UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC THESIS

PUBLIC RELATIONS THEORY AND PROCESSES

ASSIGNMENT: CASE STUDY

Topic 2:

Read the case study entitled "Breaking in an Employer"
(Center and Jackson 2002) and respond
to the case appropriately

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the organisation's vision to become the market leader in providing mobile catering services, Kitchen On Wheels is seeking to establish better communication between the organisation and its publics. Formative research has been conducted to analyse the company's strengths and weaknesses, and from the findings, a public relations (PR) programme is being proposed with the objectives to achieve media publicity for the organisation and to deploy tactics that will help the internal publics perform better. Tactics proposed include establishing communication channels, deploying the two-way model of communication, generating news for media coverage, engineering change in publics' perception and developing relationships with the media, community, unions and employees.

The timeframe targeted to achieve the goals of the programme for internal publics is one year, and for external publics, within three years. Assessment of the programme effectiveness will be evaluated based on the management by objectives (MBO) model.

VISION AND MISSION

The guiding statements for our organisation are as follows:

Our Vision

To be the market leader in providing mobile catering services

Our Mission

- We listen and improve our products and services to meet our customers' needs.

- Our success depends upon high-performing people working together in a safe and healthy workplace.

- We support the communities where we do business and hold ourselves in high regard of ethical conduct and environmental responsibility.

BACKGROUND

Kitchens On Wheels, Inc. is a growing catering service that is now in its fifteenth year of business. The organisation is currently looking into building better communication with its publics so as to motivate higher performance from its employees, gain publicity from the media, and build a corporate image as contributing to the community.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Using information derived from a formative research of the organisation, our analysis shows the following findings:

Strengths and Opportunities

There are areas in the organisation following standard of good practices, and these standards can be turned into opportunities. Appended is a list of the organisation's strengths and opportunities:

Workplace and Facilities

- *Transportation*. Possession of 40 shiny trucks with specially fitted kitchens.

- *Work Area*. Adequate facilities for cooking, sorting, packaging, and loading.

- *Mechanisation*. Appropriate equipment to facilitate work operations.

- *Hygiene*. White outfits and gloves for employees handling food.

People

- *Employees*. High level of participation in following a system of quality and uniformity. Examples include the conformity to hygiene standards, uniforms for drivers and handle service at kitchen stops.

- *Political Contact*. An in-house contact who deals with politicians.

Organisation

- *Company Identity*. A slogan identifying the company's services to its publics.

Weaknesses and Threats

Various weaknesses are found in the organisation that may pose as threats. The areas include:

Communication

- *One-way Asymmetric*. The organisation communicates to its publics using asymmetric model, where messages are disseminated or publicised one-way from the organisation to its publics.

- *Internal Information*. Corporate information and work instructions for internal publics are unavailable.

Training

- *Employees*. Employees are not trained to handle publics or convey a professional image of the organisation.

- *Political Contact*. In-house political contact is not trained to achieve strategic goals when communicating with politicians.

Organisation

- *Corporate Structure*. Centralisation of decision-making results in operational processes slowdown that creates bottlenecks and workload for top management. Food sampling and decisions on what utensils, apparatus, menu lists to use need not be made at the top.

- *Company Identity*. The slogan, "We Bring Your Lunch Pail", may be improved.

Media Relations

Content analysis of past media coverage on the organisation reveals the following:

- Media coverage has been few, with content lacking interesting or significant news about the organisation because of its lack of community involvement and development of media relations.

- No news story has been written about the success of the organisation because of insufficient information provided to the media on the organisation's story and the background of the founder.

- Communication with the media has been one way, from the organisation to the media, rather than two-way interaction.

Community Relations

The organisation's presence in the community has been weak due to its reluctance to interact with community committees.

Unions

Relationships with labour unions have seen some negativity, which can post a threat to the organisation's image and invite unpopular news coverage.

STRATEGY AND PLANNING

From the findings of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), a proposal consisting of two projects for a public relations (PR) programme is submitted to you for approval. The first is a short-range plan targeted at internal publics and the second is a long-range plan targeted at external publics.

PROJECT ONE: INTERNAL PUBLICS

Aimed to address internal issues and prepare the organisation for the second project in its wider exposure to the external publics, project one is crafted for a short-range plan to be accomplished within a year.

Background / Problems

The background and problems identified for the internal publics are found in the *Situation Analysis* section above. For the purpose of this proposal, we will only focus on the following areas:

Communication

- *One-way Asymmetric*. The need for a two-way communication between the organisation and its employees
- *Internal Information*. The need for corporate information and work instructions.

Training

- *Employees*. The need for training in handling publics, situations, crisis, and how to convey a professional image of the organisation.

Organisation

- *Company Identity*. The need to develop and improve company identity in association with corporate image.

Objectives

- Establish a two-way communication channel between the organisation and its internal publics (within 6-12 months).

- Provide tools for communicating with employees to maximise performance (within 6 months).

- Provide training and instructions on work procedures, situational and crisis handling, and how to portray a good image of the organisation (within 6-9 months).

Publics

The target audience for Project One is the *internal publics*. The *internal publics* include the management, employees, drivers and kitchen helps.

Management

Support and participation of the management is essential to the success of a PR programme. To produce optimum results for a PR programme, the PR role must operate within the decision-making dominant coalition of the organisation.

Employees

Employees play an important role in the organisation by doing their part well in the areas of their work scope. Employees are not usually hostile and are expected to conform to rules of the company.

Drivers and Kitchen Help

As the first people representing the organisation to its external publics,

drivers and kitchen help are willing to be trained to provide better service to

the customers.

Strategies

This section describes the strategic aims of the programme for Project One.

Main Message

Our success depends upon high-performing people working together in a

safe and healthy workplace.

Purpose

The strategic objectives are to achieve the following:

- Provide awareness of organisation's vision and mission to employees.

- Motivate employees to perform better.

- Inculcate good work practices.

Tactics

Based on the strategic objectives for Project One, the following tactics are

proposed for implementation:

Communication

- *Newsletters*. To inform internal publics of company's vision, aspiration,

  activities and contribution to external publics.

- *Notice Boards*. Post information on new policies, new appointments, in-house activities, awards, contests and notices.

- *Communication Sessions*. Organise informal interactive communication sessions for management to meet employees and update on company's progress.

- *Suggestion / Feedback Box*. Provide a channel for employees to feedback to management or suggest innovative ideas where reciprocal reward may demonstrate appreciation.

- *Instruction Manuals*. Documentation of organisation's operational procedures and practices for employees' reference.

Training

- *Audio / Visual*. Work with outsourced professional educational bodies to provide customised training materials for employees produced on video. Content should include situational handling and crisis management, such as how to handle transportation accidents, dissatisfied customers, delivery delays and others.

Organisation

- *Corporate Advertising*. Work with advertising agency to develop a corporate image and advertise on television with visual references to create company's identity. For example, the use of a company's shiny truck with its uniformed driver to inform publics of a new slogan.

Implementation and Scheduling

The schedules for implementing activities using the tactics proposed above may be organised according to the Gantt chart as shown in *Appendix A*.

Evaluation

There are various techniques that can be used to measure intangible returns like behavioural changes and productivity output. These include qualitative, informal and evaluative research.

Qualitative Research

- *Interviews*. Conduct interviews with selected employees using exploratory questions to determine any change in behaviour or perception before and after the implementation of programme.

Informal Research

- *Communication audits*. Analyse and assess existing channels of communication and audit regularly to see if message is reaching and achieving desired effect.

Evaluative Research

Conduct regular audits to review success, shortcomings and goals of the programme.

Budget

An estimate of the costing for Project One may be budgeted as shown in *Appendix B*.

PROJECT TWO: EXTERNAL PUBLICS

Aimed at providing the organisation with exposure to its external publics, project two is crafted for a longer-range plan to be accomplished in three years.

Background / Problems

The background and problems identified for the external publics are found in the *Situation Analysis* section above. For the purpose of this proposal, we will only focus on the following areas:

Media Relations

- Lack of news coverage on the organisation.

- One-way communication from organisation to media.

Community Relations

- Organisation's weak presence in the community.

- Reluctant interaction with community committees.

Unions

- Negative relations with labour unions.

- Unions' influence on media coverage.

Objectives

- Develop media relations to gain positive publicity on organisation (within 9-12 months, then regularly).

- Promote positive opinions of the organisation in its contribution to the community and its publics (within 12-18 months).

- Build mutually beneficial relationships with unions (within 18 months, then regularly).

Publics

The target audience for Project Two is the *external publics*. Although *external publics* include investors, government and customers, this proposal will only focus on media, community and unions.

Media

Building and maintaining relationships with the media and its gatekeepers require mutual respect and trust. Usually inquisitive and investigative in nature, proper handling is required in communicating with them if a positive publicity is expected.

Community

People living within the vicinity of the organisation's physical location expect consideration and consultation from them, or face corporate suicide if they express their unhappiness through the media or through government bodies. The community publics may be hostile or friendly. Diplomacy in handling is required.

Unions

Mutual relationships with labour unions are quintessential to handling employees' dispute, should occasions such as strikes arise. As an activist group, unions possesses considerable influence in the media, hence, a good rapport with them is essential. Conflict management is to be expected in handling unions.

Strategies

This section describes the strategic aims of the programme for Project Two.

Main Message

We support the communities where we do business and hold ourselves in high regard of ethical conduct and environmental responsibility.

Purpose

The strategic objectives are to achieve the following:

- Build relationships with the media to gain positive publicity.
- Engineer publics' perception of the organisation as contributing to the community.
- Build mutually beneficial relationships with unions.

Tactics

Based on the strategic objectives for Project Two, the following tactics are proposed for implementation:

Media

- *Media Releases*. Send information about the company's achievements, upcoming events and activities, its contribution to the community, and anything else that may be newsworthy.

- *News Creation*. Create news that will interest the media. These include community contribution announcements, events' sponsorship, business achievements, publicity stunts and others.

- *In-house Tour*. Invite the media and politicians to a guided tour of the company's premises to view the operational processes of mobile meals provision to the mass publics, demonstrating the professionalism in food handling, hygiene practices, transportation methods and any other areas that display the organisation's strengths.

- *Events Sponsorship / Participation*. Sponsor and participate in events of prominence to gain media coverage. Examples are participation in annual food fair events, sponsorship of food or money for sports tournaments, governmental forums and conferences.

- *Press Parties*. Organise press parties to interact with the media people and politicians during festive occasions or after a new product or service launch.

Community

- *Opinion Questionnaires*. Send questionnaires to residents in the vicinity of the company to ask for opinions about food recipes, creative ideas, and feedback of environmental practices. In return for each completed questionnaire, send a token gift. This gesture serves to impress the

community that their feedback is valued and taken into consideration by the organisation.

- *Community Events and Sponsorship*. Organise mini events to build relationships with the community, where food is sponsored by the organisation. An example may be a children-oriented programme, where families in the community can also participate. The company may also sponsor food or money for community committee events and meetings, and have someone representing the organisation attend as proxy.

- *Ethics and Environment*. One of the best ways for the organisation to be seen as contributing to the community is to perform some form of humanitarian work, such as the contribution of daily excess consumable and preservable food to charitable bodies and disposal of food waste from vicinity to ensure no pollution of air and maintenance of hygiene.

Unions

Meet with the unions to discuss mutual beneficial arrangements.

Implementation and Scheduling

The schedules for implementing activities using the tactics proposed above may be organised according to the Gantt chart as shown in *Appendix C*.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the PR programme will be based on the measurement of results against established objectives set during the planning process, following the management by objectives (MBO) model.

Management by objectives (MBO)

Techniques used by the MBO model for evaluative research include:

- *Statistics on Distribution*. Media output, including media releases, media interviews, speeches and presentations are tallied to provide a quantitative value.

- *Media Monitoring*. Establishing the extent of media coverage, with emphasis on reach and frequency.

- *Media Content Analysis*. Content, quality and quantity of media messages.

- *Audience Analysis*. Demographics and characteristics of the audience to whom messages have been communicated.

- *Response Rate*. Identifying a system to quantify and record target audience response to messages.

- *Attitude and Image Studies*. Analysis conducted on external publics to measure changes in attitude or image perception after programme.

- *Communication Audits*. Surveying publics to allow analysis of channels and content of communication carried out during the programme.

- *Analysis of Complaints*. Complaints are recorded and analysed.

- *Surveys*. Surveys to gauge negative or positive change in target public after exposure to the programme.

Budget

An estimate of the costing for Project Two may be budgeted as shown in *Appendix D*.

CONCLUSION

With the application of the strategies and tactics proposed above, the

organisation should see within a year, changes that will strengthen the

company's opportunities. Weaknesses and threats will be minimised to

provide greater measures for control and monitoring through foresight and

proactive planning.

APPENDICES

- **APPENDIX A:** *Gantt Chart (Short-Term Plan)*

  ❑ Project One: Internal Publics

  ❑ Category: Implementation and Scheduling

- **APPENDIX B:** *Budget (Short-Term Plan)*

  ❑ Project One: Internal Publics

  ❑ Category: Estimated Costing

- **APPENDIX C:** *Gantt Chart (Long-Term Plan)*

  ❑ Project Two: External Publics

  ❑ Category: Implementation and Scheduling

- **APPENDIX D:** *Budget (Long-Term Plan)*

  ❑ Project Two: External Publics
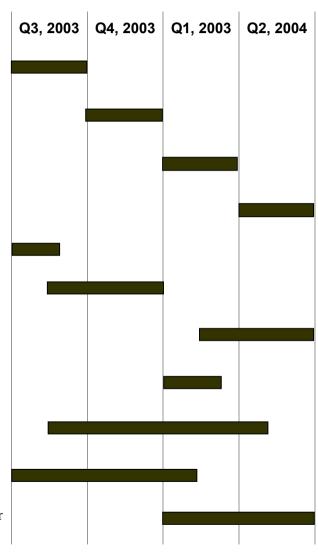
  ❑ Category: Estimated Costing

PROJECT 1: Internal Publics   Short-Range Plan (1 Year)

ACTIVITIES	Q3, 2003	Q4, 2003	Q1, 2003	Q2, 2004
• *Newsletter* (Sep 2003): preparing, sourcing content, editing, design layout, printing	▬			
• *Newsletter* (Dec 2003): preparing, sourcing content, editing, design layout, printing		▬		
• *Newsletter* (Mar 2004): preparing, sourcing content, editing, design layout, printing			▬	
• *Newsletter* (Jun 2004): preparing, sourcing content, editing, design layout, printing				▬
• *Notice Board*: find prominent place, purchase board, hang, provide content	▬			
• *Communication Session 1 (Company-wide)*: internal food catering arrangements, hotel bookings, event liasoning, facilities		▬		
• *Communication Session 2 (Company-wide)*: internal food catering and hotel bookings standing orders, event liasoning, facilities			▬	
• *Suggestion / Feedback box*: find prominent place, place box, seek corporate sponsorship			▬	
• *Instruction Manuals*: work with respective department supervisors to come out with operational manuals		▬	▬	
• *Training Audio Visuals*: work with outsource educational providers on customising instructional videos and training materials	▬	▬		
• *Corporate Advertising*: work out new corporate slogan and liaise with agencies for TV media advertising			▬	

PROJECT 1: Internal Publics   **Short-Range Plan (1 Year)**

Budgetry Costing

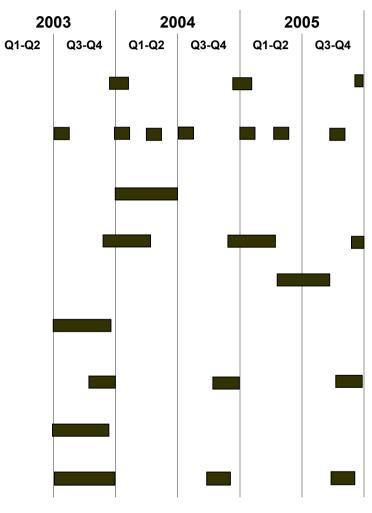|	**2003**
• *Newsletters (Quarterly)*:	$2,500.00
- content, editorials, writers, contributions, material, design layout, production, manpower	
• *Notice Board*:	$100.00
- board, material, accessories	
• *Communication Sessions (Bi-Yearly)*:	$2,550.00
- function rooms, audio/visual equipment rental, refreshments, staff transportation	
• *Instruction Manuals*:	$1,850.00
- manpower, system analysis, effort, research, documentation	
• *Training Audio Visuals*:	$4,500.00
- outsource consultation fee, content customisation, training material	
• *Corporate Advertising*:	$10,000.00
- TV advertising fee, consultation, media bookings, airtime and scheduling	
• *Evaluative research*:	$3,500.00
- time, resources, manpower, analysis and assessment	
TOTAL:	**$25,000.00**

PROJECT 2: External Publics

Long-Range Plan (3 Years)

ACTIVITIES

- *Annual Report*: gathering facts and financial statements, editing, layout, printing

- *Media Releases:* Kitchen On Wheels success story (Q3, 03), annual report (Q1, 04/05), in-house tour (Q3, 04), Food Festival (Q2, 04/05), press parties (Q3, 05) - writing, editing, printing

- *In-house Tour*: organising, preparing, contact liaisoning, inviting, food catering

- *Events Participation and Sponsorship*: Food Festival (Apr); Sponsorship (ad hoc); preparing, coordinating, publicity

- *Press Parties*: food catering, hotel bookings, event liasoning, facilities

- *Community Questionnaires*: design questions, produce forms, distribute, disseminate gifts, analyse and study feedback, report to management

- *Community Events and Sponsorship*: Family Event (Dec); Sponsorship (ad hoc); preparing, coordinating, publicity

- *Ethics and Environment*: food transportation, external disposal service arrangements, media publicity

- *Unions*: arrangement for meetings, planning, strategies, discussions, agreement, follow-up action plans, activities

Activity	2003 Q1-Q2	2003 Q3-Q4	2004 Q1-Q2	2004 Q3-Q4	2005 Q1-Q2	2005 Q3-Q4
Annual Report			■		■	■
Media Releases	■	■	■ ■	■	■ ■	■
In-house Tour			■			
Events Participation and Sponsorship		■		■		■
Press Parties					■	
Community Questionnaires	■					
Community Events and Sponsorship		■		■		■
Ethics and Environment	■					
Unions	■			■		■

PROJECT 2: External Publics   **Long-Range Plan (1 Year)**

Budgetry Costing

	2003	2004	2005
• *Annual Report*:	$1,200.00	$1,200.00	$1,200.00
- editorial, material, production, manpower			
• *Media Releases*:	$300.00	$300.00	$300.00
- writing, editing, printing, material, time			
• *In-house Tour*:		$3,000.00	
- inviting, liasing, coordinating, food catering			
• *Events Participation*:		$10,000.00	$10,000.00
- exhibitions, conferences, booth design and setup, materials, promotions			
• *Events Sponsorship*:	$3,000.00	$8,000.00	$8,000.00
- promotions, presence, expenses, donations			
• *Press Parties*:			$2,800.00
- hotel, facilities, food, drinks, organising, coordinating, contact liaising			

PROJECT 2: External Publics   **Long-Range Plan (1 Year)**

Budgetry Costing

	2003	2004	2005
• *Community Questionnaires*:	$350.00		
- material, questions design, dissemination, collation, evaluating responses			
• *Community Events*:	$1,250.00	$1,250.00	$1,250.00
- organising, staging, event area bookings, food catering, gifts, prizes			
• *Community Sponsorship*:	$1,000.00	$1,000.00	$1,000.00
- money donated to sponsor community events, participation			
• *Ethics and Environment*:			
- transportation of food to charitable bodies	$500.00	$500.00	$500.00
- paid outsource service for food waste disposal	$700.00	$700.00	$700.00
• *Evaluation / Assessments*:			
- manpower, analysis and study, follow-up improvement plans	$3,000.00	$3,000.00	$3,000.00
TOTAL:	**$11,300.00**	**$28,950.00**	**$28,750.00**

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