

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION PAPER JULY 2009

TITLE OF PAPER : MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
DEGREE AND YEAR : B. COM. V & IDE - LEVEL 7
TIME ALLOWED : THREE (3) HOURS
COURSE CODE : BA 524
INSTRUCTIONS: 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF QUESTIONS IN THIS PAPER
(6)
2. SECTION A IS COMPULSORY. ANSWER ANY
THREE QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B
3. THE MARKS TO BE AWARDED FOR EACH
QUESTION ARE AS INDICATED ALONGSIDE THE
QUESTION

NOTE: MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION IN
ENGLISH AND FOR ORDERLY AND NEAT PRESENTATION OF
WORK. FURTHER MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR THE USE OF
RELEVANT EXAMPLES

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: NONE

THIS PAPER SHOULD NOT BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION TO DO SO HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

SECTION A: CASE STUDY

MEDIA MANAGEMENT OF THE 7TH JULY LONDON BOMBINGS

Source: Egan, J. (2007), Marketing Communications, Thomson, United Kingdom, pp. 264-5

On the 7th July 2005, at 08.50, three simultaneous explosions on the London Underground, were followed by a further explosion just under an hour later on the Number 30 London bus in Tavistock Square. A total of 52 people were killed in what transpired to be one of the most devastating terrorist attacks the capital had witnessed. Within 10 minutes of the first explosions, it was clear that this was an incident of international importance and one that would lead to news headlines around the world during the days that followed. By 11.00 that day, over 250 requests for media interviews had been received by the TfL (Transport for London) press office, who by the end of the day, had received around 2000 phone calls. Hits on the press centre Web site rose from the daily average of 402, to a staggering 56,652 on the following day.

The TfL press team were in charge of crisis communication. Having undertaken crisis exercises in London, UK and overseas, the team were well trained for such an eventuality. However, prior to the bomb attacks the press team had been heavily involved in Live8 and the 2012 Olympic bid, which London won the day before the bombings. In the space of 24 hours, the team had to switch from managing a celebratory national story, to managing an unprecedented crisis. Five crisis communication objectives were established on the day of the incident:

- to inform the public to allow them to make travel decisions
- to support operational staff by reducing the impact of media activity
- to show that TfL, the emergency services, the GLA (Greater London Authority) and government were co-ordinated in their response
- to reinforce Transport for London's key message that passenger and staff safety is the top priority
- to minimise the long-term impact on passenger confidence.

In order to achieve these objectives the press team had to ensure that fast, accurate information was provided to the media, and that the media demand for access, was balanced with operational requirements. It was also imperative that co-ordination was maintained with Mayoral, emergency service and government teams, as well as across TfL itself. The press team also had to ensure that they would be in a position to sustain a professional operation over an unspecified period of time, in demanding circumstances.

After a quick risk assessment, and within 20 minutes of the initial explosions, six press officers were sent, in pairs, to Liverpool Street, Russell Square and Edgware Road tube stations to tackle questions from the media. In order to shorten lines of communication a press officer joined the NCC (Network Control Centre) to act as an information bridge. At 10.30, the first London resilience communications conference call took place.

The initial messages placed the emphasis on operational information and practical advice for travellers. The fast pace of events involved the evacuation of the entire tube network followed by the withdrawal of the London bus fleet and the suspension of the congestion charge. Buses were subsequently re-introduced within a matter of hours and the following day communication focussed on the restoration of a full bus service and around 85% of the tube network by the morning 'rush hour.'

Over the days that followed, the press office assisted in the management of three police press conferences, two Mayoral press conferences, two Mayoral visits to stations and two royal visits. It also organised a multi-language briefing for the foreign press association and managed over 270 media broadcast and print interviews. Furthermore, it assisted operational staff by assigning press or British Transport Police officers to stations with large numbers of media, and maintained round-the-clock staffing during this period. Communication aimed to cover three key aspects:

- Security: this included urgent reminders not to leave bags.
- Recovery: it was important for the organisation, their passengers and London as a whole that normal services resumed as quickly as possible.
- Professionalism: close liaison with staff, senior management and counsellors ensured that the demand from the media was managed without exposing staff to further trauma.

As a result of the prompt actions taken and the well-considered strategy underlying those actions, recovery was relatively quick, and passenger levels were soon back to normal. The crisis management strategy had not only dealt immediately with the priorities on the day itself, it had looked ahead to the challenges TfL would face in the days and weeks that followed.

The handling of the media communication during the crisis earned the in-house team at TfL a high level of critical acclaim from within the public relations industry. It was one of the two top media relations case studies presented at the 2006 PRWeek 'PR and the Media Conference' and won the award for 'Crisis Communications' at the CIPR Excellence Awards 2006.

QUESTIONS

- a) Use the TfL case to discuss reactive marketing public relations **(10 marks)**
- b) Based on your understanding of the principles of public relations, what lessons have you learned from the TfL's handling of the crisis? **(10 marks)**
- c) In the role of TfL press officer, how would you respond to the journalist who asks the question: 'Is it now safe to travel on London's buses and tube?' Explain your answer **(5 marks)**
- d) From your understanding of marketing public relations, evaluate TfL's crisis communications strategy **(10 marks)**
- e) Use this case to discuss the early warning signs of a crisis about to happen **(5 marks)**

SECTION B: ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS FROM THIS SECTION

QUESTION TWO

- a) Discuss the main benefits of brand equity from the firm's perspective **(5 marks)**
- b) Using a diagram, explain the concept of vaguely right and precisely wrong **(5 marks)**
- c) With examples, explain the ways of distributing free samples. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION THREE

- a) Use existing brands to discuss the ten characteristics of world-class brands. **(10 marks)**
- b) In relation to your discussion in (a), discuss further the brands' conformity to the main requirements for a good brand name. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

Some people have argued that word-of-mouth is a more influential method of communication than formal media. Discuss this view with reference to what you have learned about creating buzz. **(20 marks)**

QUESTION FIVE

- a) Use actual advertisements to discuss the various creative advertising strategies used by companies **(15 marks)**
- b) Discuss the characteristics of a creative advertisement. **(5 marks)**

QUESTION SIX

The Faculty of Commerce at the University of Swaziland is anticipating a marketing communications campaign to increase student enrollments. The campaign planners have identified high school students as the main target market. Using your knowledge of Integrated Marketing Communications, prepare a campaign plan to be used by the Faculty to encourage high school students to enroll at the Faculty. **(20 marks)**