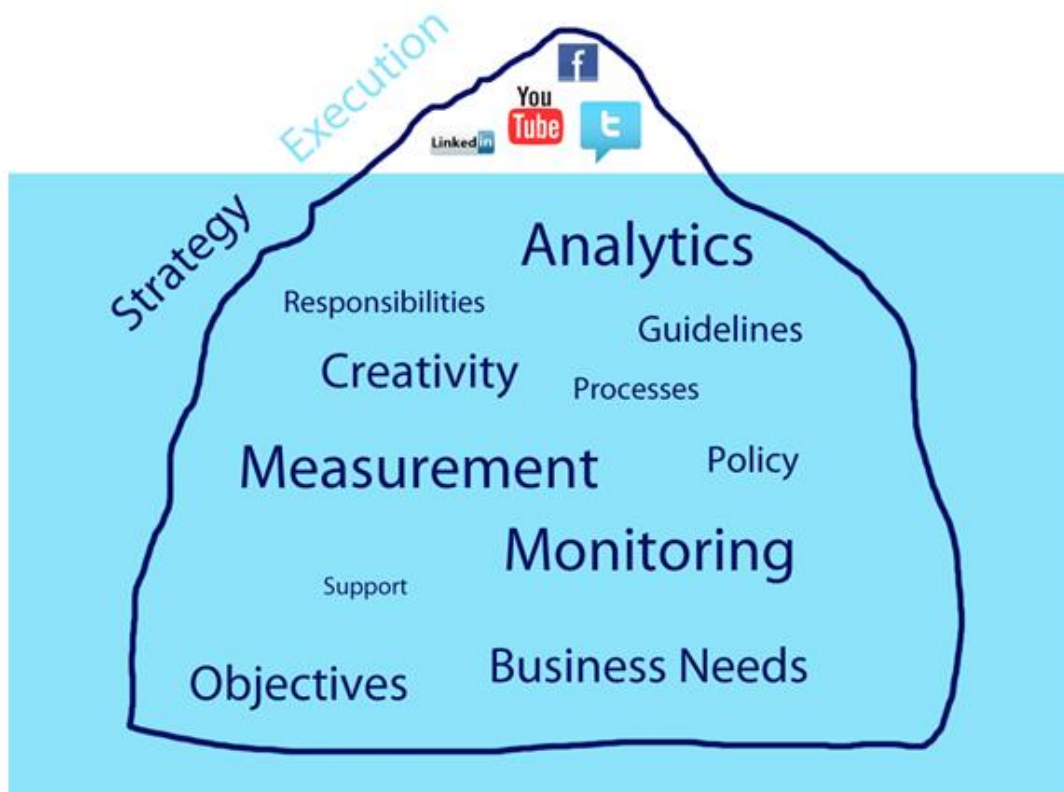


Figure 44: **What to look at when carrying out an analysis**

## **2. Identify ways to Improve**

In any given situation, there is always room for improvement. Identify them and make recommendations for the future.

## **3. Make Adjustments**

When you identify that there is need to make adjustments in the plan, materials or methods being used, do it at this point so as to have a continuous way forward to ensure set goals are being met at all times.

A strong corporate brand is crucial for the longevity of any company. Maintaining a positive corporate image is an ongoing process that must be handled with care because it can make and build a company or tear it down.

## **Undertaking Corrective Action**

Taking corrective action is crucial for sustainability of the company. It must be undertaken in accordance with the policy and procedures of the company. When feedback is received and key issues are raised action is expected to assure clients of company good will towards its stakeholders.

Taking corrective measures could mean you taking a protective approach from would be jealous competitors, angry customers, and those with an agenda to attack you. You have to be prepared with the following three sets of procedures.

### **1. The Rumor Procedure.**

If the people are saying things that are not true, you should employ the following three steps of the rumor procedure:

- (1) Don't publicize the rumor,
- (2) Promote the opposite of what the rumor says without mentioning the rumor, and
- (3) Provide undeniable and verifiable proof to support (2).

### **2. Fact Procedure.**

When it is true something wrong has been done by your organization, you should employ the following fact procedure

- (1) Admit and apologize,
- (2) Limit the scope (or put the mistake in perspective), and
- (3) Propose a solution so the mistake is unlikely to reoccur.

### **3. Turn negatives into positives.**

It is expected that on a transactional basis, misunderstandings and other negative situations will occur between you, your company, and your target audience. You need to do what you can to turn these into positives by:

- (1) Neutralizing the negative before it is blown out of proportion that does serious damage to your image and

(2) Developing a closer relationship with the person (or people) that feel “wronged” by your company

Taking corrective measures is crucial for sustainability of an organization thereby promoting longevity and posterity

### **Preparing and sharing corporate image report**

This is an important part for evaluation to take place in any given organization. Monthly reports are written to assess the current CSR activities being carried out and the impact they may have in building a positive corporate image to the public. Annual reports are also done to the stakeholders for accountability and transparency to the shareholders.

A Corporate Image report can be defined as a testimonial of what has been happening in the PR department in the pursuit of building a positive corporate image. It is purely based on observation and analysis and prepared and shared in accordance with procedures of any given organization. A report gives an explanation of any circumstance. In today’s corporate world, reports play a crucial role. They are a strong base for planning and control in an organization, i.e., corporate image reports give information which can be utilized by the management team in an organization for making plans and for solving complex issues concerning branding and cultivating a positive corporate image that has sustainability and longevity in mind.

This type of report discusses a particular problem, CSR activities being carried out, gives the outcome of the feedback analysis that has been done in detail. It brings significant and reliable information to the limelight of top management in an organization. Hence, on the basis of such information, the management can make strong decisions. This reports are required for judging the performances of the PR department in an organization.

### **An effective report can be written going through the following steps-**

1. Determine the objective of the report, i.e., identify the problem. That is what do you want to give information about. Let be clear and precise.

2. Collect the required material (facts) for the report. E.g. How many CSR activities have been carried out? What is the impact of such activities in the community?
3. Study and examine the facts gathered.
4. Plan the facts for the report.
5. Prepare an outline for the report, i.e., draft the report.
6. Edit the drafted report.
7. Distribute the draft report to the advisory team and ask for feedback and recommendations.

**The essentials of good/effective corporate image report are as follows-**

1. Know your objective, i.e., be focused.
2. Analyze your niche audience, i.e., make an analysis of the target audience (is it the departmental head, the CEO, the shareholders, the general public), the purpose for which audience requires the report, kind of data audience is looking for in the report, the implications of report reading, etc.
3. Decide the length of report.
4. Disclose correct and true information in a report.
5. Discuss all sides of the problem, challenge, impact reasonably and impartially. Include all relevant facts in a report.
6. Concentrate on the report structure and matter. Pre-decide the report writing style. Use vivid structure of sentences.
7. The report should be neatly presented and should be carefully documented.
8. Highlight and recap the main message in a report.
9. Encourage feedback on the report from the critics. The feedback, if negative, might be useful if properly supported with reasons by the critics. The report can be modified based on such feedback.
10. Use graphs, pie-charts, etc. to show the numerical data records over years.
11. Decide on the margins on a report. Ideally, the top and the side margins should be the same (minimum 1 inch broad), but the lower/bottom margins can be one and a half times as broad as others.
12. Attempt to generate reader's interest by making appropriate paragraphs, giving bold headings for each paragraph, using bullets wherever required, etc.

## **Corporate Image Monthly Reports**

These are prepared and shared in accordance to company procedures. The content of this report is predetermined. It is mainly for monthly analysis of the progress of the PR activities carried out in line with the set targets/objectives for purposes of evaluation. This helps to identify a challenge in good time so as to solve it and make improvements as you go along the way. This can be shared via email or presented physically in a meeting for interrogation purposes and feedback.

## **Annual Reports**

These are more detailed and prepared for purposes of presenting to shareholders. It mainly spells out all the PR activities carried out and its impact on the Corporate image branding in line with budget. It outlines the projects and its effects on the company and revenue collected in pursuit of building a positive corporate branch. This helps in budgeting for the next year especially if a higher budget expenditure is required to sustain the activities and builds a lasting impact on the stakeholders. These are shared as part of the Company Annual Report in accordance to your procedures.

## **Learning Activities**

**Field Visit to a nearby firm to study their MIS and how they use it to evaluate their corporate image.**

1. Write a written report of your findings and the same must be signed by the PR officer in charge
2. What evaluation process do they conduct in order to evaluate their corporate image?
3. How do they respond to the feedback they receive?

## **Practical Activities**

Create/develop an effective corporate image for your organization putting into consideration all the required steps.

## Case Study

Rosewall Hotel is facing a corporate image challenge after a child died during a swimming lesson that was being carried out in their pool.

- a. How do they get feedback from the stakeholders in consideration to this particular incident?
- b. How do they take corrective action to return a positive corporate image in the community they are operating in.

## Self-Assessment

1. How can you shape your corporate image?
- 2...Which are the tangible components of a corporate image?
3. Identify the right feedback givers in your organization?
4. Which are the online communication feedback channels?

## Tools, Equipment, Supplies & Materials

The following resources are provided:

- Computers
- Internet connectivity
- Printer
- Projector
- Camera
- Tablet
- Mobile Phone
- Classroom and classroom resources
- Stationery
- Sample logo designs

- Print media

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## Self-Assessment Responses

1. How can you shape your corporate image?

You can shape your corporate image by:

1. **Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with the general public. This effort usually begins by us offering products that successfully meet the needs of customers, thus generating goodwill. As consumers come to know and trust the product lines offered by the business, they begin to share their opinions with others. This positive word of mouth helps to introduce other consumers to the**



products offered by the business, and makes it easier to establish a favorable perception in the minds of more people.

**2. Becoming involved with the communities where our goods and services are sold.** This can involve anything from sponsoring a local sporting event to supporting some type of local charity. By choosing to be a part of the community, the business establishes a perception among consumers that the company is interested in the quality of life of everyone in the community, and not just attempting to turn a profit.

**3. Working with the media.** Journalists in both print and electronic media hold a great deal of influence with the general public. This means that businesses that want to be perceived in a positive light by consumers will want to cooperate with media professionals. Doing so helps to ensure that when new product lines are launched, or significant events happen in the life of the company, the media is much more likely to convey the news to consumers.

2. Which are the tangible components of a corporate image?

These are things that people can touch or see as follows:

### **Goods and Services**

These are the products that a company offers to its clients. Goods are items that are usually but not always tangible such as pens, fruits, machines et while services are activities offered by mainly professionals like cleaning, financial advice, treatment by a doctor, legal services by a lawyer etc.

### **Factories**

**This is an industrial site where goods are manufactured or assembled. It can a building or group of buidings.**

### **Communication media**

**This refers to different media that are employed for transmitting data from one computer terminal to the central computer or to other computer systems inside some kind of network.**

**The communication media acts as a channel for linking various computing devices so that they may interact with each other. Contemporary communication media facilitate communication and data exchange among a large number of individuals across long distances via email, teleconferencing, internet forums and many other forms of communication. This is print media, publishing, news media, photography, cinema, broadcasting and advertising.**

### **Name**

**This is the registered name of the business. It should be catchy and inline with the business being conducted. Other companies adopt trade names. This is when the business name is a pseudonym (fictitious name) used by the company but it is not the actual registered company name. Example Kenya Airways is commonly known as KQ. Kenya Electricity Generating Company operates under the name KENGEN.**

### **Logo**

**This is a graphic mark, emblem, symbol or stylized name used to identify a company, organization, product, or brand. It may take the form of an abstract or figurative design. It may present as a stylized version of the company's name if it has sufficient brand recognition. Logos have become an integral part of a company's brand identities.**

### **Packaging**

**This means the wrapping or bottling of products to make them safe from damages during transportation and storage. It keeps a product safe and marketable and**

helps to identify, describe and promote a product. It is an integral part in creating a company's corporate image.

### **Employees**

These are individuals who is hired by an employer to do a specific job. An employee is hired by an employer after application and an interviewing process resulting in his/her selection as an employee. These individuals exchange their skills, knowledge, experience, and contribution in exchange for compensation from their employer in form of salary and other agreed upon allowances and benefits. They are an important resource in a company because they are the tangible face of a company and act as effective brand ambassadors too. They have the ability to build a strong corporate image if they have been sold out to the vision of the company, have job satisfaction and are happy in the organization. Many organizations, train and equip them as a corporate image tool. They are provided with merchandise such as T-shirts, caps, umbrellas that promote the company brand in their respective communities. They also receive training to strengthen their brand knowledge in order to build a strong brand.

3. Why does an organization need the right feedback

### **Employees**

These are people who interact with the brand internally and know the products/services being offered. They form part of the larger community that the organization is interacting with, therefore, they likely to give a good perspective of the organizations corporate image and useful feedback. However, you may need to approach them with the reassurance that you want to hear their honest opinion and that they will not be victimized. Choose employees of different positions and points of view to obtain well-rounded observations and views.

### **Customers**

Your customers provide a unique perspective of your work since they interact more with the final product or service and your role in delivering it. They are outside looking in on your company, which means they can provide a picture of

how the customer base, on the whole, views the face or your organization. How you represent your company image is just as important as the work you're performing every day internally.

### **Community**

This is considered a social unit that share a sense of place situated in a given geographical are such as a village, town or neighborhood. They share commonalities such as norms, religion, values, customs or even identity. These include other companies, banks, suppliers, local government authority etc.

### **Media**

These are the main means of mass communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data. It consists of broadcasting (TV, radio), publishing (Newspapers), cinema, photography, advertising and internet (Social media). From here you can get both positive and negative feedback. This feedback has proven to be effective to build and maintain a good corporate image.

#### **4. Which are the online communication feedback channels**

Online communication feedback channels refer to how organizations or individuals communicate with each other through the internet. It happens via email, live chat, online forms, and comments on websites, instant messaging, social media sites and forums.

### **Direct Files**

Here you have contributors annotate comments, suggestions, changes, recommendations, etc. directly into files such as Google Docs or Word documents so that you can receive immediate feedback on a particular project/process/product/service. Used effectively in office setups when you need particular changes in a document.

### **Email**

You can ask for professional or project related feedback by merely sending an email containing the appropriate questions.

## **Survey/Poll**

**A great way to solicit feedback from a wide variety of people about a particular project, process, or service is by using tools such as Survey Monkey or Type Form. These are global leaders in software survey. They are easy to use and feedback is immediate. It can also be called an opinion poll.**

## **Live Chat**

**This is an online customer service software with online chat, help desk software and web analytics capabilities. It was first launched in 2002 and is currently developed and offered in a SaaS (software as a service) business model by Live Chat software S.A.**

**Companies use Live Chat as a single point of contact to manage from one software all customer service and online sales activities that are normally provided using different channels (chat, Email, Messenger, WhatsApp, SMS, Apps and even websites.**

## **Virtual Platforms/Social Channels**

**You can use of the mainstream ones such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. You are assured to cover a larger scope of targeted stakeholders within a short time. Each of them has a feedback response mechanism that is easy to use.**

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