

Public Relations at Lebara

FINAL TAKE HOME PAPER

GHAZAL KAWAR

Syracuse University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Qu	estion #I	. 2
•	Approaching the Organization	. 2
•	Lebara as an Open System	. 3
QUESTION #2:		. 5
•	The Public Relations Function of Lebara	. 5
•	About the Practitioner	. 7
QL	JESTION #3:	. 9
•	Lebara and Harlow's Definition	. 9
QL	JESTION #6:	12
•	Social Responsibility	12
•	The Lebara Foundation	13
QL	JESTION #9:	15
•	Public Relations Defined by CEO	15
•	Public Relations Defined by PR Practitioner	16
•	The Importance of Defining Public Relations	17
QL	JESTION #10:	19
•	The Organizational Structure of the PR Department	19
•	Setting Goals and Objectives	21
•	Program and Employee Evaluation Process	21
QL	JESTION #11:	23
•	Public Relations V. Marketing and Advertising	23
Ар	pendices	26
Ар	pendix A	26
Ар	pendix B	27
Ар	pendix C	28
Ref	ferences	35

OUESTION #1

APPROACHING THE ORGANIZATION

Lebara is one of the fastest developing international telecom operators in Europe. Its main purpose is to provide SIM cards and other mobile services to low-income areas in the world. Lebara offers the best customer care services, including tailored and online assistance in a variety of languages. In 2004, the organization established their first low-cost international services in Netherlands. "It is one of the largest MVNOs [mobile network virtual operators] in the world, providing mobile services to people in the low-income segments in 7 European countries (the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France). The company was established in 2001 and currently employs more than 1,400 people across all its operations. The company has a proven track record in these highly competitive markets with more than forty years combined MVNO experience. Over the years the company has been continuously recognized by the industry for its service innovations and excellence in customer service across all its operations" (Lebara, 2016). Lebara has expanded its products and services to other countries, including Saudi Arabia. Currently, Lebara provides their services to more than five million customers.

"We want to become to brand of choice for a wider group of people who want a low cost and high quality service within the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To become the number one brand for customer service, customer experience and simple honest value" (Lebara, 2016). According to the CEO, Fadi G. Kawar, teamwork and innovation are crucial drives to help them achieve prolonged care for local and global active customers. Lebara has developed four unique values that tend to shape the behaviors that take place within the organization; feel the customer, think excellence, do the right thing, and lead together. To further explain, these four values focus on placing the customer at heart by understanding their needs and wants, offering the finest quality

services to move beyond public expectations, prioritizing the well-being of internal and external groups, as well as collaborating with others to maintain a competitive advantage in the market respectively. Being part of the Lebara International Group, Lebara KSA is one of the five licensed mobile operators in Saudi Arabia. The organization launched its operations approximately two years ago, targeting three million mobile subscribers. Lebara's mobile services include post-paid and pre-paid SIM cards, including voice, data, international, and local traffic to customers. Separately, Lebara KSA has a public relations department run and administered by Nader Sidawi. (Mission statement in Appendix A)

LEBARA AS AN OPEN SYSTEM

Lebara KSA is classified as a relatively open system. Based on the responses given by Kawar and Sidawi, the organization is driven by a holistic approach. That being said, their organizational development focuses on Lebara as a whole including the systems, people, and the culture. The senior management makes an effort to guide individuals within an organization to help them develop their honesty and confidence with each other about the organization and their experiences. Additionally, organization members are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. According to Sidawi, pursuing such attitudes in an organization results in newly improved and effective ways of cooperating with other members to achieve shared goals. Effectual communication between all internal departments is crucial for providing the best customer gratification. According to Kawar, all departments work together and affect one another in order to ensure that all subsystems and sections in the organization meet and deliver the assigned objectives. One of Lebara's goals is to guarantee that all their processes and operations are customer centric, ensuring customer satisfaction at all times. Moreover, the process of enhancing service quality is closely monitored at a regular basis in order to receive thought-out and effective feedback from all stakeholders and relevant publics. This results in a better understanding of innovative solutions that

could potentially improve their performance and increase customer approval and gratification.

According to Sidawi, Lebara's mission statement is their top priority; therefore, it is essential that all individuals in the organization constantly report to, and work with the senior management in order to build, establish, and maintain effectual lines of communication between the organization and the public.

Taking into account Lebara's atmosphere and culture, the organization effectively measures progress using quantitative methods. That being said, while assuring agility and adaptation to environmental changes, progress is accurately measured by assessing the development against present KPIs (key performance indicators) such as cash flow, service and data revenue, capital expenditure, customer delight, mobile customers, and voice usage.

QUESTION #2:

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FUNCTION OF LEBARA

The Public Relations Department at Lebara KSA functions to maintain an effective form of communication between the organization and its active users. According to Sidawi, the department works will all other subdivisions in the organization to better understand Lebara's mission statement and strategically plan for potential issues that may arise. Sidawi's responsibilities center around all functions under the department such as media relations, internal communications, corporate events and social media content. That being said, his main role as the top public relations practitioner is to build mutually beneficial relationships with the media, monitor press releases, media, and corporate news; supervise internal staff activities and work closely with the human resources department; handle corporate events such as press conferences, staff events, and stakeholder events; and take charge of all social media content regarding design, context, inquiries, and other matters.

In accordance with the systems theory, Lebara's main public relations function from an internal standpoint emphasizes the proper training of employees to create a sense of trust and honesty through the use of effective communication. As Sidawi stated, "we try to maintain a controlled environment of communication between top officials and employees by making sure that the information flows in all directions of the organization," and "as a public relations practitioner, one of my top priorities within the organization is to provide a healthy and safe environment to all employees and make sure they understand the assigned objectives as well as the culture of the organization." In addition, Sidawi noted that providing optimism and career opportunities within the organization, and healthy relationships with teams, peers and managers are part of the factors that best engage employees. Recently, Lebara "has been awarded the leading International Diversity Mark which recognizes organizations who actively promote diversity in ways that benefit all

employees and its wider community" (Lebara, 2016). This represents the organization's level of effectiveness with employees. It portrays a sense of respect for employees, supports inclusion, diversity, and individuality to all individuals involved with Lebara. Furthermore, it offers opportunities to all employees regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and age.

From an external standpoint, the public relations department at Lebara focuses on effectively communicating with the media and public. The organization maintains lines of communications with such parties by creating connections with specific people related to the organization's functions, as well as establishing, controlling, handling, and monitoring press releases, interviews, and press conferences. "If you haven't noticed by now, we like helping you. Hopefully sharing with you the most up-to-date information about us will do just that. Please do reach out should you have any questions or need information." (Lebara, 2016). This, coming directly from the press division, demonstrates Lebara's strong longing of providing accurate information through different media sources and connections. In addition, the organization uses media tools including lists, plans, events, messages, and talking points to achieve and share their most important highlights. For instance, "serving the migrant community is at the core of everything we do at Lebara. While the need to call loved ones is never far away, as new locations become home for our customers, different needs such as entertainment become more important. Lebara Play is an unrivalled service designed for an under-served community, and the launch proves that we're delivering on our plans to disrupt the existing entertainment landscape and diversify our communication business" (Ratheesan, 2015). This portrays how the public relations department at Lebara emphasizes the achievement of effective two-way communication to meet their mission, which includes the objective of making Lebara "the brand of choice for migrants" by 2020.

Public relations practitioners can fall anywhere between the lines of technician and managers. According to Sidawi, all public relations practitioners work in collaboration and innovation to achieve the best performance. That being said, they work together as both technicians and managers to improve performance. As previously mentioned, Lebara's mission-oriented environment is holistically approached to accomplish their objectives. This also applies to the Public Relations Department, which supports both technician and managerial roles. The Human Resources Department at Lebara seeks technicians who are able to follow the managerial assembly of the organization to complete the work, focus time in the present, and accomplish the hands-on, practical work. Likewise, technicians in the public relations department need to adopt skills such as designing, writing, responding, and thinking strategically. As for the managerial position, which is similar to Sidawi's position, the Human Resources Department looks for managers who focus on and emphasize the future. They need to be able to build team relationships, assign sources for technicians, manage projects and operations, provide feedback to internal employees, plan strategies and, manage crises. Sidawi is responsible for all the functions that occur in the Public Relations Department. He is responsible for all functions at all times; therefore, he needs to be able to manage and supervise all roles, meetings, occasions, and other tasks that occur within the division.

ABOUT THE PRACTITIONER

Sidawi is the top public relations practitioner at Lebara; that being said, he is the director of the department. He majored in Economics but deviated and started his career working in a multinational public relations agency responsible for handling the biggest accounts in Saudi Arabia. During his time working for this organization, Sidawi noted that he needed to complete certain workshops and training sessions with the agency to achieve organizational expectations as well as client expectations. Before joining Lebara, Sidawi began his career path with advertising, public

relations, and event management organizations. Taking into account his past growth and experience, as well as his current roles at Lebara, Sidawi would be classified as a member of the dominant coalition. Noting his managerial role at Lebara, Sidawi is extremely involved in organizational decisions. That being said, he provides certain suggestions, ideas, issues, or other matters regarding the organization, particularly the Public Relations Department, and reports them directly to the senior management. Sidawi's understanding of the importance of public relations is spot-on. "The public relations area is extremely sensitive to organizational decisions; therefore, I am in involved in the decision-making process alongside the CEO." In addition, based on Gruing's (1992) theory emphasizing "key organizational decision-makers" and what has been previously mentioned about Sidawi's role – monitoring, handling and supervising all management functions under the public relations department including internal communications, media relations, corporate events, and social media content – it is safe to note that Sidawi as a public relations director is part of the dominant coalition.

.

QUESTION #3:

LEBARA AND HARLOW'S DEFINITION

According to Rex F. Harlow (1967)

Public relations is the distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; it involves the management of problems or issues; helps the management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication as its principal tools.

Sidawi defined public relations as "a form of communication between an organization and its relevant publics, stakeholders and media. It also reflects the organization's image to the public, which is the most important part for stakeholders." For the most part, this definition of public relations is similar to the one defined by Harlow. That being said, Sidawi provided examples of how each role in Harlow's definition is assumed in the organization:

- **The management process includes solving problems or issues:**
 - Lebara's services include selling SIM cards to customers online. Lebara promises a 48-hour delivery timeframe. Once the delivery has been made, the sales agent calls the customer to ensure delivery, installation, and activation of the SIM card. During this process, the agent asks for feedback or any concerns regarding sending and receiving phone calls or using data. If there were any concerns or issues, the feedback is sent

either to the dispatch or fulfillment, engineering, or the activation department, depending on what the problem is. This is part of the management function of solving problems or issues.

- The management is always informed on and responsive to public opinion, and defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest:
 - An example of this is found in customer calls. At the end of a customer call, the call center agent asks the customer for feedback regarding customer satisfaction with Lebara's products and services. The questions asked by the agent include, but are not limited to, concerns with a specific product, quality of the product or service, and/or customer awareness of the organization's services. In accordance with the feedback received, the responses are summarized and concluded into specific categories depending on the situation. These reports are then sent to the management for action. Based on public opinion and interest, the management could potentially focus on changing the product, improve pricing, enhance quality, or change the services offered. This process is usually conducted on a regular basis, which keeps the management constantly informed on and responsive to public opinion, as well as always updated to adapt to changes.
- The management is always well-informed and effectively utilizes change, serving as an early system warning to help anticipate trends:
 - Receiving feedback from the customer is what keeps the management well-informed and effectively utilize change. Consequently, the public relations department as a whole organizes weekly meetings with the senior management whereby all issues or matters related to public relations are presented. This allows for a discussion that aids

in implementing the appropriate action that needs to be assumed under specific deadlines or timeframes. This maintains a constant flow of information to the CEO and senior management, which serves as an early warning system to help anticipate trends.

- Research and sound and ethical communication are the organization's principal tools:
 - One unique value that distinguishes Lebara from other telecom operators is the proper use of ethical communication in their products and services. For instance, other telecom operators in the industry tend to display misleading information about the conditions set for the product or service. From a hypothetical standpoint, such products may display information in large print that state "unlimited minutes for one month"; however, they would place certain circumstances in small print that might be easily disregarded. Lebara tries to avoid this situation. They promote their products and services in very clear and easily understood methods that do not mislead the customer. This conveys the importance of clarity and simplicity in their products and services, which helps them earn public acceptance and trust. Another example of ethical communication is found in Lebara subscriptions. That being said, many organizations have a tendency to not remind the user of their monthly subscription and make it difficult for customers to cancel. However, at the end of every month, Lebara contacts the subscriber to either conform or cancel the subscription without additional charge. If the customer does not reply, the subscription is automatically cancelled. This permits the subscriber to either opt- in or -out of the subscription without misleading the customer and charging them without notice.

QUESTION #6:

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

According to Cutlip, Center and Broom (2013), social responsibility "means that right conduct takes into account the welfare of the larger society as the professional helps clients solve problems" (117). Being socially responsible is extremely important. That being said, an organization that does not meet public standards and interests will not succeed. Ultimately, the organization's success or failure depends on whether or not it is approved by the public. From Sidawi's viewpoint, practitioners in the public relations department as well as other subdivisions need to be ethical, provide appropriate information, and achieve high standards of behavior. In addition, being socially responsible enhances Lebara's reputation, increases public approval, serves the interests of the public, and endorses human welfare through the hosting of socially responsible activities and events. One of Sidawi's main roles in the organization is to supervise the corporate social responsibility unit part of the public relations department. According to Cutlip, Center and Broom (2013), "because of their ability to see across a diverse assortment of stakeholders whose attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors can impact the performance of the company and their role as the chief steward of an organization's reputation, public relations executives are increasingly engaged in the kinds of decisions that determine how corporate social responsibility programs are developed, implemented, and communicated" (340). This further supports the point that it is crucial for public relations executives and practitioners to be responsive to their publics.

THE LEBARA FOUNDATION

According to Sidawi, the public relations department at Lebara includes a separate corporate social responsibility unit, which underlines the importance of being socially responsible. That being said, Lebara provides an allocated budget in order to host and run socially responsible activities throughout the year, which aid in the promotion of human welfare and meeting high standards of conduct. Under Sidawi's supervision, an assigned practitioner runs the Corporate Social Responsibility unit. Lebara's objective of "providing mobile services to people in the low-income segments" is the first sign of social responsibility. In addition to the provision of SIM cards, the organization plans, hosts, and manages events that are proven to be socially responsible. For example, Lebara has a non-for-profit foundation that states:

The Lebara Foundation is the non-profit, philanthropic arm of the Lebara Group, which contributes a portion of its profits to the Foundation. We strive to make a difference to the communities of our customers and their families and friends. The Foundation is guided by the provisions and principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We believe it's every child's right to reach their full potential, and that this is non-negotiable. (Lebara, 2016)

One of Lebara's most recent projects is the "Artificial Limbs Project." This initiative was aimed at helping individuals who suffered after the Sri Lankan Civil War. More than 16 months after the war, approximately 160,000 amputees were not provided the appropriate prosthetic limbs. The Lebara Foundation managed to help more than 100 victims in northern Sri Lanka. According to Lebara, "the project aims to help a total of 200 people by providing artificial limbs for those too poor to afford them but will also ensure these people are emotionally and socially rehabilitated into society." Likewise, the foundation created a child development program in India that centers around

improving the present and future lives of children. "These projects in Tamil Nadu state in south-east India – in Chennai, Trichy, and Coimbatore districts – currently supports about 12,000 children" (Lebara, 2016). Lebara's child development program offers career training, health and nutrition programs, emotional support for traumatized children, and scholarship for children who are at risk of dropping out.

The Lebara Foundation also provides support to smaller groups of people and individuals. There are a number of case studies on their website that share the traumatizing experiences of families and individuals, as well as how they have been offered support from the Foundation. For example, "Anil," a case study that focuses on Anil's family, which consist of his wife and three children, describes the tragic loss of their home after the Sri Lankan civil war. In sum, Anil was struggling to provide food and shelter for his family due to the limited availability of jobs and education at the time. The Lebara Foundation has built them a home in order to give them the opportunity to rebuild their lives. This foundation also provides the opportunity for people to donate money on their website to support charities, refugees, and other under-privileged individuals and societies. Sidawi helps the Corporate Social Responsibility Unit of the public relations department maintain its social responsibility "by selecting the best socially responsible subjects and events, which can return positively to the organization."

QUESTION #9:

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEFINED BY CEO

According to the CEO, Kawar, "Public relations is the function responsible for maintaining the image of the organization and ensure that the reputation is clean. Public relations is also responsible for brining general feedback on the company's performance from the market and making recommendations as to how we tackle negative perceptions." Additionally, Kawar believes that the term "public relations" is used by individuals to communicate with the public and promote the organization's products, services and brands in order to meet public expectations. In other words, members of Lebara provide resources and hire public relations practitioners to control what and how information about the organization is shared. Before joining Lebara, Kawar developed this ideology of public relations from previous positions at different companies that include a public relations department. Based on his understanding, some companies either hire public relations firms or develop an internal PR department to promote and enhance the organization's reputation in the industry as well as manage and control public expectations.

"I started learning about [public relations] when I started working in the private sector. Then I [became] interested to learn more about the subject so I started noticing it in the media" (Kawar, 2017). After being appointed the position of CEO at Lebara, Kawar recognized the significance of the function of public relations within an organization. That being said, the success of generating profit depends on the efficacy of the public relations department. In agreement with the general skills required for public relations, Mr. Kawar believes that communication skills, language proficiency, presentation skills, sufficient knowledge about the media, and how people interact with information and news are crucial to become a well-suited practitioner. Moreover, his expectations of public relations practitioners at Lebara include being able to analyze data, public opinion and

reactions, provide accurate market feedback, manage public relations crises, and produce proper and timely publications of the organization's information to market segments.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEFINED BY PR PRACTITIONER

According to Sidawi, "public relations is a form of communication between an organization and its relevant publics and stakeholders. It also reflects the organization's image to the public, which is the most important part for stakeholders." There are a number of different roles that take place in the public relations department that revolve around using proper communication, constantly informing the management about internal and external changes, keeping the executive board up-to-date with public expectations and properly managing crises. In addition, Sidawi noted that public relations is also a form of communication between the organization and the media. Press releases, interviews, press conferences, and connections with specific people relevant to the mission of the organization are all tools used to build and maintain mutual lines of communication with the media.

Considering Sidawi's responsibility for the department's function – media relations, internal communications, corporate events, and social media – he believes that a well-suited practitioner should have general skills such as writing, research, public speaking, production, creativity, problem solving, multitasking, and interpersonal abilities. However, Sidawi stressed the importance of writing skills, public speaking, internet related abilities, and interpersonal capabilities for the functions of Lebara. One of Lebara's most important features is the Lebara Foundation previously mentioned, which required writing effectively in order to share press releases to their website. Public speaking is important as it is involved in the organization's events, press interviews, and internal communication with employees. Lebara's website includes many subsections that are viewable to the public; therefore, achieving the ability of controlling the website and making it easily approachable to users is essential. "Some publics consider social media as an entertainment

channel; therefore, not all content should be product- and service- oriented, some content may potentially focus on different angles relevant to public opinion to grab attention.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING PUBLIC RELATIONS

Kawar and Sidawi provided similar answers regarding the definition of public relations.

They both agree with the general skills required such as writing, public speaking, solving problems, knowledge about the media, and internet capabilities. However, Kawar also added that practitioners should also be able to analyze data and public opinion about the decisions that are made, provide accurate market feedback, and produce publications of Lebara's information. He focused more on the organization's reputation and public expectation; however, Sidawi emphasized building and maintain lines of communication with the media and public. Kawar's interpretation of public relations centers around the idea that it is a method used to communicate with the public, uphold the organization's image, support the products and services offered, and generate revenue. From Sidawi's viewpoint, public relations refers to building and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship between the organization, media, and relevant publics. Regardless of such differences, Kawar and Sidawi agree on the department's functions, as well as the general skills required to become a practitioner.

Such comparisons are necessary for the organization to function properly. The CEO, senior management and the top public relations practitioner must agree on the roles within a management function including PR, human resources, and advertising. This permits them to distinguish the departments and their requirements from one another. In addition, the expectations of Kawar and Sidawi combined provide a greater opportunity to achieve the organization's internal and external objectives. That being said, in terms of providing a healthy and safe environment for all employees, ensuring the proper flow of information, and maintaining a healthy relationship between all

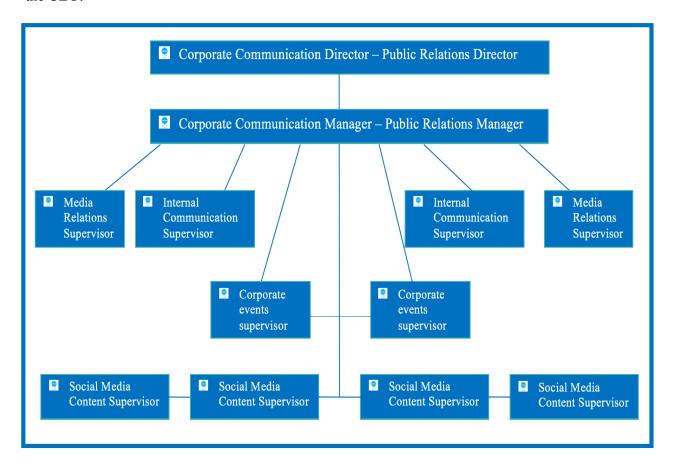
management functions, peers, teams, and employees, the mutual understanding of public relations within the organization enhance the way it functions. Consequently, it improves and increases customer service, meeting public expectations, and positive feedback. Sidawi highlighted the significance of reporting to the senior management, which according to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2013), is crucial because "public relations function is taking on increased stature in corporate organizations as top professionals are being asked to play more of a strategic and interactive role within the leadership of the organization" (p.340). Likewise, "public relations professionals function as the company's eyes, ears, and conscience; bring objective opinions and perspectives to the decision-making table; and help manage the priorities of senior management" (Cutlip, Center, and Broom, pg. 340, 2013). Being able to compare and contrast between the various definitions of public relations and understand them from different viewpoints bring about expected results, effectual conceptualizing, strong human relations, supportive style of attitude, and beneficial competitiveness.

QUESTION #10:

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE PR DEPARTMENT

Chief Executive Officer at Lebara, Fadi. G Kawar, supervises the Sales, Marketing,

Engineering, Human Resources, Public relations, Finance, and Regulatory and Legal Departments. The organizational structure (hierarchy) of Lebara's public relations department is administered by Nader Sidawi, the public relations director. The Public Relations Manager, who supervises the Media Relations Supervisors, Internal Communication Supervisors, Corporate Events Supervisors, and Social Media Content Supervisors, reports directly to the director of the department to report to the CEO.



There are specific duties for every position in the department. The Public Relations Director, Sidawi, is responsible for the department as a whole, serving as a liaison between the management

and the Public Relations Department. His position is also responsible for conducting meetings with other departments concerned with projects or events that involve all subdivisions of the organization. The Public Relations Manager controls the team and builds a relationship between the director and the rest of the department. The Media Relations Supervisors take on the primary function of dealing with the media. Most of their time is spent building mutually beneficial relationships with the media, keeping the publics informed by writing, controlling and monitoring press releases, and corporate news. The Internal Communication Supervisors are expected to keep employees driven and informed at all times. Lebara uses a number of channels such as social media networks, an internal staff intranet, and monthly magazines and newsletters to maintain the flow of information and motivation. Such supervisors work closely with the director of the department in order to keep the staff informed of organizational developments and prepare internal responses to public relations crises. Furthermore, the Internal Communication Supervisors work with the Human Resources Department to build teamwork and commitment among employees, creating a sense of trust and confidence between management-employee communication networks to achieve fundamental results. The Corporate Events Supervisors are responsible for the success of all corporate events including press conferences, staff trainings, business meetings, internal events, and public events. As for the Social Media Content Supervisors, they work closely with the Marketing Department in planning and setting goals, developing online reputation, increasing brand awareness, and managing media content such as design, material, and inquiries.

SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

According to Sidawi, objectives need to be SMART; specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. All internal employees need to understand why they are setting such goals and objectives. Therefore, setting SMART goals and objectives require effective communication in all directions within the organization to ensure that all members understand the motive, situation, or matter of the objective. The mission and vision statements are one of the tools that help employees understand Lebara's cultures and values including what the organization is looking for. Kawar noted that practitioners within the department need to be able to analyze data and public opinion, as it provides a better understanding of how to set the objectives.

The end goals need to be strategic. Therefore, practitioners work together to implement ideas, suggestions, solutions, goals, and objectives that ally with Lebara's requirements. In order to strategically set the final goals and objectives, the senior management hosts a meeting with the Public Relations Director in order to present their opinions. The final decision is either approved by the management or sent to the CEO for further consultation. On a separate note, one of Lebara's techniques for setting goals and objectives include quarterly and yearly reviews. That being said, the Public Relations Department sets certain objectives on a quarterly basis that need to be delivered and met by the following periodical review.

PROGRAM AND EMPLOYEE EVALUATION PROCESS

The public relations function at Lebara is evaluated through a number of ways, most commonly through the social media network Twitter. A special agency follows a platform to monitor all material mentioned about Lebara. For example, the frequent use of "#Lebara" on Twitter is monitored on a regular basis to observe what is being said about the organization. The agency then evaluates the nature of the feedback and whether it is positive or negative. This

helps the organization determine if the information posted is enhancing or degrading their reputation by summarizing the feedback into specific reports. This sets certain scores for each preset KPI. In accordance with these scores, the Public Relations Department is evaluated.

As for individuals, Lebara uses an evaluation report approach. Taking into account that one of the most important functions of public relations is managing crises, individuals within the department are expected to be reachable at all times, take action immediately, and be on constant alert for sudden changes. These factors that determine whether or not employees are actively and effectively involved are included in the evaluation process. In other words, criteria such as reachability, reliability, and response rates along with other factors are considered in an individual's assessment. Other criteria include attitude, dedication to teamwork, nature of built relationships with all internal and external parties involved with Lebara.

.

QUESTION #11:

PUBLIC RELATIONS V. MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

The Public Relations and Marketing Departments at Lebara work closely together. Kawar's understanding of public relations is to some extent unified with the functions of marketing and advertising. Marketing, advertising, and public relations work with a wide range of publics; however, the Marketing Department works solely with customers; whereas the Public Relations department deals with more than just the consumers.

Marketing centers around producing a product, dealing with pricing, and marketing the product through advertising techniques. Public relations is involved with building mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders, publics, and the media; focuses on the nature of the message pointed towards a product or service and the impact it leaves on the public; and measuring effectiveness of the production and publicity, as well as customer awareness, approach, and engagement. Based on Sidawi's interpretation, marketing, advertising, and public relations function are all similar regarding communication of a certain message, product, or service; nevertheless, public relations is more sensitive towards the communication aspect as the information must be accurate and honest. If otherwise, it might harm the organization. Advertising and marketing focus more on promoting the latest offers and products of an organization; whereas public relations is more centered around building and maintaining relationships with the media and relevant publics. According to Kawar and Sidawi, all functions are equally important to any organization regardless of the different roles each function assumes. At Lebara, the Marketing and Public Relations Departments work closely together, as previously mentioned, in order to effectively communicate with consumers and ensure that no confusion arises regarding mixed signals. Additionally, the three functions work together during a specific event or occasion to contribute effort into design, and

ensure brand guidelines as well as ground execution. However, there are a few differences that refer exclusively to each department.

The Marketing Department at Lebara focuses on promotion and the selling of products and services, as well as market research and advertising. The roles of marketing professionals at the organization include designing advertising campaigns, reserving advertising slots, creating promotional material for the products and services offered, and gathering and conducting market research. In order to measure marketing success, the Marketing Department at Lebara measures sales to compare the amount spent on advertising against the generated profit.

The Public Relations Department at Lebara centers around building and maintaining mutual relationships between the organization and the publics, as well as upholding Lebara's image. A public relations practitioner at the organization focuses on writing press releases, pitching stories to the media, developing relationships with internal and external parties, controlling company memorandums, and using talking points, media lists, and media plans as tools to speak to the press about matters concerning the organization. To measure effectiveness, the Public Relations Department measures the extent of positive press, customer awareness, company exposure, and customer satisfaction. Social media measurement is also a tool used by practitioners to measure success.

From a general standpoint, the Public Relations and Marketing Departments at Lebara are dependent on each other. That being said, promoting and selling products, building relationships with the public and maintaining the publics image are, to a large degree, interrelated. If Lebara does not succeed in selling products, the organization's image is degraded. Likewise, if the Lebara's

reputation is lowered, sales are decreased. Furthermore, social media is a core feature for both departments.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Lebara's Mission Statement

We want Lebara to be the brand of choice for Migrants and low income Saudis 2020.

APPENDIX B

Lebara's Vision Statement:

Our ambition is to continue to care for the migrant community, supporting them on their journey by providing innovative experiences that directly relate to their lives. Lebara stands for simple, honest values and we want to make a difference to the lives of 1 billion people by 2020.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Interview with Nader Sidawi

Please tell me a little bit about your business. What is its purpose, size, major product/service, location, historical origins, any unique features?
 Lebara KSA is a telecom operator providing mobile services to low income, expatriate and Saudi individuals. Lebara KSA is one of five licensed mobile operators in Saudi Arabia and part of the International Lebara Group. Launched its operations approximately 2 years ago targeting 3 million mobile subscribers within the coming 2 years. Lebara sells postpaid and prepaid SIM cards to consumer providing voice, data,

2. What is your mission statement?

international and local traffic to its customers.

We want Lebara to be the brand of choice for Migrants and low income Saudis 2020.

3. Describe the environment of the organization. Would you say you follow a holistic approach? Do the subsystems in your organization affect one another or is all the attention focused on one part of the organization? To what extent do you focus attention to technology, political influences, and social expectations? Is your organization mission oriented?

The environment of the organization is driven by a holistic approach. We look at the entire organization and ensure that all departments, systems, and subsystems are delivering on their objectives. We ensure that all our processes are customer centric, ensuring customer satisfaction at all touch points, quality of the services closely mo0nitored, and that all our stakeholders are satisfied with our performance.

4. To you quantitatively or qualitatively measure your progress?

We mostly use quantitative methods in measuring our progress. Basically measuring progress against preset KPIs while ensuring agility and adaptation to environments changes during the process

5. As a PR practitioner, please describe your role in the organization.

As a public relations director, I am responsible for all functions under the department such as media relation, internal communication, corporate events and social media content

6. What is the PR function at this organization?

Under Corporate Communication

- 7. Tell me a little bit about your educational background, how did you get into PR?
 - Actually my major was Economics but I started my career working in a multinational PR agency handling the biggest accounts in Saudi Arabia, also many workshops and training sessions were completed with the agency in order to meet the clients expectation as well as to meet the agency high standard.
- 8. Were you previously involved in other positions? Or were you a part of any other organization/society?
 - My first career path started with the advertising, PR and event management agencies then moved to the client side working for Telecom operators
- 9. Based on organizational decisions, how involved are you in the decision-making process? Would you say you have more say in decisions than other employees? If so, how?
 PR area is very sensitive so the final decision maker is the CEO but still decision can be taken by myself in some points.
- 10. As a PR practitioner, to what extent would you say that this organization helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, and acceptance between your organization and your stakeholders?
 - Does your management process include solving problems or issues? Yes, our agent checks in with customers whenever a problem arises with online delivery.
 - O Do you help the management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion? Yes, we always keep the management informed on what happens in the department in order for them to be able to cope with public change by collecting feedback through the call center whenever a customer calls.
 - o Do you help the management to keep abreast of and effectively utilize change,

- serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends? Yes
- O Do you normally use research and sound and ethical communication as your organization's principal tools? Yes, one of our main advantages is that we make all of the information on our products and services clear and concise in large print unlike other operators. We also have a subscription method in which we check in with the subscriber before renewing their subscription
- How would you define public relations? Public relations is the way to communicate with media & public
- 11. System theorists propose that public relations is a function of management that serves as a liaison between the various internal subsystems of the organization and also between the organization and the various external publics. To what extent do you interact with internal subsystems and the external environment?
 - Extremely involved since I am handling the entire team so I am responsible to manage / supervise all functions under corporate communication department.
- 12. That being said, how do you advance the mission of the organization?
 We keep our mission as our objective always. We ensure that all our related actions are driven towards achieving the mission and we prioritize our actions accordingly.
- 13. How do you perform your social responsibility functions? There is a unit called CSR under corporate communication department with allocated budget in order to run social activities throughout the year, also there is a dedicated person handling CSR activities
- 14. How do you help your organization be socially responsible? By selecting the best social responsibility subjects & events which can return positively to the organization
- 15. Where do the public relations and human resources department work together? Since the corporate communication department responsible for the internal communication, here both functions work together when it comes for any event or content related to the organization staff, in addition whenever the corporate communication department has any project with the universities HR should be part of the project. we try to maintain a controlled environment of communication between top officials and employees by making sure that the information flows in all directions of the organization. as a public relations practitioner,

one of my top priorities within the organization is to provide a healthy and safe environment to all employees and make sure they understand the assigned objectives as well as the culture of the organization

- 16. Are there any areas where these two departments are at odds? Describe. Usually yes whenever there is a re-structure and some staff has to leave the organization here the PR interfere to supervise the process in order to avoid any negative publicity.
- 17. Describe the organizational structure (hierarchy) of your PR department. Answer in point "2"
- 18. To whom does the top PR practitioner report to? Corporate Communication Director
- 19. What positions are there within the department?

Corporate Communication Director 1

Corporate Communication Manager 1

Media Relation Supervisor 2

Internal Communication Supervisor 2

Corporate Events Supervisor 2

Social media content supervisors 4

20. What specific duties fall within each position?

Corporate Communication Director: Manage the entire department and he is the link between management and department, also responsible to attend meetings with other departments for big projects

Corporate Communication Manager: Manage the team and he is the link between Director and the rest of staff within department

Media Relation Supervisor: Team is involved for the media people, press release media monitoring and corporate news

Internal Communication Supervisor: Team responsible for all internal staff activities such as anniversary, monthly magazine and the work with HR closely

Corporate Events Supervisor: team responsible for any corporate events such as press conferences, staff events and stakeholder's events

Social media content supervisors: handling all social media content in terms of designs, content, answering questions, etc.

- How are goals and objectives set within the department? Based on the overall company plan & objectives which should follow the organization vision
- 21. How is your PR program evaluated? How are the individuals evaluated? PR can be evaluated positively whenever there is great connections with media people
- 22. How does the PR function of your organization differ from marketing/advertising?
 - O How are they similar? Both PR & advertising communicate with public but PR is more sensitive since information goes to public should be accurate which might harm overall organization, as for the advertising organization communicate the latest offers & products with public.
 - o How are the different? Answer in point "a"
 - Is one subservient to one or both of the others? No, both are important for any organization.
 - In what areas do they work together and in what areas do they battle? Whenever PR function has any event the advertising team should participate in terms of designs, ensure brand guideline as well as on ground execution

Interview with Fadi G. Kawar

1. As a CEO, how do you define the term "public relations?"

Public relations is the function responsible for maintaining the image of the organization and ensure that reputation is clean. Public relations is also responsible for bringing general feedback on the company's performance from the market and making recommendations as to how we tackle negative perceptions.

2. What are your expectations of the PR practitioner(s) in your organization?

Appropriate accurate market feedback, ability to manage public relations crises, and proper and timely publication of company information to the market segments we serve.

Person on the Street Assignment with Fadi. G. Kawar

1)How do you define the term "public relations"?

Public Relations I believe is a term used by entities to communicate with the public and maintain their reputation as well as to promote their products, services as well as their brands. Simply said, entities put resources and hire public relations individuals to manage what and how people know about the company and manage people's expectations.

2) Why do you think of public relations in this way?

Through my work experience, I joined companies that invest and have separate departments for public relations with the objective I stated above. Some companies hire consultants to perform this task, others establish departments internally supported by expert staff with the objective of promoting the company's reputation in the market and manage people's perceptions and expectations.

3) Where did you start to learn about public relations? At home? Through the media? At an internship or job? Or otherwise?

I started learning about it when I started working in the private sector. Then I got interested to learn more about the subject so I started noticing it in the media. I believe now it constitutes a very important function within the organization as many issues related to generating revenues are directly associated with how strong public relations is.

4) What skills do you think are needed to work in public relations?

Communications skills, language proficiency specifically speaking/presentation skills, and writing. Also, sufficient knowledge with the media and specifically digital media and knowledge on how people interact with information and the news. Also, need to be very skilled with data analytics to be able to study people's opinions and reactions to certain company decisions and perceptions.

5)How would you distinguish public relations from marketing? From advertising?

I believe public relations is somewhat interrelated with marketing and advertising. Marketing includes creating a product, pricing, promoting the product in the market through advertising. Public relations involve customer relationship as well, how the message about the company is conveyed to the public, how to measure and assess customer's reaction to the product, and ensuring the proper message is out and properly communicated to the public.

6)Is there anything else about "public relations" that you would like to add?

Public relations is becoming increasingly important. Some companies may go out of business for lack of proper public relations. Public relations require highly skilled people, new methodology and knowledge of social media and how to manage the companies message to the media and the consumer well.

REFERENCES

- Broom, G. M., & Sha, B. (2013). *Cutlip and Center's effective public relations* (11th ed.). Boston ; Munich: Pearson.
- Jiang, H. (n.d.). *What is Public Relations*. Lecture presented at Class Lecture in NH 102, Syracuse.
- Kawar, F. G. (2017, April 26). Interview with Fadi. G Kawar [Telephone interview].
- L. (n.d.). Always by your side. Retrieved 2017, from https://www.lebara.com/us/en
- Lebara. (n.d.). Case Studies. Retrieved 2017, from https://www.lebara.com/us/en/supported-charities/lebara-foundation/case-studies
- Lebara. (n.d.). Giving Back. Retrieved 2017, from https://www.lebara.com/us/en/supported-charities/lebara-foundation
- Lebara. (n.d.). Our Projects. Retrieved 2017, from https://www.lebara.com/us/en/supported-charities/lebara-foundation/projects
- Lebara. (n.d.). Press Releases. Retrieved 2017, from https://www.lebara.com/us/en/press-room/news
- Lebara. (n.d.). Stay connected with your friends and family wherever they are. Retrieved 2017, from http://www.lebara.sa/
- Lebara. (n.d.). Values. Retrieved 2017, from https://www.lebara.com/au/en/who-is-lebara/values
- Lebara. (n.d.). Vision. Retrieved 2016, from https://www.lebara.com/au/en/who-is-lebara/vision
- Rhee, Y. (2007). Overview of Government Public Relations. *Government Public Relations*Public Administration and Public Policy, 1-2. doi:10.1201/b15784-2
- Sidawi, N. (2017, April 25). Interview with Sidawi [Telephone interview].