FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

1ST SEMESTER 2021

Assignment 1

Media and Public Relations
MPR711S
Dear Student

Thank you for the effort and congratulations on completing assignment One (1). Your assignment required more research on your part with respect to either Namibian or global examples. Thank you for typing your assignment, this is commendable in terms of professional report writing in business.

I highly recommend you at this level to also provide more practical examples to substantiate a concept or idea you would be explaining. I have attached a template or example of something that could assist, you are not restricted to this, and you are allowed to open your mind wider;

**Question 1 (30 marks)**
Using Namibian examples and experience, differentiate the following:

a) Journalists and PR professionals (10 marks)
b) Advertising and public relations (10 marks)
c) Marketing and public relations (10 marks)

(a) **Journalists vs Public Relations**

Public Relations (PR) professionals target specific audiences in order to communicate a message about a brand and gain support for that brand. Whereas journalists do not necessarily target a specific audience but rather a wider audience in order to relay a message to as many people as possible.

A journalist tries to convey as much information about something so that the audience can make their own conclusion whereas the PR professionals try to persuade the audience to think or feel a certain way about the information that they are relaying. In other words PR professionals are advocates for whatever they are trying to communicate whereas journalists are observers.

Another key difference between PR professionals and journalists is that PR professionals use a number of different channels, whilst the later only uses one channel. In addition,
journalists use only two components, namely writing and media relations, whereas PR professionals use a number of different components. It is for this reason that the budget surrounding activities for PR professionals is higher than that for journalists.

PR pieces often occur in the editorial sections of newspapers etc and they try to create a positive spin on information. One does not always have control over what journalists write on the other side. Often times journalists are prone to do negative reporting in a bid to “sell more papers”.

For example during the mounting of the National Youth Games held last year, journalists highlighted the results of the competition as well as the negative experiences athletes encountered during the competition (e.g. meagre meals and the lack of sufficient accommodation). This year MTC and the Namibia Sports Commission had a media briefing that served two purposes. Firstly, to regain the publics opinion about the hosts by apologising to the athletes and secondly to create awareness about this year’s edition of the competition.

(b) Advertising & public relations
Many people often think that public relations and advertising are one and the same, but they are not. PR is concerned about promoting brand awareness through written content on various channels (e.g. websites, blogs, TV, newspapers and magazines). They therefore do not write material for journalists and neither do they buy ads. Instead they uphold a reputation for creating a positive image about a brand. Whereas, advertising creates paid material that is communicated though print, digital and online platforms. Advertising is normally very expensive and require innovative thinkers who “think out of the box” in order to come up with their advertising campaigns.

Advertising sells products and services through mass media outlets. PR however, relies on a number of different communications channels in order to create a conducive environment for an organization's survival. Additionally, advertising is a communications function and tool in PR, whereas PR acts as a support. PR is multifaceted and broader in
scope than advertising. It targets every specific audiences, whereas advertising targets external audiences.

An example of advertising in sport is when Pepsi launched a campaign to reveal their drink as a soda of choice during the UEFA Champions league using well known athletes like Messi. An example of a PR campaign would be how Barcelona communicates to its fans through a media release that Barcelona is the home of football giants like Messi. The advertisers pay creatives and athletes to make the campaign and then also pay the broadcasters to air the Pepsi ad. Barcelona’s PR campaign is purely based on communicating the positive brand that Barcelona is in the eyes of the public so that a bigger fan base is built.

(c) Marketing & Public Relations
Marketing is equally different for public relations. Marketing looks at the process involved boosting an entity’s image in the public. How a brand is perceived (and eventually used) by consumers has a lot to do with the marketing strategy that is executed by an organisation. Marketing strategies are formed around the four P’s of the marketing mix (i.e. product, price, place and promotion). Therefore, marketing is concerned with selling products and services and the customers to whom these products and services are sold to. PR on the other hand is concerned with building solid relationships with its stakeholders. Moreover, PR professionals work directly with specialised audiences, public and stakeholders, whereas, marketing works with customers/consumers and an identified target market.

An example of PR is when Special Olympics used the saying NO! to the “R-Word” campaign. This campaign aimed at pledging support against saying the r-word (retard) at athletes (and people in general) who have intellectual disabilities. An example of marketing is the Adidas “Dare to Create” campaign that boosts the image of the new brand of running shoes.
Question 2 (30 marks)

Citizens and scholars have never agreed on the importance of the public relations department in the government towards the society or community. The community argues that the government’s public relations are there to simply further the interest of the government and/or get votes at the expense of the community. As a public relations practitioner - you have a different but positive view about the public relations department in the government; therefore, describe the role of a government’s public relations department and/or efforts.

Question 2:

In order to understand what the role of government’s public relations (PR) departments are it will be useful to ask the four “W’s and H” questions namely, what do PR professionals do; who do they do it for, why do they do, when do they do it; and how often is PR done. This will also help to alleviate any negative perceptions that the public has regarding PR.

What is PR’s role and what do PR professionals do:

The role of public relations (PR) is to communicate important government information, policy and strategy to its stakeholders (namely the civil society). In addition, government departments use PR to communicate the nation’s strategy in times of a crisis. A good example of this in Namibia is how the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology collaborated with the Ministry of Health to host daily updates on the number of COVID-19 infections as well as providing guidance on what measures the nation should be taking in order to curb the number of infections. In addition, the government used the promotional opportunity to dispel the myths surrounding COVID-19.

PR is also used to overcome any negative perceptions or resistance to change that civil society may have. For example when the Namibian government, under Dr Hage Geingob, decided that Namibia will no longer observe daylight saving time there was naturally a lot of resistance to change. The government then had to mobilize support and engage the business community to help inform the public of the benefits of not switching back an hour
during winter. Speeches were written for the President and interviews were held in order to inform the public about the economic importance of not changing the time. Students were found to have been negatively affected by this change, but the government encouraged that other solutions can be implemented (such as schools starting a little later during the day).

In addition, PR is paramount during the times of a catastrophe, when information of unfavourable issues have to be communicated. A government department that recently had to deal with this was the Ministry of Fisheries, where over 5000 applications were received for new rights holders for fishing quotas. Many people thought that by applying they would automatically receive quotas. However, this was not the case and it took nearly four years for government and its agencies to allocate those rights. The Ministry had a duty to report back to its citizenry and they were committed to do so even though the process was deemed to take so long. The Fishrot scandal that accompanied the process brought adverse publicity to the Ministry. However, government took an active stance to inform the public about the issues surrounding the allocation in order to remove any misunderstandings. In addition, the Anti-Corruption Commission together with the law enforcement took measures with the accused in order to regain the public confidence and trust.

Contrary to common belief, government is there for the benefit of the nation not only during election time. PR professionals are therefore skilled report to the citizenry in order to increase the government’s sensitivity to its publics.

**Who government does it for:**

Government is there to serve its citizens. Therefore, they see the public as an integral part of the process. Government officials are placed in positions of power to serve the people who have elected them in power. The strategies are therefore communicated with the nations thereby ensuring transparency. An example of this is the PR campaign surrounding the Harambee Prosperity Fund and the National Development goals as well as the funding that is demarcated for various entities, inclusive of the sport budget.
Government is proud to put people in positions who have the interests of the citizens at heart. A good example of this is Job Amupanda who played a key role with the Affirmative Repositioning group, and who is now Mayor of the city of Windhoek. Amupanda’s passion for the people is seen in how he is addressing housing needs and fighting corruption at the top echelons of society. The Minister of Sport, Youth and National Services, Hon. Agnes Tjongarero is another good example of government putting people in positions who have a wealth of experience in that industry.

**Why government does PR?:**
Simply put government does PR for the benefit of the people. In so doing it facilitates creative problem solving and builds relationships with the public. Goodwill through honest and transparent communication is the motivation for government’s PR function.

**When is PR done?:**
Government is adamant about doing regular PR campaigns. The current COVID-19 campaign is done on a daily basis, other campaigns occur weekly (i.e. police updates) and others where policy is involved can by monthly or quarterly. It is important to do regular PR activities in order to address any issues the public has and to remain transparent in its process. The government believes in a two way communication in order to build relations. (E.g. President interacted with public and answered their weekly questions in a programme known as Talk of the Nation on NBC National radio.

**How does government do it?:**
Government uses various platforms to communicate. For example they make use of media releases, media conferences (or during the times of Covid-19 we also make use of virtual media conferences), TV, and various social media (but main emphasis at the moment on Facebook and Twitter). The parastatals NBC (radio, online & TV) and New Era newspaper are effective channels government uses. PR officials in various government departments draft media releases and prepare facts sheets that can be used for distribution to various media outlets. PR professionals are
known to draft speeches and arrange public speaking engagements for government officials. This is paramount in ensuring that the masses (who are a key stakeholder for government) remain informed. Local authorities play a critical role in stakeholder engagement. PR is streamlined through one main central Ministry i.e. Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MICT). The Namibian government is proud to say that it adapts with the times and has therefore put in power the youngest parliamentarian to date, Hon. Emma Teophilus, who is the deputy minister of MICT. However, each government sector also has its own PR strategies. An illustration of this is the Namibian Police Force that makes use of its anti-poaching campaign to create awareness of the dangers of poaching.

Some more pointers to the role of PR in the government
1. Implementation of public policy.
2. Assisting the news media in coverage of government activities.
3. Reporting the citizenry on agency activities.
4. Increasing the internal cohesion of the agency.
5. Increasing the agency’s sensitive to its public’s.
6. Mobilization of support for the agency itself.