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School of Business and Economics
2013/2014 Academic Year
Busia Learning Centre
Fourth Year Second Semester Main Examinations
ABA 431: PUBLIC RELATIONS

Instructions to Candidates: Answer question 1 and any other two questions.

1. Kenya's Efforts to Recover from a Crisis

From 1998 to date, terrorism attacks, threats of further attacks and travel advisories against Kenya have caused an unforeseen and abrupt decline in the country's tourism arrivals. The 1998 simultaneous bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, put Kenya on the map as a target for terrorism. In 2002, terrorists struck again, this time bombing a beach-front hotel at Kikambala, north of Mombasa and recently the Westgate siege. In both incidents, Kenyan citizens suffered loss of life and property although the attacks were targeting foreign interests and nationals.

The American and British governments issued travel advisories warning their citizens against travel to Kenya, and other European countries followed with similar warnings. At the same time, the British department of transport advised British airlines to suspend from time to time all flights to and from Kenya, a decision that has received a lot of media coverage in the US and Europe. Historically, the British are regarded as experts on Kenya and their actions immediately send a worldwide message that Kenya is indeed not safe; as a result, tourists from other markets have cancelled flights and hotel bookings.

The travel warnings and flight suspensions have disastrous effects on the country's tourism. The tour operators have reported massive loss in revenue due to flight cancellations and evacuation of tourists already booked in their hotel. At the coast, many hotels have been forced to close or radically reduce services, resulting in the laying off of thousands of local staff. Also affected are the independent local restaurants and residents who rely on tourism for their livelihood. Suppliers of goods and services to tourists are severely hit.

Official government figures estimated the loss due to the ban and the travel warnings as exceeding US\$1 million per week. A report by Raitt Orr & Associates, a London-based public relations firm for the Kenyan Government, estimated the loss at about 2 per cent of the country's gross domestic product in 2003. In an attempt to lobby for a review of the flight ban, the Kenyan government has presented the report to the British government. While acknowledging that travellers have the right to be informed, some Kenyans think that the advisories are hurting, while other officials believe the warnings to be extremely subjective. 'I think it is about perception. When I went to London a few years ago I was worried about safety – same in the New York subway,' said Mr Raphael Tuju, Kenya's former acting tourism minister. 'There is no cause for alarm. Kenya is still a safe destination to visit. All our systems are on high alert and ready to respond to any threat, real or imagined.'

Meanwhile, the industry is turning to domestic tourists. Beach resorts in Mombasa are wooing conference tourists to fill their empty rooms. Conferences now provide about 80 per cent of bookings along the coast. However, hoteliers are unhappy as, unlike overseas tourists, conference-goers do not want to lie on the beach or spend money on leisure. Other than being a 'survival kit for hotels', the 'new customers' provide less added value. With little hope of full recovery, most investors are forced to cut costs to break even. As a result, the necessary hotel refurbishment programmes, needed to maintain facilities at internationally acceptable standards, are not implemented in many of the resorts.

As the crisis deepens, the Kenya Tourist Board has taken proactive steps to market the destination and maintain presence in the American market. The organization, together with five major US tour operators (African Travel, Big Five, Classic Escapes, Micato and Somak Safaris), has hosted a group of 160 top American travel agents in a familiarization trip, the first of its kind for Kenya. The trip is geared to help educate travel agents about travelling to the country.

1. a. Based on the case study above, prepare a detailed report on the recovery efforts to turn around the negative tourist perception. (10 marks)
b. discuss five measures the Kenyan government can take to protect the local tour operators. (10 marks)
2. As a Public relations manager of Busia County government, prepare a report to your governor discussing the public relations techniques you will utilize in crisis management. (10 marks).
b. Discuss the successes of the county in relation to development projects. (10 marks).
3. Explain the open systems model of public relations. (20 marks)
4. a. Discuss the roles of Public Relations department in your organization (10 marks).
b. Explain the different parts of the public relations function in your organization. (10 marks).
5. As a public relations manager, discuss the four-step process you will utilize in solving problems in your organizations. (20 marks)
6. Organizational communication demands particular leadership qualities. In light of this statement, discuss the qualities of leadership key to effective organizational communication. (20 marks)