CASE #7

Preamble:

Many media reports that are of public interest focus on external crisis are that face organisations. These crises are normally linked to corruptions, fraud or disasters incidents. The organisation in this case, Kenya Airways, has amassed both negative and positive publicity in relation to the two air crashes that happened in 2000 and 2007. It can be said that, albeit these atrocities, Kenya Airways has continued to grow as the’ pride of Africa airline’ with global visibility. This has been smooth sailing until the striking cabin crew!
This case examines the impasse that existed and still seems a source of strife between the organisation and its entrenched staff. The discontent staffs have relentlessly fought for their rights through courts and union action. Putting Kenya Airways in bad light in the eyes of the public.

The Case Study: The Star- KQ to spend Sh800 million on staff redundancy costs

**theSTAR**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2012 - 00:00 -- BY LOLA OKULO
GO-SLOW: A section of Kenya Airways cabin crew during one of the recent strikes. (http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-3238/kq-spend-sh800-million-staff-redundancy-costs)
KENYA Airways will spend Sh800 million to compensate employees affected by the on-going lay off, chief executive Titus Naikuni said yesterday. He said though the payment is likely to affect the airline’s half-year results, the long term benefits are overriding. Naikuni said the airline would outsource some of its services previously handled by the laid off staff.

He said that most of the 578 staff sacked employees were from departments such as baggage handling targeted for outsourcing as part of cost cutting. The airline which is undergoing expansion said most of those retrenched were not from main operation departments like cabin crew but mostly loaders.

With a leaner staff, he said the airline expects to save Sh1 billion annually. “The industry is going through turmoil and you find that other airlines like Delta, Air France and Qantas have also made similar moves. It is not just KQ it is a worldwide phenomenon affecting the entire industry,” said Naikuni at a media briefing.

Out of the 578 staff sacked, only 126 opted to voluntarily retire forcing the company to pick others on performance and production criteria to meet its target of job cuts. Only one foreigner, the firm said, was declared redundant, though there were few others who left voluntarily.

Prior to the retrenchment, KQ had 4,800 employees according to the group HR director Alban Mwendar. The airline on Tuesday and Wednesday issued termination letters to select staff most of whom said they were shocked by their sacking. Some
accused the airline of picking them on grounds of pregnancy and active participation in the union matters.

The Aviation and Allied Workers Union on Wednesday said the airline had targeted its officials and active members. However Naikuni has denied trying to weaken the union. "An employee whether or not is a union official, is still an employee first. We still recognize them (AAWU) and we still want to work with them," said Naikuni yesterday.

The airline which is undergoing expansion said most of those retrenched were not from main operation departments like cabin crew but mostly loaders. Analysts interviewed by Reuters said that, while the restructuring would dent Kenya Airways profitability in the short-term, it was expected to rebound on reduced operational costs.

"They will have a one-off expense which could potentially mean a substantial reduction in profits or (could lead to) a loss," said Eric Musau, an analyst at Standard Investment Bank "We assume the benefits will come later in a much more substantial manner."
EXPERT VIEW

Koki Robi-
Communication Consultant and Lecturer at the
United States International University

Like any other globally renowned organisation, Kenya Airways, intended to embrace a cost-cutting mechanism in the name of outsourcing jobs what may be considered as non-essential or non-core to cut down on overhead costs of the organisation.

In this case, the CEO explains that the organisation currently prefers to spend a hefty sum to compensate laid-off employees mainly from cabin crew loaders in anticipation of long term benefits. A leaner staff will save the organisation one billion annually. This retrenchment exercise however turned into a crisis in the name of a prolonged strike. Unlike two previous major crises; the airline crashes in West Africa; this crisis is internally bred and has spiralled out of context through negative reporting in the media.

The public is made privy of some staff who retired voluntarily while the rest, on a, what is perceived unjust or unfair performance/production criteria. And this is the nemesis of the crisis!!

Many of the staff who were laid off complained about the fact that only one foreigner in that category was declared redundant. This raised the issue of racial discrimination in favour of foreigners over the local staff. The gender question also comes to play where many say they were victimized for
being pregnant, others in the group were considered active union members. But of most concern was that many were shocked that they were relieved of duty!

Just as in most airlines, the face of these organisations is its cabin-crew. They epitomize the activities that deal with sensitive customer touch points. In fact, given that in modern times, customers, for lack of what is unique and rare, buy the customer experience. It is the crucial that the engagement or disengagement of cabin-crew. How they are handled whether at engagement or exit of the organisation should be in any airline, be handled with utmost care.

The operation department of Kenya Airways also, being the point of visibility and contact to the customer is hinged on institutional memory that has guided the behaviour of employees, commitment to the corporate core values and management of staff. Culture in any circumstance can be defined as the controlling mechanism that defines the right behaviour for enhanced productivity and profitability in the organisation.

Unlike the past where cultural mechanism supports the objectives of top management in organisation, in this global era the monolithic culture of an organisation is challenged by countercultures at the workplace. These countercultures are due to human resource with diverse viewpoint, diverse generational cohort viewpoints, work ethics, values and beliefs systems.
The workforce to today is more knowledgeable, ‘human rights bound’ and assertive. The workforce today is more knowledgeable, rights bound and assertive. Because of this, traditional organisations that thrived on pyramid designs that fostered rigid bureaucracy need to change to become lattice organisation that foster lateral collaboration through participative work place demographic differentiation increased productivity, innovation and workplace democracy.

Siebold & Shea (2001) - offer fine types of participatory programs that are benevolent and keep the employee engaged with the activities of the organisation. These types meet higher order needs of employees to keep them satisfied, motivated and productive. They include:

1. Involvement in quality circles by allowing their input on identifying, discussing on solving organisational problems. Not only is knowledge shared by employees teaching more about the organisation and its policies.

2. Quality of work life programs indicates that you are concerned about the well-being of the employees. Quality Circles as a fore mentioned and gain sharing plans where employees are enlisted in taskforces, consult, collaborate in problem-solving whether in management or ordinary staff.

3. Gain - Gain sharing plans entrenches employees’ involvement by adapting financial systems that manifest financial gains or rewards for them. This can be informing of bonuses, shares, facilitation of loans and pay for extra tasks that improve productivity and encourage innovation within the organisation

4. The encouragement of self-directed works teams that
facilitate for collective responsibility towards ensuring improved quality, increased productivity and decreased operating costs

5. Employers stock ownership plans as part of belonging and an extension of benevolence to employers. Workplace benefit plans inclusive of adequate housing, medical, education or even club members are another of these plans to keep employees’ content. An organisation that is involved in employee ownership encourages empowerment of staff through training, education support and other teaching experiential activities which entrenches psychological ownership.

Koki Robi

CASE #9:

WEKA CONDOM MPANGONI

"Help! I Am Married But Starved"

Posted by OP on Mar 25th, 2013 // 11 Comments
In Share

A major public debate erupted over the “Weka Condom Mpangoni” advert, a safe sex campaign by NACC (National Aids Control Council) that was deemed to endorse infidelity. I am actually surprised that an advert that pretty much stated that it was okay to sleep around as long as one used a condom, lasted this long. From my own analysis, the ad had run for a good month before the moral police could say, “What the hell?” This
advert was a sequel of the original ‘Wacha mpango wa kando’ series that featured a patronizing Jimmy Gathu, admonishing unfaithful married persons whilst tabulating the hidden costs of infidelity. The ad was criticized as being unrealistic and it was parodied quite a bit. Promoting safe sex in Kenya is always going to be a challenge because in all matters to do with sex, denial is the society’s default position.

The “Weka condom Mpangoni” (roughly translates to, include a condom in your extra marital affairs) message highlights the vulnerability of married couples to HIV & AIDS. A recent report from NACC revealed that married couples are so vulnerable; the risk is three times that of prostitutes. Unlike single persons who are more accustomed to condom usage, frustrated married partners are most likely to skip the inconvenience of sourcing rubbers out of habit and fear of social scorn.

The advert is progressive in many ways because the target is married women. The previous limitation of the safe sex campaigns was the assumption that women are always in a position to negotiate condom use. Unfortunately, prevailing stereotypes do not make it that easy for a married woman to stash condoms and oddly many women still believe availing condoms is the man’s job. Therefore, presenting a scenario where average market women discuss condom use says loudly that it is okay to place your sexual health before your social reputation. Condoms are now part and parcel of a healthy sex life, a fact that married couples engaging in high risk sexual behaviour and in serious need of prophylactic cover remain in denial about.
Since abstinence and fidelity are a universal challenge, we might as well address the big fat elephant in the room. Why does sex seem to be happening everywhere but in the matrimonial bed? People cheat because the grass always looks greener across the fence and it becomes more apparent after marriage. In the same way, one notices sleeker cars on the road as soon as they acquire a new model. That shouldn’t be an issue. Attraction to other people is normal even in a happy marriage. Sexual frustrations in long term relationships are the norm rather than the exception. What this society needs is to get over the notion that one single person will fulfill all our sexual and emotional needs. It will save us so much heartache. The human instincts and the expectations of modern living are not compatible. Typically sexual desires will always be at conflict with what’s considered acceptable behaviour. But if this lambasted ad tells us one thing, it is that more and more women are out there playing the field with no apologies to make and men are the game. Therefore, the onus is on the attached husband to start to place some initiative in his sexual performance and begin to pay more attention to his woman’s sexual and emotional needs. Female sexual repression is no longer a virtue in these liberal times and society is unable to police female desire. The reality is that what women want these days, they tend to get and they do not require a man’s permission.
EXPERT VIEW

Koki Robi-
Communication Consultant and Lecturer at the United States International University

It took a month of exposure on broadcast media and the clergy to keep the ‘Weka Condom Mpangoni’ advert off air. It was intimated that the safe sex advertisement encouraged extramarital infidelity propagated by women! It was against this backdrop that religious and ‘African’ cultural aspersions were evoked to condemn the Pandora’s Box creating unpalatable social dialogue on ‘sex’: not just sex - but safe sex decisions made by women who are married!! Just the thought of a woman in an extra-marital relationship is considered socially incorrect!

Yet in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS must continue and communication designed for all stakeholders involved, be embraced. With these numbers significantly abode in the marriage institution increasing, both the men and women need to be target audiences of the message on the media. This is so that, the change of A habit that propel the increase numbers of Persons Living with Aids (PLAs) is catalysed.

Health Communication in Kenya has tended, over the years, to be remitted through broadcast media. Messages in advertorials mainly designed to prescribe curative and preventative health-seeking behaviour. Public health messages have disseminated information on issues such as Family Planning, Malaria, Polio
Tuberculosis, Delayed Sexual Debut and in recent times HIV/AIDS.
These messages have been bold, shocking and candid; all in a bid to instigate dissonance about what is politically, economically and socially acceptable in our society. Attitudes and behaviour have been prescribed to solicit social dialogue to change beliefs and perspectives on health issues. This dialogue is believed to facilitate brainstorming, create arguments and consensus on how best to tackle health issues.

It is believed that in the process, mind-sets are changed, attitudes formed and behaviour is altered. All this then, not only, informs an individual’s health seeking behaviour but also alters behaviour all together.

Normally hinged on baseline surveys, public health messages inform the design and delivery of this content to the public. The ‘Weka Condom Mpangoni’ adverts apparently was informed various studied commissioned by the ‘Population Service Institute’ (PSI) that has for many years partnered with the National Aids Control Council (NACC) in developing communication.

Recent studies have demonstrated that the HIV/AIDS prevalence within marriage has risen from 40% during the ‘Mpango wa Kando’ campaign to 44%. This case further asserts that married couples as compared to prostitutes are three times more at risk of acquiring the HIV/AIDS virus within the institution. It is also emerging that, it seems that both partners in a marriage ostensibly cannot fulfil each other’s sexual and emotional needs.... All the above seemly justify the core messages in
these advertisement for enhanced safe sex within marriages. Nevertheless, in spite of the realities above, there had been total disregards the core messages of these advertorials. And why is the question?

- Could it be because the main target group is the married women?
- It is true that women are that frustrated in marriages to the extent that they justify meted out violence on their unwittingly husbands as stereotyped with the violent aspersions associated with the women of Nyeri?
- Is infidelity by married women the more pacified route to deal with these frustrations?
- Is it socially acceptable for women to carry condoms and propagate for their use in extra-marital affairs?
- Do these adverts model legitimised behaviour acceptable to the male to ape by the women in the married fraternity?
- Is the married man’s ego bruised or their fears articulated deafeningly before even their offspring?
- Is a ‘stone’ being cast to the married woman for being in inappropriate relationships outside marriage?
- Or it safe sex within marriages the way to go to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS in marriages.....

THESE ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK..........

Koki Robi