



FINAL EXAMINATION
NOVEMBER 2023

COURSE TITLE	CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
COURSE CODE	ECOM4163
DATE/DAY	17 FEBRUARY 2024 / SATURDAY
TIME/DURATION	01:00 PM - 03:00 PM / 02 Hour(s) 00 Minute(s)

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES :

1. Please read the instruction under each section carefully.
2. Candidates are reminded not to bring into examination hall/room any form of written materials or electronic gadget except for stationery that is permitted by the Invigilator.
3. Students who are caught breaching the Examination Rules and Regulation will be charged with an academic dishonesty and if found guilty of the offence, the maximum penalty is expulsion from the University.

(This Question Paper consists of 3 Printed Pages including front page)

*****DO NOT OPEN THE QUESTION PAPER UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO*****

This question paper has **TWO (2)** questions. Answer **ALL** questions. **[50 MARKS]**

QUESTION 1 **(25 Marks)**

Reflect on the text below to answer the following questions.

Maclaren is a well-known global brand of children's pushchairs. The safety standard of its 'umbrella fold' pushchairs has been one of its strengths, together with the durability of the product. Its folding frames and hinges are generally stronger than the pushchairs produced by its competitors. Nonetheless, the company was caught by surprise in November 2009 when it was widely reported that children's fingertips were being 'amputated' in the pushchair hinges. The company had known of the problems – there had been 15 incidents of fingertip laceration or amputation in the USA over a period of 10 years, and Maclaren executives had become particularly concerned when there were eight cases between 2007 and 2009. Maclaren engineers had been working tirelessly since the summer of 2009 on remedying the problem with the hinges. However, when the news was leaked, the company was caught unawares. It did not have any contingency plan in place. In a reactive way, Maclaren issued warnings to owners emphasizing that they should not let children stick their fingers in the folding mechanism as the pushchairs were opened. Maclaren also issued repair kits to cover the hinges but only to owners of the pushchairs in the USA. Where the company went wrong was to discriminate between US consumers and customers in other parts of the world. This decision had been made internally and had resulted from differences between safety regulators around the world; most countries had been happy with a simple warning, whereas the US Consumer Product Safety Commission insisted on a temporary fix. Eventually, and in response to a consumer backlash, Maclaren also offered the repair kits to consumers elsewhere, but by that point the damage to its image had already been done. Maclaren had also underestimated the power of the internet and social media in spreading the news. Executives had not anticipated the situation getting out, nor were they communicating through various channels about the problem and about the steps that the company was taking to address it.

Source: Rastegar, F. (2010) 'How I did it: Maclaren's CEO on learning from a recall', Harvard Business Review, Jan.–Feb.; Kirby, J. (2009)

Text 1

- a) State the main differences between an issue and a crisis. (5 marks)
- b) Based on the article, demonstrate **TWO (2)** specific mistakes that the company made in terms of crisis communication? (5 marks)
- c) Suggest **THREE (3)** strategies that the company should take to handle the crisis communication professionally. Elaborate each strategy with examples. (15 marks)

QUESTION 2

(25 Marks)

- a) Define leadership and change. (5 marks)
- b) Change communication is the informational component of the change management strategy. It helps employees and other stakeholders understand the importance and scope of the new initiatives. Change communication is crucial during transitions within organizations.

Discuss **FOUR (4)** stages of change communication that should be taken to ensure a smooth transition of new strategies/initiatives. Elaborate with examples. (20 marks)

***** END OF QUESTION PAPER *****

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