

# PR Digest

A PRSK PUBLICATION

## 2024 TOP PR PRACTITIONERS IN KENYA



# PR, POWER, AN



Arik Karani

“

*The more powerful an entity is perceived to be, the more it needs to legitimize itself. Organizations, entities, and governments require power and not all power requires organization. Power is to an organization as oxygen is to breathing, but legitimacy is the foundation of this symbiotic relationship. Public relations glues all things together.*

”



Patricia Ndede

“

*PR, Power, and Legitimacy is about the social relations that shape capabilities, decisions, and change. Public relations in the context of this issue is about the choices that we make, the actions that we take, the evils that we tolerate, the good we define, the privileges we bestow, the rights we claim, and the wrongs we do. PR, Power, and Legitimacy means finding the most effective leverage for better relations.*

”



Noella Mutanda

“

*Legitimacy is a crucial aspect of public relations and power relations. Without legitimacy, power is exerted through coercion. As we read this issue we need to understand that sometimes those in authority may execute powers whenever they feel or want and sometimes without consulting the citizens. The test for us as public relations practitioners is striking the perfect balance that helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation*

”



Samuel Karanja

“

*Legitimate power is based on perception and reality. It is based on the reality that a person holds a particular position in an organization, country, or the world. This PR Digest issue highlights the links between legitimacy and public relations, providing insights into how and why public relations is and should be practiced.*

”



Joseph Ndegwa

“

*This issue is important because it discusses the legitimacy of the practice of public relations in the society, and its implications or lack thereof, as it pertains to the events that we witnessed in Kenya this year. One key question we need to ask ourselves is whether we failed the country in 2024, or whether we helped it grow. I think deep down we know the answer. For me, legitimacy and reputation has to take the center stage in the practice of public relations in 2025.*

”



# D LEGITIMACY

— ISSUE



Samuel Mutahi

“

*Public relations professionals should track their personal and organizations key performance indicators to help quantify the overall impact of their brand's authenticity. PR, Power, and Legitimacy is directly and indirectly tied to various KPIs such as brand mentions, customer/citizen satisfaction scores, most active contributors, social accounts interacting with and discussing your brand, and engagement rates on social media. As PR practitioners, we cannot hide from the fact that the answers to all our questions can be found in the types of engagement on social media. Surveys focused on brand awareness and sentiment are crucial for 2025.*

”



Jesse Masai

“

*Authentic public relations and communications not only connects brands and organizations with the public in meaningful ways that build trust and long-term relationships, but it also helps safeguard organizations and entities against potential crises. As we review 2024 and focus on 2025, let us strive to keep authenticity in mind. Authenticity can be achieved by sharing real stories from employees or community members to show your organizations or brand's human side. Authenticity is a key factor in this era.*

”



Lydia Rosasi

“

*Power and legitimacy form the foundation on which public relations strategy is anchored. In public relations positioning, the social rights of an entity or a person are determined by the society. 2024 gave us immense lessons as public relation practitioners, the key one is understanding that power and legitimacy is derived from the people. Our work is to listen to all stakeholders and to ensure we establish and maintain mutual lines of communication and understanding*

”



Edward Wanyonyi

“

*The role of PR in disinformation has been overlooked. Emphasis has always been on the responsibilities of platforms, media, organisations, and on audiences to monitor content and eliminate fake news. Looking back at 2024 and forward into 2024 it is important for us to understand that disinformation is a tool in public relations work. The fight against disinformation must take seriously the impact of the public relations profession if it is to be effective*

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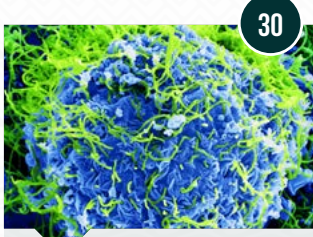
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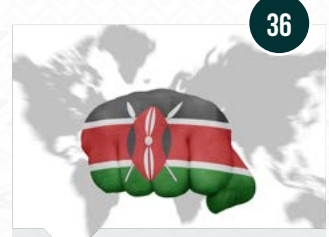
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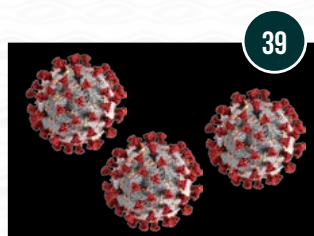
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## President's Note

As we close the year 2024, it is with pleasure that I present to you this quarter's PR Digest themed, '**Public Relations, Power, and Legitimacy**'. This edition highlights the crucial role of public relations in the success of entities.

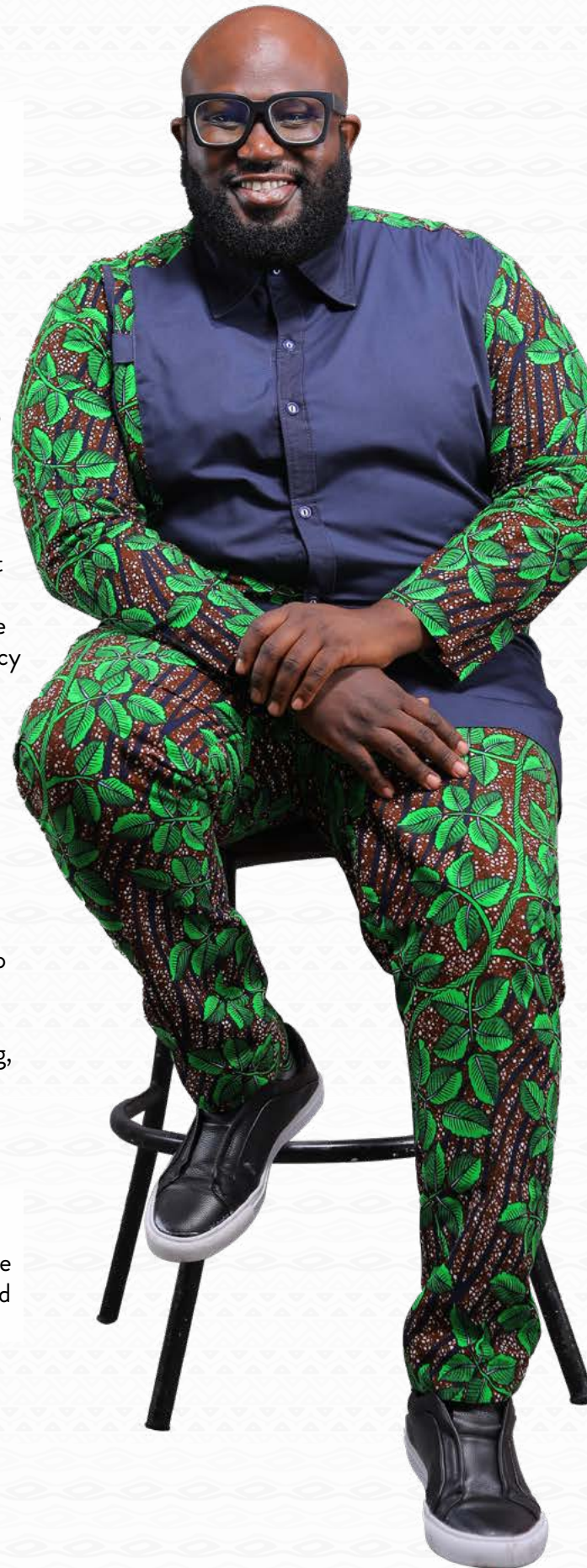
Recent global and national events such as the anti-government protests have demonstrated the place of public relations when it comes to power and legitimacy. They have also demonstrated the importance of clear, timely, and strategic communication especially in times of crisis. These moments tested our ability as communicators to anticipate, manage, and effectively respond to situations.

These events, even though they served as a reminder for us to constantly plan ahead, assess risks, and stay ahead of the curve, also showcased to us that public relations is about soft power that operates through influence and attraction. Through the events that happened in 2024, we were able to see that legitimacy is the right and acceptance of an authority. It is now clear that legitimacy is at the core of the relationship between a state and its citizens. Legitimacy is also at the center of the state building agenda. An authority which lacks legitimacy will be challenged, resulting in increased instability. So what is the role of public relations in all these?

This PR Digest issue addresses public relations, power, and legitimacy. It is an interesting read for anyone who is looking to understand what happened in Kenya in 2024. My take home from this issue is this: The more powerful an entity is perceived to be, the more it needs to legitimize itself. Organizations, entities, and governments require power and not all power requires organization. Power is to an organization as oxygen is to breathing, but legitimacy is the foundation of this symbiotic relationship. Public relations glues all things together. Let me know what your take is through emailing me on [arik@prsk.co.ke](mailto:arik@prsk.co.ke).

As I conclude, I extend my deepest gratitude to the PRSK Council, Secretariat, and the Editorial Committee, for their dedication to producing this industry magazine. I also thank all the professionals who contributed articles and insights. Enjoy the read and together let us continue to move our profession forward.

**Arik Karani, President,  
Public Relations Society of Kenya.**



# Editorial Committee Chair's Note

Dear Members,

It is yet another season we are proud to present you with the 2nd Edition of the PR Digest themed PR, Power, and Legitimacy. Over the past months and year, we have and continue to witness multifaceted crises across the globe, from the drums of war in the Middle East, far East in Russia and Ukraine, and closer home the unabating war in Sudan. The world is caught in the eye of the storm and humanity is on the brink of a precipice.

Back in Kenya, we witnessed the first ever wide scale civic expression popularly christened to as the Gen Z protests driven through online and offline platforms in response to the contentious Finance Bill 2024. As these crises unfolded, the place of PR in anticipating, managing, and pulling the country from the precipice became evident. One could ask, are there opportunities the Country missed by the posture and stance taken by PR Professionals even as senior Government officials acknowledged the breakdown in communication and strategic messaging of Government projects?

As a society under the leadership of President Arik Karani, we are alive to the present challenges the profession faces and we are keen to ensure that we are not only providing a platform for professionals to share insights but also a voice for professionals to advise and offer Solutions that advance Public Relations and communications practice.

Through the collective coordination of the the Editorial committee, this 2nd edition of the PR Digest contains articles we received from across Kenya and beyond. Contributions to the edition come from crisis and reputation management, government communication, health communication and lessons practioners can pick from the Finance Bill protests.

Special thanks to the team that has tirelessly worked to put the magazine together. This edition would not be possible without the commitment and support from from the PRSK Secretariat especially the PRSK Memberships and Communications Manager Amos Kariuki.

As a committee, we will remain and continue to be committed to providing you a venue to both share and gain industry knowledge/insights. Please share a copy with a professional colleague, work colleagues, and even friends and we would really appreciate your feedback. So send your feedback via [editor@prsk.co.ke](mailto:editor@prsk.co.ke). Also, be on the lookout for the Call for Articles for the Annual Round Up Edition.

**Council Member Edward Wanyonyi, Chairperson, Editorial Committee**

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# How Kenya's 2024 Finance Bill Protests Exposed Critical Flaws in Government PR

The protests exposed severe flaws in government PR, highlighting the critical need for modern, empathetic, and transparent communication strategies.

By Ann Kuria

In 2019, South Africa introduced the National Minimum Wage Bill to reduce poverty and improve living standards. This initiative required a comprehensive communication strategy to build trust, ensure understanding, and encourage active participation in the democratic process.

The South African government executed a multifaceted approach that included extensive internal communication across ministries, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration with labor unions, employers, and civil society organizations. Public awareness campaigns were launched to educate citizens about the new minimum wage, its benefits, and compliance requirements. This proactive approach mitigated resistance and facilitated a smooth policy adoption, demonstrating the power of effective government communication.

On Tuesday, June 25th, 2024, Kenya experienced widespread protests across major cities and small towns in response to the controversial 2024 Finance Bill, which proposed significant tax hikes on essential goods and services. These protests, primarily led by

Gen Z youth (under 30) using social media, aimed to express dissatisfaction with the bill's economic implications on Kenyans' livelihoods.

In response to the escalating crisis, President William Ruto's remarks were perceived by many as lacking empathy toward the demonstrators' grievances, further fueling unrest. The President later admitted that miscommunication in his remarks had exacerbated the crisis, though this acknowledgment did little to calm the situation.

This situation underscores the importance of applying the three R's of crisis communication—Regret, Resolution, and Reform—as part of an effective government communication strategy.

## The Significance of Government Communications

Strategic communication is vital for public information. By clearly and systematically conveying information, governments can effectively communicate policies, gain public support, shape opinions, foster community engagement, and ensure smooth implementation of initiatives.



Effective government communication provides accurate and timely information through compelling narratives and evidence-based arguments. This approach helps build consensus and drive action, addresses public concerns, and cultivates trust through interactive and inclusive channels.

Transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and responsiveness are the cornerstones of this communication

approach. Transparency involves openly sharing information to allow public scrutiny and build trust. Accountability means taking responsibility for actions and decisions, reinforcing credibility. Inclusivity and responsiveness ensure that all voices are heard, allowing governments to adapt to citizens' needs and concerns, thereby enhancing engagement and support.

### Navigating Crises Using the 3Rs

Regret, Resolution, and Reform are essential elements of effective crisis communication. They help build trust, maintain transparency, and foster accountability.

#### 01 Regret:

Promptly acknowledging mistakes and showing empathy toward affected citizens.

#### 02 Resolution:

Outlining clear steps to address the issue, allocating necessary resources, and engaging stakeholders.

#### 03 Reform:

Implementing long-term changes by reviewing and updating policies, making institutional adjustments, and ensuring continuous improvement through regular feedback and public communication.

President Ruto's team's lack of proactive communication created a vacuum filled with misinformation and speculation, leading to a significant disconnect between the government and the public. The failure to engage directly with youth and other affected groups highlighted the need for a more responsive and inclusive communication strategy.

The protests demonstrated the transformative power of social media, emphasizing the need for governments to integrate these platforms into their communication strategies to facilitate two-way dialogue and effectively reach younger demographics.

#### Building Trust Through Proactive Crisis Communication

While communication alone cannot resolve governance issues, adopting comprehensive crisis communication strategies is crucial for restoring national peace and stability.

Proactive engagement with digital platforms, real-time updates, and interaction are essential. Tailoring messages to different demographics using appropriate channels and language enhances communication effectiveness. Media training for key spokespersons should be prioritized to ensure consistency and appropriateness in messaging during crises. Collaborating with influencers and trusted public figures to disseminate accurate information and counter misinformation is also vital.

The inclusion of professional PR services in governance can mitigate many unanticipated crises.

The Kenyan government and others across Africa can draw valuable lessons from the 2024 Finance Bill protests. By adopting proactive, inclusive, and transparent communication strategies, governments can build trust, mitigate crises, and ensure the public understands and supports their policies.

# Gen Z Protests Exposed why Journalists Struggle as PR Managers

Effective stakeholder communication hinges on research, audience understanding, and humane engagement. Organizations must invest in trained PR professionals to navigate crises, build trust, and connect authentically with their audience.

By Anthony Taiti, MAC, MPRSK

In today's world, where people are increasingly aware of their rights and demand leadership accountability, an organization's ability to engage and communicate effectively with its stakeholders is crucial. The importance of strategic communication in building trust and confidence cannot be overstated. When PR principles are overlooked, the risk of missing the mark grows significantly.

In Kenya, the President publicly acknowledged that his communication team, mostly made up of former journalists, may have failed him in managing the recent Gen Z demonstrations. This failure was marked by noticeable gaps in communication, underscoring the need for specialized PR training beyond journalistic skills.

One fundamental PR principle is research. Effective PR involves evaluating communication to gauge its impact on the target audience and adjusting strategies accordingly. With the rise of smartphones and internet access, social media has become a dominant platform for public discourse. Despite some viewing social media voices as a minority, their influence is significant. PR professionals use research to identify issues, predict behaviors, and offer informed advice to manage potential crises before they escalate.

Audience-centric communication is also crucial. PR professionals must understand the demographics of their audience deeply. Prof. James Grunig's Situational Theory of Publics, introduced in 1968, helps PR professionals develop targeted communication strategies. According to this theory, people act on

issues they perceive as personally relevant, based on three variables: problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement.

Grunig identified four types of publics: active publics (those who act to address issues affecting them), aware publics (those who are affected but do not act), latent publics (those who are affected but unaware), and non-publics (those who are neither affected nor aware). PR professionals focus on active and aware publics, tailoring communication to engage these groups effectively. Timely communication, involving listening and appropriate responses, is essential to prevent misinformation. Research during a crisis helps anticipate scenarios and develop authentic communication.

Maintaining a humane approach in PR is also crucial. Despite facing offensive or demeaning language from stakeholders, organizations should respond with empathy, authenticity, and respect. This human element in communication helps garner stakeholder support and reinforces trust.

Ultimately, hiring the right PR professionals is key to effective communication and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Professional training in PR can bridge gaps that former journalists might not address, ensuring organizations connect with their audiences on a deeper, more impactful level.

***Anthony Taiti is a seasoned PR professional.***



# Kenya Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd



## About KETRACO

KETRACO, owned by the Government of Kenya, was incorporated on 2nd December 2008 under the Companies Act, pursuant to the reforms in Sessional Paper No.4 to plan, design, construct, own, operate, and maintain high voltage national electricity transmission lines and regional power inter-connector which form the backbone of the National Electricity Grid.



In carrying out its mandate, the Company is developing a new robust grid system to:

- Improve quality, reliability, and safety of electricity supply throughout the Country.
- Transmit electricity to areas that are currently not supplied by the national grid.
- Evacuate power from planned generation points.
- Provide a link with the neighbouring countries to facilitate power exchange and trade in the East Africa Region
- Reduce electricity transmission losses hence reducing the cost to the economy.
- Protect electricity consumers from the high costs of power by absorbing the capital transmission infrastructure.



## Vision

Stable Power Grid that will Transform Lives in the Region and Beyond



## Total Number of Completed Projects

- **5,638 km** transmission network circuit length owned and operated by KETRACO.
- **42** new substations with **6,396 MVA** capacity and **31** bay extensions completed and commissioned.





## Building Trust in Turbulent Times – The Power of PR in Navigating Kenya’s Challenges

Strategic communication, grounded in transparency and accountability, is essential for managing public perception, fostering community engagement, and maintaining organizational legitimacy.

By **Carolyne Tunnen**

In recent times, the role of Public Relations (PR) and Communications practitioners in Kenya has become increasingly vital as the nation faces unprecedented challenges, such as widespread public protests over state accountability and the devastation caused by recent floods. These events have tested the resilience of communities and underscored the urgent need for

strategic communication that fosters trust and legitimacy between citizens and their government. As we navigate these turbulent times, it’s crucial to explore how PR professionals can respond effectively to crises while seizing opportunities to bolster their organizations’ credibility.



Strategic PR is essential during crises because it helps organizations communicate effectively with stakeholders, manage public perception, and maintain legitimacy. When public trust is eroded, as is often the case during natural disasters or civil unrest, PR practitioners must act swiftly to provide accurate information, address concerns, and demonstrate accountability. This requires a deep understanding of the socio-political landscape and an ability to craft messages that resonate with diverse audiences.

My experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and the August 2022 elections, when I served as the Programmes Coordinator for the Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU), illustrates the power of effective PR. IMLU, which monitors and documents police conduct, faced skepticism about its data on police violence amid heightened tensions between law enforcement and citizens. As Coordinator, leveraging my Communications background, I played a crucial role in ensuring that IMLU stayed true to its mission while addressing accusations that we were fabricating statistics. This scrutiny intensified as we reported fatalities resulting from police actions. By employing forensic evidence in our investigations, IMLU substantiated its claims with scientific rigor, which not only clarified our narrative but also bolstered our credibility as a trustworthy source of information.

Forensic evidence provided irrefutable proof, enabling IMLU to present clear, factual accounts of incidents involving police violence. This evidence-based communication shifted public perception, positioning IMLU as a legitimate advocate for human rights rather than an adversarial entity. By prioritizing accuracy over sensationalism, we maintained our integrity and demonstrated how PR practitioners can navigate complex narratives while upholding their organization's core values.

Beyond addressing immediate crises, PR practitioners must also seek long-term opportunities to establish legitimacy within their communities. Engaging stakeholders through open dialogues fosters trust and collaboration between citizens and institutions. For example, IMLU organized community forums that provided platforms for citizens to voice

concerns about police conduct, encouraging more individuals to report incidents and empowering them to demand state accountability.

Partnerships with other civil society organizations can also enhance advocacy efforts and credibility. IMLU is a member of the Police Reforms Working Group, a consortium of national and international NGOs dedicated to advancing police reform. By aligning with reputable organizations that share similar objectives, PR practitioners can strengthen their messaging and expand their advocacy outreach.

In these challenging times, the need for strategic PR guidance is more critical than ever. The complexities of the current landscape demand that practitioners adopt innovative strategies that emphasize transparency, accountability, and active community engagement. Digital platforms offer significant opportuni-



**...PR practitioners must also seek long-term opportunities to establish legitimacy within their communities. Engaging stakeholders through open dialogues fosters trust and collaboration between citizens and institutions...**

ties for PR practitioners to disseminate information rapidly, but they also present challenges, as misinformation can spread just as quickly. PR professionals must remain vigilant in monitoring online conversations and responding proactively to counter false narratives.

My experience demonstrates how communication grounded in evidence can clarify complex narratives and enhance organizational legitimacy. By basing communication efforts on factual data and thorough analysis, PR professionals can effectively navigate the intricate web of public perception. Additionally, by fostering collaboration and open communication with stakeholders, PR specialists can play a pivotal role in restoring trust within society—an essential step toward fostering enduring change in the face of adversity.

***Tunnen is seasoned communications and advocacy professional.***



## Crisis Communication: Strategic Insights for a Nation in Turmoil

**Crisis communication must begin with a thorough understanding of the political, social, and economic factors at play.**

**By Dennis Koech**

Kenya, like many nations, is currently navigating a delicate balance of political unrest, natural disasters, and social upheaval. Whether it's through the lens of political rallies or the aftermath of devastating floods, the country stands at a critical juncture. In these turbulent times, the role of crisis communication is paramount—not merely to manage reputational damage but to build trust, guide the public, and foster positive change. At the heart of any nation's crisis lies an opportunity: a chance to utilize sound, sensitive communication strategies to emerge stronger.

In the face of Kenya's ongoing challenges, the importance of crisis communication cannot be overstated. The principles discussed here extend beyond national crises; they can be adapted for corporate bodies and individuals alike. Four key pillars can serve as a compass to guide Kenya through these moments of uncertainty.

Crisis communication must begin with a thorough understanding of the political, social, and economic

factors at play. In Kenya's case, recognizing the root causes of public dissent against government authorities is essential to crafting messages that can effectively de-escalate tensions. Without a nuanced grasp of these underlying issues, communication efforts risk fanning the flames of conflict rather than quelling them. This immersion into context is the first and most crucial step in any crisis communication strategy.

The next step is to anticipate challenges that could arise during the communication process and to develop proactive strategies to address them. Kenya's digital infrastructure presents both an opportunity and a challenge. While the nation is celebrated as the "Silicon Savannah," there remains much to be done at the state level to fully leverage this reputation. Ensuring that communication strategies are aligned with the digital age and can connect with Kenya's increasingly tech-savvy population is crucial to staying ahead of potential risks.





Successful crisis management hinges on strong relationships with the public. In Kenya's recent crises, from political protests to natural disasters, public trust has wavered due to a perceived disconnect between the government and its citizens. PR professionals must engage the public where they are, not just where authorities assume they are. This means employing communication strategies that are responsive to the concerns of the people, fostering dialogue, and promoting transparency in state-citizen interactions.

In today's world, simply "seeing is believing" is no longer enough. With the rise of social media, geopolitics, and digital influencers, anyone with a smartphone can shape public opinion. This digital age brings an explosion of content—some of it factual, some misleading—requiring PR professionals to be more vigilant than ever. Navigating this complex terrain with ethical, transparent, and culturally sensitive communication is crucial to ensuring trust and credibility.

The foundation of crisis communication must always be built on truth and transparency. With the overwhelming amount of information at the public's disposal, citizens are quick to dismiss anything they perceive as disingenuous. Balanced, fact-driven communication that provides a full, clear picture is vital to maintaining trust during crises. PR professionals in Kenya must ensure that every message delivered is grounded in honesty, no matter how difficult or damaging the information might be.



**...Kenya's digital infrastructure presents both an opportunity and a challenge. While the nation is celebrated as the "Silicon Savannah," there remains much to be done at the state level to fully leverage this reputation...**

Further, a comprehensive crisis communication plan is a must-have for any government, organization, or business. If a plan doesn't exist, it needs to be created. If one does, it should be continually refined and adapted to meet the demands of the current climate. A well-crafted plan ensures swift, coordinated responses during times of crisis, minimizing the damage and laying the groundwork for recovery.

provides a full, clear picture is vital to maintaining trust during crises. PR professionals in Kenya must ensure that every message delivered is grounded in honesty, no matter how difficult or damaging the information might be.

PR practitioners often face the delicate balance of representing their clients' interests while serving the public good. In times of crisis, this tension becomes even more pronounced. Downplaying issues such as product recalls, environmental disasters, or political missteps may seem tempting but can lead to disastrous consequences. Ethical communication means confronting uncomfortable truths and ensuring that the public is fully informed. By championing openness, PR professionals can help to rebuild trust and facilitate long-term solutions.

Kenya's rich tapestry of cultures and ethnicities requires communication strategies that are both sensitive and tailored to specific communities. Effective crisis communication must avoid harmful stereotypes or language that alienates certain groups. By working with local media outlets and community leaders, PR professionals can ensure that their messages are respectful, relevant, and culturally appropriate.

Crisis communication is, at its core, a form of storytelling. But the ethical use of storytelling demands a careful balance between creativity and truth. Highlighting real stories, involving genuine community members, and showcasing authentic connections strengthen the narrative and foster trust with the public. When the story is true and rooted in real experience, it becomes a powerful tool for navigating crises.

The digital age presents a double-edged sword for PR professionals. On one hand, social media provides an unparalleled platform for engagement. On the other, it allows misinformation to spread quickly.

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***Koech is CEO of Raydawn Communications.***

PR practitioners must act as digital truth warriors—verifying facts, debunking falsehoods, and promoting media literacy. By fostering informed public discourse, they help prevent misinformation from further complicating crises.

Ethical PR extends beyond just following a code of conduct; it requires creating a culture where honesty, transparency, and respect are embedded into every aspect of communication. In Kenya, the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) plays a crucial role in promoting these values through workshops, mentorship programs, and discussions on real-world ethical dilemmas. When ethics are part of the profession's DNA, PR becomes a force for good that helps society navigate even the most turbulent times.







## Dear President, Here is how to get your Message Across when Under Pressure

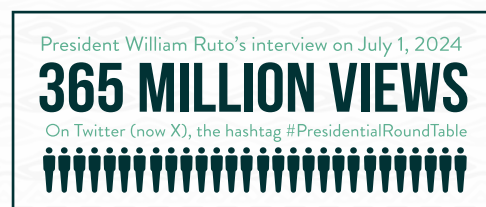
When faced with a high-stakes media interview, keeping the “three-legged stool” in mind— preparation, messaging, and control—will help you stay on track.

By Lawrence Gikaru

Within 24 hours of President William Ruto’s interview on July 1, 2024 with three media house editors following the Finance Bill debacle, the broadcast recorded an astounding 365 million views. On Twitter (now X), the hashtag #PresidentialRoundTable amassed 13 million interactions through comments, retweets, and discussions. Given that the interview was planned by the President and his advisors, the goal was to positively shape public perception. However, it had the opposite effect.

According to a sentiment analysis our firm conducted using digital intelligence tools, 83% of social media conversations on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok were negative. Only 17% of the responses reflected positive sentiment in the

24 hours following the interview.



In past media interactions, President Ruto has effectively conveyed his vision and position, such as during his recent press conference at the White House, where he discussed Kenya’s police mission to Haiti. But this time, the State House interview, with journalists Linus Kaikai (Citizen TV), Joe Ageyo (NTV), and Eric Latif (KTN), didn’t resonate well with the audience.

What went wrong? Let's break it down into three essential elements for successful media engagements: **Preparation**, **Messaging**, and **Control**—what I call the “three-legged stool” of communication.



### Preparation

While the President was armed with facts and figures, there was no clear theme to tie them together into a cohesive narrative. His team seemed unprepared for the public's top concerns, with one journalist even crowd-sourcing questions on X. This suggests there wasn't enough research into what issues truly mattered to the audience.

Communication is about creating meaning. Without an overarching message to unite the data, the audience struggled to connect with the President's broader vision.



### Messaging

In any interview, you must have a clear message that reflects your central theme or “true north.” Each response should align with this message and be supported by evidence. The key is to answer the journalist's questions while steering the conversation towards your main point. Unfortunately, in this interview, the President's message was diluted, and the connection with viewers faltered.

The audience is not the journalists; it's the viewers. Therefore, it's crucial to stay focused on what the public cares about, rather than getting sidetracked by the questions being posed.



### Control

One of the biggest missteps came when a clip of a politician being arrested was unexpectedly shown during the interview. This seemed to catch the President off guard, shifting the focus away from his intended message and putting him on the defensive. When that happens, you lose control of the narrative and your message risks getting lost. Always remember that the audience is not the reporters—it's the people watching or listening. Remaining in control of the interview ensures your message reaches the public, not just the journalists in the room.

**Lawrence Gikaru is the managing director of Apex Porter Novelli (APN)**





## Strengthening Leadership and Trust Through Strategic PR: The Power of MEAL Programs

Leaders inspire confidence when they articulate a clear vision and guide society through change, influencing policies that benefit the broader public.

By Salmon Joash Koyo, MPRSK

In the face of natural disasters, geopolitical crises, and rising public distrust, effective leadership remains the cornerstone of successful societies. As leaders navigate these challenges, public relations (PR) plays a critical role in building trust, guiding change, and advocating for the public's best interests. Today, more than ever, PR practitioners must embrace transparency, accountability, and continuous learning to support leaders and help foster a more resilient, engaged society.

Effective leadership thrives on the trust it builds within communities. Leaders inspire confidence when they articulate a clear vision and guide society

through change, influencing policies that benefit the broader public. However, recent events have caused many to question the legitimacy of some leaders, particularly regarding their ability to represent the people's interests fairly.

Amid this, PR professionals can step in to restore trust by reinforcing the legitimacy of leadership institutions. Through transparent communication, crisis management, and strategic storytelling, PR can help leaders connect with citizens and other stakeholders, ensuring that their actions are understood and appreciated.

### The MEAL Framework for PR in Kenya

To achieve this, PR professionals in Kenya can adopt the MEAL framework (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) as a strategy to reinforce legitimacy and build trust.



#### 01 Monitoring

Regularly tracking media coverage, social media engagement, and public opinion allows PR practitioners to adjust communication strategies in real time. This ensures that leadership efforts align with public concerns and expectations.



#### 03 Accountability

Leaders must be accountable to the public they serve. PR practitioners can emphasize this by clearly communicating the rationale behind decisions, successes, and even failures. This transparency fosters public trust.



#### 02 Evaluation

By evaluating the effectiveness of policies and communication strategies, PR professionals can offer insights on what works and what doesn't. This commitment to continuous improvement strengthens the credibility of leaders.



#### 04 Learning

Reflecting on past successes and failures allows PR practitioners and leaders to adapt to evolving challenges. This commitment to growth reassures the public that leaders are dedicated to continuous improvement.

PR professionals have several opportunities to enhance the MEAL framework, including leveraging digital platforms, collaborating with trusted community figures, and fostering civic education. By engaging the public in real-time through social media, town halls, and public forums, PR efforts can create an open dialogue between leaders and citizens.





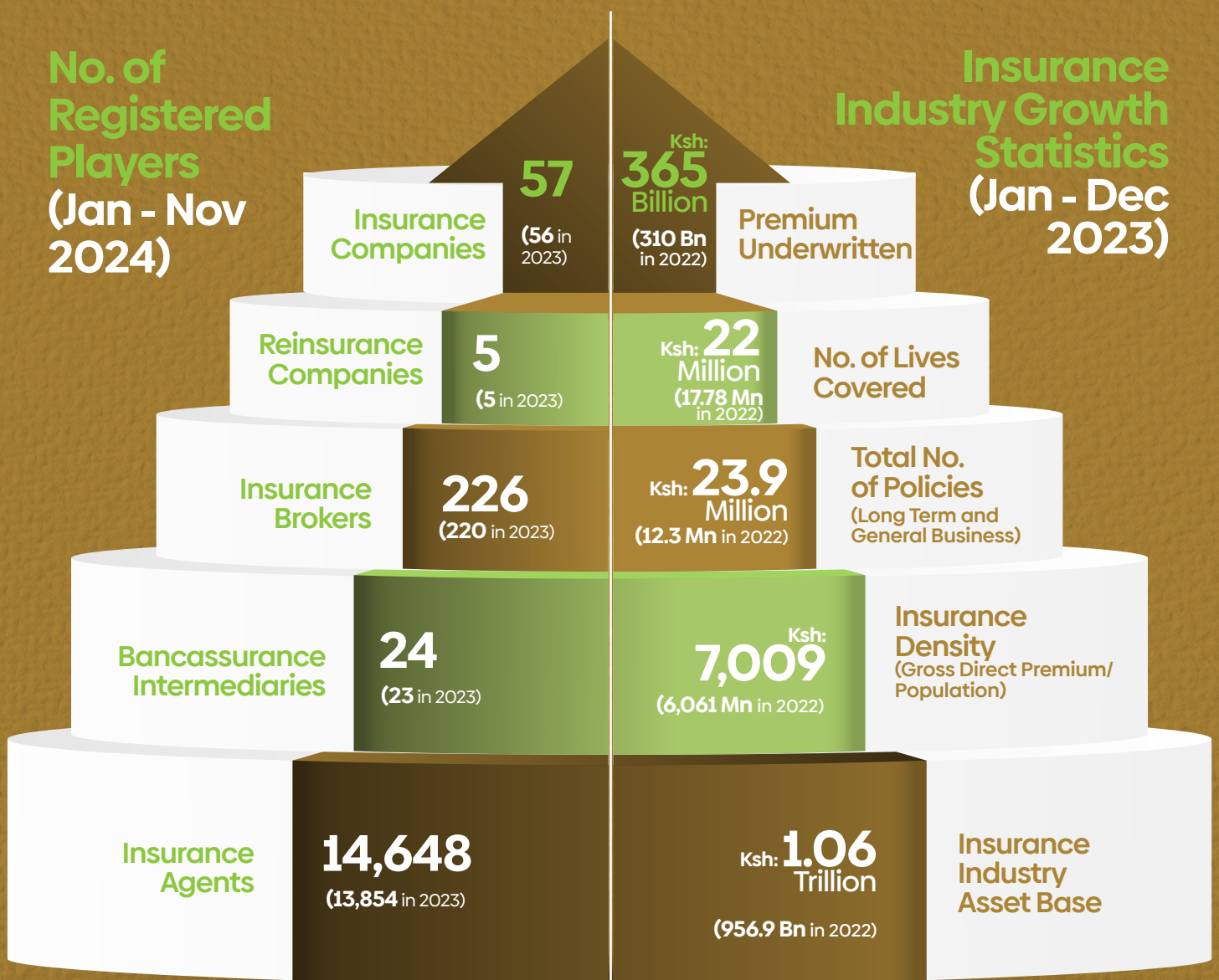
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## Three Essential Steps for Treasury's Effective Communication

Leaders should not only listen to the public and tell the truth but also back their words with action.

By Ruth Musembi

The vetting of John Mbadi for the position of CS for Finance has sparked a national conversation about how the Treasury communicates with the public. While Mbadi's promise to improve communication is promising, the solution goes beyond press briefings and media engagements. True communication requires a deeper, more authentic approach—one that builds trust and strengthens relationships with the public.

Drawing from the insights of communication experts like Arthur Page and Jim McNamara, I propose a three-pronged strategy for effective government communication: consultation, information-sharing, and the implementation of promises. I call this the

“communication triangle,” a framework designed to foster transparency and meaningful public engagement.

These principles mirror Arthur Page's famous six principles of public relations, which have guided ethical and impactful communication for decades. As Vice President of Public Relations at AT&T, Page championed the idea that public relations should be an integral part of leadership and decision-making. His core belief was that trust is built through honest, proactive communication. Leaders should not only listen to the public and tell the truth but also back their words with action.



## STEP 01

### Consultation

Strategic listening is the first pillar of the communication triangle. The Treasury must actively seek the voices of citizens and stakeholders affected by its policies. This can be achieved by creating platforms for open dialogue, conducting surveys, and engaging with communities directly. By incorporating a wide range of perspectives, the Treasury will make better-informed decisions that reflect the needs and concerns of all Kenyans.



## STEP 02

### Information-Sharing

Transparency is critical, but it needs to go beyond simply sharing facts and figures. The Treasury must communicate in ways that resonate emotionally with the public. Leaders should understand the hopes, fears, and aspirations of the people to craft messages that inspire and motivate. Informed communication that appeals to both logic and emotion will foster trust and a shared sense of purpose.



## STEP 03

### Implementation of Concrete Action

As the saying goes, “Actions speak louder than words.” The Treasury must not only make promises but follow through with real, measurable results. Failure to deliver on commitments weakens public trust and damages the government’s credibility. By backing words with action, the Treasury can build a reputation for reliability and effectiveness.

It is concerning to see leaders confuse information dissemination with genuine communication. While sharing information is necessary, it is only part of the equation. True communication requires active listening, transparent information-sharing, and, most importantly, concrete actions that align with the promises made.

I urge the Treasury to adopt this communication triangle. By prioritizing consultation, transparency, and action, the Treasury can reshape its relationship with the Kenyan public and help build a more resilient, trust-driven nation.



***Ruth Musembi is the Associate Managing Partner at Burson, a PR agency under the WPP Scangroup stable based in Nairobi, Kenya.***



## Government's Struggle with Digital PR is Undermining Public Trust

The shift to digital PR has left the government struggling with effective communication, leading to a decline in public trust and confidence.

By Alex Owiti

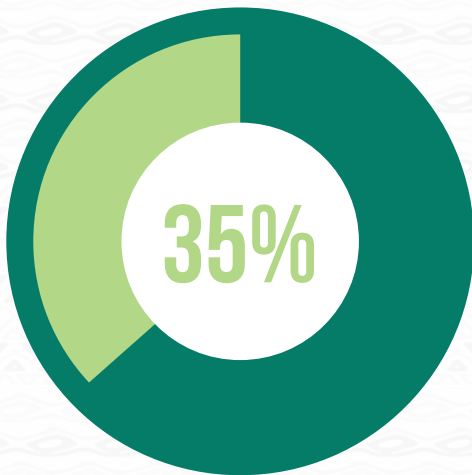
As Public Relations (PR) transitions into the digital age, traditional methods are rapidly becoming obsolete. The modern audience, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, consumes information through digital platforms with a preference for quick, captivating, and multimedia content. Governments and organizations alike are grappling with the shift, needing to adapt their communication strategies to maintain trust and relevance in an era where public opinion is shaped in real-time online.

Governments are particularly struggling with this shift to digital platforms for public communication. They must evolve and use these platforms to drive policy advocacy effectively. For instance, President William Ruto recently criticized his communications team for failing to effectively articulate issues surrounding the rejected Finance Bill 2024. The government missed an opportunity to leverage its communication machinery to gather and synthesize online feedback, which could have informed critical decisions, such as introducing austerity measures or making significant policy changes. This oversight has resulted in a decline in public confidence and trust in the government.

Digital communication platforms are now essential for public participation, especially when engaging Millennials and Gen Zs, who prefer digital interaction over traditional methods. Public participation must become easier, quicker, and more efficient than traditional Kamkunjis or people's parliaments. According to Social Sprout, Millennials are the most active demographic on social media, with 68.8% estimated to be using it in 2024. Gen Zs top the list in terms of daily time spent on social media, with 35% using it for more than two hours a day. Additionally, Statista indicates that, as of January 2024, Kenya had 13.05 million social media users, marking a threefold increase from 2014.

This digital trend should also be embraced by parliament when collecting public views on bills or amendments to Acts. Parliament can utilize platforms like X (formerly Twitter) Spaces and other digital channels to engage with citizens. There's no longer a need to rely on traditional media to solicit feedback. Unfortunately, most Millennials and Gen Zs do not consume traditional media; they prefer digital channels that are quick and accessible on the go.





**Gen Zs** top the list in terms of daily time spent on social media, with 35% using it for more than two hours a day.

Furthermore, organizational communications are increasingly being held accountable from the top. Trust and accountability are now key values in organizational communication, with executives being held responsible for their actions on digital platforms. Their engagement is no longer optional; they must be visible and responsive, receiving instant feedback. A brand's promise is no longer defined solely by its products and services but by the character of the organization and its commitment to its mission and values.

According to Edelman's Trust Barometer 2024, the government in Kenya is perceived as less competent and ethical than businesses. Similarly, the report suggests that business leaders cannot be trusted to tell the truth on critical issues. These findings point to a significant loss of public confidence and trust due to ineffective communication strategies.

As we look to the future, public relations is no longer optional but a critical need for organizations. Reputation management and market positioning are now judged not only by business performance but also by participation in social issues, including politics. Corporates face backlash when they are perceived as neutral or passive on matters requiring social change. Social impact, good governance, and freedoms are now integral to brand communication, as are stakeholder management, crisis and reputation management, and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.

Technologies such as AI are becoming indispensable tools in modern PR. They assist in data collection, providing insights and facilitating informed deci-

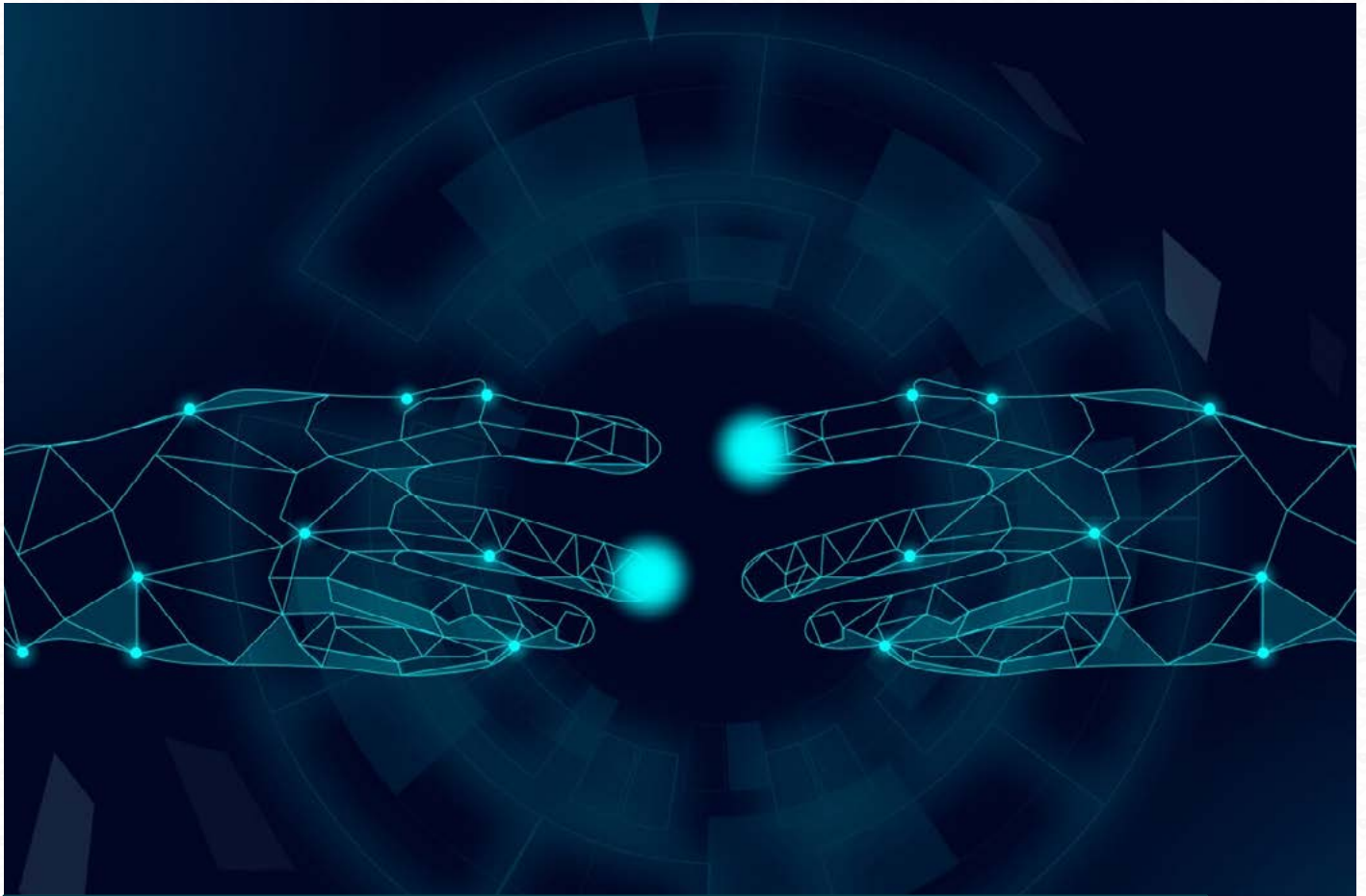
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SOCIAL MEDIA USERS, AS OF JANUARY 2024

sion-making based on consumer and stakeholder behavior. The adoption of AI and Big Data technologies is crucial; without these insights, PR efforts are akin to shooting in the dark.

This is the era to be more intentional and focused on the changes happening in the marketplace, helping brands position themselves strategically for a better return on investment. As Bill Gates, the Chairman of Microsoft, once said, "If I was down to my last dollar, I would spend it on public relations."

**Alex Owiti is the Founder and CEO of Alexander PR and Communications Network.**



# Igniting Kenya's PR Revolution: A Blueprint for Transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Embracing diversity and continuous professional development is key to positioning PR as a powerful tool for societal and organizational change.

By Omboki Monayo

Public Relations (PR) in Kenya has evolved from its early days as a tool of colonial governance to become a cornerstone of communication in both public and private sectors. Yet, despite its deep-rooted significance, the practice of PR in Sub-Saharan Africa faces significant challenges. These challenges, influenced by the region's unique cultural, technological, and economic landscapes, necessitate a revolutionary approach to PR strategy. In a world where communication is rapidly changing, Kenya stands at the forefront, offering a distinctive vantage point for how PR can be transformed to meet the demands of a modern, dynamic society.

While sitting at the crossroads of these challenges and opportunities, Kenya offers a unique perspective on how PR strategies can undergo a significant transformation to align with the ever-evolving socioeconomic environment. To foster an effective PR revolution, it is crucial for current tools and tactics to evolve by embracing innovation, technology, and leveraging cultural nuances to deliver more impactful messaging.

Sparking the much-needed revolution in the country's public relations (PR) practice demands a comprehensive strategy rooted in theoretical frameworks and industry best practices. At the core of this



transformation lies the imperative to cultivate a culture of transparency and ethical conduct within the PR profession. Drawing upon ethical theories such as deontology and virtue ethics, practitioners must adhere to moral principles that prioritize honesty, integrity, and accountability in their interactions with clients, the media, and the public. By upholding ethical standards, PR professionals will not only foster trust and credibility but also contribute to the ethical functioning of society as a whole.

Further, embracing digital transformation emerges as a key driver in modernizing PR practice. Utilizing digital tools and platforms, informed by communication theories such as the diffusion of innovations and the uses and gratifications theory, enables practitioners to adapt to changing communication trends and reach wider audiences. By integrating social media, content marketing, and influencer partnerships into PR strategies, practitioners can enhance audience engagement and measure the impact of their communication efforts through data analytics. This data-driven approach, grounded in theories of persuasion and audience behavior, can enable PR professionals to craft more targeted and effective campaigns that resonate with diverse stakeholders.

Investment in continuous education and professional development is a critical component for advancing PR practice in Kenya. Providing training opportunities and workshops grounded in adult learning theories such as andragogy and transformative learning allows practitioners to stay abreast of emerging trends, technologies, and best practices in the field. By collaborating with academic institutions and industry experts to develop and improve relevant cur-

ricula and research initiatives, the PR profession can evolve in tandem with societal changes and technological advancements. This commitment to lifelong learning not only enhances individual competencies but also elevates the overall standard of professionalism within the industry.

Additionally, promoting diversity and inclusivity within the PR industry emerges as a fundamental principle in revolutionizing practice. Informed by theories of diversity management and social identity, embracing diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences fosters creativity, innovation, and cultural relevance in PR campaigns. By ensuring equal opportunities for women, minorities, and marginalized groups in leadership positions and decision-making roles, the industry will become more representative of society at large. This inclusivity not only enriches the quality of communication but also strengthens organizational resilience and adaptability in an increasingly diverse global marketplace.

Also, advocating for the strategic integration of PR at the organizational level is essential for maximizing its impact on business outcomes. Drawing upon theories of strategic management and corporate communication, PR practitioners must position themselves as strategic advisors who align communication efforts with overarching business objectives. By demonstrating the tangible value of PR in managing reputation, mitigating crises, and driving stakeholder engagement, practitioners can secure buy-in from senior management and stakeholders. This strategic alignment ensures that PR is integrated into the decision-making process, thereby enhancing organizational resilience and competitive advantage.

Moreover, strengthening collaboration and partnerships among PR agencies, media houses, government entities, and civil society organizations emerges as a catalyst for driving positive change and collective action. Informed by theories of collaboration and network governance, collaborative initiatives such as industry forums, joint campaigns, and knowledge-sharing platforms facilitate the exchange of resources, expertise, and best practices. By leveraging collective intelligence and pooling resources, stakeholders can address complex societal challenges and amplify the impact of their communication efforts. This collaborative approach not only fosters innovation but also builds trust and solidarity among diverse stakeholders.

***Aggrey Omboki is a copywriter and editorial associate at Camerafrica Consultants.***



## The Role of PR in Bridging the Generational Gap and Rebuilding Trust in Times of Crisis

In an era of constant connectivity and rising digital engagement, PR and Communications must focus on delivering accurate information, building trust, and bridging generational gaps to effectively address and manage public issues and crises.

By Paul Mwirigi Muriungi

We live in a time where we are always connected. Whether working on a laptop with multiple tabs open or accessing vital information on a tablet, we are constantly online. At the very least, we carry smartphones buzzing with notifications, keeping us engaged through social media, videos, images, and breaking news.

Think about it – where do you go when you want to verify information? In most cases, the first stop is an online platform, searching for stories from credible sources and trusted personalities. It's easier to believe information from organizations or figures with established reputations for delivering accurate news.

In Kenya, during the recent floods and public protests, we saw the power of the media in shaping nar-

atives. For example, the protests on the streets of Nairobi showcased how social media platforms, especially those used by Generation Z, became a rallying space for young people speaking out on important issues. In moments of crisis, chaos, and uncertainty, PR and Communications become the cornerstone of providing accurate and timely information.



**...Although these protests have caused disruptions to business operations, they have inspired young people to speak up and have their voices heard in government...**

To build trust and protect a country's image, credibility is key. It is important to know who is sharing information and whether it is reliable. Without trust, the engagement between the public and their leaders begins to deteriorate.





Another vital aspect of communication is ensuring that messages are aligned with the right narrative. Recently, we've witnessed public figures make statements to protestors that seemed out of touch. Even if well-intentioned, these messages were quickly drowned out by the public's reactions, often doing more harm than good. This highlights the importance of PR and Communications professionals engaging with citizens – who are the most significant stakeholders in the country's direction.

One of the fundamental roles of PR is to engage with audiences openly and listen to their concerns. Effective engagement means responding with intent, not just answering without purpose. It's about giving and receiving

feedback, ensuring people feel heard, and taking both immediate and long-term actions to address their concerns.

There's a noticeable gap in building trust between leaders and communities in Kenya. There are no clear spaces where both sides can meet to express their views and address differences constructively. This lack of dialogue has fueled the rise of the Gen Z movement on social media. The generational divide in Kenya is evident, with the older generation and those in power not taking the time to understand or communicate with younger people. This has only widened the gap.

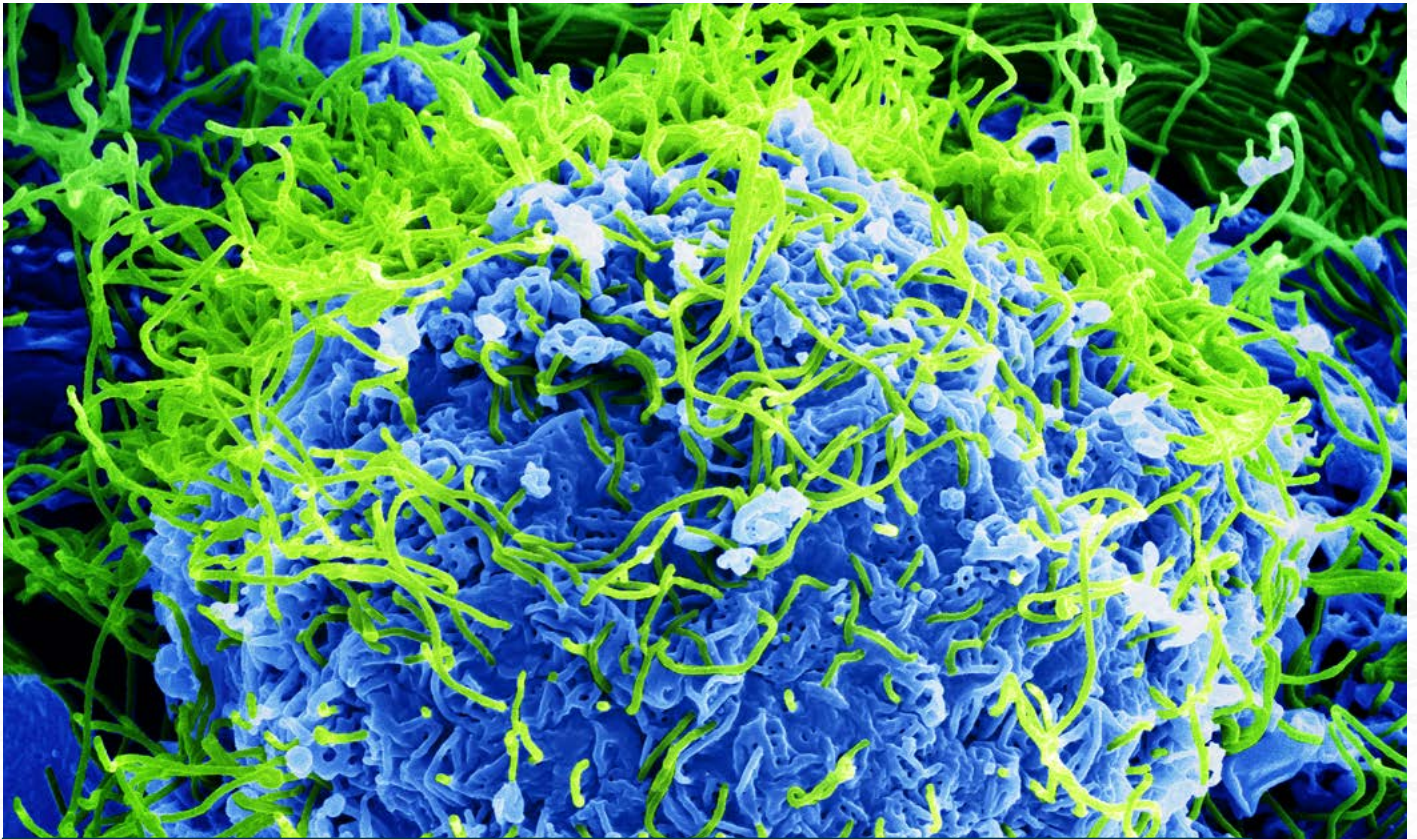
Young people, especially Gen Z, have shown unprecedented coordination on social media. Pre-

viously, social media was used as a tool to fight for justice, and today it continues to unite people regardless of tribe, color, or political affiliation. Recent events have sparked a global Gen Z movement demanding accountability from leaders, not only in Kenya but also in countries like Ghana and Uganda.

Although these protests have caused disruptions to business operations, they have inspired young people to speak up and have their voices heard in government. PR and Communications professionals play a crucial role in these uncertain times, providing accurate and timely information. Without this, there's a risk of misinformation spreading as different groups push their own agendas.

***Paul Mwirigi Muriungi is a founder and Managing Director of Capital One Group East Africa.***





## Turning Crisis into Opportunity: Strategic PR in Africa's Unique Landscape

Effective PR strategies in Africa require culturally sensitive communication during crises to maintain and enhance institutional legitimacy and long-term success.

By Cyrille Djami

In Africa's diverse cultural and political landscape, effective public relations (PR) is essential for maintaining institutional legitimacy, especially during crises. With over a decade of experience in PR across France and Africa, I've seen firsthand how an organization's ability to navigate crises with culturally sensitive communication can determine its long-term success. This article delves into strategic crisis management in Africa, showcasing examples that highlight the importance of swift, transparent, and culturally adapted PR responses to uphold legitimacy.

### Strategic Crisis Management in Africa

Crisis management in Africa demands a deep understanding of local cultural and political contexts,

where a one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn't work. When crises hit, organizations must communicate quickly and transparently, but also ensure their messaging resonates culturally to maintain legitimacy.

Consider the Ebola outbreak in West Africa between 2014 and 2016, where over 11,300 lives were lost, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The initial international response suffered from poor communication, breeding distrust toward health authorities. However, organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the Red Cross managed to rebuild trust through culturally inclusive strategies. By involving community leaders and





respecting local practices, such as using local radio stations for information dissemination and collaborating with traditional healers, these organizations were able to restore a measure of legitimacy among affected populations.

Similarly, AngloGold Ashanti in Ghana faced protests in the Obuasi region over environmental concerns related to its mining operations. In response, the company proactively engaged with local chiefs and community stakeholders, offering compensation and investing in local development projects. Their use of local media to communicate these efforts played

of Africa, which affected over 13 million people, the Aga Khan Foundation took decisive action by investing in irrigation projects and providing food aid, working closely with local governments. Their efforts reduced food insecurity by 30% in some Kenyan regions by 2012, solidifying their reputation as a leader in sustainable development.

Conversely, failing to act swiftly during a crisis can erode an organization's legitimacy. The Volkswagen "Dieselgate" scandal in 2015 had significant repercussions in South Africa, where the brand was highly popular. The company's slow response and lack of transparency led to a 3% drop in market share and a noticeable decline in consumer trust by 2016.

On the other hand, Safaricom, Kenya's leading mobile service provider, turned a potential crisis into an opportunity. During the 2017 elections, allegations of electoral fraud threatened to tarnish the company's reputation. Safaricom responded by engaging in open communication with its users and collaborating with electoral observers to ensure transparency. This proactive approach not only reinforced customer trust but also cemented Safaricom's status as a trustworthy player in Africa's technology sector.

**Djami is a Strategic Communications Consultant and Founder of CommsOfAfrica**

**“ ...during the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa, which affected over 13 million people, the Aga Khan Foundation took decisive action by investing in irrigation projects and providing food aid, working closely with local governments. Their efforts reduced food insecurity by 30% ...**

a critical role in diffusing tensions and reinforcing the company's legitimacy.

### **Leveraging Crises for Long-Term Legitimacy**

In Africa, crises present not just challenges but also opportunities to reinforce an organization's legitimacy. A successful PR strategy involves transforming a crisis into a chance to demonstrate the organization's commitment to its values and the local communities it serves.

For example, during the 2011 drought in the Horn





## PR Wins and Missed Opportunities During Floods, Protests

The role of PR in managing Kenya's recent floods and protests is highlighted, focusing on both successful initiatives and missed opportunities.

By Dan Oloo

In recent years, Kenya has faced a series of crises, from devastating floods that have displaced communities to massive public protests demanding a new social contract between citizens and the government. These events have plunged the nation into a volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, underscoring the critical need for strategic public relations (PR) guidance. With the theme of World PR Day 2024, "The Future of PR in a Changing World," it is essential to explore how Kenyan PR and communications professionals can offer strategic responses and seize—or miss—key opportunities during these turbulent times.

In the midst of these challenges, PR specialists in Kenya play a pivotal role in shaping public narratives and maintaining trust. Transparency and timely communication are paramount. For instance, during

the floods, misinformation about the extent of the disaster and the relief efforts spread quickly. PR professionals must act swiftly to provide accurate information, clarify the situation, and offer guidance to affected communities. This approach helps to prevent panic, keep the public well-informed, and reinforce trust in both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Kenya's sociopolitical landscape, marked by widespread protests and demands for greater accountability, also necessitates that PR practitioners advocate for open dialogue between citizens and the government. By crafting messages that resonate with public concerns and amplifying these voices, PR professionals can help bridge the gap between the government and its people, fostering a more transparent and responsive governance system.





### Opportunities and Missed Chances

Kenyan PR campaigns have successfully leveraged social media and other digital platforms to engage with the public, provide updates, and rally support during crises. During the recent floods, for example, several organizations used these platforms to disseminate real-time information about relief efforts, which was crucial in coordinating aid and ensuring that help reached those in need promptly. This proactive strategy has boosted public trust and highlighted the vital role of digital media in crisis management.

However, some opportunities have been missed. In certain situations, slow responses or ineffective communication strategies have led to public dissatisfaction and eroded trust in both government and non-governmental organizations. This underscores the need for PR practitioners to be more agile and responsive, particularly in anticipating public reactions and addressing issues before they escalate.

While these challenges are particularly pressing in Kenya, they reflect broader global trends. PR practitioners worldwide are increasingly tasked with managing crises in a context of rapid change and heightened public scrutiny. In the U.S. and Europe, PR strategies now include crisis communication frameworks that emphasize transparency, stakeholder engagement, and the use of digital tools to shape public opinion.

These global practices offer valuable lessons for Kenya and other countries. For instance, integrating technology into PR initiatives can enhance communication efficiency and reach, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Moreover, the focus on ethical communication and transparency in global PR practices can serve as a model for Kenyan practitioners, promoting greater trust and collaboration between organizations and the public.

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**Dan Oloo is a Communication Student.**





## The Role of PR in Managing Disasters and Public Protests

During crises like natural disasters or protests, the public's demand for information spikes.

By James Ndone

In a world increasingly shaped by natural disasters and public protests, public relations (PR) plays a critical role in guiding organizations and governments through turbulent times. Effective crisis communication isn't just about controlling narratives—it's about providing clear, timely, and empathetic information that addresses public concerns and fosters trust. Whether in the face of a natural disaster or rising public discontent, PR professionals must respond strategically to meet the information needs of the public and create opportunities for meaningful engagement.

During crises like natural disasters or protests, the public's demand for information spikes. People want to know what actions are being taken to protect them and how they can stay safe. Before worrying about reputations, governments and organizations must prioritize providing clear and actionable information to reduce uncertainty and stress. This can be broken down into two key types of crisis communication: instructing information and adjusting information.

Instructing information provides immediate actions people can take to protect themselves. For example, during floods in Budalangi, issuing evacuation orders is critical for public safety. Adjusting information helps people emotionally cope with the crisis by offering reassurance, empathy, and resources for support, like counseling services for families affected by events like the Lamu terrorist attack. The goal is to



**...Public protests, often sparked by issues like social injustice or controversial policies, require a sensitive and strategic PR approach. How these events are framed by the media can significantly impact public perception...**

reduce anxiety and help the public understand what is happening and what steps are next.

### Engaging Communities During Major Events

Natural disasters and crises also create opportunities for PR professionals to engage communities in meaningful ways. For example, after a flood, PR practitioners can organize community events that provide both critical information and emotional sup-





port. These gatherings not only help share disaster preparedness tips but also offer spaces for collective healing, fostering unity and resilience.

By highlighting stories of recovery and hope, PR can inspire communities to focus on rebuilding and moving forward. However, it's important to also address broader issues, such as the environmental factors contributing to disasters, to maintain credibility and demonstrate a commitment to long-term solutions.

### **Managing Public Protests Through PR**

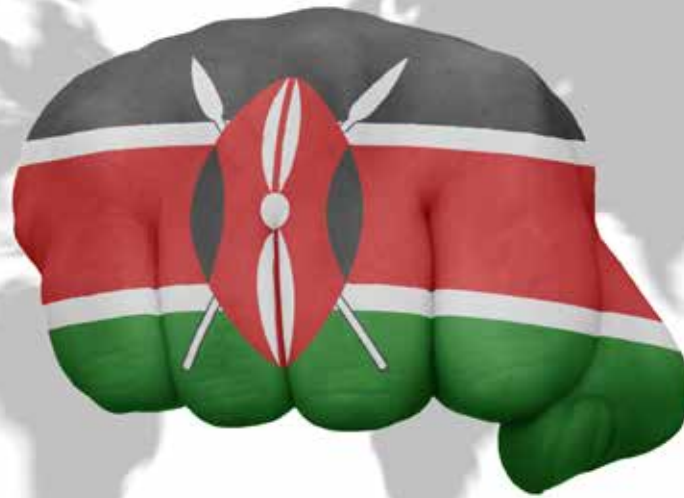
Public protests, often sparked by issues like social injustice or controversial policies, require a sensitive and strategic PR approach. How these events are

framed by the media can significantly impact public perception. PR professionals must collaborate with journalists to ensure that stories are presented accurately and respectfully, reflecting the concerns of affected communities.

In Kenya, for instance, protests against the 2024 Finance Bill have highlighted dissatisfaction with policies that many believe unfairly burden the economically vulnerable. PR efforts can amplify the voices of young protesters by focusing on their stories and demands for accountability, rather than framing the protests as mere unrest. Ensuring that marginalized communities are included in the conversation is key to building legitimacy and fostering trust in the public narrative.

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***James Ndone is an assistant professor of communication at Coastal Carolina University in the United States***



## How Social Media Changed the Game in Kenya's Recent Protests

The recent protests in Kenya demonstrate the power of social media in shaping public discourse, with key PR lessons on the importance of genuine engagement, transparency, and effective communication in maintaining public trust.

By Pauline Nyumu

During times of crisis, governments typically rely on traditional media channels like TV and radio to make crucial announcements. Whether dealing with coups, the death of leaders, or other destabilizing events, these conventional methods have been the norm. However, the recent #OccupyEverywhere protests in Kenya, driven by the Zoomers (Gen Z), completely disrupted this approach.

In a historic shift, the **President had to engage with the movement via an X-Space, bypassing traditional statehouse meetings and public addresses.** This marked a significant change, highlighting social media's growing influence on public discourse (Howard & Hussain, 2013).

Instead of traditional rallies and political meetings, young Kenyans utilized memes and social media to express their demands, share safety tips, and coordinate protest locations such as Parliament, Statehouse, CBD, JKIA, and Uhuru Park. This digital strategy led to the unprecedented storming of Parliament, a first since independence. Confronted with a leaderless protest, the President rejected the Finance Bill and hosted an X-Space, another first for Kenya.

These events underline the necessity of engaging with a digitally savvy population (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013). However, the President's PR efforts on X backfired due to poor handling of public sentiment, revealing significant PR missteps.



**...In a historic shift, the President had to engage with the movement via an X-Space, bypassing traditional statehouse meetings and public addresses...**



## PR Pitfalls and Missed Opportunities

Gideon Too from Busara attributes the support for online mobilization to factors like peer influence and the fear of missing out. Yet, the President's handling of the X-Space conversation missed key PR opportunities, leaving the government in a PR crisis. Here are some lessons that could have turned the situation around:

### 01

Instead of attempting to buy silence, the government should have demonstrated real concern for the issues driving the protests, such as high taxation, public extravagance, and misuse of funds. It's about taking real action rather than just making promises.



### 02

Humor, when used appropriately, can humanize an organization and diffuse negative sentiments (Lueck, J. A. (2015)). For instance, animations could have been used to explain the impact of the protests in a more accessible way rather than resorting to force against protesters.



### 03

In crisis PR, honesty is crucial. The government should have acknowledged its mistakes, apologized for any wrongdoings, and avoided empty promises. The re-hiring of previously fired cabinet secretaries undermined efforts to rebuild trust. According to Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), being transparent helps build credibility and demonstrates a genuine commitment to resolving issues (Coombs, 2007).

### 04

Effective communication involves active listening and meaningful engagement. The government missed the chance to foster genuine dialogue, which could have included public participation or mediation to find solutions. Instead of escalating tensions with blame and conflict, investing in constructive dialogue could have helped de-escalate the situation and led to long-term solutions (Chadwick, 2009).

***Pauline Nyumu is the Online Engagement Officer of Busara and Director at Urbanacle.***

# How Brands can Effectively Engage Gen Z and Gen Alpha for Future Success

Brands must adapt by embracing authenticity, sustainability, and personalization to meet the high expectations of tech-savvy, socially conscious Generation Z and Alpha, or risk losing trust and market share.

By **Monica Chege**

We live in a rapidly evolving business landscape where brands must constantly adapt to meet changing consumer expectations. With the rise of Generation Z and Generation Alpha, businesses face new challenges in how they engage with their audience. These tech-savvy, socially conscious generations are reshaping the way brands operate, demanding authenticity, transparency, and a strong commitment to social and environmental causes.

Generation Z (born mid-1990s to early 2010s) has grown up in a digital world, where social issues play a significant role in their purchasing decisions. They expect brands to be transparent and take a stand on important issues like climate change and social justice. On the other hand, Generation Alpha (born early 2010s onwards) is growing up surrounded by AI, automation, and cutting-edge technology. This generation will expect even more seamless digital experiences, sustainability, and personalization.



**...Consumers now expect personalized solutions tailored to their needs. By using AI and data analytics, brands can offer unique experiences that meet these expectations...**

## Strategies for Engaging Gen Z and Gen Alpha

Brands must be genuine about their values and impact. Sharing real stories about your brand's journey and community involvement can build trust and foster deeper connections with these generations.

Sustainability is a priority for these consumers. Businesses must integrate eco-friendly practices into every part of their operations, from production to

packaging, and communicate these efforts clearly to resonate with Gen Z and Alpha.

Also, generic products are no longer enough. Consumers now expect personalized solutions tailored to their needs. By using AI and data analytics, brands can offer unique experiences that meet these expectations.

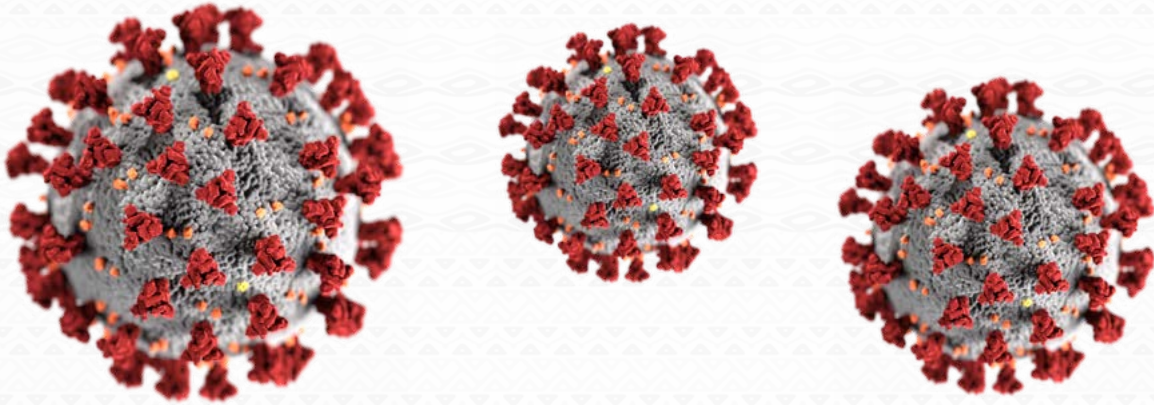
Further, modern brands need to address social and environmental challenges through strong corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. Aligning your brand with these issues will enhance its appeal to socially conscious consumers.

Creating interactive spaces, both online and offline, allows for meaningful interactions between brands and their audiences. This fosters a sense of community and strengthens brand loyalty.

Ignoring the values and expectations of Gen Z and Gen Alpha can have serious consequences. These generations are quick to voice their opinions on social media, and brands that are seen as insincere or unresponsive to social issues may face backlash and loss of market share. To stay relevant, businesses must align with their values and take a stand on critical issues.

**Monica Chege is a Head of Marketing-Jubilee Health Insurance.**





## Lessons for the Current Regime from Uhuru's Effective COVID-19 Management

The current regime can enhance its crisis management approach by adopting key strategies from Uhuru's government, including swift action, clear communication, and strong public trust.

By Esther Gicheru

In today's fast-paced world, where information spreads instantly and public perception can shift just as quickly, managing crises effectively has never been more crucial. Governments, especially, must go beyond traditional administrative processes and embrace strategic crisis communication that addresses both the immediate and long-term challenges posed by crises. Kenya's current administration can learn valuable lessons from how the Uhuru Kenyatta government handled the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrated the power of clear communication, quick action, and public engagement in managing a nationwide crisis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, governments across the globe were tested. Norway became a standout example, praised for its transparent crisis management and the high level of trust its citizens had in their leaders. Kenya, too, displayed notable crisis management during Uhuru's tenure, where swift actions and public communication helped mitigate the effects of the pandemic. But what set Kenya's COVID-19 response apart, and what lessons can the current regime take from it?

### 01



#### Speed and Decisiveness in Crisis

The hallmark of effective crisis management is rapid response. When COVID-19 hit, Uhuru's government acted swiftly by mobilizing emergency services, instituting lockdowns, and enacting public health protocols. This immediate action was critical in preventing further spread of the virus. Similarly, any current or future crises—be they political, health-related, or natural disasters—require the same urgency and decisiveness in action.

A quick response not only reduces the physical impacts of a crisis but also sends a message to the public that the government is in control and working to protect them. Timely interventions, like those seen during the pandemic, help maintain public order and provide reassurance during uncertain times.

02

### Clear Communication Builds Trust



One of the most important takeaways from Uhuru's management of the COVID-19 crisis is the power of clear and transparent communication. Consistent messaging from government officials helped manage public expectations and provided clarity on necessary safety measures. This transparency fostered a sense of trust and encouraged collective responsibility among the public. For the current regime, maintaining open communication lines and engaging the public regularly can help avoid misinformation and misunderstandings. Additionally, crafting a narrative that aligns with the public's values ensures that the messages resonate on a deeper level, encouraging compliance and cooperation.

03

### Collaboration



Successful crisis management requires collaboration at every level. The COVID-19 pandemic showed how partnerships with local governments, private entities, and NGOs can enhance a government's ability to respond effectively. The coordination between national bodies and the health sector in Kenya ensured that the public health response was not only comprehensive but also widespread.

Today, the current leadership must continue fostering such partnerships, especially in times of crisis. A unified approach involving various sectors strengthens the overall response and ensures that resources are efficiently utilized.

04

### Understanding the Crisis



Crisis management doesn't stop with rapid response—it requires a deep understanding of the crisis itself. During the pandemic, the government's reliance on expert advice and real-time data ensured that every decision was informed by the latest developments. This thorough understanding of the situation allowed for more accurate and effective communication with the public. For the current government, analyzing the full scope of any crisis, consulting experts, and adapting strategies in real-time are essential steps to ensuring a successful outcome. Accurate information gathering and a willingness to adjust as situations evolve can make all the difference.

05

### Rebuilding Trust



After a crisis, leaders must focus on rebuilding public trust. During and after the pandemic, Uhuru's government took steps to rebuild confidence by reassuring the public through ongoing updates and by addressing grievances. Apologies where mistakes were made and compensation to those affected were key components in maintaining transparency and trust.

For the current administration, this period of reflection and rebuilding is equally important. Trust is a valuable commodity in governance, and how leaders manage the aftermath of a crisis can strengthen or weaken their legitimacy. Taking accountability and engaging in meaningful action to prevent future crises will ensure that trust is maintained.

In conclusion, the current government can draw from the successes of the Uhuru Kenyatta administration's handling of COVID-19. Crisis management is more than just responding to immediate problems; it's about understanding, communicating, collaborating, and rebuilding. By applying these principles, Kenya's leadership can navigate future crises with resilience and restore confidence among its citizens.

***Esther Gicheru is a seasoned development communication specialist currently working at the Micro and Small Enterprises Authority.***





## Shabikia Mawasiliano na Mahusiano ya Umma ili Kutimiza Matakwa ya Wananchi

Taifa linalokumbatia mikakati ya kuwaleta pamoja wananchi wake katika kile wanapania kutekeleza huvuna pakubwa.

**Naye Fred Myers**

Mahusiano mema na chanya ni viambajengo maridha-wa ambavyo hukuza muamano wa jamii hivyo basi kujenga umoja uliodhabiti.

Hilo huleta mazingira tulivu ya maendeleo ya nchi kwa kuwa mna amani toshelezi. Biashara hufanyika na kuwaajiri wananchi jambo ambalo lakuza ufanisi wa nchi.

Taifa linalojukumika kuimarisha viwango vya ajira kwa wakaazi wake, ni taifa lililoendelea.

Jamii hutangamana kwa kupitia njia tofauti kama vile kupitia mawasiliano kwenye tamaduni zao, jambo la muhala likiwa kipitisha jumbe.

Kenya ni mfano hai wa jamii hii lengwa. Uongozi haswa ulio mamlakani wafaa kushabikia mawasiliano na mahusiano ya umma ili kutimiza matakwa ya wananchi. Hilo litasaidia sana kujenga nchi iliyo imara ki-maendeleo.

**Baadhi ya mikakati ambayo nchi yafaa kutimiza ni kama ifuatayo:**

01

**Usikivu Changamfu**

Mikakati ya nchi hupangwa kitaratibu ili kufanikisha lengo husika.

Moja wapo ya taratibu hizi ni kupitia mawasiliano yaliyo ya pande mbili, wapo wanaozungumza na wengine wakisikiliza kisha kubadilishana kwa usanjari uo huo.

Mfano hai, kwenye baraza la mawaziri, rais anaweza kuita kikao cha mawaziri kisha kuelezea malengo tofauti ya kuikuza nchi. Hili litafanikiwa kupitia usikivu changamfu ambapo wapo mawaziri watachangia maoni yao kisha baada ya kuyasikiliza, rais atafanya uamuzi.

Hatua za kimaendeleo hukuzwa na kusikiliza lile lazungumziwa ili kuathiri uamuzi. Katika kusikiliza suluhisho hupatikana pale palipo na changamoto.

02

**Mawasiliano Waziwazi Ya Kimjadala**

Jamii imara hujengwa kwa ushirikiano wa kimawazo. Makundi ya vijana, akina mama na baba, walio-elimika na wale hawana elimu, walalahoi na walalahai bila misingi ya ukabila huweza kujumuika na kuzungumza waziwazi kuhusiana na mjadala pevu.

Hili laweza kuafikiwa kupitia maandalizi ya mijadala kwa kuzingatia uwepo wa hadhira kikamilifu. Kwa mfano hadhira ya mashinani yaweza kuhusishwa kuja na mawazo mengi mema kupitia mazungumzo kwenye mikutano sehemu tofauti ili wapate nafasi ya kujieleza. Wanaweza pia kuzungumza kupitia redio haswa zile za mashinani ambazo hutangaza kwa lugha ya mama.

Vijana wanaweza kutumia mitandao ya jamii kama vile X, Facebook kuelezea mawazo yao kindakin-daki. Viongozi wa mijadala hio kukusanya maelezo hayo na kufikisha kwa wahusika ili itendewe haki.

Mijadala hii ikitiliwa maanani, yatajenga nchi pakubwa kutokana na upevu wa yale yamezungumziwa na halaiki ya makundi mbalimbali.

03

**Majibu**

Ukamilifu wa mawasiliano upo kwa mchakato mzima kuanzia kuzungumza na kukamilika kwa kupokea majibu kutokana na yale yamezungumzwa.

Mijadala na mada kadha wa kadha zilizojadiliwa na makundi ya watu, itakuwa na mwafaka iwapo baada ya kukusanywa kwa maoni yaliyodadavuliwa kwa upana, yataweza kujibiwa.

Majibu hayo yafaa kutolewa kwa kuzingatia utaratibu ambao jambo lililoadiliwa kuelezewa kihatua jinsi litakavyo suluhishwa au kutumika kuimarisha huduma.

Kwa mfano, iwapo visa vya ufsadi vimekidhiri na jambo hilo limejadiliwa jinsi ya kutatua, asasi husika katika kukabili ufsadi yafaa kutoa mwelekeo ya jinsi ya kum-

aliza ufsadi.

Kesi ziripotiwe pindi tu zimetukia, zitachukuwa muda upi baada ya kushtakiwa, maamuzi yatatolewa lini na vipi waliopatikana watakabiliwa ili iwe funzo kwa wale huchukulia mzaha mali ya umma.

Majibu hukuza muamano wa nchi kwa kuwa yale yamezungumziwa huhitaji kusuluhishwa hivyo basi kuchangia uaminifu baina ya haswa uongozi na wananchi.

Hili hufanya serekali iliyo mamlakani kuweka na kutimiza maendeleo lengwa kikamilifu bila maandamano ya kuasi.





04

### Uzalishaji Wa Matokeo Chanya

Juhudi na jitihada huwa kigezo mahususi kwa kila aliye na ndoto ya kufanikiwa kwa malengo ya ki-maisha.

Kupitia hili mikakati ya kufanikiwa huwekwa ili vido vya malengo kuweza kufanikiwa.

Mikakati kama vile, viongozi waadilifu, sera mwa-faka zinazo jali wananchi wa matabaka yote ni baadhi tu ya yale hutiliwa mkazo ili kufanikisha matokeo chanya.

Nchi yenye viongozi wawajibikaji hupiga hatua kiu-chumi. Hili ni kutokana na kutimiza ahadi zilizowe-kwa nyakati za kampeni.

Kwa mfano, barabara za umma zinapojengwa, mi-fumo ya kufanya biashara kuimarishwa ili kutoa nafasi kwa walio wa kipato cha chini kuimudu, ni baadhi ya masuala yakiimarishwa yanachangia jamii pevu yenye uchu wa maendeleo.

Matokeo haya yanapotimizwa, yanakuza ushirikiano mzuri baina ya wananchi na viongozi wao hivyo basi kuwachagua tena na tena kulingana na muda wa kikatiba ili wafanikishe ndoto za jamii pevu, wananchi hujitegemea na kukuza ekonomia ya nchi kwa kupitia uanzishaji wa biashara ndogo na kubwa zinazolipa ushuru bora.

05

### Ushirikishi

Chambilecho semi za jadi kuwa umoja ni nguvu na utengano udhaifu, ndio usemi wakuongoza hatua mbele.

Jamii tofauti zinapoungana kuzungumza umoja wa taifa hujenga mustakabali komavu ambao huwa msingi wa ufanisi.

Kila kundi linapohusishwa kuchangia uendeleu wa nchi hujenga muamano wa kujihisi kuwa sehemu ya maamuzi yaliyofanywa na kundi alimo.

Uwazi pia hudhihirika kikamilifu hivyo basi wananchi wana uelewa wa kile ambacho nchi yapanga kuanzia maandalizi hadi utekelezaji wa maamuzi tajwa.

Ushirikishi pia huchangia uwajibikaji katika malengo yaliyodavuliwa hivyo basi kila shirika, asasi za serekali kutaja tu baadhi, kufanya kazi zao bila kulaza damu. Sababu hapa ikiwa walioshirikishwa wapo na uelewa wa kile kinafaa kutekelezwa na kwa kupitia njia zipi kulingana na maamuzi yaliy-owajumuisha.

Taifa linalokumbatia mikakati ya kuwaleta pamoja wananchi wake katika kile wanapania kutekeleza huvuna pakubwa.

Hukuza tamaduni ya kujivunia mchango katika ujenzi wa taifa na kukuza bidii isiyo na mapungufu.

**Fred Myers ni mwanamawasiliano katika uwanda wa mahusiano ya umma**



## Is Public Relations Just a Name, or Does it Really Matter?

By Paul Udoto

The famous Shakespearean quote from *Romeo and Juliet*, “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” suggests that the essence of something remains unchanged despite its name. Juliet uses this phrase to argue that Romeo’s identity, defined by his family name Montague, is not affected by the feud with her own family. But can this concept be applied to the field of public relations (PR)? In other words, does the name

“public relations” truly reflect the identity and value of the discipline?

Public relations has faced a long-standing negative reputation. Many people associate PR with propaganda, spin-doctoring, and manipulation. This perception undermines the true value and purpose of the practice. As the biblical proverb goes, “Physician, heal thyself,” suggesting that PR practitioners must first address

their own credibility issues before they can effectively manage and improve the reputation of others.

Scholars Benita Steyn and Gustav Puth argue that the negative image of PR is partly due to the field’s historical tendency to focus on tactical roles rather than strategic contributions within organizations. Traditionally, PR has been confined to handling publicity and media relations, rather than contributing to the broader strategic



goals of organizations. This has resulted in PR being marginalized as a management function, with practitioners often excluded from key decision-making processes.

In response to this negative perception, PR has been rebranded under various titles such as “corporate communication,” “public affairs,” and “communication management.” These new names reflect an attempt to elevate the discipline and align it more closely

The challenges facing PR are further amplified in the context of governance, particularly in Kenya. In a complex and rapidly changing environment, PR plays a crucial role. It is not enough for public institutions to simply communicate their actions; they must engage in meaningful dialogue with the public, listen to their concerns, and demonstrate a genuine commitment to addressing those concerns. This requires PR practitioners to be involved at the

technicians and become strategic advisors who contribute to policy and strategy formulation. This involves advocating for the inclusion of PR in the strategic decision-making process, ensuring that communication is not an afterthought but a central component of governance.

In its most effective form, public relations acts as a boundary spanner—a mediator between public institutions and the citizens they serve. It fosters dialogue, builds relationships, and helps maintain social order by replacing ignorance with knowledge and coercion with compromise. PR can help public institutions navigate the complexities of globalization, digital communication, and changing demographics by providing tools and strategies to engage with diverse audiences and address their concerns.

For PR to truly foster trust and legitimacy, it must be practiced with integrity and a commitment to the public good. This means rejecting tactics of spin and manipulation, and instead embracing transparency, honesty, and accountability. Public relations practitioners must advocate for these values within their organizations, ensuring that communication builds trust rather than merely managing perceptions. By redefining their role from tactical functions to strategic partners in governance, PR can enhance its legitimacy and professional value, proving that it is indeed as essential as ever.



**...In its most effective form, public relations acts as a boundary spanner—a mediator between public institutions and the citizens they serve. It fosters dialogue, builds relationships, and helps maintain social order by replacing ignorance with knowledge and coercion with compromise....**

with the strategic goals of organizations. For instance, a survey of Fortune 500 companies in the United States revealed a growing trend of replacing the term “public relations” with “corporate communication,” signaling a shift in how the function is perceived and integrated into organizational strategies.

Despite these rebranding efforts, corporate communication functions in many organizations still struggle to gain strategic recognition. Steyn and Puth highlight that even under new titles, PR often remains stuck in an operational role, implementing rather than shaping plans. This indicates a broader challenge: the need for PR to evolve from a technical function into a strategic partner capable of influencing organizational decisions and outcomes.

highest levels of decision-making, ensuring that communication strategies align with broader goals of transparency, accountability, and good governance.

Building public trust demands more than just effective communication; it requires a strategic approach that integrates PR into the core functions of governance. Scholars credit PR with increasing attention to public accountability and social responsibility, as well as making organizations more responsive to public interests. When executed properly, PR helps institutions anticipate and respond to public perceptions, evolving values, and environmental changes.

Thus, PR professionals face the challenge of redefining their role within public institutions. They must move beyond being mere

**Paul Udoto is an assistant director in charge of Corporate Communications at the Kenya Wildlife Service.**

# Men in PR Kenya and Women in PR Kenya Chapters Launched.

By Arik Karani, President, PRSK.

We are delighted to conclude the year on a high note with the launch of two exciting initiatives: **Men in PR Kenya** and **Women in PR Kenya**.

Over the past two years, we have proudly celebrated over 100 men and women practicing public relations in Kenya. An initiative which when we started many questioned its viability and longevity. Two years and several campaigns later, the movement has grown and now is more stronger than ever.

Along the course of this journey, I have realized that the intersection of public relations and social advocacy plays an important role in advancing our profession. Not only are we elevating how public relations practice is viewed in Kenya through these campaigns, but we are also offering a powerful platform to amplify voices, reshape narratives, and to inspire widespread action and love for the public relations practice.

Through strategic storytelling and impactful top women and top men in PR campaigns, the public relations industry in Kenya has also had the opportunity to highlight the challenges that both men and women face and to celebrate their victories, steering the society towards a future of equal opportunities.

As many of you already know, I will be stepping down as president in 2026 after completing my second term as the president of PRSK. Part of my duty at this time is to ensure successful continuity of all PRSK programs. This now entails identifying and equipping the next crop of leaders who can use the compelling force of storytelling to bring light to the silenced and marginalized voices across Kenya. These narratives are not just stories; they are testimonies of resilience, ambition, and the relentless pursuit of the public relations profession. By elevating these stories, PR professionals in Kenya can influence public opinion, sway policy, and mobilize communities, making them indispensable allies in the quest for advancing the Public Relations and Communications Management Bill (PRCM) currently in the National Assembly.

These new chapters under the leadership of **Grace Munjuri (Women in PR Kenya)** and **Jesse Masai (Men in PR Kenya)**, will spearhead impactful initiatives to promote, develop and grow the profession on multiple fronts. Not only will they focus on the Top Men and Women in PR series, they will also focus on other exciting activities and ventures that will connect both men and women. The vision is to ensure both men and women have the necessary tools, initiatives, and the support system to inspire growth and foster excellence within the PR and communication landscape.

**Grace Munjuri** will be leading the **Women in PR Kenya** chapter alongside **Patricia Ndede** and **Noella Mutanda**. **Jesse Masai** will be leading the **Men in PR Kenya** chapter alongside **Augustine Wachira** and **Amos Kariuki**. I have total confidence in both of these teams that will work independently for these two different causes. I encourage you to support these teams as they take on their roles in advancing the profession in Kenya and beyond. As a Society, we are committed to nurturing talent and creating opportunities within the field of public relations and communication. Let's achieve this together—because collaboration is the cornerstone of our collective success.

“...Through strategic storytelling and impactful top women and top men in PR campaigns, the public relations industry in Kenya has also had the opportunity to highlight the challenges that both men and women face and to celebrate their victories, steering the society towards a future of equal opportunities. ...”



To join the conversation and connect with these communities, use the following links:



**MEN IN  
PR KENYA**

Join the Men in PR Kenya

[WhatsApp Group Here](#)



**WOMEN IN  
PR KENYA**

Join the Women in PR Kenya

[WhatsApp Group Here](#)

On the next page, I will share the bios of these amazing leaders. The bios will be followed by the stories of the top 52 men and women practicing public relations in Kenya in 2024. Here's to a brighter future for the PR profession in Kenya!



### JESSE MASAI

Chairperson,  
Men in PR Kenya.

A long-time journalist and communications management professional with stints in Africa, South East Asia and the United States, Jesse serves as Director of Communication and Public Relations with Nyandarua County Government in Kenya's former Central Province. A native of the country's scenic Rift Valley region, he is a graduate of Messiah University in Grantham, PA and Daystar University, Kenya. His work has appeared in mainstream media, including at The East African and the British Broadcasting Corporation. He is a member of the Public Relations Society of Kenya's Council.



### AUGUSTINE WACHIRA

Executive Member,  
Men in PR Kenya.

Augustine Victor Wachira Njenge is a seasoned photojournalist and new media expert committed to leveraging digital platforms to drive positive social change. With over a decade of experience in public communication, international affairs and governance, he has honed his skills in strategic communications, public relations and new media. Currently serving as a Social Media Assistant at the Media Council of Kenya, Augustine is dedicated to fostering a vibrant and ethical media landscape.

Beyond his professional pursuits, Augustine is a passionate advocate for youth empowerment, particularly for the boy child. He actively mentors and inspires young minds to reach their full potential. A member of the Public Relations Society of Kenya, Augustine brings a wealth of knowledge and insights to the communication and digital media industry. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from St Paul's University, Limuru and has completed the Facebook Video Storytellers-Africa training program.



### AMOS KARIUKI

Executive Member,  
Men in PR Kenya.

Amos Kariuki is a Certified Project Management Professional and a dynamic leader in membership management, communication strategy, and event coordination. Currently serving as the Membership Manager and Acting Communication Manager at the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), Amos has been instrumental in driving membership growth, improving retention by 36%, and advancing PRSK's strategic objectives across East Africa.

His notable achievements include doubling PRSK's membership, leading impactful campaigns like the Top Women in PR 2024, and managing large-scale events such as the PRSK Annual Summit, which attracted over 1,000 delegates. Kamau has also demonstrated expertise in legislative advocacy by spearheading the Public Relations and Communication Management Bill 2024.

Amos holds a Bachelor's degree in Applied Communication with a specialization in Corporate Communication from Multimedia University of Kenya. His diverse skill set spans stakeholder engagement, digital marketing, leadership, and project management. Passionate about advancing public relations and empowering communities, Kamau actively volunteers in youth mentorship programs and champions initiatives that foster professional excellence and community impact.

Looking ahead, Amos is focused on leveraging innovative communication strategies to shape the future of public relations in Africa. He aspires to build sustainable networks, influence policy development, and mentor the next generation of PR professionals, ensuring the industry continues to thrive and adapt in a rapidly evolving global landscape.





**GRACE MUNJURI**  
 Chairperson,  
 Women in PR Kenya.

Grace Munjuri is Team Lead, at Brand Magnets Limited. She is a Public Affairs Specialist who possesses key capabilities and leadership skills that she has developed over the past 18 plus years she has worked as a Senior Corporate Communication Executive in the public and private sectors. Ms. Munjuri carries a wealth of experience in Leadership and Governance, Corporate/ Public Affairs, Communication for Advocacy, Brand Positioning, Public Relations, Media Relations and Government Relations. She has undertaken corporate profiling to position as market leaders the various organizations she has dealt with helping them refine their strategic communication, brand positioning and reputation management.

Beyond her work life, Grace has served our Nation in various capacities including her current advisory roles as a Board Member at the Kenya Film Classification Board, Board Member and Vice Chair for World Vision Kenya, Director in the Board of the Communications Authority of Kenya and the Media Council of Kenya Board where together as a team they successfully spear headed the Digital Migration in Kenya amid great challenge and chaired the law making process of the Media Act 2013, and together with her committee mid-wifed the delivery of a good law for the industry. She also played a key role in the amendment of Kenya Information and Communication Amendment Act 2013 that gave birth to the new Communications Authority of Kenya.

Ms. Munjuri served at the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) Board from 2009 and was elected PRSK Vice-Chair in 2012, a position she held until 2014 and went on to give her contribution to the regulatory framework for the Kenya Institute of Public Relations currently under legislation. Grace was in 2022 recognised and awarded PRSK Warrior 2022 for her outstanding contribution to the PR industry, an award bestowed upon only 24 professionals in Kenya who have influenced the industry in the last 50 years. Her academic qualifications include a Master of Arts in Corporate Communications from Daystar University and Bachelor of Commerce degree in Marketing from Kenyatta University. She has also pursued numerous courses locally and overseas.



**PATRICIA NDEDE**  
 Executive Member,  
 Women in PR Kenya.

Patricia Ndede is the Managing Director at Simori Communications. She is a passionate, creative, self-driven and proficient PR and Communication professional with Analytical Business acumen who has consistently delivered quality work for 23 years with different organisations within Media, Public Sector and mainstream Government.

Currently, she is the Vice President of the Public Relations Society of Kenya, and has served the society passionately at it's helm. She is also a member of Marketing Society of Kenya and Kenya Editor's Guild. She has a wealth of experience in media management having worked with Nation Media Group and Capital Group respectively. She is a past Corporate Communications Manager at Retirement Benefits Authority for 10 years, the first Director Communications and PR at Huduma Kenya Secretariat and a past Communications Secretary at the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender.

Recognised among PRSK's 2023 Top Women in PR, she is a practitioner of many firsts. While at RBA, she innovated the award winning Mbao Pension Plan that oversaw increased pension coverage in the informal sector in Kenya, recognised and awarded by the World Bank. She developed the Communication Strategy that oversaw the rollout of 52 Huduma Centres during it's inception, developed and executed the Communication Strategy of Kazi Mtaani, a National

Hygiene Programme response to the Covid 19 pandemic while consulting for the World Bank under the Kenya Urban Support Programme through the State Department of Housing.

She also works closely with the Office of the Government Spokesperson giving thought leadership and innovation insights as well as facilitating strategy and staff performance models.

She holds a Masters degree in Communication Studies from the University of Nairobi, a Bachelors degree in International Relations from United States International University and a Bachelors degree in Journalism from United States International University.



**NOELLA MUTANDA**  
Executive Member,  
Women in PR Kenya.

Noella Mutanda, an award-winning PR professional with over 20 years of leadership in Corporate Communication, Stakeholder Management, Advocacy, and Media Relations, has made a significant impact across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Bermuda. Recognized among PRSK's 2023 Top Women in PR, she began her career as a journalist before transitioning into Corporate Communications, where she has driven transformative strategies and operational excellence.

Her career highlights include institutionalizing functional communication departments, implementing Crisis Communication and Reputation Management strategies, and crafting impactful Corporate Communication and Brand Management initiatives.

Notable successes include the development of Quality Management Systems (QMS) that improved organizational efficiency and media relations strategies that enhanced stakeholder engagement and visibility.

Noella holds a master's degree in Corporate Communication, a bachelor's degree in Economics and Communication, and a Diploma in Journalism. She is currently finalizing an Executive MBA at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

A Fellow of the prestigious Fletcher School Leadership Program for Financial Inclusion (Tufts University, USA), Noella serves as the Secretary General of the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) and as a Board Member of the Global Alliance. She has also contributed to public sector transformation as a member of the Ministerial Taskforce for improving government information and public communication functions to align with emerging dynamics.





TOP PUBLIC RELATIONS  
PRACTITIONERS IN KENYA  
2024





# WINNIE GOR

CEO & Founder,  
Winnie Gor Communications Africa.





**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

What excites me the most is how versatile PR is... there's always something new to learn, some new technology coming up. For me, being able to develop and execute successful communications campaigns, whilst working with a diverse clientele locally and internationally. Today I could be representing a client in animal tech, tomorrow a luxury cosmetic brand, a betting firm... There's really never a dull moment in PR

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Digital marketing and personal branding. This has helped us to tell stories of ourselves and our clients to varying audiences. Additionally, I have learnt how to be tenacious and clear-cut in going after the firm's as well as my personal ambitions.

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Oprah Winfrey, Gina Din -Kariuki, My Mother

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Be fearless about following your dreams.

The industry can be a very challenging environment, that will require you to be true to your values and ethics, while also being accommodating towards change. In the moments of uncertainty, having your values and the courage to follow your goals towards breaking barriers will help you achieve greatness in every step of your journey.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

More strategic boutique communications agency. We have a lot of nascent and niche opportunities that require innovative approaches in delivering client solutions around corporate reputation and brand management.


**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

1. Limited access to funding to scale up and knowledge of optimizing funding opportunities.
2. Work-life balance and related responsibilities.
3. Sustainable work force which is not unique to women but the industry at large

How can these be solved? By working together and elevating each other, and empowering the younger generation to take up more responsibilities

**Parting shot**

PR is a very fun and exciting profession but needs one to be malleable, have an open mind as there's always room for more creativity. Lastly, you have to be willing to roll with the punches.

 **...The industry can be a very challenging environment, that will require you to be true to your values and ethics, while also being accommodating towards change. In the moments of uncertainty, having your values and the courage to follow your goals towards breaking barriers will help you achieve greatness in every step of your journey...**





# OMAR KIBULANGA

Head of Communications & PR | Award-winning Swahili Filmmaker  
Mombasa County Public Service Board



### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I oversee the promotion of the Board's corporate image, working strategically to enhance its reputation and visibility. I'm responsible for developing and executing a robust Communication Strategy to effectively convey our messages and objectives. Additionally, I cultivate and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders, ensuring alignment and collaboration on key initiatives. Implementing Advocacy and CSR programs is another aspect of my work, where I focus on driving positive social impact and community engagement. Content creation across various platforms is central to our communication efforts, alongside managing the Board's presence and interactions on social media channels. Furthermore, I facilitate Kiswahili content development, translations and verbal communications to ensure inclusivity and accessibility in our messaging.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

Over the years, I've honed a versatile skill set encompassing strategic communication, stakeholder engagement, advocacy, content creation and social media management. These skills have been instrumental in propelling my professional journey, enabling me to effectively navigate diverse roles in media, government and filmmaking. They've empowered me to amplify organizational messages, encourage meaningful partnerships, drive social impact and effectively tell stories that resonate with audiences. This multidimensional proficiency has not only fueled my career growth but also allowed me to make a tangible difference in the sectors I'm passionate about.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

In the next 10 years, I see myself at the forefront of initiatives aimed at promoting our Swahili culture globally, particularly through communications and film. My work will continue to be deeply rooted in collaboration with coastal communities, especially the youth, documenting our rich cultural heritage and exploring innovative ways to preserve and share it with the world. Swahili holds immense potential to encourage continental linguistic unity and contribute

to Pan-African endeavours. I pledge to continue championing content that not only promotes Swahili literacy but also showcases how its language and heritage have been a cornerstone of historical significance and cultural integration in Africa. I believe the Swahilization of Africa holds immense promise for our nations!

“**...What excites me about the PR industry is its continual evolution, fueled by innovation. Today, platforms like TikTok and Instagram offer unprecedented opportunities for creative storytelling and audience engagement...**”

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Amb. Erastus Mwencha once told me “Language holds immense power serving as a cornerstone of communication, cultural identity and unity. In France, it's almost seen as a transgression when one chooses to speak English over French, despite being proficient in both. I think we need to draw inspiration from Tanzania's visionary leader, Mwalimu Nyerere, who unified his people using Swahili. Tanzania's success in uniting its people, despite having greater ethnic diversity than Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, serves as a compelling example of Swahili's unifying power. I have personally worked with Zuma and South Africans are open to adopt Swahili as the lingua franca of Africa. The problem could come from West Africa, the Hausa and Yoruba as well as the Afro-Arabs in North Africa”.

These words have helped me value my role as a Swahili native and communication professional in our continent, but I also constantly feel challenged to do more to achieve the Swahili dream!



### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

What excites me about the PR industry is its continual evolution, fueled by innovation. Today, platforms like TikTok and Instagram offer unprecedented opportunities for creative storytelling and audience engagement. We're witnessing a shift towards more interactive and visually captivating content and PR professionals have the chance to leverage these trends to connect with audiences in meaningful ways. Whether it's crafting viral campaigns, utilizing influencer partnerships or exploring emerging technologies like AI, the possibilities for innovation are endless. Embracing these new avenues allows us to stay at the forefront of communication, reaching and resonating with audiences in ways previously unimagined.

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

OPPORTUNITY IS NOWHERE. How you read that statement matters. A positive person will see opportunity immediately even without space, a negative person will never. #PositiveVibes

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

My greatest fear is stagnation, the fear of settling for less and not reaching my full potential. Yes, I have

faced this fear numerous times by taking on opportunities and roles that have stretched my capabilities and pushed me to evolve both personally and professionally. I vividly remember the moment

I left my secure position at the Kenya Revenue Authority to pursue a reporter's role at Nation Media Group, despite facing criticism from some for leaving a 'lucrative' job for passion. Confronting this fear has never been easy, but the rewards of stepping outside my comfort zone have far outweighed any initial discomfort. Each time I've confronted this fear, I've emerged stronger, more resilient and with a deeper sense of fulfilment.

### Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

Ah, if I could hit the rewind button and tweak something, I'd totally make sure I was the first one to invent "memes" on social media. Can you imagine the clout I'd have? Haha! But for now, I'll just stick to scrolling through TikTok and Instagram hoping my next video goes viral enough to make me the next internet sensation, of course in a good way. Gotta keep riding that wave of Gen Z and Gen Alpha energy!

### Parting shot.

Ishi sana, ufe sana. -Shihabuddin Chiraghdin Meaning: Live greatly, leave a lasting legacy after your death.





# MOSES KEMIBARO

Founder & CEO  
Dotsavvy Limited.

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

As the Founder & CEO at Dotsavvy, my role includes leading the strategic and tactical aspects of the digital agency across a myriad of areas in close collaboration with a talented and highly capable multidisciplinary team

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

As an entrepreneur and seasoned digital marketing and communications practitioner for close to three decades, I have had the privilege of evolving my skillsets and competencies in several key areas. These include being able to develop, implement and manage digital strategies for our clients using a range of solutions such as websites, social media, digital content, and digital advertising, I have also learned how to lead teams successfully across different organisational functions. As a blogger, podcaster, analyst, speaker and trainer on all things digital in Kenya and Africa for almost two decades, I have amassed immense experience on sharing insights that are highly valued by all stakeholders. Collectively, the sum of my professional experiences have put me in good stead as a thought leader and practitioner in Africa's fast growing digital ecosystem.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

In 10 years' time, from my current vantage point, I imagine still being active in Kenya's and Africa's digital ecosystem in expanding the scope of my interests and competencies in areas such as Artificial Intelligence. I also see that I should have published at least one book and should also be involved as an investor and leader in possibly a few startups. I also imagine doing more writing and creating content via other platforms at scale. Basically, doing what I am doing already but with more focus on some of these areas.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Through the years, I have consulted with many PR and Communications practitioners. I have long admired and

engaged with some like Kui Kinyanjui who was highly inspirational to me when I first started my blog as she was quite probably one of Kenya's first technology journalists. She made me realize that I too could do so with a blog given what she was doing.

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

I think that the convergence of PR and Digital with a focus on the current emerging era of AI will open up so many opportunities to enhance and grow the industry in a myriad of ways. PR will become much more scalable and measurable but the same time will be able to take advantage of next practices in line with evolving consumer behavior.

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

At this juncture, I would say that technology is everything and everything is technology. Therefore, young people need to embrace this reality as it will be essential for all things in the future work.

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

My greatest fear at this time is fear of not achieving my full potential. Therefore, I am always looking at how to ensure I keep learning, growing and evolving to do so. This fear keeps me on my toes!

### Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

Life is interesting. You are where you are because of what you went through. So changing anything would mean you may not be who you are today. From this perspective, however, I wish I could have started my entrepreneurial journey sooner rather than later. I stayed employed for more years than I should have in hindsight.

### Parting shot.

Do things that scare you. Never stop changing with the times. The future is digital!





# MUGAMBI MUTEGI

Manager, Communications and External Relations  
Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK).

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I lead execution of the CAK's awareness creation initiatives and projects, with the aim of growing the organization's corporate image and brand awareness. This spans everything from managing our social media platforms, drafting press releases and speeches, Media monitoring and relations, among other tasks. I am also involved in drafting and advising on internal staff communication.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

In journalism and public communication, simplicity is key, or else you'll lose your audience. The English language is as broad as it is tough. As a business journalist, I reviewed volumes of technical documents and distilled them for my readers in a palatable form, while being vigilant to center the articles on impactful and relatable issues. At my current work station, the same logic applies. Competition law is not the easiest of topics to disseminate. You can easily lose your audience if you fail to plainly demonstrate the nexus between legal provisions, your interventions, and the benefit to the public. At some point last year, I had the unenviable task of distilling over 250 pages of technical management papers into a 3-page press release, while being careful to communicate effectively. Back when I was pitching stories in the newsroom, one of my former editors would instruct me "write like you are addressing your grandmother."

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

My journey in the PR world is still in its early years. I enjoy Government communications, so let's see where this journey takes me. I'm going with the flow, but infusing my steps with a healthy dose of ambition.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

I'm privileged to have friends in the PR & Communications world who have held my hand before and after I exited the newsroom. I'm eternally grateful for their counsel. A member of this circle once told

me to "only communicate when you have something important or useful to say. And when you do, ensure that every word you utter or write owns its place."

This calls for serious introspection before dishing out press statements or other material, and careful choice of words and tone. Why are we communicating? Is it really necessary? How should we say it and when?

Design expert, Ken Haemer, also said (not to me) something memorable. He opined that "designing a presentation without an audience in mind is like writing a love letter and addressing it "to whom it may concern."

Effective PR practitioners should, as much as is practicable, liberate themselves from the desire to inundate their communication, especially to external stakeholders, with the organization's jargon and buzzwords.

**“ ...It's ok to fully understand your professional calling later in life, and not at 22. But when you finally do, grind it out hard! In school, I was good in sciences, specifically Chemistry and Biology. This explains how I ended up undertaking Biotechnology as my undergraduate degree. Initially, it seemed like my calling was spending time in a laboratory, squinting at microorganisms through a microscope. I eventually had my Damascus moment and substituted a lab coat with the mighty pen. No regrets whatsoever....**



### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

As a natural storyteller, and an information sponge, the PR industry is the gift that keeps on giving. Like a factory, the PR discipline is an opportunity to process raw information and present the finished product to consumers. I always like segueing back to my newsroom days. Back then, the gratification from writing important articles was when it elicited policy changes or highlighted issues or malpractices that needed urgent redress. And yes, scoring a scoop sparked an adrenaline rush. On this other side of the comms world, I'm gratified when I play my role in reducing the information asymmetry that exists between the public and organizations. I light up when expounding about the impactful things my employer has done for Kenyans. That is what gets me to my desk every morning.

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

It's ok to fully understand your professional calling later in life, and not at 22. But when you finally do, grind it out hard! In school, I was good in sciences, specifically Chemistry and Biology. This explains how I ended up undertaking Biotechnology as my undergraduate degree. Initially, it seemed like my calling was spending time in a laboratory, squinting at microorganisms through a microscope. I eventually had my Damascus moment and substituted a lab coat with the mighty pen. No regrets whatsoever.

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

Contrary to what my close friends believe, public speaking is not my cup of tea (coffee, in my case). My safe space is writing. During my earlier years in school, I held leadership positions which forced me to stand in front of crowds and articulate issues. In retrospect, this primed me, to some extent, to calm my public speaking butterflies. In my current space, I have purposed to speak more in an official capacity. Instead of always proposing to my colleagues to attend TV or Radio interviews, I am increasingly offering myself to do so. In the instances where I was given the chance, I did not fair too badly, so I was told. At the end of the day, fighting the fear of failure and calming the inner

imposter syndrome voice is an unending journey that requires intentionality. Obviously, it helps if you have a good grasp of the subject matter. So, you have to be well informed about your mandate area to the point that, if you are abruptly woken up at 5am to attend an unplanned TV interview, you can hold your own. Mark Twain said "There are two types of speakers; those that are nervous, and those that are liars."

### Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

Hindsight is 50:50. I don't like lamenting about what should have happened and did not. From a professional standpoint, my experience and time at my former and current employers all matter. God's timing is always ideal. But if I had the ability to quantum leap, I would unhesitatingly set it to a time when my dad was alive, if only to show him that the children he worked purposefully to ground educationally turned out ok.

### Parting shot.

I'm a big fan of Mehdi Raza Hasan, the journalist. In his book, *Win Every Argument: The Art of Debating, Persuading, and Public Speaking*, he offers numerous relatable and practical tidbits. For one, he opines that whereas facts matter during communication, human beings are more receptive to messages that also appeal to them emotionally.

### Pathos Vs Logos.

Another one - never shy away from civil debates/ interviews. If pre-planned, research about the topics. Then research some more, including about the interviewer. Learn their questioning style, watch how they handled other guests and what they said.

A boxer who enters the ring without knowing their opponent's weight class is a self-destructive risktaker!





# SWALEH SHAABAN

Corporate Communications Manager  
Safaricom PLC.



### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

Currently, I serve as one of the Corporate Communication Managers at Safaricom PLC, within the Corporate Communications Department. In my role, I am responsible for developing and implementing communication strategies for our two corporate foundations (M-Pesa Foundation & Safaricom Foundation), as well as a selection of our Corporate Centers and Business Units

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

From an early age, I used to enjoy reading, and creative writing. In my formative years, I used to read newspapers end to end (excluding obituaries hehe!), and my father used to buy copies of Taifa Leo specifically so that I can advance my Swahili. Little did I know that I would make a career out of it, considering writing constitutes a big chunk of my output in my current role. Over the years, this skill has evolved into the editing side, whether it is simple proofreading or more complex structural editing.

During COVID-19, I also started shadowing my then colleague B.W as an MC for the virtual organizational town halls that were introduced as part of employee engagement. These sessions have since evolved into hybrid ones. I continued to sharpen this skill to date, facilitating both internal and external sessions, as well as serious business topics and more laid down networking sessions. I must say, I am not too shabby at this.

I recently graduated with a Masters Degree in Communication Studies from the University of Nairobi, and with it, I am making the step up into more critical assignments and using it as a stepping stone to elevate my impact.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

Armed with a PhD, I see myself catalyzing impactful storytelling at a global stage. Appreciating the fact that I too got a hand-up by my seniors in the industry, I see myself engaging in a lot of teaching and mentoring the next generation of communicators, perhaps even

venture into academia, if AI will not have replaced us all haha!!.

As a comms practitioner, you are always in the background, never the story, so I would challenge myself to do a lot more public speaking, and perhaps author something, on what, I don't know yet. As Master Yoda says, "difficult to see; always in motion is the future."

“...PR at its purest form is about taking these basic principles of communication and elevating them, such that how we share information influences and shapes perception and narratives at a grander scale.....”

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Actions speak louder than words, so to me, the moments that stand out are not just the words of advice given, but more importantly, the actions taken. My current leader has played a great role in shaping my approach to PR and communication, because he believed in me when I was starting out in the industry, and has been very supportive over the years. The effect of such support is that you develop the confidence and courage to try out new things, and the resilience to pick yourself up and move on when things don't turn out as planned.

Another lesson I learnt early on was from my Political Communications lecturer back in campus, who managed to apply his teachings to clinch a seat in the senate. From him, I learnt that you should always be able to practice what you preach!

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

Every day, we communicate with our family and friends, colleagues, acquaintances among others. When passing particularly good or bad news, we take some time and ponder on how best to land the message, what channels to use to achieve the desired outcome, the timing of communication, among a host of factors. PR at its purest form is about taking these basic principles of communication and elevating them, such that how we share information influences and shapes perception and narratives at a grander scale. In PR, there is no one size fits all playbook, and a particular scenario could be approached in multiple ways depending on the context, and even the experiences of the people in charge. This is particularly exciting because it means that there are always learnings to be gleaned from every situation, and it also means that as a PR Practitioner, you have no choice but to collaborate with and learn from your seniors and peers in the industry.

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

One of the mantras that has kept me going over the years is 'if it has to happen, it has to happen' there's no other way about it. Often, we are faced with situations where we feel out of options, without a way forward, or a deadline is fast approaching, but work must be done, or a specific goal must be achieved. However challenging the situation, there is always a solution or an option, if you look hard enough. It might not pan out exactly as envisioned, or might not achieve the most desirable outcomes, but it is a step forward anyway. Such a 'never say die' attitude helps build resilience, and imparts you with the ability to see solutions and options where others see challenges and obstacles.

Another one is contentment, the ability to derive satisfaction even when things don't go 100% as planned, this is critical for peace of mind, otherwise, you will constantly be worried about one thing or another.

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

From a professional lens, a couple of fears emerge from time to time. There's always the background concern that initiatives won't succeed or meet expectations, and

the pressure to consistently perform at a high level. Also, despite having done this for almost a decade, the imposter syndrome occasionally rears its head.

I try to face these fears by embracing a growth mindset and when things don't go as planned, look at it as a learning opportunity. I try to set realistic goals and seek regular feedback from my stakeholders where we have the hard conversations. Lastly, I have found that celebrating small wins as well as engaging my peers provides a platform for exchanging knowledge and reaffirming our value.

### Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

One of my favourite song's lyrics goes 'sometimes I wish I could go back in life, not to change things, just to feel a couple of things twice.' I think it would be the same for me, there are a lot of moments I would like to experience again, like a conversation with my father and hanging out with my mother, or the freedom and innocence of life before responsibilities take center stage. I believe everything that has happened so far is for a reason, and is part of who I am today, so I am more keen to shape the future, so

### Parting shot.

Do, or do not, there is no try. If you are not making mistakes, you are not learning!





# SOLOMON MAHINDA

Executive Vice President  
Tatu City, Rendeavour.

**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

Government, International and Investor relations + Stakeholder engagement and management.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

Leadership, Communication and Marketing strategy development, stakeholder mapping and management, crisis preparedness and communications, business development.

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

Delivering impact and value while having fun at whatever it is I will be doing.

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

When I was an intern, at Scanad PR decades ago. My MD then, Michael Otieno told me, and not so diplomatically, that I had to grow a thick skin (he used very different words here), I had to be bold and confident to make it in this profession. He further impressed on my young soul that if you make a mistake, you make it remarkably well and own it.

My line manager at the time, Rose Thuo, kept reminding me that I'm a consultant, and not our client's employee or magician. Consultants are the experts that clients rely on to bring the outside in. To present the facts as they are.

Bharat Thakrar taught me how to get into the world and shoes of my client to know where it pinches. Only then can you understand them and help them.

These nuggets have stuck with me to date.

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

No day is the same as the other. You can't really plan your week.

In many cases, when you will be relied upon, you will not know what to say or do, but your experience,

networks, knowledge and skills will come together into concert, perform and deliver a harmonious solution with great impact...often, to no applause.

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

The perfect is the enemy of the good. Invest in your career, respect your job, respect your colleagues and respect yourself.

Your biggest asset in your ecosystem is your reputation, your credibility and your integrity. Guard it with all you got!

**“ ...Coming to a much earlier realization in my formative professional life that what doesn't break you, makes you stronger. This, actually true.....**

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

Not meeting my purpose on this earth. I face it every day!

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

Having a more positive outlook of life in general especially during those tough, dark days.

Coming to a much earlier realization in my formative professional life that what doesn't break you, makes you stronger. This, actually true.

**Parting shot.**

In a world where you can be anything, be kind. Tenda wema, nenda zako.



# STELLA KIGUTA-NG'ANG'A

Founder / Principal Consultant, Brand Essence Public Relations.



**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

I am excited about the increasing power of Public Relations to blend strategic thinking, technological innovation, and creative execution to make a positive and tangible difference in the lives of people across Africa.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Strategic thinking, leadership, creative thinking, relationship building, public speaking, and storytelling.

However, one skill that has particularly shaped my career is the ability to scan the operating environment and bring valuable insights into the organization. In a rapidly evolving world, the ability to bring the outside in helps organizations to become responsive, nimble, and forward-thinking.

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Mum is at the top of the list. She gave me the nickname “Stella Storyteller”. Today, whenever I stand on stage to make a presentation or advance a cause, Mum never ceases to marvel at how storytelling has been a core part of my life since childhood.

My daughters, Joy and Abby, also inspire me. They constantly challenge me to be my best in everything I do. They remind me that effective communication is an ancient art that must adapt and remain relevant to the times.

Norah Odwesso played a significant role in my journey in PR and Communication. She provided me with the opportunity to thrive at Coca-Cola in a role that shaped the PR practitioner I am today.

I am thankful for my friends and colleagues, such as Abimbola Oligbinde and Esther Kiragu, among others. They not only challenge me professionally, but also provide support and guidance on a personal level.

This list, of course, is not exhaustive!

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Be yourself! The world will adjust. Embrace who you are, including your imperfections, because they make you perfect for your life’s purpose.

While there’s always room for growth, it’s important to find comfort in the unique way that God has designed you. Every experience you’ve had in your life, whether good or bad, has value.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

More purpose-driven communication. I envision a world where our profession is highly regarded because we, as PR practitioners, resist the usual and speak truth with fluency and courage.

I look forward to the day we eliminate misguided statements like “that’s just PR.”

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

In my opinion, women in PR face similar challenges to women in other fields, such as unconscious bias, various forms of harassment, unequal pay, work-life balance (especially for working mothers), and lack of mentorship and sponsorship, among others.

One challenge that concerns me is ageism. According to Global Women in PR’s (GWPR’s) 2023 report, this issue affects more women than men in our industry. The report revealed that many agency workers don’t plan to continue in their careers beyond the age of 50. Instead, they opt for in-house positions, start their own businesses, or leave the workforce altogether.

Despite these challenges, women in PR have a unique opportunity. Our profession and gender naturally align us as storytellers, advocates, relationship builders, connectors, and systems thinkers. We can use these skills to shine a spotlight on the issues faced by women in the workplace. Our understanding of social, mainstream, and community platforms allows us to share our success stories effectively. By collaborating with men who genuinely support our cause, we can influence policies that level the playing field.



Ultimately, nothing speaks louder than delivering results and demonstrating our competence and expertise. When we excel in our craft, our story cannot be ignored.

### Parting shot

Women in PR (and PR practitioners in general): Now is our moment to shine. We hold the key to guiding our businesses, governments, and communities through the complexities of our evolving world, bringing clarity and purpose to all we do.

“**...One challenge that concerns me is ageism. According to Global Women in PR’s (GWPR’s) 2023 report, this issue affects more women than men in our industry. The report revealed that many agency workers don’t plan to continue in their careers beyond the age of 50. Instead, they opt for in-house positions, start their own businesses, or leave the workforce altogether...**



# PROF HELLEN MBERIA

Principal, JKUAT Karen Campus





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

- Its dynamic and ever-evolving nature. For instance, many organizations are trying to navigate social media platforms for their benefit.
- The strategic thinking required in PR: When an organization decides to rebrand. Strategic thinking is involved in matters of logo, color scheme, etc.
- How PR is used in managing organizational change, conflict, or crisis.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

- Public relations research skills: Through this skill I have been able to conduct research and supervise postgraduate students. The research findings have informed theory and practice in the PR profession.
- Networking: Participating in various events and conferences have enhanced my interactions and engagements with PR professionals and industry players. I have acquired useful knowledge and skills that have informed my research, teaching and practice.
- Mentorship and Coaching: I interact with the young generation in the university. The youth are faced with many challenges. Therefore, my mentorship and coaching skills are very useful.
- Storytelling skills: I am able to tell and write compelling stories.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

Wangari Maathai: Founder of the Green Belt Movement, her commitment to environmental conservation, women's rights, and democracy showcased the power of grassroots activism. Her courage and determination motivate me to contribute to the betterment of society.

Mary Kay Ash: Founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, her dedication to empowering women through entrepreneurship inspires me to stand up for my convictions and contribute to positive change.

Oprah Winfrey: A media mogul, talk show host, and philanthropist, her story of overcoming challenges

inspires me to work hard and not limit myself through limiting beliefs.

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

- Appreciate and embrace the PR profession: Pursue your passion regardless of stereotypes about the profession.
- Consider soft skills: Develop strong interpersonal skills; employers value soft skills in addition to technical skills.
- Be prepared for any opportunity: Preparation is key for job interviews; appearance alone is not enough.
- Maintain a positive online presence: Ensure your online image is positive and professional.
- Keep educating yourself: Stay informed about emerging PR areas and trends.

### Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?

- Embrace emerging technologies.
- Innovative crisis communication and management strategies.
- Ethical digital PR practice.
- Leverage employee engagement, communication, and advocacy.
- Use data and analytics for campaign tracking and decision-making.
- Responsiveness to emerging issues like food security, climate change, economic recovery, and health.

### Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?

- Sexualization and objectification: Establish and enforce policies promoting diversity and inclusion.
- Work-life balance: Encourage organizations to support work-life integration programs.
- Limited leadership roles: Establish mentorship programs, encourage continuous education.
- Sexual harassment: Develop and enforce sexual harassment policies.

- Inadequate training and education: Provide training opportunities and support continuous education for women in PR.



**Parting shot**

Women in PR: Let us be relentless and unstoppable!





# PATRICK OKOYO

Senior Hansard Reporter  
County Assembly of Kisumu.

## Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I transcribe proceedings at the Kisumu Assembly ensuring accuracy in grammar, style and syntax. As Hansard officers, our aim is to enhance transcripts by rectifying errors and clarifying words and sentences to make them clearer, more precise and effective while ensuring that the transcript is substantively verbatim. In my daily tasks, I focus on the organization, paragraph, structure and content of Hansard reports. Additionally, we broadcast Kisumu Assembly proceedings live on our Facebook and YouTube platforms. With real time videos of Assembly plenaries, we contribute to our corporate image building by accurately portraying the state of affairs of our brand, thereby enhancing our reputation.

## Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

Besides the skills acquired during my studies of Mass communication from undergraduate to postgraduate levels, over the years, I have honed my expertise in hermeneutics, knowledge management, leadership, and working within strict deadlines. Yes, I have developed new skills such as indexing Hansard reports (at the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training- CPST) and gained an in-depth understanding of government communication.

My practicality, efficiency, and meticulous attention to detail have consistently set me apart and earned me the privilege to serve on multiple committees within our organization: The Taskforce on the Transition to the Third Assembly, the Steering Committee on the Amendment of Standing Orders, the Committee responsible for developing the Assembly Service Charter, and the Committee overseeing the development of the Second Assembly Legacy Report. I played a pivotal role in the creation of the Assembly's inaugural documentary, where I served as the scriptwriter and narrator, showcasing the legacy of the Kisumu Second Assembly with brilliance and flair.

In May, 2023, I was appointed by the Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association - Africa Union (CHEA-AR) Executive committee during a meeting in Mpumalanga to sit on the subcommittee in charge of the Association's website. Other Members of the

subcommittee include Mr. Steve Katawa Banda, CHEA-AR President (Malawi), Ms. Euphraat Mngadi (South Africa), Mr. Yussuf Muhindo Mukururu (Uganda), Mr. Adam Idrissu (Ghana), and Mr. Jacky Nkosi (Mpumalanga, South Africa). My nomination to this coveted subcommittee is a testament to my leadership and content development skills, as well as my active participation during the 10th Biennial CHEA-AR Conference held in Malawi in October, 2022. The website is set to be unveiled this October, likely in Ghana, during the 11th Biennial Conference of CHEA-AR.

Outside my professional sphere, I actively engage in community service. I serve on the Board of Management of my former secondary school in the village, where I have the privilege of chairing the Academic subcommittee. Recently, I drafted a proposal to Davis & Shirliff, the leading supplier of water-related equipment in the East African region, for the installation of a water pumping system to provide clean and safe drinking water to the students and the community. I am pleased to reveal that the proposal was accepted, and the installation project is currently underway. We anticipate launching the project soon. Let me seize this opportunity to extend my gratitude to Davis & Shirliff for their CSR initiative.

Furthermore, I hold membership in the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) Secretariat on Culture and Heritage. Since 2018, I have represented the youth of Kisumu County in the KNATCOM Youth Forum on Culture. The Secretariat comprises only seven individuals who assist the KNATCOM Culture programme in organizing and planning its annual National Youth Dialogue on Culture and Heritage, coinciding with African World Heritage Day (AWHD) in May each year. Leveraging my skills, I have documented previous KNATCOM workshop reports as a rapporteur and served as a special rapporteur during the development of the nomination file for Mwazindika spiritual dance of the Dawida community. If successful, Mwazindika will become the sixth element to be inscribed under the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) element in need of urgent safeguarding.





### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

In 10 years, I envision myself having progressed from my current role as Hansard reporter to become a Chief Editor, trainer, and PR consultant. Additionally, I see myself serving other parliaments within the Commonwealth, either in PR or Hansard capacities.

“**...If you consistently do the best you can, with integrity, you will regret less and move forward with greater ease.”**-  
**Brian Koslow...**

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

In the PR and communication landscape, I have been influenced by the writing style of the late veteran journalist Philip Ochieng. He emphasized that an editor has the prerogative to take sides on any issue but is professionally obligated to support their stance with facts, accurate figures, and cogent arguments.

Additionally, as a sophomore, I was inspired by the thoughts and works of Ivy Lee, widely considered the first true practitioner of PR. Lee advocated for a philosophy aligned with a ‘two-way street’ approach, although in practice, he sometimes engaged in one-way propagandizing on behalf of clients despised by the public. Nevertheless, his approach remains relevant today as PR involves listening to clients and accurately communicating messages to the publics.

Finally, the late Jasper Otieno, who served as Director of Public Relations at Maseno University, always advised me to be up to date with the latest trends in communication. Thanks to his guidance, I am committed to keeping myself aware of the changing professional landscape.

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

I perceive PR akin to the quadrangular pillars of the oriental concept of Ikigai, the Japanese secret to long life: passion, vocation, profession and mission. It is the intersection where what I love converges with my areas of expertise. PR serves to educate, rectify misinformation, and refine an image. It affords one the opportunity to wield a certain level of influence and impact lives.

Among the principles of human communication, I appreciate the dimension of power inherent in communication. Power, in this context, refers to the ability to influence or control another person’s behaviour. This power dynamic shape’s one’s communication style, and conversely, one’s communication style shapes the power they possess. PR grants legitimate power through control over the dissemination of organizational information. Over time, PR may confer a degree of referent power, especially when individuals aspire to emulate you. Besides, it bestows expert power upon those who master their craft, and information power when others perceive you as capable of communicating logically and persuasively.

However, it is crucial to remember that if one is incompetent in their work, these powers can boomerang, and their influence may wane over time.

Sustaining a positive reputation, building public relationships, crafting compelling narratives that resonate with audiences, fostering clear communication between management and employees, timely transmission of information during crises, and curating an organization’s newsletters/ bulletins are all aspects that make PR exceptionally exciting.

### Q6. What’s the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

The best advice I can offer to young people is this: take time from social media to develop your writing, editing, and other skills crucial to a 21st - century PR practitioner. Secondly, remain open minded to learning something new each day. As Dr. Wale Akinyemi once wrote, a closed mindset can only be opened by the humility of its owner to recognize that their current knowledge is not exhaustive. Thirdly, maintain positivism in life and eschew shortcuts.



Dedicate yourself to hard work and uphold integrity. Finally, cultivate a habit of wide reading; whether it is literature, philosophy, religion, or latest journals, diverse reading enriches the mind. It's been said that with ten thousand hours of focused reading, one can become an expert.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

My greatest fear is waking up one morning to find the world has moved ahead of me. I overcome this fear by staying informed about current events and ensuring I have accurate information.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

I would advise myself to stop worrying excessively about the future and, instead focus on consistently doing the right thing. Through my experiences, I have learnt that success often results from amalgamating hard work with integrity, regardless of the timeline. By embracing this mindset, I believe I could have approached challenges with greater intestinal fortitude and positivity

**Parting shot.**

"If you consistently do the best you can, with integrity, you will regret less and move forward with greater ease."- Brian Koslow.

Let me also echo the evergreen words of English Bishop, moral philosopher and satirist Joseph Hall who once said, "a reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep their eyes on the spot where the crack was."



# CATHERINE MURAGURI

Principal Corporate Communications Officer,  
Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)





**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

Telling stories that impact people's lives, promoting behavior change. It's a privilege to design and package material to bring out information that impacts people's lives. PR is dynamic and versatile, requiring constant learning, unlearning, and relearning. The influence of technology like AI adds to the excitement. The progress of the IPRAC Bill in Parliament is also remarkable.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

**Problem-solving skills:** Critical thinking for attaining desired outcomes by consulting others.

**Communication Skills:** Continuous improvement to avoid disastrous results, emphasizing effective communication, listening, and feedback.

**Networking skills:** Recognizing the transformative power of a phone call and its impact on personal and professional life.

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years?**

**Irene (Mother):** Encouraged and guided Catherine in her career from an early age.

**Gina Din Kariuki:** Trailblazer in the PR profession in Kenya, admired for resilience, tenacity, and crisis management.

**Anne Waiguru:** Chair of the Council of Governors, a figure of inspiration.

**Kamala Harris:** Vice President of the USA, breaking barriers for women of colour in high offices.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Work hard and deliver PR's essential results. Keep up with current affairs for improved content creation and writing. Learn and upgrade skills continually. Don't hesitate to ask for assistance. Be relevant in the workplace.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

Enactment of the IPRAC Bill into law.

Recognition of communications as an essential part of business.

Adequate budgetary allocations for the PR profession.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Overlooking women's voices and decisions made for them.

**Solution:** Speak up, make valuable contributions, be bold, and prove your worth.

Long working hours in a male-dominated field.

**Solution:** Be versatile, adaptive, and knowledgeable about the profession's contribution to organizational success.

**“ “ ...Work hard and deliver PR's essential results. Keep up with current affairs for improved content creation and writing. Learn and upgrade skills continually. Don't hesitate to ask for assistance. Be relevant in the workplace... ” ”**

**Parting shot**

Be good at what you do and leave  
the world a better place than you  
found it.





# NJIDEKA AKABOGU

Regional Manager, East Africa and Lead PR & Comms Adviser  
ID Africa (BHM)



### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

I think the future is quite bright. We still have a long way to go, but people, organizations, and governments across the world are increasingly acknowledging the importance of Public Relations and the critical role we play. The COVID-19 pandemic, I believe, is partly to thank for this awakening. But even beyond COVID-19, the work that professionals and trade bodies such as the PRSK are doing to shine the light on our profession has also played a huge part in this. It's why initiatives like World PR Day are important.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

I always say that the most important skill I have is my writing skill because I think that everything else in my career has been built on/around that. But beyond writing, I think actively working on my people management skills has been a game-changer. Because relationships are very important in the work that we do, the way you handle people - be it the media, your clients, colleagues, supervisors, or vendors - can either make or mar your career.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

I don't know about history, but there are tens of women who have inspired and continue to inspire me to be the best version of myself either through the way they live their lives, their work ethics, or even active counselling. From my sisters to my friends and some of my brilliant colleagues at ID Africa and BHM. For the benefit of this article, though, I'm going to list three.

Bozoma Saint-John – She has shown black women all over the world, especially those of us in Marketing Communications, that it is indeed possible.

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter - I mean, it's Beyoncé. It doesn't get more inspiring than that. There's something about Beyoncé's brilliance and spirit of excellence that just makes you want to not be mediocre.

Sheryl Sandberg - Sheryl has had a career that's been nothing short of inspiring.

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

Do the work! I know the world we live in today appears to favour posturing. But I promise, you don't want to be the person who makes all the noise on LinkedIn or social media with nothing to show for it. At the start of your career, it's particularly important that you put down your head and get your hands dirty. By all means, do all the nice personal branding stuff, but always ensure that you can back it up.

### Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?

I'd like to see more PR practitioners take up spaces in rooms where decisions are being made. We need to be in a place where the governments and businesses that we serve fully see our value and are able to rely on our guidance on important decisions. I'd also like to see more PR professionals step out of their comfort zones, out of the traditional way of doing PR, and take into cognizance the world we currently live in; and adapt accordingly. A lot has changed and continues to change - and if we are serious about communicating for impact, we must not continue to limit our practice of Public Relations to what we were taught in school, to press releases, print clippings, and blog posts. I also hope that in 5 years, we are not playing catch-up. That we are the ones setting trends and leading the change we want to see in the world.

“ “ **...Do the work! I know the world we live in today appears to favour posturing. But I promise, you don't want to be the person who makes all the noise on LinkedIn or social media with nothing to show for it. At the start of your career, it's particularly important that you put down your head and get your hands dirty...**



**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

I do not think that the challenges women face in PR are particularly unique to our industry. Findings from the Africa Public Relations & Communications Report show that leadership positions in the industry across the continent are mostly dominated by men. Now, it can be argued that this is also because there are more men than women in the industry (per the report), but it's also hard to not see the correlation between this and our societal reality, which is that the percentage of women in leadership positions in government, organizations from Kenya to Nigeria to Ghana to South Africa is abysmally low. Which is a shame because throughout history, it's been demonstrated that women make really great leaders. I always say that a huge part of the success we've attained at BHM can be attributed to the fact that a greater percentage of our leadership team over the years has been women. On how this can be solved, I think it's simply to let women lead. We all need to strive in our individual agencies, companies, organizations to create an enabling environment for women to shine and reach their full potential.

**Parting shot**

Finally, my African agenda for our profession is that we realize how big a role we as storytellers and perception managers should be playing in propelling our continent forward. And that we step up to the challenge!





# LINA JAMWA

Membership, Advocacy and Communications Manager,  
Kenya Flower Council.





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

The public relations industry is very unique and powerful in that it helps to make organizations by building and maintaining their corporate images. The most exciting thing about the industry is that there's never a dull moment. New trends come up every day and how we do our work invokes a lot of creativity to get the message across. I enjoy reading to get to understand new trends in the industry. New technology is released every day and public relations, like many other industries, has not been left behind. The use of Artificial Intelligence tools, data analytics, and blockchain technology among others have made the PR industry a very interesting space!

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

- Writing skills - Over the years my writing has become much better. Public relations work is marked by writing different pieces at any particular time. One is required to write proposals, newspaper articles, feature stories where necessary, press releases, and reports among other items. All these require the ability to write to a very good level and pass all the ideas clearly and concisely
- Analytical skills - public relations has sharpened my analytical skills. As PR Pros, we analyze trends in our audiences and interpret these into pieces of information that can be used to make decisions in a company.
- Emotional intelligence - dealing with many different people of different levels and expectations has helped build my emotional intelligence. Public relations is a high-pressure job and requires careful handling of different audiences at different times. Different audiences require specific handling at particular times in an organization's life. The only way to excel in this is to sharpen one's emotional intelligence skills.
- Creativity - executing public relations skills requires creativity to a very good degree otherwise one risks appearing mundane and losing the audience's attention altogether. Over the years, I have sharpened my creativity as with each industry that I have worked in, I have handled a different audience with totally different needs and expectations.

Meeting these has required creativity in crafting and executing the public relations strategy through it all.

- Research skills - there are always new trends and technology in public relations. To keep abreast, one has to keep on reading and researching. Failure to do so would mean they risk remaining relevant to their jobs. Over the years, I have developed and sharpened my research skills to make me a savvy public relations professional.

**“ ...The ascension of the IPRAC Bill into law. Public relations as a professional is quite critical to any company. Sadly, most people are not aware of the impact of PR hence roles in PR have been downplayed in the past, and unqualified personnel employed to handle these dockets. While some somehow learn the ropes and excel, others have contributed to watering down the very essence of the profession. The IPRAC Bill will ensure that all professionals handling public relations work are duly qualified....**

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

- Michelle Obama - she makes excellence look so easy!! I love her intelligence, her growth story and her dedication to a workout regime. She was just the girl next door who worked hard in whatever she was assigned to handle. And as much as her husband was

the President of America, she too has very powerful achievements even before they both rose to fame.

- Julie Gichuru - her intelligence and excellence in the workplace have stood out for me. I admire how she has maintained a perfect personal brand despite being in the public face over the years
- Oprah Winfrey - I love what she does and the impact she has had on society globally. She is a force to reckon with for sure!

#### **Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

- Be open to learning and don't shy away from handling new roles that you are given
- Have a curious mind and go the extra mile to get valuable information at any time
- Curve your space by creating a strong work ethic marked by integrity and professionalism
- Be strategic and calculate each step you take wisely
- Take some time to exhale! Your body will thank you for it!

#### **Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

I would like to see:

- The ascension of the IPRAC Bill into law. Public relations as a professional is quite critical to any company. Sadly, most people are not aware of the impact of PR hence roles in PR have been downplayed in the past, and unqualified personnel employed to handle these dockets. While some somehow learn the ropes and excel, others have contributed to watering down the very essence of the profession. The IPRAC Bill will ensure that all professionals handling public relations work are duly qualified.
- Emergence of more technology that would make audience engagement easier and more strategic in the long run
- The emergence of more highly specialized PR agencies. In the global PR industry, for example, there are PR agencies serving only industries

specifically working with blockchain technology, others only serve tech companies, among other specialized industries.

#### **Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

- Work-life balance - PR work sometimes entails long working hours and trips out of station which may clash with family demands and obligations. The effect of this is felt more by women in PR than their male counterparts. This can be resolved by creating or strengthening policies that allow for days of rest and reconnection with family after such demanding times of work
- Glass ceiling - While PR is generally dominated by women, fewer women make it to leadership positions compared to their male counterparts. This could be emanating from wrong perceptions and gender bias which make people imagine that male PR professionals will perform better than their female counterparts when given leadership positions. This can be resolved by having awareness and complete change of cultural trends when it comes to male and female handling in the industry
- Unequal pay - In several instances, men in PR earn more than women in PR at the same level. Like in number 2 above, this could be due to wrong perceptions and gender bias. It could also be because men generally do not shy away from negotiating salaries against their worth. Women tend to be empathetic to their employers and end up accepting a lower salary in the long run. To resolve this, women should be educated more on personal branding and the elevation of their own brands. They should also be educated more on the development of negotiation skills. This could help them negotiate for higher pay as they join the particular organization

#### **Parting shot**

Trust in God, fear nothing, and keep on moving!!



# MUMBI WARUI, OGW

Deputy Director, Communications, State Dept. of Internal Security.



### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

The diversity of the PR industry is what excites me most. No assignment or project is the same. Today, I could be telling stories of how government projects are positively impacting the lives of citizens in remote areas of the country, while tomorrow I could be in a boardroom with senior government officials strategizing on how to effectively run National Day celebrations, the World Rally Championship in Kenya, or simply how to implement a National Government Agenda. The thrill that comes with the successful completion of a daunting task is gratifying, hence the urge to always strive to be better.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

Top on the list is networking. It is, for sure, true that your network is your net worth. Day by day, I learn the immense benefits of growing my network. If you do good and do right, people in your network will mention your name in rooms you may have never set foot in. This I have seen first-hand, and I appreciate all who have rooted for me over and over, allowing me numerous opportunities for growth in my PR journey.

Secondly, relationship building. As a practicing journalist, I always felt some PR professionals would only reach out when they needed help with a particular story or project. Now that I am in the PR space, I decided to invest time and build my relationships, be it with the media, government, and any other stakeholders. They end up always feeling appreciated and create a better working environment.

Third, honesty. The PR industry is prone to the embellishment of stories, resulting in half-truths being circulated. However, if one must communicate, the truth will propel you further down the road than a lie. Always being truthful has seen me avert potential crises in my professional career. It is when you lie and the truth gets out that makes the job much harder.

Fourth, attention to detail. I have learned to study and understand the various individuals, clients, and stakeholders I work with. Anticipating their needs even before they articulate them has set me apart from the rest of the crowd. Over time, this has resulted in several

referrals and work opportunities for which I am grateful.

Last but not least, thinking on my feet and adopting a 360-degree approach in every task has positively contributed to my PR journey. I am where I am today because of these skills that I strive on a daily basis to abide by, propelling me even further in my career and in delivering PR services to my clients.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

The first person that comes to my mind is Mary Wambura Ngure. Bet you must be wondering who she is. My mother. Were it not for her, I would not be half the woman I am today, or half the journalist or even half the PR professional I continue to be. My mother taught me to strive to be better at an early age. She taught me to be my own person. She taught me to stand for the truth, and above all, she taught me that things always work out; all you need to do is trust in God. Every day, she continues to inspire me by how she takes care of everyone around her, striving to make the world a better place in her own little way. I am privileged to have learned all I have from her, first hand from a tender age. She inspires me to do good, to be the best I can be because that is all she ever hopes for me. Thank you, Mum! Happy Mother's Day to you.

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

No, is never a final answer. Keep trying, keep asking, keep believing, and keep reinventing, and the door will open. Also, do it afraid. I almost feel that this is a mantra that every woman in PR abides by or has abided by. There are instances where the assignment will seem impossible; do it afraid. 80% of the things we worry about don't materialize. Be kind to yourself.

### Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?

I would love to see the implementation of the IPRAC Act. With set standards and regulations, the industry can only grow in leaps and bounds. Graduates in the profession will be better guided, while corporates will understand the modus operandi of the profession, hence improving the quality of the stories told and the impact on society. Additionally, I hope to see more corporates





and organizations leverage the power of PR. This could entail having a PR strategy or practitioner within each and every organization.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

According to statistics, there are more women in the PR profession compared to men. However, in most cases, decisions regarding PR ideas or activities are made by men in leadership positions. Incidentally, the average age of women in PR is reducing by the day. Being a young female tends more often than not to work against PR professionals who know what they are doing. Some managers are inclined to question your ideas based on your age and not necessarily experience.

The PR and Communications landscape is changing, and it is beautiful what Gen Z is bringing to the table. Fearlessness, speaking their minds, and sharing ideas outside the norm. This needs to be supported, and it is my hope that

PRSK will continue leading from the front, offering young professional women opportunities to showcase their brilliant ideas.

I believe a time is coming, in the not-too-distant future, where age or gender will not be a determinant but only the execution of great ideas.

**Parting shot**

You don't have to wait until life isn't hard anymore for you to be happy. Be here, NOW.



# KEVIN SANG

Head of Corporate Communications  
The Kenya Power & Lighting Company Plc.



### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I lead corporate communication and social impact initiatives at Kenya Power, leveraging over 15 years of energy sector expertise to develop strategic communication strategies, manage stakeholders, engage media, handle crises, and drive corporate social responsibility programmes aligned with business goals.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

Over the years, I've honed a comprehensive skill set in strategic corporate communications and stakeholder engagement. This includes communication planning aligned with organizational goals, adept stakeholder management, effective media engagement, crisis communication, and digital/social media management. I've also demonstrated strong leadership and team management skills, strategic decision-making, and proficiency in event management. These skills have propelled my journey from Corporate Communications Officer to my current role as Head of Corporate Communications, enabling me to navigate challenges and drive organisational objectives.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

In a decade, I envision myself as a distinguished leader at the intersection of corporate communications and sustainability, driving transformative change within organisations and communities. With a focus on integrating sustainability principles into communication strategies, I aim to inspire action and engagement towards environmental and social responsibility. By collaborating with cross-functional teams, advocating for sustainability initiatives, and leveraging innovative communication approaches, I aspire to create a more sustainable future, leaving a lasting impact on both organisations and the world at large.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

I owe immense gratitude to my predecessors at Kenya Power; Migwi Theuri, former Deputy Manager, Corporate Communications and Florence Obura,

former Head of Corporate Communications, whose guidance has profoundly shaped my career in PR and Communications. Migwi, being my immediate supervisor, instilled in me the principles of meticulousness, adept multitasking, ethical conduct, and unwavering diligence. This, coupled with Florence's strategic mindset, taught me the value of adaptability and foresight in navigating every evolving communications landscape. Their mentorship equipped me with the skills and ethical foundation necessary for success in this dynamic field. I am profoundly thankful for their impactful leadership, which has been instrumental in my professional journey.

“**...My greatest fear is feeling inadequate and failing to live up to my potential, partly stemming from not having a father figure while growing up. I've confronted it by simply ploughing my way through, building confidence over the years, and embracing setbacks as opportunities for growth. ...**

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

Its dynamism and fast-paced nature. The ever-evolving PR landscape presents constant opportunities for creativity, innovation, and growth. The challenge of staying ahead of trends, adapting to new technologies, and effectively communicating messages in a rapidly changing business environment is daunting and exhilarating at the same time.

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

Embrace the dynamic nature of the PR industry. Stay curious, adaptable, and open to learning. Seek out opportunities for growth within the spaces you find yourself in, build strong relationships, and never lose



sight of your passion. By being hardworking, staying proactive, and committed to continuous improvement, you'll thrive in this fast-paced field.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

My greatest fear is feeling inadequate and failing to live up to my potential, partly stemming from not having a father figure while growing up. I've confronted it by simply ploughing my way through, building confidence over the years, and embracing setbacks as opportunities for growth.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

Nothing! I've found that every experience, whether good, bad, or ugly, has worked for my good over the years, shaping me into the person I am today.

**Parting shot.**

"Semper Paratus" - Always Ready





# MAUREEN KOECH

Customer Experience Communications Manager,  
Equity Bank Kenya Limited.



**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

I am particularly drawn to the ever-evolving nature of the PR industry and the opportunity it provides to inform, educate, shape opinions and influence perceptions. This gives us so much power as PR professionals and how we use this power is what sets us apart as professionals. It is said to whom much is given, much is expected.

How storytelling and content creation has revolutionised how we connect and interact with our audiences is something that excites me as well. There's limitless opportunities for us to creatively tell our stories.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Building relationships and networking is one of the most important skills I have acquired over the years. I have been able to enter rooms and meet people I otherwise wouldn't have, just because I invested in people and cultivated the right relationships.

Writing is one of my strongest skills. One of my proudest achievements as a professional is being the founding editor of the PR Digest Magazine, an industry publication that gave PR professionals a platform to tell their stories. Starting a publication, under guidance from the Editorial Board and Dr Marube who was the President at the time, and making it a powerhouse that is recognized in the PR space globally is one of the things I will forever be proud of. We not only featured amazing local stories but had pieces from writers across the world.

Storytelling and content creation is another set of skills that I've honed over the years. Being part of the team that ran successful campaigns like the 2023 Top Women in PR campaign in partnership with the US Embassy in Kenya, the inaugural EAPRW conference and even just telling stories about the Council and Secretariat's achievements during AGMs is something I'm proud of. Through this we were able to give members an opportunity to belong and be proudly associated with the #TeamPR movement.

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female Head of State. She paved the way for many more African women to take up strategic leadership positions and that number is bound to grow. I believe that Kenya will one day have a female Head of State and won't be surprised if she came from the #TeamPR community.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Always be open to learn, unlearn and relearn, that's the only way you'll grow. Remember to chin up even when things don't seem to be going your way. Something will eventually give, that's how the universe is wired.

Also, invest in mentors. You need people who'll guide you as you navigate your career path. God knows I needed my mentors. I am a proud product of their mentorship and I'm glad that they held my hand, challenged and encouraged me throughout my career. The right mentors will always celebrate, correct and challenge you.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

With the IPRAC Bill in the offing, I look forward to a profession that is accorded the same respect and recognition as our counterparts in other professions. We have often been overlooked yet we play a critical role in not only the organizations we work for but societies we live in.



**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

We fight so hard to get a seat at the table but seldom use that opportunity and voice to drive meaningful change and make room for other professionals to join the fold. I am happy that many women in #TeamPR are breaking the glass ceiling and joining the C-Suite. Use this opportunity to send the elevator down.

**Parting Shot**

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Always remember to fail fast, but fail forward.







# JOEL CHACHA

Lead, African Regional Hub,  
Portland Communications.



### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

In my role, I oversee the Africa regional hub, providing strategic insights to multinational investors, corporations, and prominent development and policy-focused groups across the continent. Some of our clients include King Baudouin Foundation, The Mo Ibrahim Foundation, The MasterCard Foundation, Alwaleed Philanthropies, The Gates Foundation, Janus Continental Group, and Coca-Cola, among others. My responsibilities also include driving new business growth, strengthening multi-market client relationships, and managing and expanding our firm's network throughout the region.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

Throughout my career, I've honed a diverse skills set strategic communication, crisis communication, and stakeholder engagement— that's driven my professional growth. However, my research skills and social capital are what have truly set me apart, keeping me ahead of industry trends and fostering innovative solutions. Leveraging media relations with key gatekeepers and securing new clients through my extensive network has been key aspects of my success. As AI redefines the norm, standing out, being creative, and disrupting the status quo are not just important— they're imperative.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

A decade from now, I see myself as a leader in the field of strategic development communication, leveraging cutting-edge technologies and innovative strategies to drive positive change on a global scale. I envision myself continuing to expand my knowledge and expertise, collaborating with diverse teams, and making a meaningful impact in the world.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

One of the most impactful pieces of advice I've received from my mentor, emphasized the critical role

of honesty. It has guided me in building relationships based on trust and credibility, which are essential in our field. By being honest and transparent in my communications, I have been able to establish myself as a reliable and trustworthy partner to clients and colleagues alike.

This approach has also helped me navigate challenging situations, such as when clients demand unrealistic KPIs. Instead of compromising my integrity to meet these demands, I have learned to push back respectfully and ensure that expectations are realistic and achievable. This has not only maintained my integrity but has also set the stage for more meaningful and successful partnerships.

Moreover, the advice to prioritize honesty has shaped my approach to PR strategy, ensuring that I always present information accurately, fairly, and transparently. This commitment to honesty has not only helped me build a reputation for integrity but has also contributed to the success of my PR campaigns.

Overall, the advice to prioritize honesty in PR and communications has been a guiding principle in my career, helping me build strong relationships, navigate challenges, and achieve success in our field.

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

Having exposure to different clients across various sectors such as corporate, litigation, government, foundations, and multilateral organizations is incredibly exciting. It provides a rich and diverse experience, allowing for a deeper understanding of different industries and issues. This exposure not only broadens my knowledge but also hones my skills in adapting communication strategies to suit different clients' needs and contexts. As an extrovert, I'm particularly excited about the opportunity to meet new people and build connections in these diverse sectors. Overall, this experience is a constant learning experience that keeps me engaged and motivated.

## Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

My advice to young and upcoming individuals is to be inspired by others' success but not intimidated by it. Success is not a finite resource; there is room for everyone to achieve their goals. Use others' achievements as motivation to push yourself further and strive for your own success. Remember that everyone's journey is unique, and comparing yourself to others can be counterproductive. Focus on your own path, set realistic goals, and work hard to achieve them. Stay true to yourself, be persistent, and believe in your abilities. With dedication and perseverance, you can achieve great things!

**“...Moreover, the advice to prioritize honesty has shaped my approach to PR strategy, ensuring that I always present information accurately, fairly, and transparently. This commitment to honesty has not only helped me build a reputation for integrity but has also contributed to the success of my PR campaigns....”**

## Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

In the ever-evolving world of communication, my greatest fear is becoming complacent. While automation and technology are transforming the industry, I believe the true threat lies in simply following the crowd and failing to stand out.

This fear fuels my constant drive to push the boundaries of creativity and disrupt the status quo. By focusing on the unique human skills that machines cannot replicate, like strategic thinking, emotional

intelligence, and the ability to craft compelling narratives, I strive to differentiate myself and remain relevant in this dynamic field.

## Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

If I could rewind time, my biggest regret would be the prevalence of “shovel ware journalism” during my stint in the newsroom. With the dramatic decline of advertising, simply replicating content across platforms without tailoring it to each medium's strengths ultimately undermined the impact of journalism. Instead, I would have advocated for embracing multimedia storytelling, prioritizing telling real, raw and relatable stories, and fostering audience engagement – strategies that could have ensured media houses remained relevant while upholding the core principles of quality journalism.

### Parting shot.

Being named among the Top 30 Men in PR for this inaugural event is a profound honour. To stand alongside such esteemed peers fills me with immense gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose. This recognition isn't just a personal milestone – it's a torch passed, igniting a passion to push the boundaries of strategic communication even further.

It's not about the individual accolades; it's about the collective impact we can create. This recognition serves as a platform to amplify positive stories, champion causes that matter, and inspire the next generation of PR professionals. Together, let's leverage our voices to shape a future where Kenyan PR thrives, not just in the industry, but in the hearts and minds of our communities. This is just the beginning of an exciting journey, and I'm humbled to be a part of it.





# ABDISHUKRI OSMAN

Principal Operations Officer (Port of Lamu),  
Kenya Ports Authority.

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I am responsible for managing ship operations and deployment of labour and equipment utilization at the Port of Lamu. I also coordinate internal and external communication, spearhead stakeholder engagements and chair the Border Management Committee (BMC) of Lamu Port. I cover the region of LAPSSET Corridor including Counties of Lamu, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu and Turkana as well as transit markets of Ethiopia and South Sudan.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

I view communication and public relations as a gradual process that has over the years enabled me to acquire the skills and ability to strategically communicate in both written and verbal communication, as well as active listening skills which is essential in the career growth of any communicator. This has clearly provided me the much-needed clarity and ability to disseminate correct information during my engagements with stakeholders and the public amidst the overcrowded communication space.

The need to be equipped with improved and enhanced technical skills in my career have also seen me developing specific technical skills that have become a great asset and highly beneficial in the ever dynamic and growing technological advancements in communication. With the advent of social media and artificial intelligence among other new forms of media, it is only prudent that we learn new ICT skills and don't get left behind.

The ability to prioritize tasks, meet deadlines, and work efficiently has been crucial in my communication and public relations career. This skill has indeed helped to increase my productivity and meet my goals.

As you are aware, sometimes in this sector, we are called problem solvers or "Mr. Fix it". Therefore, having the ability to think critically and providing creative solutions to challenges is a valuable skill in this career. During times of crisis communications, it has enabled me to analyze the situation at hand, identify potential solutions, and oversee its implementation effectively.

Without any doubt, there is the benefit of networking, building, and maintaining professional relationships and beyond in the communication and public relations sector as I have evidenced over the years. This involves being able to network, make connections, and leverage them for career opportunities and building friendships.

Lastly, the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions, as well as those of others, is important in any career especially given that we handle public expectations.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

God willing, and to be honest, I will be over 50 years and If not serving in State House or Office of the President as the State House Comptroller or Government Receptionist, I would love to be an industry expert that can provide ideas, guidance, and strategy especially in addition to communication, Government Relations and Public Communication where I strongly believe there is a big gap in most public owned organizations.

During my over 20 years in this space, I have had amazing mentors and managers in different organizations, so I'd like to be able to provide similar guidance, potentially taking on a leadership role in my own establishment as a consultant.

In this regard, I am committed to honing my leadership skills and staying abreast of industry trends. I will also wish to broaden the space for Protocol management as one of the less considered roles of communication units and perhaps introduce a branch of Association of diplomacy and protocol officers in Kenya and subscribe to the United States of America's Protocol & Diplomacy International – Protocol Officers Association (PDI – POA) where members, just like Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) can meet and exchange ideas and learn.

I realize even those who have been in the industry for a long period still find it difficult to appropriately advice on matters protocol despite the function being domiciled in communication and public relations departments / sections.



#### **Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

When I joined Kenya Ports Authority, I found Mr. Harry Abok who I think most of the Public Relations professionals have met and interacted with. He is the one who introduced me to Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) and encouraged me to attend short courses which were organized by PRSK in conjunction with the best minds in the industry.

This recommendation, I must admit, contributed immensely to the sharpening of my skills and knowledge given that I was new to the industry. In short, it provided me with an opportunity to learn from the best.

The other person I would wish to single out in the PR industry is none other than our Fellow Ms. Fatma Mohamed Hirsi. She was at that time heading the communication unit at the Nation Media Group and Chairperson of Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK). Her counsel was simple; if you wish to succeed in the PR industry, especially in public communication, deliver correct and timely information, be consistent in your communication and be ready to adapt to emerging issues and trends in the sector. She said, "Be a flexible young man, what I can promise you is that the future is bright is this sector."

Looking at how far I have come, I will be selfish if I didn't attribute my steady growth in my career to this magnificent lady.

Lastly, and most importantly my former immediate Boss and Manager Corporate Communications at Kenya Ports Authority Mr. Bernard Osero. In my over 17 years of working under his stewardship, he taught me that landing your dream Public Relations job could not happen overnight. He encouraged me to embrace patience and perseverance as I navigated the ever-evolving communication sector and continue to hone my skills leading to my enrolment for BSc Degree in Communications and Public Relations at Moi University.

He significantly helped me expand my understanding of the industry and enabled me to actively seek opportunities to showcase my abilities in the organization with a lot of confidence. He might have been hard on me on one occasion or another, but as I

usually said to him, I am who I am today because of his proper guidance and teachings. That man is a walking PR and communications Dictionary, look out for him.

#### **Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

Public relations industry provides unique opportunities for one to be creative and in control, build relationships, learn, and grow both professionally and personally. I find it fun and energizing to connect with so many different people, leaders, colleagues, stakeholders, and media making each day distinct.

Over the last 17 years, I don't think I got bored even for a day. In essence, I love working in PR because it's not that typical 8-to-5 job.

In PR, you can explore new places because of assignment in different Countries and valuable connections from meeting and handling the most important persons in the society. Without a doubt, what excites me most is that PR professionals get much more than just an income.

#### **Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Firstly, in these hard economic times, and in the absence of job opportunities, there is need to gain experience through internships and volunteering as the training wheels for your PR career. They give valuable hands-on experience, allowing you to learn the ropes and make mistakes without the pressure of a real job.

Secondly, networking is ideally considered a secret handshake for PR professionals. Participate in PR and Communications events, connect with people and reach out to those you admire with a view of building a strong network that will open doors to new opportunities, provide valuable insights, and foster collaborations that can propel your career forward.

Thirdly, keep yourself abreast on the PR industry trends because the PR and communications landscape just like many other fields is constantly evolving, so stay in the know. Read industry publications and follow relevant blogs to keep your finger on the pulse, trust me, it pays. I understand learning is usually difficult after you have graduated from the University, However, embrace a mindset of continuous and commitment to a lifelong learning which will position you at the forefront of the PR field.



Last but not the least, like I mentioned above, and the first lesson I was given when I started working as a PR and Communications practitioner, was to embrace patience and perseverance. You will certainly come across many challenges and many would seem to be barriers to accomplish your PR role in the organization or industry, but consistently and aggressively seek opportunities to showcase your talent and prove your worthiness. They always listen.

I hope these tips are helpful since I strongly believe that with dedication and persistence, you'll undoubtedly find your place at the table.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear, and have you ever tried to face it?**

My best friend and colleague for over 10 years called Serah Tuva, Senior Corporate Communications Officer (CSI) used to ask me, what your biggest fear? Though it is scary to talk about it, the biggest fear I have in my life is failure. Basically, being afraid of not accomplishing my objectives, letting down myself and others who depend on me, and not taking out on opportunities for success and fulfillment. Despite this, I am a strong believer that facing my fear, learning from the accepted setbacks, and persevering through challenges ultimately leads to personal growth and resilience.

Another fear and which is very critical in my career growth is feeling stuck. Because I think it's important to keep learning and growing, I try not to get too comfortable. I like taking on new challenges because they keep me moving forward and constantly avoid being stagnant and not evolving or improving as a person.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

To succeed in my PR and Communications career, I would often over-commit my time and availability which made it challenging for me to take the time I need to care for myself and my family. Therefore, if I could change one thing about myself if time was taken back, I would

improve my ability to set boundaries and recognize when it's time to take a break and be with my family, wife, and children.

Spending time together as a family creates a sense of belonging and promotes adaptability and resilience and in the words of my former Chairman of Kenya Ports Authority, Gen. (Rtd) Joseph Kibwana who once told me that we should try in finding ways to spend time together as a family and create great memories.

He said if there is something he could do if time was taken back, is spending time with his family when he served in the military since according to him, the ability to face life's changes and challenges is greatly improved by a strong family bond, the feeling of knowing that you belong, you are cared for, and you are needed, which gives a sense of meaning and purpose in life. I concur with him.

**Parting shot**

There is a quote I saw somewhere that goes like; the horse was a long shot, but I bet on him anyway. When I was asked to choose my career, I did bet on PR and Communications industry, and I have no regrets at all.





# ZAKHEEM RAJAN

Senior Communications Officer- Judiciary, Vice Chair CSR -Office of the  
Chief Justice, ICEPCVE Peace Advocate  
Judiciary.



**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

My portfolio spans photography, videography, social media management and media coordination. I am a member of the State of the Judiciary and Administration of Justice Report committee (SOJAR), [a constitutional and statutory committee that prepares the annual report on the state of the judiciary and the administration of justice], Vice Chair to the CSR in the office of the Chief Justice, among others. I cover the Judiciary in the entire Republic.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

Learning: Continuous learning has been key to the rest of my skill sets. The adventure of learning as much as possible at all times has kept me sharp in the PR space. I have attended a number of courses on communication for development.

I have also gotten exposure by Igad Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) such as: training on countering violent extremist narratives and ideologies on the digital spaces, peer to peer learning with media practitioners, among others.

Creativity: Breaking the norm in reaching out to the general public by the deployment of twitter, humour, sheng and kiswahili to communicate judicial matters has made me very popular.

This has attracted followers ranging from notable public figures, jurists, law students, technocrats to the common mwananchi. Noteworthy of a certain month, the tweets achieved impressions of around 10 million with profile visits as much as 2.18 million.

Photography skills: Have the core skills revolving around your passion and dream. My ambition for my PR career was immensely boosted from my photography hobby from a young age. A photo is worth how many words?

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

I see myself as one of the leading PR Practitioners in the East African region especially on reporting matters legal.

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

My former boss, Dr. Naim Bilal would always tell us to package information that can be easily consumed by the public with an emphasis on feedback. The key to this is simplicity and shifting away from the barriers created by bureaucracies and technical jargons.

This pushed our creativity to engage the public using social media. The impact sparked interest from the public, awareness and a wider engagement of the people on the judicial issues.

**“ ...Learn to network. As a PR person never have fear and keep breaking the ice with whoever you meet. I maintained a good working rapport with Chief Justices Willy Mutunga, David Maraga and Martha Koome....**

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

The PR industry is involving, evolving, engaging and the results start from the immediate. It fascinates me how much change arises from the impact of information disseminated.

**Q6. What’s the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Always be yourself. Believe in yourself and go for it. Work double hard and be ready to put in the extra hours. PR involves a lot of research, team work with other stakeholders and keeping an open mind.



I started young walking around town with a small camera capturing exciting moments. Even through my nyama choma days, my passion for PR did not fade and I kept my skills alive when off work. It is the same passion I hold today in my duties and capacity. Where you start and your prevailing situation matter least. Keep your vision alive. Go for it.

Remember the goal of PR is making a positive relationship with the community and this is often achieved using simplicity, humility and honesty.

Allow positive criticism as it helps you grow both as a person and as a professional.

Learn to network. As a PR person never have fear and keep breaking the ice with whoever you meet. I maintained a good working rapport with Chief Justices Willy Mutunga, David Maraga and Martha Koome.

On the sidelines of my official duties, I was fortunate to initiate conversations with Presidents Mwai Kibaki, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto (Kenya); Ellen Johnson (Liberia), Dr Horst Kohler (German), Jakaya Kikwete (Tanzania) and other dignitaries.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

It is hard to recover from a PR mistake, especially arising from misconceptions. Every communication I do, I strive to be honest, humbled and keep an open mind.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

The wrong thing I said.

**Parting shot.**

I want to be remembered as the person who helped demystify the Judiciary through PR with the tools of humour, simplicity and humility.





# GRACE CHEPKWONY

Community Relations Manager,  
Kenya Electricity Generating Company.





**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

Sharing of ideas that shape organizations we work for and grow us professionally.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Stakeholder engagement and creative thinking

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Gina Din Kariuki and Yolanda Tavares

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

To embrace PR and experiment on the various opportunities it offers

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

A profession that plays a central role in business and all social aspects

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Failure to recognise their professionalism. This can be cured by the women professionals focusing on continuous self-improvement and asserting themselves.

**Parting shot**

PR is the future of all businesses and human endeavours. It has the potential to open infinite doors of opportunity. To succeed, we must embrace and apply PR to all that we do.





# JASON NYANTINO

Founder and CEO,  
Intent Media Africa.



**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

As a leader, I am responsible for driving the overall direction of the organization by managing people effectively and implementing Board decisions. My role involves developing and overseeing growth plans, ensuring robust stakeholder management, and promoting the organization's image and reputation. I am also tasked with crisis management to safeguard the organization's interests and resource management to ensure sustainable operations.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

I possess excellent oral presentation skills, which have enabled me to mobilize resources from various partners to support impactful PR and media initiatives that create spaces for civic engagement among citizens. My strong proposal and report writing skills have enhanced my credibility as a leader who not only contributes to organizational growth but also attracts resources to expand opportunities and create jobs. Additionally, my leadership skills have allowed me to successfully guide teams to achieve program goals while mentoring young professionals who have gone on to make meaningful contributions in their communities.

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

A great public policy influencer and an inspiration to the young people of this country.

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

His Excellency Maurice Makoloo who is now Kenya's ambassador to Austria. He is a lawyer by profession but with a lot of passion for the PR sector. When he was the head of Ford Foundation Eastern Africa office, he once told me this: "Many a time, the greatest driver of your individual success is usually around where you are.

You only need to wake up and smell the coffee!" This statement has always inspired me to know that I am in charge of my own success. I also use it a lot to mentor young professionals to develop themselves and stop blaming other people for their perceived failures.

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

That we have the power to transform nothing into something!

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Invest in developing your own oral and written communication skills. You don't find this in school.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear, and have you ever tried to face it?**

That I might leave the face of the earth before making it ready for my children. That is why I face this fear every day by working hard to give my 3 children opportunities to conquer the world.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

Our work ethic. We don't work to the full. If we did, Kenya and Africa will not be where it is.

**Parting shot**

Let us teach our children the value of good manners. This is what PR is all about!

“

...I have managed to successfully lead people to achieve results on a number of programs and initiatives but most importantly, mentored quite a number of young professionals who have gone ahead to create impact in their own communities...







# FRANK WAFULA

Principal Corporate Communications Officer,  
Lake Victoria North Water Works Development Agency.

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I am the Principal Corporate Communications officer at Lake Victoria North Water Works Development Agency, a state corporation under the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation and I participate in the development and implementation of strategic communication and marketing plans that promote the organization's vision, mission, and values. I also manage the organization's digital platforms, including the website, social media, and newsletters, ensuring that they are updated, engaging, and informative in the six counties covered by the organization.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

I have a Master's of Science degree in Business Management from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, where I gained valuable knowledge and skills in communication theories, strategies, and techniques. I also have a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and a Certificate in Digital Marketing from Finstock University, where I learned the fundamentals of Digital marketing and management. Am also a member of the World Water Day preparations Committee and have participated in various tree planting activities in the whole country as a lead liason on behalf of my organization. I have also been appointed as the liaison person in the production of African Development Bank Water and sanitation Projects documentaries. I also successfully participated in the networking days of the Australian Smart Cities Trust Fund and was awarded a certificate by director Urban and Water Division, South East Asia Department by Asian Development Bank.

One of my core competencies is Human Capital Management, which I acquired through working as a Human Resource Officer at Lake Victoria North Water Works Development Agency for three years. In this role, I was responsible for creating and maintaining employee data, work schedules, leave records, travel requests, and drafting appointment letters.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

During my career, I've largely focused on honing my skills, ensuring I can provide exceptional value

to my employer. However, recently, I've had the opportunity to step into a leadership role, spearheading a critical project and overseeing a team. Through that experience, I've developed a love for coaching others toward success. As a result, I'm looking to shift from individual contributor to management within the coming years, ensuring I can provide value to companies by supporting the success of not just myself but those around me.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Mr. Daniel Oduyo Owino. He once advised me to always give my work 100% if not 99.9%. He advised me to always do my best even in the simplest job given by my boss and that has always propelled me to success and becoming one of the best employees of the organization.

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

PR specialists work tirelessly to build, maintain, and amplify brand equity. This doesn't merely involve promoting products but communicating the deeper values, missions, and visions of an organization. Establishing a strong brand image requires consistency, genuine engagements, and authentic narratives. With changing technology every day, PR has been embraced worldwide with different social media platforms. Almost everyone is practicing it!

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

Get Uncomfortable: Growth happens outside your comfort zone. Embrace challenges and learn from them.

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

My greatest fear is to look back and regret not having done something because I was afraid.



**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

The truth is that you learn far more from your mistakes than you do from your successes. How are we supposed to grow and get better if we always want to fix the mistakes of the past and undo the things that were done? No, it's all by design. Everything was meant to shape you in some way.

Even if it was something so traumatic that you simply can't wrap your mind around a reason for it, there is one. It's hard to realize it at the moment. But when you reflect back on life years into the future, you'll understand that it was simply part of the grand design and meant to move you in the direction of your destiny.

**Parting shot.**

You don't have to see the whole staircase, just make the step! Faith it till you make it!....

**“ ...PR specialists work tirelessly to build, maintain, and amplify brand equity. This doesn't merely involve promoting products but communicating the deeper values, missions, and visions of an organization....**





# HAZEL KIRIGO

Manager, Public Relations, Research and Education,  
Association of Kenya Insurers.





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

The fact that PR can be practiced in any industry is an exciting aspect for me. It does not limit practitioners to particular areas. Just like finance or legal professionals, PR practitioners can work in any sort of industry and organization. This means that PR professionals are very diverse in their knowledge and experience, making them a very interesting group of people to engage with.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

**People skills:** Learning how to engage with and manage people at all levels is critical to getting things moving. I have learned to be just as comfortable speaking to the CEO as I would be speaking to my colleague and as I would to the messenger.

**Time management:** As a PR practitioner, I have found myself juggling many projects at any given time. That does not mean you sleep at work; the family needs your time, your friends need your time, you need your own alone time. So managing time is a critical skill to help balance life's demands.

**Project management skills:** Communications assignments are either continuous projects or one-off projects, often with many moving parts and sometimes involving multiple teams working on different aspects. Juggling all these tasks and seeing them through to completion is a skill I have had to learn over time.

**Skim reading:** In the roles I have held, I have had to read through many documents—policy papers, research papers, reports, and others—and pick out the important details that go into another element of the work.

These skills have helped me grow in my career as I have been able to successfully handle significant projects.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

In Kenya, Wangari Maathai has taught me the power and sacrifice of standing for what you believe in. Nuru Mugambi and Phyllis Wakiaga have shown me the power of one's voice and the influence it can have across a sector.

Globally, Hillary Clinton has imparted the lesson that transitions are important and one needs to be strategic about them. She has also demonstrated that women can be very powerful. Ruth Bader Ginsburg has taught me the importance of marrying well and that success is possible in the face of adversity. From Chimamanda Ngozi, I have learned about the power of our voices as black women..

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

Learn all that you can about the practice. With online learning today, the world is your oyster. Join communities like PRSK where practitioners are, and learn from them. Seek mentors, and remember that volunteer work can help you grow in skill and experience too. Have fun while at it!

### Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?

I like that the PR Law will soon come to be. This is exciting, as it sets the stage to have a legal framework for the profession that will impact how it is taught, who teaches, who practices, how practitioners are hired and this will go a long way in showcasing the value PR adds to any organization.

I also look forward to seeing more specializations or niche areas of PR emerging.

“... As a PR practitioner, I have found myself juggling many projects at any given time. That does not mean you sleep at work; the family needs your time, your friends need your time, you need your own alone time. So managing time is a critical skill to help balance life's demands.....”



**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

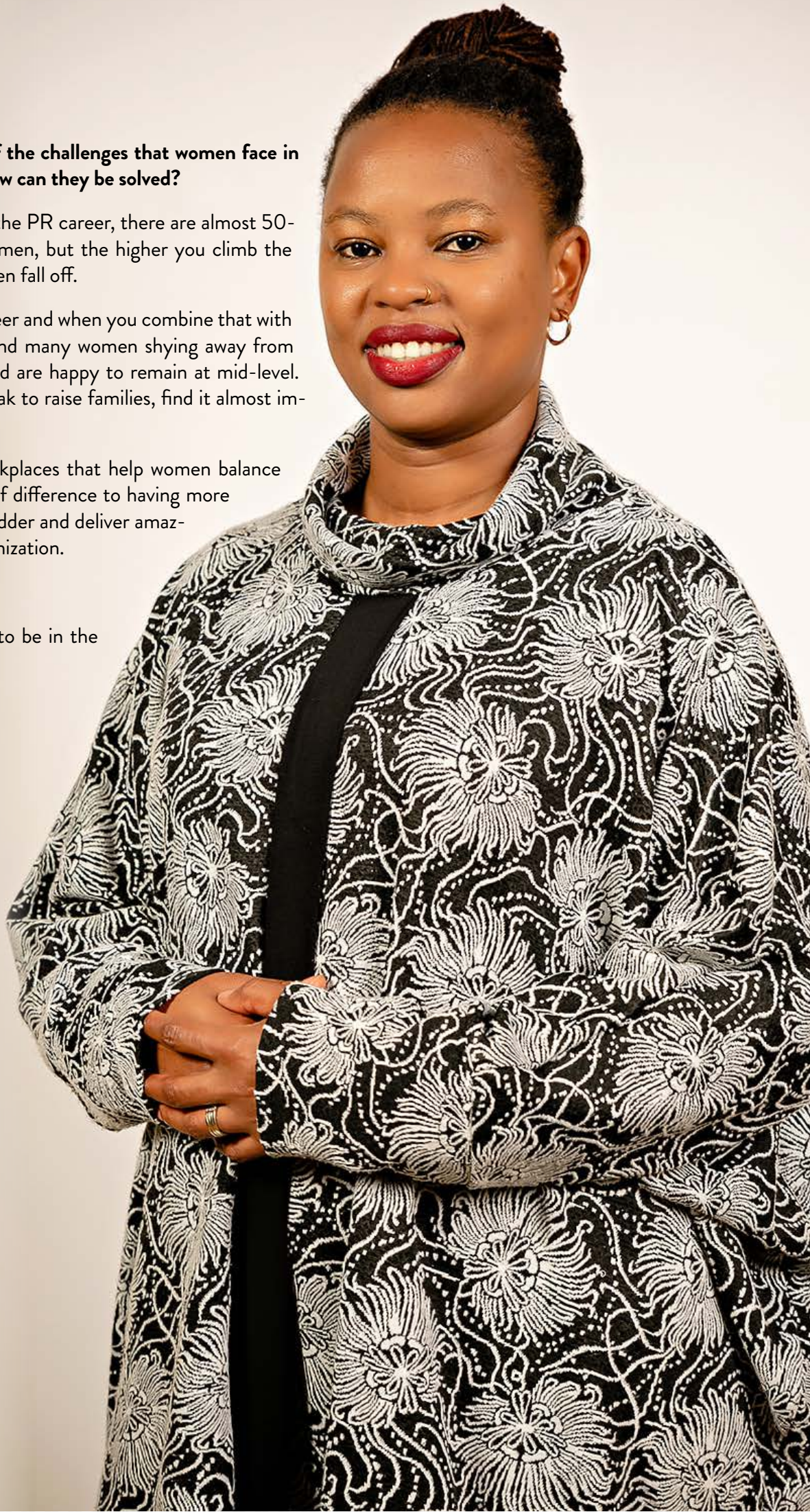
At the starting line of the PR career, there are almost 50-50 split of women to men, but the higher you climb the scales tip and the women fall off.

PR is a demanding career and when you combine that with raising a family, you find many women shying away from going up the ladder and are happy to remain at mid-level. Others that take a break to raise families, find it almost impossible to get back in.

Having supportive workplaces that help women balance life will make a world of difference to having more women climb up the ladder and deliver amazing results for the organization.

**Parting shot**

It is a wonderful time to be in the PR profession!





# Who Do You Trust?

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# DENNIS OKORE

Consultant,  
Sustainable Africa Innovators.



### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I serve as a strategic communications leader, driving the development and implementation of high-impact ESG programs. My focus extends beyond internal initiatives, as I actively cultivate stakeholder engagement to influence policy, legal, and regulatory landscapes within target geographies. Through this collaborative approach, I contribute to a more supportive environment for sustainable business practices and impactful programs to flourish.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

There are two sets of skills. Those taught in school, say media school, and those learned in the school of hard knocks. While not underplaying the technical skills from school, I think the ones I learned in the marketplace have made the biggest difference. First, it's people management. It helped me build teams, bring the best out of others and best support my managers. Second, are entrepreneurial skills. I define this as being able to take an idea from your brain to execution. It is a tears and blood affair, especially in the corporate sector. Entrepreneurial skills is key for innovation and adaptability in any situation. It helps you take advantage of opportunities and know how to handle challenges as well as protect you from risks - yes, risks of extinction and entropy which are very prevalent in our practice. Third, learning about other topics which are not in our core line of PR - this adds an achilles heel to your PR that you can flex when the tides are against you. For me its Technology, Health and Sustainability

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

Drawing on my extensive PR experience and unwavering commitment to professional development, I am excited to articulate a vision for empowering the next generation of communicators. Over the past several years, curating a professional WhatsApp group since 2020 has provided firsthand insight into the challenges young professionals face as they enter the workforce and navigate emerging trends. A crucial gap I have identified is the lack of readily accessible mentorship opportunities that address the

ever-evolving landscape. In the new dispensation of the PRAC legislation, I would like to work with other professionals to make these connections possible and create more opportunities and collaborations. The fun fact of my life today is that 80% of the consulting work I have done in the last 5 years has come from direct referrals from my mentees. Mentoring pays forward, and in 10 years, I would like to retire and benefit from mentorship as I take care of my farm.

“**...A great boss is greater than a great company. Choose communities and ecosystems where you can grow and learn how to deal with changing environments by aligning your vision with an understanding of your industry trends. Strive to build fruitful relationships.....**

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Mercy Kabangi, a seasoned PR and Communications professional, profoundly impacted my career, fundamentally transforming my approach to relationships and communication. Her extensive experience and shared wisdom went beyond talk, navigating me through the complexities of the workplace. She stressed the importance of listening to understand, rather than merely respond—a practice that significantly enhanced my connections with colleagues and superiors. This empathetic approach not only bolstered support for my ideas but also cultivated relationships grounded in mutual respect, effectively navigating the dynamics of the workplace.

One of her notable practices was ‘Pulling a chair’—where she would either invite you to pull up a chair or herself join you—to gain clearer insight and perspective on ideas or issues. She taught me to view colleagues as allies, not competitors, fostering a spirit of teamwork

that facilitated smoother project execution. This mindset encouraged accountability and fostered growth within our teams, all while maintaining strong interpersonal relationships. Emphasizing authenticity, trust-building, and credibility among peers and superiors, she guided me in enhancing my effectiveness in managing both vertical and horizontal relationships within the organization with integrity. Her influence continues to inspire my dedication to excellence in my work, shaping every interaction with empathy and authenticity.

### **Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

It is about people first. I love the evolution of PR from being just a support function to a core management tenet that influences the bottom line and existence of companies. PR transcends all industries, but one must understand the nuances of those industries to make PR count for specific setups. A key lesson that every Kenyan public relations practitioner can take away from recent global and national events such as the global financial crisis, climate crisis, COVID-19 pandemic, Goldenberg and Anglo-Leasing scandals, and tribal clashes, among others, is not to be complacent. Doing PR business amidst a ripe market in Kenya does not guarantee success; doing PR business right will. We must be prepared to adjust our practice sails in the wake of new dynamics brought about by emerging issues like artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and sustainable development goals (SDGs) as they are bound to impact PR. We must look ahead to anticipate ways in which messages can get blurred or even lost in the process of protecting people's freedoms and privacy. Understanding our audiences now entails not only knowing what they want to hear but also their feelings and perceptions of how they interact with the message. Technology has created a trust deficit, despite the good things that have come with it. The degree to which PR will continue its positive impact in Kenya and beyond depends on the way it is applied in the age of territorial politics, digitalization, integration, and partnerships.

### **Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

A great boss is greater than a great company. Choose communities and ecosystems where you can grow

and learn how to deal with changing environments by aligning your vision with an understanding of your industry trends. Strive to build fruitful relationships. Be agile, do not take a linear view of how your career is supposed to go, as the opportunity might be in another lane which you have ignored. Lastly, avoid the pitfalls of the 'gold-rush' to entrepreneurship; rather, be entrepreneurial and innovative where you are to unlock more golden experiences for you and your stakeholders, which brings more valuable opportunities to all concerned.

### **Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

Listening to any recording about myself. I recently embarked on an odyssey of recording #TikTok videos about things I wanted to share about my experience. What I learned is that confronting our fears and being vulnerable to accepting failure due to fear of perfection is the surest way to learn from our weaknesses. The #TikTok videos are my highlight of 2024.

### **Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

I do not believe in changing the past, but in influencing how to make the future better. Thinking about our missed past devalues the importance of the present and the better opportunities of the future. The journey may not have led us to our desired destination but it has had a whole recipe of experiences that have made us what we are today. Speaking to the future, we should aim to build stronger networks, be lifelong learners, and commit to a bigger purpose in life than just earning a salary.

### **Parting shot.**

My Dad's favourite bible verse is Exodus 4:2... And the LORD said unto him, what is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod... it is clarion call to our lives to use what we have today to be the best we can be and to create an impact. It is not a call for complacency but one that says: "Start where from where you are." In the end, everything you do counts toward something big (we all desire big and fine things). The challenge is starting.



# JOANNE MWANGI-YELBERT

Group CEO, PMS Group Africa Ltd.







**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

The power to influence change and shape perception is thrilling as it positively impacts lives.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

An open curious mind, an analytical thought process and a constantly learning attitude.

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

My remarkable mother, Helen Kabura Mwangi : She taught me grit, resilience and self mastery.

Rose Kimotho, Kameme FM Founder CEO: She taught me to speak up, to take my rightful place at the table and to dare to be the outlier.

Graca Machel : Rising from the ashes and living a full impactful life. She teaches me that it's never over till it's over. That one is enough to create a movement for radical change.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Remember that values and integrity are like elegance - timeless. Fads fade, the 'how' will change, but humanity never veers away from their hearts and souls to stay true to your north.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

Greater application and use of data driven solutions as well as new tech.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?

Women thrive in PR - I am yet to know any challenge they face that is limited to their gender.

**Parting shot**

We always can choose to create a new you. You are the author of your brand.



# GLORY NTINYARI

Communications & PR Strategist, Imara Africa Fellow.



### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

What excites me most is the way PR is shifting towards a people-centred approach, emphasizing meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders.

In today's fast-paced world, the ability to connect authentically with people from various backgrounds and perspectives is invaluable. It's not just about delivering messages; it's about fostering relationships, understanding unique narratives, and resonating with the hearts and minds of individuals.

Being part of this allows me to contribute to building bridges between organizations and their audiences.

PR, to me, is the art of creating conversations, understanding the pulse of society, and weaving narratives that truly resonate. It's the human touch that m

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

First and foremost, building genuine relationships with people has been a cornerstone. Understanding diverse perspectives and connecting with individuals on a personal level has not only enriched my professional network but has also enhanced the authenticity of my work.

The ability to handle crisis situations has been another invaluable skill in this ever-changing landscape. It's taught me to think on my feet, respond swiftly, and maintain a level-headed approach amidst challenges. Crisis situations, rather than obstacles, have become opportunities to showcase resilience and strategic problem-solving.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

One woman who has profoundly inspired me over the years is Martha Karua. What resonates with me most about her is her unwavering commitment to speaking her truth and standing firm in her beliefs, regardless of popular opinion. Martha Karua's courage to articulate her thoughts with clarity and conviction deeply inspires me.

Her fearlessness in addressing issues head-on, coupled with her articulate and learned approach, serves as a constant reminder of the power of authenticity and intellectual integrity. In an industry where consensus is sometimes prioritized over individual conviction, Martha Karua's example inspires me to uphold my principles even when it may not be the popular or easy choice.

**“ ...To tackle these issues, it is essential for organizations to implement robust diversity and inclusion initiatives, setting measurable goals for female representation in leadership positions and establishing mentorship programs. ...**

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

The best advice I can offer to young and upcoming women in the industry is to focus on honing practical skills that set you apart. Develop a craft, whether it's writing or public speaking, and strive to excel at it every day.

Moreover, invest time and effort in personal branding. Gone are the days when the quality of work could solely speak for itself. While delivering high-quality results is crucial, proactively talking about your capabilities and making yourself visible is equally important. Establish an online presence, share your achievements, and articulate your skills. Don't shy away from showcasing your expertise always make yourself seen and heard.

### Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?

As we progress, I would like to witness a transformation in the perception of PR from being seen as a support function to being recognized as a key driver of organizational success. This shift in mind-set is crucial for leveraging the full potential of communication strategies to contribute to the strategic goals and long-term vision



of the company.

It's essential for the role of communications to be widely understood as a pivotal management function, integral to the overall success of any business.

Furthermore, I believe there should be a concerted effort to foster mentorship programs for young and upcoming professionals in the PR industry. Establishing structured mentorship initiatives can play a vital role in nurturing talent, providing guidance, and creating a pipeline of skilled individuals who can contribute meaningfully to the profession. By investing in the mentorship of the next generation, we can ensure the continuity of excellence and innovation within the PR landscape.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Women in the PR industry often face challenges such as underrepresentation in leadership roles and the perception of communications as a support function rather than a strategic imperative.

To tackle these issues, it is essential for organizations to implement robust diversity and inclusion initiatives, setting measurable goals for female representation in leadership positions and establishing mentorship programs.

Additionally, women in PR must actively advocate for the strategic impact of communication, emphasizing its role in shaping public perception and contributing to overall business strategy.

**Parting shot**

As a woman, if you don't stand out, you don't stand a chance" So, Market Yourself, Brand Yourself, Promote Yourself & Invest in Yourself.



# LILIAN NGANDA

Head of Customer Communications and Events, Indian Sub-Continent,  
Middle East and Africa (IMEA) Region, AP Moller - Maersk.





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

What excites me about the PR industry in Africa is the dynamic nature of the work. There's never a dull moment - it's a fast-paced environment that presents us with new and different challenges every day. Whether during my agency days or now in-house, I've found that working in PR truly embodies the role of a trusted advisor. I'm entrusted with the task of providing guidance, solutions and innovative ideas that can make a real difference. It is a role that requires constant learning and adaptation, which keeps me engaged and motivated.

Additionally, the PR industry offers remarkable networking prospects. I've had the privilege of participating in projects that have connected me with both global and local leaders - some individuals I never imagined I'd encounter. However, beyond the networking aspect, what truly resonates is the chance to nurture and cultivate these relationships. This fosters collaboration and facilitates the exchange of invaluable insights and expertise, enriching both professional endeavours and personal growth. Lastly, I'm inspired by the profound impact the PR industry has on both businesses and communities across Africa. Beyond simply serving corporate interests, PR initiatives often contribute to economic growth and societal well-being. It's this potential for positive change, and the opportunity to be at the forefront of it, that truly inspires me in this field.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

Every stage in my career has demanded some new set of skills. Learning. Unlearning. Relearning is a norm and not just our PR world. My university degree in Communications prepared me to enter the industry. The rubber met the road and I went back to class for a postgraduate diploma in public relations with Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) UK. I continue to employ lifelong learner mentality with additional certifications that continue to propel me in my journey with new skills such as Influencing for Impact, Maximizing Your Stakeholder Ecosystem, Modern Marketing - Kellogg, Wharton School Sprint course that focuses on leading and engaging with agility in an environment that changes day by day.

Most notable now include Adaptability: Capacity to adapt to changing circumstances, trends, and technologies in the rapidly evolving PR landscape. Creativity: Capacity to think creatively to generate innovative PR campaigns and initiatives that capture attention and resonate with target audiences. Collaboration Skills - This is the cornerstone of effective PR practice, embodying the ability to seamlessly work with diverse individuals and teams to achieve common objectives. We are one of the few departments that engage almost everyone in an organization. We must be able to demonstrate expertise in fostering harmonious partnerships, whether within internal departments or with external stakeholders, to drive impactful outcomes. Relationship Building: cultivating and maintaining relationships with clients, stakeholders, influencers, and other key industry players to achieve PR objectives is paramount. I once managed to save a brand I was handling from a crisis situation through great relationships. It works! Leadership and Team Management: Strong leadership abilities to inspire and guide teams, delegate tasks effectively, and ensure collaboration and cohesion to achieve PR goals.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

There's something about music and how it unites us. The award-winning Angelique Kidjo through her music brings it together so admirably. As a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, she continues to advocate for children's rights, education, and empowerment across Africa. Malala Yousafzai a Nobel Peace Prize laureate at the age of 17?! Look at that boldness. In the face of Taliban oppression, her activism has inspired millions of people to act and support initiatives geared towards ensuring education is accessible to all, regardless of gender.

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

Wow! The industry has undergone a remarkable evolution and maturity, infusing our professional journeys with greater significance. Success in PR transcends mere knowledge; it hinges on adeptly navigating relationships, communicating with impact, and embracing change. Here are some key pointers to keep in mind.

**Build Strong Relationships:** As mentioned earlier, networking is key in the PR industry. Cultivate genuine relationships with clients, colleagues, journalists, and other industry professionals. These connections can open doors to opportunities and support your work assignment you're your career growth.

**Life-long learner culture:** The PR landscape is constantly evolving. Stay informed about industry trends, emerging technologies, and best practices. Continuously seek opportunities for learning and professional development.

**Embrace Creativity:** PR thrives on creativity. Don't be afraid to explore innovative ideas and strategies to capture attention and achieve your objectives.

**Be Resilient:** The PR industry can be demanding and fast-paced. Develop resilience to navigate challenges, setbacks, and criticism. Learn from failures and setbacks, and use them as opportunities for growth. Do also create a circle of peers as well as mentors who you can exchange your day-to-day challenges with as well as support with career progression.

**Advocate for Yourself:** Don't be afraid to speak up for yourself and your accomplishments. Take credit for your work and advocate for opportunities that align with your career goals.

**Maintain Work-Life Balance:** PR can be demanding, but it's essential to prioritize self-care and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

**She4She:** Support and empower other women (I will also add men in the spirit of inclusivity) in the PR industry as you also climb up! Collaborate, mentor, advocate for gender equality, diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

### **Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

**Enactment of the Institute of the Public Relations and Communications Management Bill!** It was a great honour to be part of the first cohort to edify the draft and it would be great to see it adopted for our growing industry.

**Embrace of Technology:** This currently tops my learning agenda. How do we leverage technology to bring better visibility to our work? I hope to see the PR industry fully embracing and leveraging advanced technologies such as

AI, data analytics, and automation to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and measurement capabilities.

**Focus on Purpose-driven Communication:** I hope to see a shift towards more purpose-driven communication strategies, with PR professionals increasingly aligning their efforts with broader societal and environmental goals. I believe this is where we can easily demonstrate the value we provide as a profession.

**Emphasis on Professional Development:** I hope to see a continued emphasis on professional development and lifelong learning within the PR industry, with practitioners actively seeking out opportunities to enhance their skills.

### **Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

**Work-Life Balance:** This continues to be a big hindrance to a lot of women out there. Balancing the demands of a career with personal responsibilities can be challenging for women, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities. I've been fortunate to work for organizations that have prioritized creating programs to support work-life integration. It's my hope that the lessons learned from these initiatives can be shared across the industry, benefiting women everywhere. Lack of Representation in

**Leadership:** Women are often underrepresented in leadership positions not just within PR agencies and organizations but generally in the corporate world. Recent studies indicate that women may be less likely to apply for roles compared to men, especially when they don't meet all the listed qualifications, the "confidence gap" or "imposter syndrome," where women may doubt their abilities or feel less confident in their qualifications compared to men. I see a deliberate effort to break this trend where organizations are designing strategies on hiring, promotion, and decision-making processes.

### **Parting shot**

Approach each day as an empty canvas and paint it with as much vibrancy as you can muster!



# OLIVE METET

Deputy Director Corporate Communication,  
National Cohesion and Integration Commission.



### **Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

Public relations excites me because it involves constant communication and problem-solving in various sectors including peace and security. It permits ingenuity and strategic thinking to build relationships and brands. I am excited by the opportunity to work with different audiences and convey messages effectively. The dynamic nature of public relations keeps me engaged and interested in staying current with trends. I am excited to see how PR can impact public perception and drive positive change. Additionally, networking and collaborating with professionals in the field excite me to learn and grow. Overall, public relations offers endless possibilities for growth, challenges, and the ability to make a meaningful impact.

### **Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Over the last 18 years, I have attained a multitude of skills that have propelled my public relations journey. First and foremost, my strong communication skills have been instrumental in building relationships with clients and media outlets. Furthermore, my ability to think creatively and strategically has allowed me to come up with innovative Public Relations campaigns such as Deepening Peace and Cohesion for a prosperous Kenya dubbed Amani Kwa Ground 2022-2025 that generate buzz and gather constructive attention from the audience.

Furthermore, my outstanding writing skills have allowed me to craft compelling press releases and pitch emails that effectively communicate key messages to the public. In addition, my proficiency in social media management has allowed me to leverage various platforms to increase brand visibility and engage with target audiences.

Additionally, my strong organizational skills have helped me juggle multiple projects simultaneously and meet tight deadlines without compromising on quality. Additionally, my attention to detail ensures that every aspect of a PR campaign is thoroughly planned and executed to perfection.

Lastly, my ability to adapt to changing circumstances and think on my feet has been crucial in navigating the

fast-paced world of public relations. Whether it's dealing with a crisis or seizing a last-minute PR opportunity, I am always prepared to handle whatever comes my way.

### **Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

If I have seen a little further in the PR profession it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants. Some of these historical women who have inspired me over the years include; Professor Nancy Booker, Mrs Ruth Musembi, Ms. Kentice Tikolo, Cheryl Procter-Rogers, Mrs Mary Ngaruma, Ms Lillian Kimetto among many others. These women have inspired me through their leadership, innovation, and dedication to public relations. They have broken barriers, shattered glass ceilings, and paved the way for the current and future generations of women in the sector. Their resilience, creativity, and strategic thinking have not only elevated the field of Public Relations but have also inspired me and others to pursue passions and strive for excellence. These great women mentored and empowered me during my earlier years in the profession. Sharing their knowledge, experiences, and insights inspired me to embrace their unique voices, perspectives, and talents. They showed me and others the power of storytelling, relationship-building, and strategic communication shaping narratives and driving impact. Through their campaigns, initiatives, and advocacy efforts, they have raised awareness and influenced change on a global scale. Generally, these women have inspired me through their resilience, creativity, and commitment to making a difference while inspiring a new generation of professionals to follow in their footsteps and continue pushing boundaries.

### **Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Young women getting into this exciting fast-paced world of public relations must be prepared to steer through the challenges with grace and confidence. Specifically, they must seek opportunities for growth and development. Hence, they ought to take the initiative to network, participate in PR events, and reach out to mentors who can provide guidance and support. This will help the young professionals gain deeper knowledge as well as forge meaningful connections within the profession.

Secondly, as we all know the PR sector is fast-paced



and sometimes unpredictable in nature. It is vital to stay calm under pressure, think on your feet, and pivot quickly when required. Challenges should be embraced as opportunities for development. I encourage risk-taking in pursuit of your clear goals. After all, when you take risks you learn that there will be times when you succeed and there will be times when you fail, and both are equally important.

Thirdly, young professionals ought to build a strong personal brand. By cultivating a distinct and authentic image, one will stand out in a crowded field and attract opportunities that align with one's goals and aspirations.

Fourthly, prioritize self-care and well-being. Balancing a demanding career with personal responsibilities is challenging. Hence one ought to deliberately carve out time for activities that nurture your mind, body, and soul. This could be exercise, spending time with loved ones, and taking care of yourself to make you resilient and effective in your professional endeavours.

Finally, it is important to know that success in PR or any other field is not just about individuals but also about collaboration and teamwork. It is important to cultivate strong healthy relationships with colleagues, and stakeholders while approaching work with a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

#### **Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

First, I would like to see a momentous change towards transparency and authenticity in the PR profession in the next 5 years. This can be achieved by utilizing innovative strategies and technologies to engage with audiences in a more genuine and meaningful way. One of the key aspects that I would like to see in the PR profession is a stronger focus on storytelling. By harnessing the power of storytelling, PR professionals can create compelling narratives that resonate with their target audiences.

I would also like to see in the PR profession a stronger commitment to ethical practices. This includes being transparent about conflicts of interest, upholding high standards of integrity, and always putting the interests of the public first. By adhering to ethical principles, PR professionals can build trust and credibility with their stakeholders.

In addition, I would like to see an improved use of data and analytics in the PR profession. By leveraging data-driven insights, PR professionals can measure the impact of their campaigns more effectively and make informed decisions about their strategies. This can lead to better return on Investment (ROI) and a more effective use of resources. The next 5 years hold great potential for growth and innovation in the PR profession.

#### **Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

The main challenge faced by women in the PR profession is the struggle to balance work and family responsibilities. Many women find it challenging to balance their professional duties with their personal lives, leading to burnout and stress. Additionally, women often face societal expectations that may hinder their career progression.

To address these challenges companies should prioritize diversity and inclusion, ensuring that women have equal opportunities for advancement. Mentorship programs can also be beneficial, providing women with guidance and support as they navigate their careers.

Covid 19 taught us that we can embrace flexible work arrangements. Hence this can help women balance their work and family responsibilities more effectively. Employers should offer options such as remote work and flexible hours to accommodate women's needs. Moreover, raising awareness about gender biases and stereotypes can help create a more supportive environment for women in the PR industry.

#### **Parting shot**

PR professionalism can be challenging but with the right mind-set and approach, it can also be a chance for growth and learning. By maintaining a high level of professionalism, keeping communication lines open, and staying true to our values, we can navigate the complexities of the industry with confidence and grace. Remember, God is always with us, guiding us through every challenge and opportunity that come

# ANGELINA V. MWASHUMBE

Founder and CEO, Global Events and Communication Company.





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology can in future be used to track market trends and the performance of PR communication campaigns to help in budget-setting, managing social media posts, drafting press releases, and undertaking other manual PR tasks. However there is still a need for human emotions and insights to drive campaigns that lead to real results.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

Provision of Strategy Development; Policy Formulation; Project Administration; Specialist Communication and Branding Advice including Corporate Logos; Community Engagement Activities; Story writing, Bespoke Marketing Materials; High-Level Event Planning and Coordination; Content Creation for Social Media; Oral and Written French Language, Etiquette and Personal Grooming just to mention a few. These skills have helped me to achieve my goals.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

Queen Esther also known as Hadassah in the Bible was a real queen who lived in Persia (now Iran) and who found favour with the King when she defied the cultural norm to seek his audience without first being summoned, thus risking her life. Queen Esther found favour with the King and defeated the evil advisor Haman, thereby saving her people from unavoidable destruction through an evil decree.

In a biography called "MY LIFE WITH DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.", Coretta Scott King (now deceased) passionately and intimately wrote a personal, inspirational account of the history of the American Civil Rights Movement and describes her relationship with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a prominent leader at the time, detailing their marriage, the events of the 1960s in America and King's tragic assassination in April 1968. I felt the fortitude, tenacity and hope which Dr. King demonstrated and he is honoured throughout the globe for his positive contribution to the American Civil Rights Movement for people of colour in America. This biography inspires me to be a person of influence in the

marketplace and society at large

Other women who have inspired me include, Indira Gandhi (Former Prime Minister of India); Golda Meir (Fourth Prime Minister of Israel); Mother Teresa of Calcutta the Founder of the Missionaries of Charity; Rosa Louise Parks the American Civil Rights Movement activist; Wangari Maathai the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; Oprah Winfrey the American television personality, actress and entrepreneur; CeCe Winans the award-winning contemporary American gospel singer; Angela Bassett an American Actress, to mention a few.



...A key element in PR is creativity, which can be applied to create a successful PR campaign for an animated film. PR professionals can use creativity as a PR tool in animated films through stunning visuals, effects, and humour, fun and experiences to tell a great story. Animated films are great for telling unique and compelling stories and are becoming increasingly popular...

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

Best Advice is in the acronym: DREAM

D - "DEDICATION"

R - "RESPONSIBILITY"

E - "EDUCATION"

A - "ATTITUDE"

M - "MOTIVATION"

I would advise young women that continuous improvement in your area of specialization is non-

negotiable. You don't have to be somebody different to be important. Be yourself and don't try to be somebody else.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

I anticipate that the PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT BILL 2024 will be signed into Law in the Republic of Kenya in the next 5 years, lending credibility and authenticity to the profession.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

A paucity of mentors, role models in PR for young women, tools, books, resources, grants, scholarships and networking opportunities. This may be solved through collaborative efforts, partnerships, alliances, coaching, mentoring, MOUs; as well as legal frameworks. Partnerships for sponsorship can be created between universities in Kenya and those in North America, Europe, Singapore and other African countries for mutual benefit and promotion of the PR profession.

**Parting shot**

A key element in PR is creativity, which can be applied to create a successful PR campaign for an animated film. PR professionals can use creativity as a PR tool in animated films through stunning visuals, effects, and humour, fun and experiences to tell a great story. Animated films are great for telling unique and compelling stories and are becoming increasingly popular.







# CHRIS WANGALWA

Director, Africa Strategic Communication Hub (ASCH).  
Lead, Research and Development and Innovation, Center for Public Relations  
(CPR).

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

My work entails inspiring and motivating the team at Africa Strategic Communication Hub (ASCH). I oversee all our business units under the mission of building new, progressive strategic communication products. It means scouting for non-traditional talent. It means extracting the best out of our already talented team. That is why our team is composed of statisticians, web developers and data scientists to complement the traditional skillsets.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

As a gift, I am a performing artist. I am a creative writer and creative director, content critic and entertainer. I transferred these natural content creation skills to this industry.

Of course, I have failed a lot. A LOT. One of my memorable failures was when I tried to create a Netflix equivalent. I did not understand the magnitude of such a project and the qualities my team required to realize the dream. I have since learned the skill of self-reliance, that of not starting a project or business that I cannot sustain should everyone jump off the bandwagon. That is why I am now passionate about coding, web development, statistics and project management. Perhaps I failed because I lacked the financial muscle, which means I had to learn fundraising.

Over the years I have learnt that what people know is not necessarily the best there is to know. However good we may be, someone else knows better. Knows more. And so I don't hoard. I share a loud so that someone else may add to what I know or pick a new way of doing things.

I have gone through school for Masters in Knowledge Management and Innovation to allow me to see and use the windscreen, the rearview, the side mirrors and the accelerator effectively.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

10 years from now I am sure I will be laughing at the 'silly' things I am doing presently. I will say, "What were

those I was doing in 2024, surely!"

If I may explain:

10 years ago, I had the idea to form a company called CDBViews & PR, which I forgot about but which never really disappeared. Today I lead a company of PR related subsidiaries including the Center for Public Relations (CPR). Same script, improved cast. I am trying to say that I cannot say for sure what 10 years from now will look like but the patterns are healthy and the climate conducive.

“...It will look like time is moving too slow. It will look like no one cares about you. But even in those frustrating conditions. Stay ready and versatile. Exceptional executors are in great demand, and it is not known where to find the best....”

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Ruth Musembi:

In Q3 2022, we were conducting research months before set up of Center for Public Relations (CPR). The research involved engaging seasoned practitioners, lecturers and students on industry gaps. I confided in Fellow Ruth Musembi that we were setting up a unique company to be called Center for Public Relations (CPR). She advised: "Consider calling it Strategic Communication Something instead of Center for Public Relations". We quietly resisted for a while but never stopped thinking about it. Eventually we heeded to her advice and set up Africa Strategic Communication Hub (ASCH), which became the mother company and CPR a subsidiary concerned with communication Research and Development (R&D) and Innovation.







More like a PR Laboratory. That move also paved the way for the setting up of other communication related business units.

Paul Barasa:

“If you have decided to go back to school, with your skillset of creative writing, talent management, creative directing, acting, courage and confidence, your perfect fit is communication.” That is how I enrolled for Communication and Public Relations at Moi University.

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

It has to be the roaming playmaker role that allows us to stand as the creative heart of organizations, often dictating the pace and direction of the game. This role is characterized by exceptional vision, technical skills and the freedom to move across departments.

It is the fact that we are invisible CEOs. It is the fact that we are unseen spokespersons. It is the fact that we have the freedom to be paranoid. It is the inverted journalist role, controlling a multi-sector desk, from business to health to opinion, to the unknown, all in one organization. It is the roleplaying role that allows us to think like the target audience and seeing through their possible reactions.

It is the gold standard parenting style which serves as a healthy and effective model to guide our ‘parenting’ practices; which combines the best of both worlds - nurturing love and support, along with clear boundaries and expectations - to build and maintain an enviable reputation. In fact, as I write this, I am surprised that there is no such a game in app stores.

### Q6. What’s the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

It will look like time is moving too slow. It will look like no one cares about you. But even in those frustrating conditions. Stay ready and versatile. Exceptional executors are in great demand, and it is not known where to find the best. So, think like a Veteran, act like a Gen Z. It is easier with constructive visibility. You will make more progress with this recipe than you may have in your previous decade.

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

I am scared of water. There’s a time I drowned in a swimming pool while holding a floater. I don’t trust floaters. But at a greater level, my fear is that if you call me at 2am you will find me. And if you call me at midnight, you are likely to find me. Time is moving so fast. I guess there is so much to do and we only have 24hrs. And so my greatest fear is that one day I might break down.

### Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

I would tell my younger self to just start and never stop because 10 years ago I created a job of looking for jobs for jobless people. I dropped it. 10 years ago, I was doing digital ads for retailers for as little as Kshs 500. I stopped it. 10 years ago, I started crafting random quotes but stopped because

- The purpose wasn’t clear and,
- Bandwidth was inaccessible.

10 years ago, I was scripting for the entertainment industry, mostly for no pay. So I quit. 10 years ago, I started writing a book. I am still on the very first page. Today I do all of these things but I regret that I did not commercialize them earlier.

### Parting shot.

As Fred Obachi Machoka once advised me, PR is too urbanized. Take it even to the villages. A head teacher is also a CEO. A primary school has stakeholders too.



# GRACE WANDERA

Deputy Commissioner,  
Marketing and Communications at Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA).



**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

The ability to touch the hearts and minds of audiences with compelling messages that shift behaviour.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

By far I would say having a continuous learning mindset and willing to push beyond my comfort zone has helped me navigate managing strategic communication in both the private and public sector. The ability to show the value of strategic communication and having representation at the table has also been a key lesson.

Once communication is viewed as an enabler for business it becomes a strategic tool and there's a need to have more representation of communication professionals at the decision making table. To drive credence for the communication teams I have learned that one needs to learn how to deploy research and analytics and ensure that the data can demonstrate the output and impact of communication and the Return on Investment.

Most recently dealing with the emerging issue of disinformation and building a centre of truth for the brands will continue to stretch Communication professionals to do more and do better. PR can't work on its own, take Customer Experience or Service to the public in our industry, no amount of PR strategy can be used to negate bad service and therefore there is need to be open to see how other interrelated fields can bolster PR efforts. I would also say that there is need to have strong written and oral communication skills, problem solving and the ability think creatively

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Madeline Albright, Condoleezza Rice, Prof. Margaret Kobia, Esther Koimett. These are distinguished women in public service who have been able to hold their own and deliver in their different spheres with grace and dignity.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Explore the different disciplines in the sector and find what truly resonates with you, once you do, pursue this relentlessly and with passion

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

Clarity on PR. I think the profession is shrouded with a lot of misunderstanding on the key competencies and skills needed for the profession. There is need to change the view that PR is Spin. You don't manage your reputation even at an individual level through spin, you actually do so by being your authentic self and being consistent in the way you portray yourself.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Balancing personal commitments and career goals. With the push towards diversity and gender equity, bringing in place policies such as flexi hours workplaces are taking this into consideration. My encouragement for women is to always ensure your voice is heard; don't let people and situations discourage you from speaking up. Your thoughts and opinions matter.

**Parting shot**

Let's always strive to learn and prepare for the future to remain relevant.





# ERIC KINITI

Group Corporate Relations Director  
East African Breweries PLC.



**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

Eric leads a team that leads public policy advocacy, reputation and communication at EABL.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

I have acquired negotiation, campaign planning, sustainability, and strategic communications skills that have helped me lead one of the best Corporate Relations teams in the East Africa Region. My background is in Economics, and I am so glad I did not end up working on economic models and formulas to earn a living. But that grounding has helped me appreciate the power of storytelling to such audiences.

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

In a decade, I see myself at the forefront of global change, harnessing decades of PR mastery to drive sustainable initiatives forward. From boardrooms to grassroots movements, I'll lead the charge for a brighter, greener, more sustainable future.

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

The late Keli Kiilu was a pioneer of PRSK and a real champion of the public relations movement in Kenya. May his soul rest in peace. He was a tough person to please. But he taught me some really powerful career lessons, one of them being the power of storytelling; it's your greatest tool. He told me "Learn to listen as much as you speak, understanding your audience is key. Stay curious, and adaptable, and always keep ethics at the forefront of your work. And never forget, behind every successful campaign lies the strength of relationships built on trust and authenticity". He believed in the power of partnerships and joint campaigns with all stakeholders to lead positive change in society and the private sector. This advice has shaped me to be the person I am today in building connections, leading with integrity, and living my purpose.

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

It can create change across geographical boundaries and amplify voices for positive change, build brand reputations, shape public opinion, and change behavior. PR wields tremendous influence in shaping the world we live in. PR's adaptability has helped turn chaos and crisis into real opportunities for storytelling with a profound positive impact. Its creativity has helped to shape attitudes, emotions, and beliefs in the hearts and minds of different audiences.



**...My greatest fear is not leaving a legacy in my personal life or professional life. I always wonder what people will say when I am gone. I haven't faced it yet because I am lucky to still be around :) ....and hopefully, I still have time to make a positive impact on my family and society...**

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

I would ask them to stay curious, be adaptable, build and nurture relationships, and master the art of storytelling. I would also ask them to ensure they identify mentors and coaches who can guide them in their careers and ensure that they do something brilliant twice a year and have fun while at it! There are many times in my career that I didn't have a solution to an issue but through sharing with my network you find the solutions are always there.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

My greatest fear is not leaving a legacy in my personal life or professional life. I always wonder what people will say when I am gone. I haven't faced it yet because I am



lucky to still be around :) ....and hopefully, I still have time to make a positive impact on my family and society.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

I wish I had taken more calculated risks earlier in my career, whether it was pursuing new opportunities, starting a venture, or speaking up for my ideas.

**Parting shot.**

Life is short, own and tell your story, and most importantly.... leave the world a better place than we found it.



# VIVIENNE ATIENO

External Communication Manager,  
Kenya Airways





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

PR is about managing and disseminating information to key stakeholders and the public in order to influence perception; build trust and advocate for a positive social impact. As a practitioner for the last 10 plus years, it has been exciting watching how practitioners have been able to embed the art of strategic and creative story-telling in order to champion social impact, influence policy while embracing technology and the learning opportunities and growth it comes with.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

Policy Communication- Innovation and effective implementation of communication with regards to policies that influence social impact initiatives. This is because you are interacting with both community members (some who are disenfranchised and with low levels of exposure or education) and policy makers and regulators. You need to be able to synthesize the complex, technical and regulatory messages and disseminate it in a simple, easy to understand manner in order to gain buy-in and advocate for behavioral or culture change.

Stakeholder Collaboration- Over the years, I have developed skills in advocacy and lobbying with decision-makers, grassroots organizations and other strategic stakeholders in order to influence policy by understanding how country policy agendas can influence global processes. This has led to brand positioning of the organization as a thought leader in addressing key societal challenges.

Leadership and Governance: I am currently serving my second elected term as the National Assistant Secretary of the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK). In addition, I have just finished my term as an Honourable Commissioner of the Communications and Multi-Media Appeals Tribunal where our key mandate was to listen and adjudicate on matters pertaining to the Communications, ICT and Regulatory industry in Kenya.

Strategic Corporate Communications: Having worked in a media house, a Communications Agency and now in the mining and manufacturing industry, I have gained immense experience in developing effective corporate

communication strategies- which are cascaded to different stakeholders across multi-channels.

Communication Writing is an underrated yet very important skill. Having honed my practise at Royal Media Services where I first worked, straight out of University- I was able to get an in-depth understanding on how to write for media- what do editors look out for? What piques their interest? How do you ensure that your article gets featured? These are some of the key questions one needs to answer when writing for the media.

Networking- Being intentional about building symbiotic and collaborative relationships is a must-have skill in PR. These developed relationships are what will help you when advocating for policies, when seeking media visibility, when managing a crisis and more importantly when achieving shared organizational or communication goals. I can not count the number of times my networks have come through for me at a point of need. I learnt to hone this skill from my former Boss Susan Maingi who was our Communications and Sustainability Director. There was no door that was never opened for her when she knocked- and this she attributed to her deliberate and intentional relationships developed over the years.

Crisis Management and the ability to critically assess the crisis, the cause and how to both manage it at present and also mitigate it in case of future reoccurrences. As a communications professional who is in charge of reputation management- it is critical to always have a crisis and issue management strategy in place, with scenario mapping embedded in it.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

Cliché as it sounds but my biggest inspiration comes from my mother and my late maternal grandmother. My mother had me when she was in her 1st year of university.

As a last born in a family that did not have much growing up- her fate was sealed. She would drop out of school, raise me and figure out life at that juncture. My late grandmother however would hear none of that. She instead took care of me from when I was barely a month old and insisted that my mother returns to University and earn her degree. My late grandmother appreciated

the value of education and the opportunities it presents and even though I already have an MBA and I am contemplating enrolling for a PhD in her honor. I have watched my mother rise from a teacher to currently working for one of the largest global humanitarian agencies and her resilience, her determination to achieve her goals and her spirit of never giving up are qualities I hope to always carry with me in my professional and personal life. Her passion for the Humanitarian space has been a driving force in my career and as a result, I have always gravitated towards projects or initiatives that have a social impact in the community. Regardless of what my official role would be, I have always asked to be involved in social impact initiatives in an organisation. Being able to use my communication expertise to be a force for positive change is a goal I always aspire to. Eva Muraya and Stella Kiguta- Ng'anga are some women I have had the pleasure of working directly with. They taught me how to both create and jealously protect a brand, reputation management, and how to effectively handle corporate crises as well. Internationally, Ellen John Sirleaf who was not only the 1st female African President but was also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent efforts to promote peace and her advocacy for women's rights- a true testament of the power of effective communications.

#### **Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Own your narrative and never let anyone tell your story. Believe in yourself, do not fear failure and whatever you do- always move forward- no matter how small the steps may be. It will eventually pay off.

#### **Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

The legislation and regulation of the profession through the IPRAC Bill is a big win. As a council, together with the support of key stakeholders, we have made immense progress and we can only hope to see the fruition of our labor soon.

Secondly- Communication being both a science and an art; I would like to see how communication goes beyond relaying information and to instead shape perceptions, inform behavioral changes and connect with people at an intrinsic level.

#### **Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Some of the biggest challenges are stereotyping. Despite efforts being made to elevate women on meritocracy basis, there are still organizations who have a bias towards women; making them work twice as hard just to get half the recognition. This gender bias and discrimination in the workplace stifles many career growth opportunities for women. For the women who have been lucky enough to scale the heights, there is need for them to send the lift back down so that other women can use it too- mentor them, mention their names in rooms, and hold space for them. We all need each other if we are to win this fight.

#### **Parting shot**

Be true to who you really are and to who you want to be.

“What if I fall?”... “Oh but my darling, but what if you do fly”

“**...Cliché as it sounds but my biggest inspiration comes from my mother and my late maternal grandmother. My mother had me when she was in her 1st year of university....**





# DR. CHARLES NYIRO

Lecturer and Patron of Pwani University PR Club  
Pwani University, Kenya.

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I teach Communications and Language at Pwani University. I am Founder and Patron of Pwani University PR Club a club that provides mentorship to students who would like to get into the field of PR and Communications and seeks to transform students into excellent strategic thinkers. I am also Chair of the PRSK Coast Chapter

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

Experience with various organizations in both private and public sectors coupled with a PhD in Communications prepared me for a career in teaching. Practical experience with internal and external communications, media relations, CSR, brand management, publication production, stakeholder management, corporate events planning etc has meant that I can equip students with the practical aspects of PR and present many case studies in my teaching. One skill I acquired over the years which I have come to appreciate is design. Being able to work with design software has meant that I can present very professional documents and reports and even do serious newsletters and project proposals.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

Germany and Austria have introduced English language in their curriculum. I plan to be one of those who will teach Communication and English language to the German students in Germany or Austria and to bring the Euros home!

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

One of my first PR assignments was in Kenya Wildlife Service where I did an internship after Journalism school undertaking conservation communication. I remember a statement Mr. John Mramba made while addressing staff:

“The PR effort in any organization should not be seen as a departmental responsibility perceived,

conceived and executed by the PR officer or team alone. Good effective PR is conducted by everyone in the organization. It is the shine on the messenger’s shoes; the smile on the secretary’s face; the vigour of the officer’s handshake. It is the courteous voice of the telephone operator; the tone of the letter from the chief executive.” This statement made me realize that all employees have a role to play in the PR effort of projecting a positive corporate image and the PR practitioner has the huge task of professionally planning and directing this effort to achieve a targeted impact. Indeed the PR practitioner is the Priest of the organization.

“**...Learn another foreign language other than English. In my life I have missed many international opportunities because I could not speak French or German.....**

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

Image for an organization is everything. It determines who comes to work in that organization, who will want to do business with it and for NGOs what funding it attracts etc. Its communications and PR that has the tools to package the image of that organization by maintaining dual information flow. This improved flow of information is important because attainment of public trust and successful fundraising activities are only possible with a good corporate image.

The PR tools are useful even when handling non PR dockets. My PR skills for example were very useful when I worked as Programme Manager for various international organizations. In the public sector, lack of recognition has in the past hindered PR from playing its rightful role within organizations, largely because of lack of proper structures caused by lack of legislation. What’s exciting is that the industry has made significant progress in ensuring that the industry is guided by legislation with the Communications and PR Bill. The Bill will bring sanity to the industry





**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Learn another foreign language other than

English. In my life I have missed many international opportunities because I could not speak French or German. My West African friends who could speak both English and French landed international jobs in Communication and PR

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

One of my greatest fears is spending nights writing a proposal and not getting the job. As a consultant I spend lots of time writing proposals for funding. I do adequate research and ensure my documents are very presentable. Missing the job (sometimes accompanied with an acknowledgement that my proposal was very good) almost makes me not want to try again. To remedy this, I have started reaching out to the organizations and finding out why I missed the job

and I have used the feedback to improve my proposals and presentations. Hopefully this will make things better.

**Q8. If you could go back and**

**change one thing, what would it be?**

I was sponsored by a German Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung to Journalism School and they encouraged their students under scholarships to learn German. I did not because I thought I had enough on my plate. Looking back I should have put effort into learning not just German but also French up to C2 certification as it's easier to learn a new language when young. That would have opened up many opportunities for me.

**Parting shot.**

Young upcoming Communication professionals should learn a second foreign language other than English. This will expand their horizons and open up opportunities beyond Kenya and East Africa.





# EUNICE KILONZO

Manager, Media Relations and Strategic Communications,  
Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.



### **Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

Three things excite me about the industry: storytelling [creating and supporting compelling narratives that resonate with audiences and create meaningful connections], impact [the power to shape public perception, influence opinions, and drive change for organizations, causes, and individuals] and learning [new technologies, trends, stakeholders, and strategies this provides endless opportunities for learning and growth.]

### **Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Over the years, I've acquired a diverse set of skills that have propelled my journey in public relations. Currently, I serve as the Manager of Media Relations and Strategic Communications at Gavi the Vaccine Alliance. My expertise as Manager of Media Relations and Strategic Communications at Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, my expertise has been honed through various roles in prominent organizations.

My previous position as Content Generation Manager at Safaricom PLC equipped me with invaluable skills in multimedia editorial development, stakeholder management, internal communications, and digital publishing. Working with diverse teams at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) HQ in Nairobi and Geneva, as well as the World Health Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland, further expanded my capabilities in organizational communications and media management across sectors such as health, science, environment, technology, financial services, and development.

During my tenure as Communications Officer for the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) at the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), I developed a passion for communicating scientific research results in a creative, simple-to-understand manner, fostering informed action. This experience solidified my skills in storytelling and content creation.

As a former senior health reporter at the Daily Nation newspaper in Nairobi, with over seven years of experience in development writing and journalism, I gained extensive expertise in crafting compelling narratives for various media outlets, including online

platforms and regional publications like The East African and The Citizen.

My writings have been featured in renowned publications such as Scientific African Magazine, Le Monde, and Voices of Africa, highlighting my proficiency in reaching diverse audiences through multimedia storytelling. Additionally, my role as the creator of the monthly #KalundeLearns video series underscores my commitment to exploring innovative forms of content creation and sharing.

Overall, my background in storytelling across private, public, and international organizations, including UN agencies, has equipped me with the skills needed to develop powerful multimedia content, policies, and strategies in the realm of development work. My purpose is to tell authentic stories that inspire change, showcase impact, and foster strategic partnerships, while also maximizing audience reach and engagement through unique multimedia content.

### **Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Rose Thuo, Jacqueline Achieng, Ngele Ali, Pamella Sittoni, Margaret Ogolla, Margaretta wa Gacheru, and Wangari Maathai. These women have inspired me through their resilience, passion, and dedication to making a positive impact in their communities especially in Media, Communications and Public Relations. They serve as shining examples of courage, leadership, and compassion, and excellence in all that they did.

### **Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Believe in yourself and your talents, and be open minded to take on chances to grow and learn along the way. Build up those connections with mentors and friends who lift you up, and don't be afraid to speak up for what you need. When life throws curveballs your way, see them as opportunities to grow and get stronger. Stay open to feedback, make sure to find that balance between work and everything else, and always stay true to who you are. Always support other women in your field. Keep your chin up, never say no to yourself especially in matters that will help you grow, help others and see the world.



**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

In five years, I hope to see a push for greater diversity and inclusion within the global PR community, particularly amplifying African voices and perspectives. I envision enhanced digital skills among African PR practitioners, ensuring proficiency in data analytics, social media management, and emerging technologies. Collaboration and knowledge sharing will be key, fostering partnerships between African and global counterparts while mentoring emerging talent. Upholding ethical practice and accountability remains paramount, with a continued emphasis on transparency and integrity. Furthermore, I am passionate about elevating African narratives on the global stage, showcasing the continent's richness and complexity authentically. Through these efforts, I believe we can create a more vibrant, inclusive, and impactful PR industry that reflects the global community we serve.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

As one of the four curators of the Media, Comms and PR Jobs network, this is an area we are candid about



and constantly discussing to help colleagues find sustainable solutions. Some of the most identified challenges are: gender bias, difficulties in maintaining work-life balance, limited mentorship opportunities, mental health concerns, and stereotypes. Some of the solutions to overcome these

hurdles include: being intentional in advancing gender diversity and inclusion in everything you do, establishing realistic mentorship programs tailored to women, offer flexible work policies, support and resources on mental health, challenge gender stereotypes, and advocating for equal pay and opportunities.

**Parting shot**

Keep your curiosity alive. Stay open to learning, relearning, and unlearning. Offer assistance wherever possible, whether through financial support, sharing your time, networks, or ideas. However, exercise caution to ensure you're not being taken advantage of.



# DR. MILLICENT OTIENO

Head of the Department of Communication, Media and Journalism,  
Rongo University.



### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

The ever changing nature of the practice of public relations is intriguing. It is a paradox that the practice of public relations is guided by principles and ethics yet there is latitude for creativity so as to meet the diverse public relations goals. Further, even with the developments such as data analytics, Big Language Model and Artificial intelligence, the traditional techniques for the Public Relations practice are still pertinent to the field. This mix of the old and new techniques for the success of the practice of Public Relations makes it exciting.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

For me, the skill of relationship building is key in the practice of public relations. It gives room for one to tap into the expertise and assets of others for different goals. Relationship building for organizations is not just for purposes of public relations but also for marketing. Relationship building also exposes one to the dynamics of human nature and how to harness it for mutual benefit.

Being committed to continuous learning has been key in my Public Relations journey especially in view of the fast paced changes in its practice. As a trainer of PR this skill enables me to align teaching and learning to the changes.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

Gin Din Kariuki charted a path for the practice of Public Relations in Kenya. She provided a model for the establishment of a Public Relations enterprise. At an entrepreneurial level, I think that was quite an ingenious innovation of that time. My high school Principal, Mrs. Margaret Wanjohi inculcated the spirit of hardwork in us, she made us believe that there were no heights that we couldn't scale. My mother, Consolata Otieno is a phenomenal woman, who epitomizes hard work.

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

Public relations practice evolves every now and then and one has to remain open minded to cope up with the changes. Nevertheless it is the changes that make Public Relations unique and exciting.

### Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?

The establishment of the Public Relations Institute of Kenya would buttress the training of Public Relations in Kenya. I would also recommend the regulation of the practice of public relations so that it is a preserve for the accredited public relations practitioners. Regulation would enhance the ethical practice of public relations. Further the formation of a union of public relations practitioners would go a long way to enhance their welfare.

### Q6.

#### What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?

Issues of gender inequality are not only unique to the PR field but to many other fields. The gender dynamics may sometimes not work in favor of women. Nevertheless, through hard work, resilience and tact, women can break the ceilings and achieve self actualization in the field of Public Relations.

“**...Being committed to continuous learning has been key in my Public Relations journey especially in view of the fast paced changes in its practice. As a trainer of PR this skill enables me to align teaching and learning to the changes...**



### Parting shot

“Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'Press On!' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”

Calvin Coolidge





# CHIIMBIRU GIMODE

Ag. Senior Media, Publications and Digital Communications Officer  
Communications Authority of Kenya.



### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

Many things! But chiefly, I am responsible for providing strategic communications counsel, issue and crisis management, stakeholder management, and media & public relations to ensure my employer is visible, well understood and highly regarded by all stakeholders. In this role, I am also actively involved in supporting executives to communicate openly and honestly build trust and credibility among employees and stakeholders. This means understanding their communication needs, undertake research and preparing them to deliver impactful communication, whether in media engagements or participation in high level forums locally and globally.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

I began my career as a radio journalist in 2008 for about four years before transitioning to corporate communication at the Communications Authority of Kenya. Along the journey, I had to undertake quite some learning, relearning and unlearning, to understand and fit well within this space. I have undergone numerous capacity building sessions on corporate communication locally and globally, including by PRSK, which have positioned me well to deliver in my role. Working for an ICT regulator means we deal largely with technical issues, and my role has been to ensure our various stakeholders understand what we do in a manner that allows meaningful collaborations and support, particularly, the public. Surprisingly, beyond the technical skills that one needs to do the job well, I discovered I also needed some skills in organizational politics and how they shape the work that we do as communication professionals. As a professional, balancing organizational realities is key to achieving successful and impactful communication approaches. On the educational front, in the last 10 years I have been able to transition from a diploma to a Masters degree, during which I have expanded my horizon in many profound ways. My academic journey has also taken me to uncharted waters of international relations, skills which have come in handy in executing assignments with a global context. I have learnt the power of collaboration with colleagues within the organization and building lasting network professionals

within the ecosystem and never stop learning. No white flags!

“...Greatness is not fashion. It is not fame, either. It is what people do with what they have!’ The greatest question I keep asking myself is whether I am achieving greatness with what I have and in all I do. By making a difference in whatever I do, impacting others to be the best they can through my talents and resources, and, contributing to a better world, that’s true greatness.

.....

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

10 years from now, I see myself a thought leader in the PR/communication space, creating impactful solutions to practical communications challenges and influencing future practitioners to make meaningful contributions in the various spaces they are in.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

That must be my former boss Mr. Mutua Muthusi, who currently works for the Universal Postal Union as the Director, Development Cooperation, in Bern, Switzerland. When things were thick, he always urged us to be ‘cool under fire!’ In my early days in my PR career, I discovered it can be quite highly demanding or stressful at times, and yet, it is in those moments that you must maintain your cool and get the work done!

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

The PR industry is a highly dynamic space that continues to evolve in the face of new realities in the ecosystem. Working in the ICT space, my excitement is around how emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) will impact the industry, and how in turn, PR can adapt in order to thrive. A recent article in the Business Insider, for instance, observed that AI is not only a new pillar for innovation in PR practices, it is opening up new frontiers in communication strategies, data analysis, and campaigns management. It is therefore gratifying to see the industry adapt, and now that we have the Public Relations and Communication Management Bill that seeks to professionalise this space, the prospects look great.

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

A few years ago, I was in London, United Kingdom. While walking in the streets of Oxford, I saw a message from the Mayor of London at the time, Boris Johnson, who later became Prime Minister. It was celebrating efforts to lower HIV infections. It said, 'London, keep doing it right! I would urge anyone trying to figure themselves out in this space and indeed anywhere, like the Londoners, to always keep doing what they are doing, right. It is easy to have ambitions in life, it is far more difficult to realize them. Along the way, you discover that nothing comes easy. You will require to invest your time and efforts, spend long days and nights toiling and sweating, of succeeding and failing. As long as you consistently and ruthlessly pursue your ambition, you will realize it in fullness of time. While giving up along the way may sound tempting, and even convenient, but it is counterproductive. As you make life-changing decisions, have an open mind, and follow your gut! Sometimes you will get it right, sometimes not. Whichever way, that's how life works!

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

My greatest fear has always been, if I die today, what sort of legacy would I leave? What would I be remembered for? This reflection is always inspired by the life of Jesus Christ, whose ministry lasted for just three years, but whose legacy lives forever. In light of this dilemma, I purpose to create impact in everything

I do, living my life to the fullest, and taking on a challenge at a time.

### Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

That must be how I spend my share of 24hrs daily!

### Parting shot.

What makes us great? Late last year, I was introduced to a 2018 film, 'The Art of Greatness,' which traces the lives of America's five foremost cattle keepers. It sought to find out, what exactly is greatness? What made them stand out in the trade? The film sums it up thus: 'Greatness is not fashion. It is not fame, either. It is what people do with what they have!' The greatest question I keep asking myself is whether I am achieving greatness with what I have and in all I do. By making a difference in whatever I do, impacting others to be the best they can through my talents and resources, and, contributing to a better world, that's true greatness.





# DALTON MBONDO

Head of Corporate Communications,  
Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

I spearhead the development, review, and implementation of Corporate Communication policies, strategies, and procedures. I also coordinate the gathering, packaging, and dissemination of information on programs, significant events in a specific area, and their implementation on customers. Additionally, I oversee the management of ODPC media platforms and coordinate media and public relation services. I promote public awareness of ODPC programs through the development, publication, and dissemination of information, education, and communication materials. I also coordinate the management of executive events to secure ODPC profiling moments. Furthermore, I lead stakeholder management to promote public engagement. I supervise the preparation of timely media supplements, appearances, documentaries, press releases, and features. Lastly, I provide advisory services on matters related to corporate communication.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

Over the years I've been in the industry, I have acquired a number of skills. Having attained a Masters of Arts in Communications, I am an enthusiast in new media and a teacher. I have acquired strong problem-solving skills, allowing me to identify and analyze issues and develop practical solutions. My leadership skills include guiding and motivating others, influencing decision-making, and managing teams effectively by leveraging qualities like communication, delegation, and conflict resolution. Additionally, I excel in communication, conveying information effectively through verbal, written, and nonverbal means. I use active listening to present ideas and foster collaboration.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

At a position where my ideas are recognized and in which I am making a real impact. I picture myself becoming even more confident in the communication field, with more knowledge and experience.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Alex Chamwada. How to be a strategic thinker, a person who has foresight to identify potential problems and invests in building relationships. This has seen me excel in my projects with ease.

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

You meet a lot of different people who come in all shapes, sizes and personalities, which keeps the gig exceptionally interesting!

### Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?

Not to be afraid of the dynamics in the communications landscape, embrace it. Leaving behind what you know and entering a new stage in life can bring feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Pushing the fear aside and embracing change, will make the transition into your new PR career very interesting.

### Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?

Public Speaking: It's now my cup of tea.

### Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?

To trust and have more faith in what I do.

### Parting shot.

"When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen." – Ernest Hemingway.





# AWINO GILBERT (AG)

Head of PR Stakeholder & Knowledge Management  
Kenya Women Teachers Association (KEWOTA).

### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

We have officers stationed in 40 out of the 47 counties. As part of our commitment to excellence, I provide training to all our coordinators who serve as representatives for our membership, which totals 100,000. I work closely with the leadership team of our organization under the guidance of CEO Benta Opande. In delegated capacity, I stand in for the CEO at meetings where she feels my presence is necessary. Additionally, I offer guidance on effective communication channels and help craft messages for dissemination to the public. Beyond the duties outlined in my appointment letter, I also take on the responsibility of managing the political landscape within the association. This entails continuously striving to earn the trust of the CEO, the National Chair, and the broader leadership team

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

I've dedicated myself to education, culminating in the achievement of a Master's degree in Communication. I have just completed my LLB studies, my third. I have training Journalism and Forensics. Through this journey, I've realized that PR as a Profession is greatly enhanced when paired with complementary technical skills, such as those found in Law, Business, ICT, and various Sciences.

No matter how proficient one is, what truly distinguishes an individual in their role are the intangible qualities like trustworthiness, reliability, teamwork, compassion and temperament.

Creating an environment where everyone feels heard and appreciated is paramount. There seldom exists a single, definitive solution to our work for success hinges not only on being correct but also on ensuring that others are satisfied with the outcomes. I prioritize relationship management as a fundamental aspect of my professional ethos. In my previous role, I faced the challenging task of handling the dismissal of a close friend who served as the head of Procurement. Assigned with the responsibility of communicating this sensitive matter to the public via the newspaper. I navigated the situation with care and transparency by seeking him late in the night to explain in confidence.

Five years later, he graciously recommended me for a lucrative employment opportunity.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

I envision myself in a leadership position. Whether as a CEO of a prominent organization or serving in a pivotal role within esteemed institutions like the UN or the World Bank. This must happen.

Should my aspirations in these avenues not materialize, I see myself as a political or communications advisor, a legislator or a diplomat. I am committed to utilizing my expertise and passion to enact positive change within governmental structures.

“**...Creating an environment where everyone feels heard and appreciated is paramount. There seldom exists a single, definitive solution to our work for success hinges not only on being correct but also on ensuring that others are satisfied with the outcomes. I prioritize relationship management as a fundamental aspect of my professional ethos.....**

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

The most invaluable advice I've received came from Mr. Ogallo, a former Commissioner General of Prisons. He says PR is everything. Though not a PR practitioner. He says that life's challenges are inevitable and diverse, ranging from job loss to personal hardships like illness or loss of loved ones and that nobody chooses their problems, and problems choose you. So one must



always be prayerful and loving to family. I've gained valuable guidance from my CEO. Her advice: Always speak last in meetings. By refraining from immediate contributions, I've cultivated a habit of thoughtful reflection, which has enhanced my effectiveness as a communicator and decision-maker.

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

PR is dynamic. It is not a deterministic profession like medicine, engineering or Law. It is a transitional profession. You will find people from other professions easily transiting to PR and doing better. PR strategies must adapt to the unique characteristics and goals of each organization and tailor their approach, messaging, and tactics to best suit the needs and objectives of their clients or employers.

Misconceptions about PR can significantly impact the effectiveness of our work. To mitigate this, it's crucial for PR practitioners to invest in education and deepen their understanding of their organization's core functions and industries. For instance, if working in the medical field, supplementing PR expertise with studies in healthcare practices can enhance one's ability to navigate and communicate within that specific context.

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Pursue your aspirations with unwavering determination and adaptability. Set ambitious goals and fearlessly pursue them, even if the path to achieving them may be difficult.

Aspiring to leadership positions requires consistently "upping your game" and striving to exceed expectations. Success often hinges on cultivating positive relationships and fostering likeability among peers and bosses. Demonstrating reverence and honor to those in higher authority fosters professional growth and will lift you to the next stage.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

For me, it's the prospect of working in an organization that undergoes frequent retrenchments or staff reorganizations. Another significant fear revolves around the uncertainty of having insufficient funds to

meet essential needs. Other concerns can take a back seat, but these two remain at the forefront of my mind.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

Generally, I do not regret. I reflect and become better. I would be more deliberate in building friendships. Staying at a corner office and earning a good salary will not take one anywhere.

**Parting shot.**

Nothing is easy and everything takes long. Do not be in a hurry to be great. Read a book and share the stories. Reading makes one a good listener. Invest in relationships.

# CYNTHIA MWANGI

Brand Manager - Hot 96, Royal Media Services Ltd.





**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

It's a thrilling time to be in PR! Public relations is no longer just about dull press releases. We're strategic partners, using the power of technology to craft compelling brand stories and build meaningful relationships with our audiences.

Now, we can target our messages with incredible precision, reaching the exact demographics and interests that matter most to a brand. This laser focus ensures our messaging resonates deeply, maximising its effectiveness.

The ability to measure campaigns in real time is another game-changer. We can see exactly how our efforts are performing, allowing us to adjust strategies and optimise campaigns on the fly. Data empowers us to be smarter and more efficient than ever before.

We can use social listening tools to identify potential problems before they escalate, allowing for swift and measured responses. This minimises damage and protects a brand's reputation in the digital age. What about this? Isn't thrilling!

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

**Storytelling:** Crafting compelling narratives that resonate with audiences is key. Whether it's a press release or a social media campaign, I've learned to weave stories that capture attention and drive action.

**Digital Dexterity:** The PR landscape is digital now. From social media mastery to data analysis, I've had to become fluent in the tools and platforms that connect us with audiences and measure success.

**Relationship Building:** Building strong relationships with journalists is crucial. I've honed my pitching skills and media relations expertise to secure valuable placements and positive coverage for my clients.

**Calmness in Every Storm:** PR isn't always sunshine and rainbows. I've developed the ability to stay cool under pressure, crafting strategic communication plans to navigate even the trickiest situations.

**Adapt to every situation:** The PR world is constantly

changing. I've learned to embrace new technologies, trends, and platforms, staying ahead of the curve to deliver the best possible results for my clients.

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Sirleaf Johnson, Liberia's first female president, inspires me with her unwavering resilience. Facing war and political turmoil, she never stopped advocating for peace and progress. She reminds me of the power of using your voice to fight for what's right, even in the toughest situations.

Alyssa Mastromonaco is an American author, and White House Deputy Chief of Staff under President Obama. Her ability to navigate complex situations and manage a vast team with clear communication is a constant source of inspiration. She exemplifies the importance of clear messaging and strong leadership in achieving ambitious goals.

Gina Din, A true trailblazer in Kenyan public relations, she broke barriers and paved the way for others. Her dedication to excellence and her commitment to the African continent inspire me. She reminds me of the importance of using our talents to make a positive impact in our communities.

Josephine Mwangi, A formidable force in Kenya's education sector. Renowned for her headstrong and determined approach, she led with unwavering resolve during her tenure as principal of top girls' schools in Kenya and as head of the department at the Kenya Teachers Training College. Her resolute determination propelled her to overcome challenges and achieve remarkable results, leaving an indelible mark in the institutions she served. She is also my mother.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Stay true to yourself and your values. In the fast-paced world of PR, it's easy to get swept up in trends and pressure to conform. However, your unique perspective and voice are what set you apart. Embrace your authenticity, and let it shine through in your work and interactions.

PR can be a challenging field, filled with unpredictable situations and demanding clients. Cultivate resilience to navigate setbacks and adversity. Remember that failure is not the end, but an opportunity to learn and grow stronger. Stay focused on your goals, and don't let obstacles deter you from pursuing your passion.

The PR landscape is constantly evolving, with new technologies, platforms, and strategies emerging regularly. Stay curious and committed to lifelong learning. Seek out opportunities to expand your skill set, whether through formal education, workshops, or networking events. Embrace change and adaptability as essential tools for success in this dynamic industry.

Above all, remember that your journey in PR is yours to shape. Be bold, be ambitious, and never underestimate the power of your voice and contributions. Your perspective as a woman in the industry is invaluable, and your potential is limitless.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

For starters, the adoption of the IPRAC bill will herald a new era of efficiency and professionalism within the PR profession. With standardised accreditation processes in place, the industry will see a significant streamlining of practices, ensuring that PR practitioners meet rigorous standards of competence and ethics.

I anticipate a profound transformation in public relations, driven by the challenges of the digital era. With the surge of social media, managing online crises becomes paramount. Fake news and AI-generated deepfakes amplify these challenges, demanding robust strategies to safeguard reputations. Organizations must prioritize hiring skilled professionals to navigate these complexities, ensuring resilience and trust-building in the face of adversity.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Stereotypes and preconceived notions about gender roles can create barriers for women in PR, affecting how their contributions and capabilities are perceived by colleagues and clients.

Striking the right balance between being assertive and maintaining likeability can be a challenge for women in PR. Women face backlash or negative perceptions when exhibiting traits typically associated with leadership.

As a woman in male-dominated workplaces, you may face challenges navigating office politics and power dynamics. However, with persistence and a positive mindset, you can overcome these obstacles and achieve your goals. Keep pushing forward towards success.

Women in PR often experience a gender pay gap, where they are paid less than their male counterparts for the same work, which can contribute to financial insecurity and perpetuate systemic gender inequalities.

**“ ...The ability to measure campaigns in real time is another game-changer. We can see exactly how our efforts are performing, allowing us to adjust strategies and optimise campaigns on the fly. Data empowers us to be smarter and more efficient than ever before.....**





### Parting shot

As we part ways, let's remember to embrace the dynamic nature of our industry, remaining agile in the face of evolving challenges. Let's harness the power of AI to innovate and mitigate risk, all while upholding the highest standards of professionalism.





# TITUS K. KISANGAU

Communications Lead  
Joint Learning Network for Universal Health Coverage (JLN).



### Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?

As the Communications Lead at the Joint Learning Network for Universal Coverage (JLN), Titus Kisangau spearheads the creation and distribution of compelling content to amplify the network's global presence. He collaborates closely with internal teams to craft and share knowledge products, ensuring their effective dissemination. Titus oversees communication platforms such as newsletters and websites, meticulously upholding brand standards. Through diverse media channels, he actively engages stakeholders, driving forward the network's mission of advancing universal health coverage. Titus is instrumental in devising and executing communication strategies, nurturing online communities, and forging strategic partnerships to bolster the network's impact. His multifaceted role demands not only impeccable writing and digital media proficiency but also the adept ability to foster relationships across a spectrum of stakeholders.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?

Throughout my professional journey, I've acquired a diverse skill set that has significantly advanced my career. Strategic thinking has been instrumental, allowing me to develop and implement communication strategies aligned with organizational goals. This skill enables me to identify opportunities, anticipate challenges, and adapt approaches to navigate dynamic environments effectively. Relationship building is another cornerstone of my career success. I've cultivated strong connections with diverse stakeholders, including partners, media outlets, and communities. This ability to foster collaboration and trust has been pivotal in driving successful communication initiatives. Project management has been a valuable skill I've honed over the years. Coordinating communication activities, managing timelines and resources, and ensuring deliverables are met have all been part of my repertoire. This competency has enabled me to oversee complex communication projects efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, my experience in crisis management has equipped me to handle sensitive situations with composure, mitigating risks and upholding organizational reputation. These skills have not only propelled my professional journey but have also contributed significantly to the success and impact of

the organizations I've been a part of. They've empowered me to drive meaningful change, foster collaboration, and effectively communicate to drive positive outcomes.

### Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?

In 10 years, I envision myself as a highly regarded leader in communications, possibly holding a senior executive position or serving as a sought-after consultant guiding organizations on strategic communication initiatives. Drawing upon my extensive experience and the insights gained from finalizing my postgraduate diploma in Strategic Leadership and Accountability, I aim to expand my influence globally, collaborating with international entities or leading multinational teams. My passion for sustainability and purpose-driven communication will continue to drive me, inspiring me to champion initiatives tackling pressing global challenges. Additionally, I remain committed to mentoring emerging communication professionals, sharing my knowledge and expertise to empower others to drive positive change. Overall, I see myself as a dynamic force shaping the future of communication and making meaningful contributions to societal progress in diverse career spaces.

### Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?

Kentice Tikolo, a seasoned PR professional, instilled in me the importance of authenticity in communication. By staying true to myself and organizational values, I've built genuine and trustworthy relationships with colleagues, stakeholders, and clients. This authenticity has enhanced my credibility and helped me navigate challenging situations with integrity. Whether addressing crises or advocating for change, I prioritize sincerity, earning respect and loyalty from those I work with.

### Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?

What excites me about the PR industry is its dynamic nature and the opportunity it provides to creatively shape narratives and influence perceptions. I'm drawn to the challenge of crafting compelling messages that resonate with diverse audiences, as well as the strategic thinking required to navigate complex communication landscapes. Moreover, I find fulfillment in building meaningful relationships with stakeholders and driving



positive change through effective communication strategies. Ultimately, the PR industry offers a platform to make a tangible impact, leveraging storytelling and engagement to connect people, organizations, and ideas on a global scale.

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Never stop learning and embrace failure as a stepping stone to success. Stay curious, seek out new opportunities, and don't be afraid to take risks. Surround yourself with mentors and supporters who inspire and challenge you. Remember that setbacks are temporary, and each experience, whether positive or negative, contributes to your growth and resilience.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

Reaching my full potential. I constantly strive to overcome it by pushing myself out of my comfort zone, taking on new challenges, and embracing growth opportunities. By confronting this fear head-on, I've learned to trust in my abilities, persevere through setbacks, and continue striving towards my goals with determination and resilience.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

Prioritize self-care and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. While striving for success, I sometimes went beyond. Recognizing the importance of balance sooner would have allowed me to achieve my goals more sustainably and enjoy the journey along the way.

**Parting shot.**

In PR and Communication space, success isn't solely measured by professional achievements but also by the depth of relationships fostered. Every interaction presents an opportunity to learn, whether from clients, colleagues, or stakeholders. Prioritizing authenticity and connection-building enriches communication efforts, amplifying impact and fostering trust. Balance is key; maintaining well-being allows for sustained excellence in crafting compelling narratives and influencing perceptions.



# GLADYS J SOME, HSC

Group Corporate Affairs Manager, Kenya Reinsurance Corporation.



**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

Simply telling a corporate story, shaping public perceptions, and experiencing the satisfaction of witnessing the impact brought about as a result of small, progressive steps — one day at a time.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Adaptability to different situations, staying updated on industry trends, creativity for crafting compelling messages, maintaining calmness during crisis situations, and possessing skills in public speaking, protocol, and etiquette training. Coupled with resilience, commitment to excellence, and stakeholder engagement, these factors have been my sources of strength and growth in the industry and my profession

Acquisition of an MA in International Relations and Diplomacy has also been a great shot in the arm in my career as a Public Relations Practitioner. This, together with the opportunity to have served as a Kenyan Diplomat in the Republic of South Africa in the position of Minister Counsellor, was a great experience that propelled me further in the field of PR. The two professions marry too well and go hand in hand

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Maya Angelou is simply epic for me. I draw strong inspiration from the way she handles her critics and soars above the raging winds.

Wangari Maathai - a woman who remained focused. Regardless of what came her way to dissuade her from pursuing her purpose and goals, she did not relent or get waylaid. This helps me refocus amidst all opposition when I am determined to deliver on a purpose.

Hillary Clinton - her resilience in the face of adversity, dedication to public service, advocacy for women and children, and her wit and wisdom in standing by her husband's side when everyone expected otherwise make her quite an admirable personality.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

My best advice to upcoming women in the PR industry is as follows:

Develop excellent communications skills - Hone your writing, speaking and listening skills. They are the backbone to your career.

Build Strong Networks - cultivate strong relations with colleagues, clients, and media.

Be adaptable and Resilient in the profession - PR can be fast paced and unpredictable. Be easy to adjust to situations and circumstances related to your work.

Always be updated on Industry Trends - Always keep up with new trends as PR keeps evolving. Be aware of the technological changes and trends and remain competitive and relevant.

Seek Mentorship and Guidance - Have people you look up to, people who challenge you and your imagination, and people who push you to be better than yourself today.

Prioritize Self Care - PR can be demanding and so there is a need for one to prioritize their physical and mental wellbeing. Set boundaries, manage stress effectively and make time for personal development and activities that recharge and make you better.

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

In the next 5 years I believe the PR industry will not be isolated from the current AI craze. However, I would love to see growth in authenticity, transparency, and diversity. I would wish to see the great integration of PR with other professions and disciplines that will position PR as a key aspect of growth in different disciplines. I would wish to see PR recognized as an authentic entity with ethical practices and recognition.





**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Some obvious challenges faced by women in the industry include gender bias, limited leadership opportunities and most prominently, work-life balance issues as well as unequal remuneration.

Some solutions:

Flexible work arrangements can be a significant booster for women who are raising families or facing various challenges. Providing options like remote work and flexible hours can help women balance their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Equal pay Initiatives - Implementation of transparent salary structures and regular pay audits to reward meritocracy and fair compensation for women.

Creating supportive work cultures - Where women

feel empowered to voice their opinions, contribute ideas without being castigated and support to enhance their careers to promote inclusivity.

Leadership Development programs  
- Offering

leadership development programs and mentorship opportunities specifically tailored for women can help women advance their careers and break through glass ceiling.

Equal opportunities for women - HR practices that give women equal opportunities.

**Parting shot**

I would like to encourage more young women and share compelling stories—winning stories of resilience, commitment to excellence, and picking up whenever we fall. Know that every stumble is an opportunity to learn, grow, and become stronger.



# SALIM ALI BAKARI

Chief Corporate Communication Officer,  
Kenya Civil Aviation Authority



**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

I am currently a Team leader in PR and Comms function - This entails leadership in Reputation Management, Strategic communication, Brand management, Crisis communication, Stakeholder engagement.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

I have amassed Practical skills in varied challenging sectors; Academic/professional skills; Strategic thinking; relationship skills

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

I envision myself as part of the esteemed cadre of seasoned PR professionals, mentoring and molding aspiring practitioners to make meaningful contributions to the corporate communications landscape. By imparting my knowledge and honing their skills, I aim to cultivate a community of adept communicators committed to upholding the standards of excellence in the PR industry

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

Mr. Justice Kemei, one time my boss during the elementary years of my practice. He said "Never stop learning. Stay curious, keep up with industry trends, and invest in continuous professional development to stay ahead in the field."

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

It's the opportunity to shape narratives, build relationships and drive positive change through effective communication strategies. I am passionate about leveraging communication to enhancing service delivery, promoting accountability and fostering public trust

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Embrace continuous learning - PR is dynamic, constantly evolving; be creative and innovative - and be resilient to handle pressure and criticism

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

I fear being in the spotlight and missing my target. This fear constantly pushes me out of my comfort zone and lean towards personal growth. It is what has helped me to grow.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

I would focus on promoting a culture of transparency and honest communication. In the pursuit of protecting reputation, authenticity can be compromised, hence leading to nowadays politicians' cliché - THAT'S PR!

**Parting shot.**

In the PR realm, honesty is the cornerstone - build trust with all your key stakeholders and you will thrive!

**“ ...My greatest fear is feeling inadequate and failing to live up to my potential, partly stemming from not having a father figure while growing up. I've confronted it by simply ploughing my way through, building confidence over the years, and embracing setbacks as opportunities for growth. ...**

# EVA MURAYA

Founder and CEO, BSD Group.





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

One of the things that is most exciting to me is the critical role PR plays in everyday lives of people; how it has the power to inform and transform, even as it educates and empowers through sharing information amongst multiple stakeholders. I say it is critical because it serves as an engine that runs effective message delivery, understanding and response, through a whole organisational value chain. This can result in transactional benefit, behavioural change and social impact. It is a business science that delivers the dividends of trust, credibility, confidence and believability to organisations, products, services, causes and governments. The other consideration is its increasing growth! The energy! The multiple opportunities!

The community of practitioners we can now access via our new media...the proficiencies we can build daily across multiple markets and channels. The centrality that PR finds itself in lending irreplaceable organisational value in today's world, is without any doubt the most important asset. In my mind today, Public Relations is an organisational imperative! Fun fact – Wi-Fi + PR=Same WhatsApp Group! You cannot build any meaningful & profitable engagement with clients, partners, consumers, community or even government, without smart PR...As an organisation how would you possibly breathe?! I also think that PR has reformatted its practice into new and exciting speciality areas, making it all the more a desirable career path for those looking for disruptive methods of storytelling, opportunities for message creation, multi-channel expression and favourable impact and response. I think we are currently living through our best PR times yet....

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

I have been in the industry for many years...and suffice it to say, I still learn new things each day, week, month and year that passes. As a novice in my early years, it was learning how to employ the craft to basic requirements like developing press releases, features, writing Opinion Editorials that were newsworthy and that business desks would find meaningful for their

respective audiences. Organising media receptions, developing corporate and product PR strategies... and coordinating service vendors for the agency. That then built into more client centric engagement which required more focus and understanding of their organisational strategies so that these could be captured and carried through in our PR & Communication plans.

With time, I had quickly become the point person for client based solutions, leading and managing teams. This phase was key in guiding a journey of building social capital from the many opportunities and networks that came my way in providing effective PR solutions, efficiently. This phase also allowed my skills in media relations to grow...gaining better understanding, in very practical ways on how media houses work...why they exist and how by complementing their respective editorial policies, this would provide easier platforms for my clients' messages to find audiences through their platforms & channels.

Over the last nearly 15 years, I have built a successful PR practice that was established from skills gained in my early years: understanding the fundamentals of PR practice, hard & smart work, nurturing and growing the enterprise based on newer industry trends and global practices. I have been exposed to every conceivable sector in our regional market to offer services and solutions...gaining so much knowledge and exposure in the process. Team leadership, mentorship, coaching and role modelling have been the hallmark in more recent years. To say, its been a full cup over these many years is an understatement... and yet every single day I learn! So grateful to have chosen this path...

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

I have so many amazing women I have and continue to admire, both within this region and globally. To name just a few...I stand in awe of the legacies of Prof Wangari Mathai, Pamela Mboya, entrepreneur Martha Mugambi; Winnie Mandela. My own grandmother Ethiteri wa Gathenji (Esther!) I also admire Dr Eddah Gachukia, Mrs Mary Okello; Hillary Clinton; Michelle Obama, Condeleeza Rice & Oprah Winfrey. Each of these women have demonstrated grit, zeal, courage and hard, smart work. Most have successfully interwoven

their lives to raise families, build businesses and strong, admirable personal brands that are distinct, clear and inspiring, and in many instances, in spite of great odds. They told - or continue to tell - their stories and have owned their narratives, boldly and without apology... and delivered great impact whilst at it! It remains a great inspiration.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

At my age, I now truly know that ‘the world is your canvas’. Paint your story...choose your colours...your crayons. Work them through the canvas. Breathe. Smile. Keep painting! Find the sunshine in your painting...it’s always hiding behind the greying cloud... and yes, whilst at it, please own your crown! You are here for a God-given purpose. Please deliver on it? You must. The world needs your gift. Open your hand, your palms. Give it. It will come back to you in multiples. And when your gift & talent gets you to the very top floor, please remember to send down the elevator, so that it can also bring someone else, just like you...back to the top. Keep it going! That’s why it’s still a beautiful world! Be authentic; be true. Innovate constantly; audacity will get you far! Avoid naysayers. The world needs less of them. Embrace humility and, yes, enjoy the ride!

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

Aah wow! I would like to see every boardroom in this region building organisational centricity around PR and committing adequate resources to leverage its value as an imperative. PR is a transformational business science that, when well applied, can catapult the performance and impact of organisations in multiples. I would also like to see the Kenyan National Assembly pass the IPRAC Bill and it subsequently be assented into law. The craft must promote standards and a business culture that are commensurate with globally acceptable understanding and execution. I would also like to see more practitioners move up the C-suite into corner offices as CEOs of blue chip organisations - including leading public agencies. At BSD Group, we have always promoted the principle that Brand is the business of business. That said, our PR practitioners should aim at taking over more institutions as Captains of industry, in order for the profession to find its

respect, value and centricity in strategic organisational delivery.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

The labelling. I think time has proven that PR is not just about an event being reported in the mainstream media, neither is it a profession qualified by “high coloured heels and volume of lipstick adorned on smiling lips” that has often been the regrettable stereotyping of women in the industry. Most women in PR have often been compartmentalised as “blondes”, even without much interrogation. A terribly sad fact. Truth be told, as a key business science and organisational imperative, the PR practice has raised some of the smartest business thinkers and innovators; women whose skills and ideation proficiency has translated into high level financial, social and reputational value for many brands and organisations. Solutions lie in Executives gaining an understanding of and respect for PR value and appreciating that some of the market’s most difficult business crises were resolved by women PR practitioners; some of the most notable business & organisational pronouncements were crafted and delivered through PR teams led by very smart women. Continuing to build on a narrative that fails to recognise the real tangible value of women’s participation in PR is degenerate and unfortunate.

**Parting shot**

It’s not always going to be easy. Fall 7 times; rise 8! It can be done. Just keep going...you’ve got this! Love people; they’re God’s people!





# SIMON MWANZIA

Creative, Digital & Production Lead  
The Arts Group Limited.

**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

Design and oversee our client's communication campaigns across different markets. Other than working on client projects, I lead a team of young creatives that have the best imagination, ideas and very diverse personalities. I also help my business partner and CEO run a profitable business.

“**...PR at its purest form is about taking these basic principles of communication and elevating them, such that how we share information influences and shapes perception and narratives at a grander scale.....**

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

Critical thinking/ business acumen - a problem well defined is a problem half solved.

People skills - managing and handling people is a whole course that should be taught in school.

Sales - I never liked selling until I realized that sales (revenue) is the oil that keeps the business going and all other departments.

Communication - learning how to articulate a point and perspective of a situation has been crucial to getting me where I am today.

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

Still at The Arts Group as the Managing Partner with an operating footprint across Africa. I would like TAG to be an African Giant in the PR and Communications industry telling all kinds of stories the African way.

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

“You are as good as your word, keep it”, Mary Muinde Gitari, Founder Brandspark PR & my first proper boss. She gave me my first paying job and cemented my career path in the communications landscape.

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

How consumption of information and communication campaigns continues to evolve due to technology, new demographics and consumer trends.

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

Show up and more so, give it your very best no matter the task you have been asked to do.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

Heights. Am still marshalling myself to go skydive and bungee jump.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

Nothing, I would do everything the same. I believe that mistakes and experiences are lessons that we learn from and we get better by making them.

**Parting shot.**

“Always be content with what you have and where you are; while gracefully praying and working towards better and more to come your way”



# ELSEBA AWUOR

Managing Director,  
Virtual Twenty One Ltd.



**Q1.****What excites you about the public relations industry?**

I am excited about the constant evolution and innovation in communication strategies: It charts new and creative ways to connect with audiences, build relationships, and shape public perception. I am fascinated by how PR experts use storytelling, media relations, social media, and other tools to help brands and individuals effectively communicate their messages and achieve their goals. The dynamic nature of the industry keeps me engaged and eager to learn more about the latest trends and best practices in PR.

**Q2.****What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

I have acquired a wide range of skills such as:

**Communication skills:** I've honed my ability to communicate effectively with clients, colleagues and public through various channels such as written communications, public speaking, verbal communication and also active listening.

**Relationship Building:** The art of successful socialization is tightly hinged to being interested in people thus building and maintaining strong relationships with clients, media contacts and other stakeholders in the industry. Bearing in mind, people buy relations and this has helped me establish trust and credibility in the field of public relations.

**Digital Marketing skills:** I have acquired additional knowledge of digital marketing tools and techniques, such as social media management, content creation, and online reputation management, which has proven to be valuable in enhancing the reach and impact of PR campaigns.

**Crisis Management:** I have gained experience in handling crisis situation effectively by remaining calm under pressure, communication transparently and taking swift and decisive action to mitigate any potential change to the client's reputation.

**Strategic Thinking:** I have developed strategic and creative thinking skills that allows me to analyze

situations, identify opportunities, and develop innovative PR campaigns that achieve the desired results.

Through these skills I have managed to navigate the dynamic and competitive landscape of public relations, allowing me to deliver exceptional results for my clients and contribute to the success of their communication strategies.

**Q3.****Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Dorothy Ooko, a communication strategist and activist, speaks vehemently about the beauty of creativity, authenticity, and ensuring that you are doing your best in your endeavours throughout her journey and career growth.

Gina Din-Kariuki, a pioneer in the field of PR, has made a significant contribution to the industry and created job opportunities for many youths.

Late Lorna Irungu used her skillset to amplify women's issues and promote women's voices in the media. Lorna inspired me in many ways, especially during her radio shows. I looked up to her since I was young.

**Q4.****What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

Doing the right thing consistently, even when no one is watching, builds character and integrity. Being your own cheerleader and finding motivation within yourself based on your purpose, focus and determination can lead to long term success and fulfilment. Do it crawling, do it walking, do it running but when it's necessary, please just do it.

**Q5.****What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

I would like to see the PR profession continue to evolve by embracing diversity and inclusivity, utilizing technology more effectively for data-driven decision-making, prioritizing ethical and transparent communication practices, and adapting to the rapidly





changing media landscape with innovative storytelling techniques. I would also be happy to see seniors fostering a community of engagement, ensuring that no one is left behind.

**Q6.**

**What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

Firstly, Work-Life balance: The demanding nature of PR work, coupled with family responsibilities, can be challenging, especially in roles that require long hours.

Solution: Offering flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting and flexible hours.

Secondly, Gender bias: Women often encounter bias in hiring, promotion, and leadership opportunities within PR agencies or departments. In terms of networking and lack of mentorship, women often have limited access to mentors and networking events, which are crucial for career advancement in PR.

Solution: PR agencies and organizations can create and implement policies and practices to foster a

more inclusive work environment to combat gender bias.

Lastly, Equal pay: Women in PR often face disparities in pay compared to male counterparts,

even with similar qualifications. Additionally, there is underrepresentation in leadership roles, as women are often not well-represented in top leadership positions within PR agencies and organizations.

Solution: The implementation of transparent pay policies and regular pay equity audits can help ensure that women are paid fairly for their work. On the other hand, creating leadership development programs specifically tailored to women in PR can help prepare them for senior roles and increase their representation in leadership positions.

**Parting shot**

The cold water doesn't get warmer when you jump in late... Do it now for there is a future in the Digital World and I believe women are part of it.



# CHRISTOPHER WAMBUA

Director, Corporate Communication.  
Communications Authority of Kenya (CA).



**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

I oversee the corporate communications at the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA). This role entails providing thought leadership in the management of communication and relationship with a diverse range of stakeholders. In particular, the role involves developing and implementing policies and strategies relating to corporate communication, reputation and events management, internal communications, and media relations. I oversee the development of publicity materials to support story telling on the brand. The function also serves as the focal point for regional and international ICT bodies to which Kenya is affiliated. In this capacity, I oversee representation of CA in relevant technical, policy and treaty-making fora and coordinate the implementation of recommendations arising from such meetings.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

Over the years, my employee has facilitated relevant training, including strategic leadership, stakeholder management, professional training in Public Relations (Chartered Institute of PR). The role has also exposed me widely in international affairs, lobbying and canvassing support for nationals seeking leadership positions in intergovernmental ICT bodies to which Kenya is affiliated. Having worked largely at regulatory agencies for over 25 years, I have over the years acquired knowledge in the art and science of regulation. As a result, I have served at C-Suite level as the acting Chief Executive Officer at the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) and at CA.

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

I will be retired and giving back to the community in one way or the other.

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

The future is in your hands. Invest in continuous learning to keep abreast of the world around you. Artificial Intelligence is a good place to start.

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

It is the opportunity to have a helicopter view of the organization, the power to influence relationships and to change lives that I find quite fulfilling.

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

The future is in your hands. Invest in continuous learning to keep abreast of the world around you. Artificial Intelligence is a good place to start.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

Failure is my greatest fear. I manage it through managing potential risks in all my professional undertakings.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

Managing life-work balance. I am now working on it.

**Parting shot.**

The PR industry is evolving pretty fast on the back of technology. The future belongs to those who will normalize storytelling and continuous learning.

“**...Failure is my greatest fear. I manage it through managing potential risks in all my professional undertakings...**”

# CAROLINE W. NJIRU

Head of Public Relations at Convey Communications.





### Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?

What pumps me up about PR is how it's always switching gears. Every day's a new puzzle to solve, which gives me all the room I need to get creative. From creating a product campaign to carving out a niche for a thought leader, to the joy I find in writing, there's always an adrenaline rush in setting a goal and working hard to achieve it that this industry provides

PR is also a great way to expand my network as I get to rub elbows with people from every corner of the professional world. In addition to spreading the word, I get to soak up insights from diverse industries, growing both my knowledge bank and social capital simultaneously.

### Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?

I started writing at quite a young age, a skill that has come in pretty handy in this career! I earned my Bachelor's degree in Communication with a specialization in Public Relations and Electronic Media in 2005, and I've been navigating the PR and media space ever since. I obtained a higher Diploma in Marketing Management as well and thereafter a Master of Science Degree in Entrepreneurship and Innovations Management from the University of Nairobi in 2016

One skill I didn't learn in school but is core to my work is listening. I find that when I tune in and really hear what people are saying, I am able to uncover insights, understand their needs, build trust, and craft messages that truly resonate.

### Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?

While my mother might not be a historical figure in the traditional sense, her impact and influence on my life is immeasurable. In a world often clouded by deception, her courage and commitment to doing what's right, even in the face of adversity, are qualities that have shaped the way I perceive the place of integrity in storytelling.

I am also inspired by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the Nigerian author. Her ability to wield the power of words

to authentically tell Africa's story and make an impact on the world is an open door for other African creatives to go through. Through her masterful storytelling, she has captivated readers and also reshaped narratives about the African experience, which in turn has inspired me to keep telling the stories of our communities.

### Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?

Don't be afraid! Fear can be the silent dream killer, holding us back from reaching our full potential. Especially for young women starting out in the industry, self-doubt can creep in and dim your light at work when brainstorming, pitching ideas or launching campaigns. The truth however is that PR thrives on taking calculated risks. You can never be 100% sure if a campaign will soar until you give it a shot. So, don't let fear paralyze you. Embrace the uncertainty, take the leap, and watch your ideas take flight. And remember, youth is a powerful asset. You have time on your side to recover and learn from any missteps. So, go ahead, dare to dream big, and don't let fear hold you back from making your mark on the PR world!

“...While my mother might not be a historical figure in the traditional sense, her impact and influence on my life is immeasurable. In a world often clouded by deception, her courage and commitment to doing what's right, even in the face of adversity, are qualities that have shaped the way I perceive the place of integrity in storytelling. ..

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

In the next five years, I envision the PR profession as a well-regulated and highly professional industry, where best practice is promoted, and standards are upheld, and excellence is the norm. I see an environment that fosters continuous research, publications that create standards and growth of the industry where practitioners are rewarded for pushing boundaries and being innovative.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

One significant challenge that women often encounter in the PR journey is the struggle to be heard, and the constant need to prove themselves, even when they are highly qualified. This challenge stems from deep-rooted gender biases and stereotypes that persist in many workplaces.

To address this, fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect is crucial. Employers and colleagues alike should actively listen to and value the contributions of women in PR. Providing equal opportunities for advancement and recognizing achievements based on merit rather than gender can help mitigate this challenge.

**Parting shot**

My experience in PR has been that success isn't just about reaching the finish line; it's about the journey and the challenges conquered, the obstacles overcome, and the growth experienced along the way.

I have also learnt that the power of the truth in this industry is unparalleled; that by crafting narratives that are honest, transparent, and based on verifiable facts, we can build credibility and establish meaningful connections with our very perceptive audiences.







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A professional portrait of Dr. Robi Njoroge, a middle-aged Black man with a mustache, wearing a white dress shirt, a blue patterned tie with yellow stripes, and a dark grey vest. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a dark, solid color.

# DR. ROBI NJOROGE

Anti-Counterfeit Authority, Kenya  
Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer (Secretary to the Board)



**Q1. What do you currently do at your organization?**

As the CEO of the Anti-Counterfeit Authority (ACA), I lead our mission to combat counterfeit goods, enforce intellectual property laws, and advocate for legitimate trade practices. My responsibilities include strategic planning, overseeing enforcement activities, advocating for policy reforms, and ensuring the safety and health of consumers. Additionally, I work to foster a fair and competitive market environment.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

Over the years, I have acquired skills in strategic leadership, management, and people skills, alongside expertise in communication, pedagogy, legal, intellectual property, and corporate governance. My legal background provides a solid foundation in intellectual property law, while my experiences in various taskforces, committees and boards have honed my governance and regulatory expertise. These skills, combined with my abilities in communication and policy formulation, have enabled me to drive significant improvements and foster transparency and efficiency in every role I have undertaken, from leading the Anti-Counterfeit Authority and other entities where I have served in various capacities.

**Q3. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

In 10 years, I envision myself continuing to make impactful contributions in the realms of governance and policy, possibly taking on a broader role in communication and legal practice.

**Q4. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

The best advice I received was from a seasoned PR professional who said, "Transparency and integrity are the cornerstones of effective communication." This advice has guided me throughout my career, emphasizing the importance of honesty and openness in all my professional interactions and communication strategies. It has helped me build trust and credibility in every organization I have been a part of.

**Q5. What excites you about the PR industry?**

The PR industry excites me because of its dynamic nature and its crucial role in shaping public perception and influencing behavior. The ability to craft compelling narratives, manage crises, and foster positive relationships between organizations and their stakeholders is both challenging and rewarding. I am particularly passionate about using PR to advocate for social causes and drive positive change.

**Q6. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

The best advice I can give is to be relentless in your pursuit of knowledge and excellence. Embrace continuous learning, remain adaptable, and always uphold integrity in your professional dealings. Build a strong network, seek mentorship, and never underestimate the power of effective communication. These elements are fundamental to building a successful and fulfilling career.

**Q7. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

My greatest fear is not living up to my potential to drive positive change. I face this fear by setting ambitious goals, continuously seeking improvement, and staying focused on my mission. By pushing myself to innovate and lead with purpose, I transform this fear into motivation.

**Q8. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

If I could go back and change one thing, I would have sought more diverse international experiences earlier in my career. Exposure to different cultures and global perspectives can provide invaluable insights and enhance one's ability to address complex challenges effectively.

I wouldn't change anything, but I would be more cautious about the nature of time. Time is short, and opportunity is always fleeting. Knowing this, I would make the most of every second, ensuring that every moment counts.







# ALFRED NG'ANG'A

Partner and Co-Founder  
Oxygène Marketing Communications Ltd.

ALFRED NG'ANG'A

**Q1. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your professional journey?**

Strategic Communication management, Public Affairs engagement and management, Executive Counsel. These skills have provided me with a professional differentiation and positioning in the Kenyan strategic communication management market.

**Q2. Where do you imagine yourself 10 years from now?**

A decade from now, I see myself as a leader in the field of strategic development communication, leveraging cutting-edge technologies and innovative strategies to drive positive change on a global scale. I envision myself continuing to expand my knowledge and expertise, collaborating with diverse teams, and making a meaningful impact in the world.

**Q3. Who in the PR and Communications landscape has given you the best advice? What did they say and how did it help you?**

Several mentors from Gina Din-Kariuki, Koome Mwambia, Nelly Wainaina, Thiagarajan Ramamurthy, Nick Wachira, Mr. Chris Flowers, and Prof Abraham Mulwo among others have all played a key part by providing priceless advice and hand holding. I can sum up their advice thus, give it your best shot, never stop learning and always lead from the front!

**Q4. What excites you about the PR industry?**

The PR industry in Kenya has come of age as it continues to evolve to a true management function. In the last two decades, the value of PR services have grown fastest and the impact is clearly visible. I was one of the early proponents for the Public Relations and Communication Management Bill, 2024 which was recently published and has already gone through the first reading. We are truly set to turn a new leaf as a solid professional practice guided by a legislative instrument enshrined code of conduct. This is a significant milestone and will provide a good foundation to grow this practice.

**Q5. What's the best advice you can give young and upcoming people?**

PR is a management function. Like any other management function, technical and strategic proficiency will be expected of you. To build such proficiency, you have to work hard in acquiring professional competency in Public Relations and Communications Management. Dare to dream and explore new horizons that can advance your relevance as clients seek reasoned counsel from you.

**Q6. What is your greatest fear and have you ever tried to face it?**

Heights, but having been in Nairobi city for more than two decades now, I guess I've overcome that fear. I've also been to the Burj Khalifa at the Top viewpoint, so I guess I can handle heights now. Still, you won't catch me bungee jumping.

**Q7. If you could go back and change one thing, what would it be?**

I have no regrets in life. I carry experiences and some scars...

**Parting shot.**

A tribute to my colleagues and clients at Oxygène Marketing Communications Ltd. You guys rock and let's keep doing what we do best! To all PRSK members and PR students, let's work even hard to secure the pride and sanctity of this profession.



# ATIENO OTIENO

Chief Officer, Public Communication,  
County Government of Homa Bay.



**Q1. What excites you about the public relations industry?**

Its unpredictability. The numerous chances at changing perceptions and attitudes. The varied audiences that one has to reach especially in Public Communication - and of course the challenges associated with that including speaking in vernacular. Its fun, full of surprises, full of heartaches, some long nights and some incredibly high highs.

**Q2. What skills have you acquired over the years and how have these skills propelled your public relations journey?**

Creativity - I'm a multimedia producer/director and hold a masters in Documentary filmmaking. These have been quite instrumental in content packaging for the audiences. I've also committed to continuous learning and never-ending mentorship from peers in the industry. Strategic Communication skills. Public Administration Management - requires a whole set of skills to deliver in public service. Writing. This is one skill a PR professional cannot do without and one has to continuously hone her skills in it.

**Q3. Who are some of the historical women who have inspired you over the years? How have they inspired you?**

Oprah Winfrey -media mogul, born on 29th Jan, my birthday. A great advocate for women empowerment, has been instrumental in promoting literacy, and since we share a birthday, I almost feel a strong connection to this legacy. Her life stories and accomplishments inspire me. I'm a big fan of Lupita Nyong'o as well. She's quite an inspiration having dared to dream and accomplish those dreams to become one of the most respected artists of our time. Indeed every dream is valid.

**Q4. What is the best advice you can give young and upcoming women in the industry?**

No you have, yes you can get. In any situation, if you do not present yourself or your ideas, automatically that's a no. Yet if you do, you are likely to get a yes. Strive to build strong relationships at all levels. Be flexible/ adaptable. Seek mentorship - we all got here by standing on the shoulders of giants. Have a strong heart - it is a fast paced and very challenging industry and more often than not, you'll take the fall so develop resilience, cry

in private and put a brave face in public. What's your personal brand? Build one to stand out and tall amongst your peers. Most importantly, stay true and do not compromise on your values. Believe in yourself. Yes you can!

**Q5. What would you like to see in the PR profession in the next 5 years?**

With advancements in technology, we need more and more tools that leverage tech and data for us to be able to measure and improve on our PR campaigns. This also calls for capacity building of PR professionals on new skills to stay ahead of industry trends. I see an industry that will embrace innovations and creativity to create engaging and memorable campaigns.

**Q6. What are some of the challenges that women face in the PR journey and how can they be solved?**

The big one for me has been work-life balance/harmony. With long hours and tight deadlines, it is difficult to arrive at that harmony. To navigate this, one must learn to delegate and to trust her colleagues to deliver. Engage remotely in some instances so as to free up time for family. Discrimination, micro aggression and harassment can occur at the workplace. I've learned to stand up for myself and speak up if I feel offended.

**Parting shot**

Behind every successful woman, is herself. Believe in yourself. Model others who've been there before you, constantly seek mentorship opportunities and most importantly mentor others in their PR and communication journeys.





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