

## The contribution of the broadcast media in Reputation Repair in Kenyan Healthcare Corporates

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The overall effect of crises is damage to corporate reputation. Reputations are widely recognized as valuable, intangible asset. Reputation being a valuable asset to an organization, when crises occur, there is need for reputation repair. One of the most important stakeholders in reputation repair is the media. The broadcast media can be used to build or restore an organization's reputation as well it can destroy the reputation of an organization. However, many healthcare corporates have continued to ignore the important contributions that the media plays towards reputation repair. This study thus fills a research gap on how the broadcast media can be used in reputation repair in Kenyan healthcare corporates. The major objective to this study was to establish the impact of the broadcast media coverage in reputation management in Kenyan healthcare corporates. The study used a descriptive survey design which enabled the researcher to get a quantitative and a qualitative insight into the opinions and attitudes of the respondents in different environments that could easily be compared. The population included PRO's of healthcare corporates, Media practitioners, employees from different healthcare corporates and consumers of healthcare services. The researcher used stratified sampling to select 10 healthcare corporates and thereafter selected 10 PRO's; 30 employees of the corporates were selected*

*through systematic sampling; 150 consumers of healthcare services were selected through multi-stage sampling while 10 broadcast media practitioners were selected through random sampling giving a study population of 200. The data collected was then analysed by the use of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) package 17.0 and presented in tables, frequencies, pie charts and graphs. The study established that strategies used in reputation repair are usually effective when the media highlights them in their coverage. The study therefore concluded that broadcast media coverage indeed has an impact in reputation repair.*

## **Introduction**

Organizations across the globe today are faced with a host of issues which may cripple their functionality and render the organizations obsolete (Genasi, C. 2002). According to Benoit, W. L (2005), the biggest threat to organizations' performance is crisis and reputation is at peril during any crisis. Risk to reputation becomes greater as the public becomes less tolerant of organizations that do not conform to societal and environmental principles.

Factors both within and outside the organization environment would continue to ruin organizational reputation. In studying the contribution of the broadcast media in reputation repair in Kenyan Healthcare corporate, organizations would be able to comprehend the need for quick and consistent communication to maintain credibility in the eye of the public.

The organization involved in a crisis is already at a disadvantage for being in a crisis. Reputation repair in partnership with the media would therefore derive from "the need for skilled communicators to strategically defend and explain the organization's position in the face of crisis-induced criticism, threat, and uncertainty" (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).

## **Main objective**

To establish the impact of the broadcast media coverage in reputation management in Kenyan healthcare corporates.

## **Literature review**

Doorley, J., Garcia, H.F. (2007), define corporate reputation as the end result of interaction between company communications and its constituents' responses to those communications. Ashcroft, L.S. (1997), defines the concept similarly as a mixture of the company's communication and behaviour and the expectations of its constituents

Corporate reputation is one of the main concerns of corporate communication and critical in any relationship with constituents (Doorley, J., Garcia, H.F. 2007). According to Argenti (2002), corporate reputation is extremely valuable for companies as a source of competitive advantage, and because a negative corporate reputation can mean considerable losses in the long run. Regardless of its strong ties with the corporate communications function, Argenti, (2002) postulates that corporate reputation is not solely the concern of the communications department.

Reputation repair is used if your business has gotten a bad reputation for any reason (Ulmer, et al, 2007). The convergence of globalization, instantaneous news and online citizen journalism magnifies any corporate wrongdoing or misstep. Barely a day goes by without some company facing new assaults on its reputation. Reputation repair is the long and arduous path to rebuilding equity in a company's good name. Research has found it takes approximately 3.5 years to fully recover reputation. James C. C. , (2008) says it takes a company seven years to go from good to great. The path is clearly long. The reason reputation repair has risen in importance is that the "stumble rate" among companies has risen exponentially over the past five years. In fact, 79% of the world's most admired companies have lost their number one positions in industries in that time period. Companies which were once heralded as invincible no longer are.

It is completely possible to manage your reputation successfully in the face of crises. One of the most important stakeholders in reputation management is the media. The media can be used to build the reputation of an organization when faced with crises (Ulmer, et al 2007).

According to Brown, B. (2007), it is important to understand Reputation Management as the response to reputation damaging information. Bad postings, negative feedback in blogs, horrible testimonials in popular forums, unrealistic scam allegations in different Medias, and

product reviews from false users can potentially put a company out of business and its Reputation Management.

The most common contribution of the media in reputation repair is to act as an information resource. Secondly, the media assists in the response efforts. This means that the media act as part of the first 'responder team' during a reputation crisis. Thirdly, the media contribute by providing initial instructing information to minimize damages. In addition, the media contribute by acting as public advocates. Journalists have long carried the reputation of being the watchdogs for citizens, monitoring government and corporate giants for power abuse. (Ulmer et al. 2007).

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Introduction***

This section discusses the methodology which was adopted by the study so as to ensure that the objectives are achieved. It outlines how the study was carried out. The chapter presents the research site, research design, the population, sampling design and the sample size, data collection methods and ethical considerations.

### ***Research Design***

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A survey gives a quantitative and a qualitative insight into the opinions and attitudes of the respondents in different environments that can easily be compared (Orodho, 2002). This design is also appropriate for the study since it enabled the researcher to secure factual and detailed information from all or selected number of respondents on the various aspects of the phenomenon that already exist, namely the contributions of the broadcast media.

### ***Study Population***

The study population of this study strictly included: The consumers of the healthcare services, the Public Relations Officers, The Management at different health care corporate, Media Professionals and Practitioners and the staff at different health care corporate. The above persons were chosen because they are the key persons in an organization, who deals with reputation repair directly and would be knowledgeable enough to help in information gathering. The consumers of the healthcare services were chosen because they were helpful in

determining the impact of the media and because their perception of the healthcare corporate is what makes up a corporate reputation.

### *Sampling and sample size*

It is not possible to interview all corporate in Kenya today; therefore, only Kenyan healthcare corporate that have had crisis in the last two years were selected. The researcher used stratified sampling to categories the healthcare corporate into strata of public healthcare corporate and private health care corporate. Afterwards the researcher randomly selected 5 corporate from each strata giving a total of 10 corporate. From the 10 corporate, 10 PRO's and 30 staff members were studied. The consumers of the health care services were also selected through stratified sampling. The population was stratified into 30 estates in Nairobi where 5 respondents per estate was randomly selected, giving a total of 150 respondents. The study also includes 10 respondents from the media. The sample size is thus 200 respondents.

### *Data Collection Procedures and Methods*

Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews and piloting.

### *Data Analysis and Presentation*

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were used. This is because the researcher used close and open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Quantitative data derived from the instruments was analysed using descriptive statistical method. The quantitative data was analysed by use of the SPSS package 17.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and presented in tables, frequencies, pie charts and even graphs. The qualitative data obtained was analysed by organizing the information in forms of percentages, and tables. Interpretations, conclusions and recommendations were then made.

**Research Findings**

	<b>Positively</b> (%)	<b>Negatively</b> (%)	<b>Neither</b> (%)
Employees response	66.7	26.7	6.6
PRO response	50.0	40.0	10.0
Media response	80.0	20.0	0.0

The table shows employees response on how broadcast media coverage affect healthcare corporate: twenty (66.7%) positively, eight (26.7%) negatively and two (6.6%) neither. PRO responses were: five (50.0%) positively, four (40.0%) negatively and one (10.0%) neither. Media responses were: eight (80.0%) positively and two (20%) negatively. From this finding, thirty three (66.0%) agreed that indeed broadcast media coverage had a positive effect on a corporate. They gave explanations that through advertisements, coverage of corporate events, objective reporting, coverage of successes and highlighting of their corporate positively led to the positive effect of media coverage. Fifteen (30%) said that coverage had a negative effect on a corporate and gave explanations that the media put emphasis on the negative side of a crisis and that it relied on rumours and speculations. The two (4%) that saw no effect can be attributed to ignorance.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

***The impact of the broadcast media coverage in reputation management in Kenyan healthcare corporates.***

It was concluded that partnerships with the media during crisis leads to positive coverage and vice versa. The findings also indicated that negative coverage mostly led to reduction in sales and profits (87.5%). One of the most important stakeholders in reputation repair is the media. (Simpson, R., & Cote, W. 2006) This is because what people perceive is highly influenced by what they see in the media. The findings of An Analysis of the National Salmonella Outbreak in 1998 in the United States by Hyehyun Hong of University of Missouri suggest that the media play a supporting role in reputation repair. Prominent crisis communication researchers

like Gotsi M. & Wilson, A.M. 2001, have also suggested that practitioners should work with the media when repairing their reputation (Ulmer et al 2007). In conclusion, media coverage has an impact in reputation repair.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the conclusions made from the research findings, the researcher came up with some recommendations for the purpose of improvements. Being a read of information, healthcare providers should be enlightened on the importance of the media. This is because means of communication such as newspapers, television and radio are more often not taken seriously. Scientific research from concerned communication practitioners based on this phenomenon 'media contribution in reputation repair' should be given priority and their views taken into consideration to enhance mutual agreement. In addition, as the corporate move towards forging relationships with the media, the ministry of health shall not be an exception. Therefore healthcare corporate need to be adaptable to change as the Ministry looks for better ways to implement policies towards linking corporate to the media.

The ministry of Health should ensure that managerial skill for the healthcare corporate are instilled to enhance cordial relationships at work and to ensure that the PRO/CCO's perform their roles accordingly.

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