

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MAIN EXAMINATION PAPER

DECEMBER 2015

TITLE OF PAPER : PUBLIC RELATIONS 1

COURSE CODE : BA 518 / IDE

TIME ALLOWED : THREE (3) HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS :**
- (1) TOTAL NUMBER OF QUESTIONS IN THIS PAPER IS SIX (6)**
 - (2) THE PAPER CONSISTS OF SECTIONS A AND B.**
 - (3) ANSWER THE QUESTION IN SECTION A WHICH IS COMPULSORY AND ANY THREE (3) QUESTIONS IN SECTION B.**
 - (4) THE MARKS ALLOTTED FOR A QUESTION /PART OF A QUESTION ARE INDICATED AT THE END OF EACH QUESTION / PART OF QUESTION.**
 - (5) WHERE APPLICABLE, ALL WORKINGS / CALCULATIONS MUST BE CLEARLY SHOWN.**

NOTE: MAXIMUM MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR GOOD QUALITY LAYOUT, ACCURACY, AND PRESENTATION OF WORK.

THIS PAPER MUST NOT BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

SECTION A: COMPULSORY**QUESTION 1 Read the case and answer the questions that follow:****CASE: The Pick 'n Pay Group**

The Pick 'n Pay Group is one of Africa's largest and most consistently successful retailers of food, clothing and general merchandise. It is one of the most recognizable brands in the country, and, as events showed, one of the most trusted. On their website (www.picnpay.co.za) they list their corporate values as: *'we are passionate about our customers and will fight for their rights; we care for and respect each other; we foster personal growth and opportunity; we nurture leadership and vision, and reward innovation; we live by honesty and integrity; we support and participate in our communities; we take individual responsibility; we are all accountable.'*

In 2003 this commitment to customers and the honesty and integrity of the company in communicating with stakeholders was tested. Pick 'n Pay became the target of a blackmailer who threatened to poison food items on their shelves and in this way harm or kill customers. Their response after receiving the extortion note was that Sean Summer, the CEO of Pick 'n Pay, immediately contacted the police and the media to inform the customers of this threat. Food items that were identified were removed from shelves countrywide, customers who complained of symptoms of poisoning were treated and a forensic investigation was launched. By means of regular bulletins in the media, sometimes in the form of double-page advertising space bought in national Sunday media at great cost to the company, Sean Summers personally kept customers updated with the investigation and further threats received. Each of these communications emphasized Pick 'n Pay's commitment to the safety of their customers and indicated added safety precautions taken in stores. Notices were also displayed in-store and managers and employees were updated daily.

Although nobody was ever arrested for the attempted extortion, the threats decreased and disappeared after a time. It was proved that none of the food items indicated in the notes was in fact contaminated and the customers who showed symptoms of poisoning were also not diagnosed as suffering from food poisoning. The company's excellent previous reputation ensured that customers did not abandon them. Many people indicated that they continued buying non-food items from them until the threat had passed and then returned to Pick 'n Pay for all their grocery items.

Questions:

- a) Explain the corporate values of the Pick 'n Pay Group and how they were effectively applied in this particular case [15 marks]

- b) What prevented customers from abandoning the shop after the incident [5 marks]
- c) In handling **customers' complaints**, as public relations practitioner, you need to put yourself in their shoes and find solutions as quickly as possible. Explain the **guidelines** you would follow in order to do this successfully. [20 marks]

[Total marks 40]

SECTION B

Answer any **three (3)** questions from this section.

QUESTION 2

Public relations today has developed beyond its traditional role of a press agency. However, public relations is still fairly young compared to other management disciplines and is still evolving and improving. Discuss the five trends that have contributed greatly to the increased use of public relations. [20 marks]

QUESTION 3

- a). Public opinion affects most businesses and public relations practitioners have to establish and maintain relationship with their various publics. Explain how public relations practitioners can measure all dimensions of public opinion [10 marks]
- b). Issues management ensures that organizations are able to preserve their markets, reduce risk, create opportunities and manage their image. Discuss the seven elements encompassed by issues management [10 marks]

QUESTION 4

Proactive marketing public relations (MPR) plays a major role in product introductions or product revisions as well as integration with other marketing communications tools, gives a product additional exposure, newsworthiness and credibility. Discuss the tools that are used in gaining proactive MPR [20 marks]

QUESTION 5

The greatest test of public relations practitioners is the ability to manage in crises. Discuss the warning signs that appear when the crises strikes. **[20 marks]**

QUESTION 6

Using appropriate examples, outline how you would manage the flow of a public relations campaign plan. **[20 marks]**