STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING CORPORATE REPUTATION: A CASE STUDY OF NATION MEDIA GROUP (NMG)

BY: CATHERINE NJARI

A Management Research Project Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements For The Degree of Master of Business Administration, Department of Business Administration, School of Business, University Of Nairobi.

OCTOBER 2009

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the University of Nairobi for academic credit.

Signed: ________________ **Date:** 6|11|2009

Catherine W.Njari
(D61/8811/2006)

This project has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

Signed: ________________ **Date:** 6th/11/2009

Dr. Martin Ogutu
Lecturer, Business Administration Department
University of Nairobi

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my dear husband, David Kirenga, and my family
Thank you for your patience, understanding and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge the support and advice provided by my supervisor Dr.Ogutu of University of Nairobi

Thank you to all my respondents at the Nation Media Group for availing your time and assisting with the necessary information about the company.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Reputation constitutes what the various stakeholders- customers, employees, vendors, shareholders, local communities, government, suppliers perceive the company to be. It takes a life time to build reputations but a moment to destroy them. In a world where corporate reputations are fragile and where crisis seem to be occurring, organizations, small or big are starting to pay attention to building and enhancing corporate reputation as a way of driving competitiveness. Good corporate reputation contributes directly to a company's health by providing competitive advantage and differentiation

Nation Media Group which was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan in 1959 is the largest independent media house in East and Central Africa. It has print, electronic media and the Internet which attracts a regular readership. A case study of the Nation Media Group was used. The institution was used as a role model to highlight the strategies it has used to effectively enhance corporate reputation. The objectives of the study is to determine the strategies used by Nation Media Group(NMG) to enhance its corporate reputation and to establish the effectiveness of the strategies in enhancing corporate reputation.

The major findings revealed that corporate reputation is a critical aspect for an organization survival and it is a way of sustaining competitive advantage. There are various strategies that have been highlighted that the organization has adopted in enhancing corporate reputation and they include; focus on the employees, responsibility to the community, innovation, corporate culture management, marketing communications, corporate identity management and focusing on the customer.

Based on the findings of the research, there are very many attributes that constitute corporate reputation and further qualitative and quantitative research should be conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how these attributes influence the company's reputation and find out the key drivers of its reputation.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Businesses are concerned with the long-term survival of the organization and enhancing corporate reputation is one strategic approach to ensuring an organization survival. Ross (2008) points out that with companies now unable to afford to overlook any competitive advantage, an intangible asset such as reputation matters more than ever. In the recent years, corporate reputation has gained prominence as a way of driving competitiveness in organizations and because of the delicate nature of corporate reputation, more and more organizations are making a deliberate effort to protect and enhance their reputation. Managers are now building strategic advantage by generating favorable perceptions about the company in the minds of key stakeholders. These favorable perceptions become visible in the attractiveness of the company's products, services, trademarks, and brands and constitute a company's reputation capital.

1.1.1 Corporate Reputation

Bromley (1993) indicates that the word corporate can be used in at least two ways. First it can be used to refer to a particular firm or organization, and secondly it can be used to refer to an organized system of firms. Bromley refers corporate reputation to the public image of the higher-level organization-this is the body that ensures proper coordination of the various departments and division so that the organization is speaking in one voice. Reputation has a number of elements; the two most important being the views held of the organization by the two main stakeholders, employees and customers. Reputation is a collective term referring to all stakeholders view, including identity and image. Identity refers to logo, building, design, colour; this is referred to as corporate visual identity. Image is taken to mean the view of the company held by external stakeholders, especially by customers.

Howard (1998) notes that corporate image is a dynamic and profound affirmation of the nature, culture and structure of an organization. Every organization has a corporate image, which reflects the organization's commitment to quality, excellence and relationships with the internal and external publics. Dion Binneman a reputation consultant, also points out that corporate reputation has become a topical and vital asset and risk for companies to manage. He says that with "so many forces affecting organizations such as heightened public sensitivity to corporate responsibility, media scrutiny, the quest for extracting value from intangible assets and the constant request by stakeholders for transparency and trust to be restored and demonstrated, managing reputation has become a key priority."

Good corporate reputation is created through multiple interactions. The image of a company will depend upon how we treat staff, the quality of our product and services, how we treat the customer, internal and external communications and so on. The contacts with organizations are a mixture of tangible and intangible. Example we can read an article about an organization, use and consume its products, visit its premises and meet its staff, all these are tangibles and are all capable of rational assessment and an opinion formed about the organization. If a customer visits the organization premises or raises a complaint, how they are treated determines the kind of image they will have about that company. All these perceptions constitute how company reputations are formed. Ralph Larsen CEO Johnson and Johnson said: "Reputations reflect behavior you exhibit day in and day out through a hundred small things. The way you manage your reputation is by always thinking and trying to do the right thing every day" Overall reputation has been conceptualized as a valuable intangible asset, a form of goodwill whose value fluctuates in the marketplace and is tied to the company's market value.

Buzzel and Gale (1987) argue that companies should strive first to achieve a reputation for better quality as this will drive increased sales, creating higher market share which translate to better economies of scales that lead to superior profitability. Davies, Chun, Silva and Roper (2003) also argue that the external image of many organizations is driven by the way customers perceive the organization, using what they term as reputation paradigm. Good corporate reputation influences financial performance, in that a strong reputation attracts and retains better employees and motivates them, it helps attract more potential customers, it allows customers to give you the benefit of doubt in any situation and suppliers are willing to supply because they are proud of their association with a strong brand. Davies and Miles (1998) emphasizes that good corporate reputation can drive business performance. A good reputation is likely to reduce transaction cost because the customers trust you. In the labor market there will be reduced labor turnover, attracting better quality and more productive employees.

1.1.2 Media Industry In Kenya

The media in Kenya is a diverse and vibrant growing industry and in 1992, the media sector was greatly affected by the multiparty democracy in the country. According to BBC World Service Trust (2006) the major changes occasioned by this political shift included the registration of new FM radio stations; increased freedom for both the public and other institutions to air their views through the media openly and candidly; increased political content and political battles fought via the media; and the growth of public demand for information and news. Currently the media is considered as the opposition, because there is no strong political opposition to keep the government in check and set the agenda.

According to Steadman research (2006) the media industry has grown significantly with over five major daily newspapers, over 15 TV stations and over 30 radio stations. The Daily Nation was established in 1960 and is published by the Nation Media Group (NMG) which also owns a TV station (NTV) and two radio stations (Easy FM, QFM). The Standard formerly the East African Standard was established in 1902 and is published by the Standard Group which also owns a TV station (KTN). Kenya Television Network (KTN) was the first private TV station in Kenya and was allowed to broadcast in Nairobi in 1989. The People Daily was established in 1992 whereas Kenya Times was established in 1983. The latest added daily newspaper is Nairobi Star, which is owned by the Radio Africa Group which also owns four radio stations. KISS FM, Classic FM, X FM and Radio Jambo. In August 2009, the group launched two television stations, KISS TV and Classic TV. The Royal media Services Ltd which is owned by S.K Macharia also has 10 radio stations and one TV station (Citizen TV). There is only one state owned TV station which is The Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). KBC was formed in 1961 and in 1964 it was nationalized under an Act of Parliament to become the

Voice of Kenya. In 1989 its name was changed back to KBC after another Act of Parliament. KBC has a variety of vernacular-language radio stations targeted at rural people of various origins. Although KBC is supposed to be funded by the state, they have had to re-strategize and align themselves with the private players so as attract a larger audience so that they can get a share of the advertising revenue.

The BBC World Service Trust (2006) highlights the various challenges the media has encountered, from the early days of imprisonment, intimidation, threats, and curtailed press freedom by the Moi government. Up until 1992, the media sector had experienced very slow growth. It was common for journalists to be arrested and imprisoned for trivial offences, since the government was wary of the media challenging its activities. Although the media in Kenya has improved, media policy, law and regulation in Kenya still remains a challenge and relations between the state and the media are still tense. In 2006, the government raided the Standard newspaper and KTN offices on claims that the group was about to publish information that was a threat to the security of the country. The government has in recent years, attempted to introduce new laws giving it greater power over media. Only recently parliament approved the 2008 media bill to control media and gave the Minister of Security full authority of raiding any media house as it deemed fit. The bill which was opposed by the media and the general public is currently under review.

The media industry in Kenya opposes the government's position and favours self-regulation. It set up the Media Council of Kenya in 2002 to pursue this aim, resolve complaints and improve journalistic standards. The Council has also drawn up a code of practice for ethical journalism. In future, the media is also bound to face challenges on cross-media ownership. Because of increased domination of content across various channels depending on who owns them, the government aims to limit cross-media ownership. The government argues that if one person owns all channels of communication, then it is easier to manipulate information, especially to spread negative ideas to the public.

Practicing journalists in Kenya still face various challenges, including lack of protected access to information, poor levels of technology in their workplaces, low pay, fear of intimidation and victimization in the absence of a proper media regulatory framework, and negative attitudes from the public due to lack of proper understanding of the role of journalists and of the media in general.

1.1.3 Nation Media Group-Kenya

According to the company website the Nation Media Group (NMG) was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan in 1959 and is the largest independent media house in East and Central Africa. It has print, electronic media and the Internet which attracts a regular readership. It also has operations in Tanzania and Uganda. When Nation Media Group started its operation it was housed at old Nation house, but is currently housed in the ultra modern building on Kimathi Street, at Nation House.

The group has various divisions namely, Newspaper, broadcasting, Carriers, Marketing & publishing, Digital, ICT, Finance, corporate affairs and Human Resource divisions. The Newspaper division was started in October 3, 1960, and today the newspaper division boasts of various leading publications, starting with the number one newspaper, Daily Nation, others include Taifa Leo, Business Weekly and The East African. (Daily Nation, 2009). The company website also defines the responsibilities of each division which are: Nation Carriers Division is responsible for distributing the company's product around the country as well as providing transport needs for other divisions. The Marketing and Publishing division (NM&P) ensures market visibility of the group and also distributes various international titles such as the Economist, Times, Newsweek and Fortune magazines. The Digital Division is the latest addition and is tasked with ensuring that the group is ready for the digital age and keeps a brace of the latest digital technologies in the market.

The broadcasting division comprises of NTV, Easy FM, and QFM. NTV and Easy FM were launched in 1999 whereas QFM started in November 2008. Besides giving accurate and informative news which shape the opinions of the general public, the electronic division now entertains with music, movies, comedies and talk shows. In 2003, licenses and frequencies were allocated to the Group and television and radio services were rolled out to most of the major towns around the country.

The group's vision is "To be the Media of Africa for Africa" and vows to continue to create multiple media opportunities to inform, educate and entertain. The group's core values are also highlighted on the company website as dedication to team work, integrity, delivering high quality product and services, excellence in customer service and serving the community. Through the Corporate Affairs department, which is tasked with maintaining and enhancing corporate reputation, the group has undertaken various activities to help the community, such as sponsoring intelligent but needy students since 2006, sustaining the environment by undertaking various projects such as The Nation Aberdare Forest Fund so as to fence off the Aberdare ranges.

The group has a board of Directors which is tasked with determining the company's policy and strategy, monitoring the attainment of business objectives and ensuring that the company meets its obligations to the shareholders. (Daily Nation, 2009) The directors are also responsible for overseeing the group's internal control systems and there is an able management team to achieve the vision of the group. The group's financial performance has been outstanding over the years and it continues to grow to maximize the shareholders and company's wealth.

1.2 The Research Problem

Kim Harrison a Public Relations Consultant points out that reputation has often been overlooked by organizations, because it is an intangible and complex concept, but it is only when a reputation incident severely damages the credibility of an organization that the importance of managing corporate reputation becomes apparent. Organizations that do not pay attention to enhancing their reputation suffer long term and irreparable damage to share price, market share and brand value. Building a strong reputation is an everyday task and not only does it determine how the outside world view the company, but good corporate reputation has an effect on the financial performance of an organization, it attracts the very best employees in the market, it enhances business to business relationship, investors will want to invest in your company, stakeholders are proud to be associated with a strong brand and shareholders are assured of wealth maximization

Organizations need to treat reputation as its biggest asset and risk. Many companies in Kenya have not fully understood the magnitude and benefit of corporate reputation to their businesses and hence reputation is never a priority in their boardrooms. NMG is a good case study of an organization that has placed reputation as part of its boardroom priority issues and organizations in Kenya should borrow a leaf from it. Despite the various divisions the organization has both in East and Central Africa, it has ensured proper coordination of the various departments and divisions so that the organization is speaking in one voice, which is a vital role in enhancing corporate reputation. NMG has undertaken image and culture management strategies; they have focused on the employee, placed the customer at the epicenter of the business model, and are constantly giving back to the community.

Other studies such as Burson Marsteller's (2005), Hill and Knowlton (2007) have been undertaken on corporate reputation, but none in particular focusing on strategies for enhancing corporate reputation at NMG. The research questions that were addressed in the study were: What are the strategies used at NMG to enhance corporate reputation? How effective have these strategies been in enhancing corporate reputation?

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives for the study were as follows;

i. To determine the strategies used by Nation Media Group(NMG) to enhance its corporate reputation
ii. To establish the effectiveness of the strategies in enhancing corporate reputation of NMG

1.4 Importance of the Study

In today's competitive world, reputation is such an important asset that it needs to be defended. The CEO of Wal-Mart, David Glass said: "Reputation is everything. It helps with your customers, suppliers, and employees. Your reputation is everything, and should be protected at any cost." Organizations that rely heavily on their reputation to maintain a strong market position are likely to react strongly to threats to their public image.

The strategies that will be highlighted in the study will benefit the organization as a whole, management, customers and employees as well. Overall the organization will benefit from good corporate reputation as it influences financial performance. A strong reputation attracts and retains better employees and motivates them, it helps attract more potential customers, it allows customers to give you the benefit of doubt in any situation and suppliers are willing to supply because they are proud of their association with a strong brand. Investors will want to invest with a company that has a solid reputation, and shareholders are assured of wealth maximization and are assured that the business objectives will be adequately met.

When customers feel that you genuinely care for them, exceed their expectations and provide high quality goods and services, they are likely to spread the good word of your reputation and this guarantees repeat business for the organization which translates to profit, which is a key objective for any organization. As for the employees treating them with respect and offering them great opportunities -professionally and financially-will not only encourage them to keep customers happy, but will also give them a powerful incentive to grow the business beyond everyone's wildest expectations. Satisfied employees are retained longer and are more productive.

The academicians will benefit because they will be learning from the very best organization on what strategies to use to enhance corporate reputation. The strategies documented in the study will be a wealth of information for students who are studying corporate reputation management.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2:1 The Concept of Strategy

Davies et al. (2003) defines a business organization as something that has a specific purpose. Usually it pursues its goal in the interest of its owners, often its shareholders. Strategy is therefore how a business plans to achieve its goal. Davies continues to define strategy as "matching the competencies of the organization to its environment" A strategy describes how an organization aims to meets its objectives. Andrews (1971) defines strategy as the pattern of decisions that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes, or goals, outlines the plans for achieving those goals, and lays out the businesses the company is to pursue. Andrews also elaborates on business strategy and indicates that it determines how a company will compete in a given business and position itself among its competitors. Corporate strategy is the responsibility of the top management team, supported by corporate strategy staff whereas business strategy is formulated and implemented primarily by the divisions or business units.

Strategy is therefore a vital component in any business as it serves as a road map for organizations; it is a unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to the actions and decisions of an individual or organization. Strategy is also a link between the firm and its environment, and helps organizations understand the industry environment and perform an internal analysis which involves understanding the firm's resources and capabilities. Companies also seek to be market leaders and this requires that they be competitive in order to be successful. Michael Porter points out that competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value.

During the 1960's and early 1970's, corporate planning was used by many organizations to predict the outcome of various situations in the market, but later in 1970s circumstances changed. There was a new era of macroeconomic instability and increased international competition from Japanese, European, and Southeast Asian firms. There was a more turbulent business environment, and the firms ability to plan for their investments, was no longer possible because they couldn't forecast far ahead. The result was a shift in emphasis from planning to strategy making. This transition from corporate planning to strategic management was associated with increasing focus on competition as the central characteristic of the business environment and competitive advantage as the primary goal of strategy. Henderson (1989) observed that strategy was a deliberate search for a plan of action that would develop a business's competitive advantage

The concept of strategic fit requires that for a strategy to be successful, it must be consistent with the firm's goals and values, its external environment, its resources and capabilities, and with its organization and systems. Lack of consistency between the strategy pursued by a firm and its external and internal environments is a common source of failure. Lorsch and Tierney (2002) point out that enduring firms are aligned to their strategies enjoy competitive success and financial strength and eventually become the market leaders. A key common ingredient in all success stories is the presence of a soundly formulated and effectively implemented strategy. Consistency of direction and a clear understanding of the strategy to be used enables an organization to get a position of advantage which enhances competitiveness in the market. In order for organizations to be successful in the strategies they formulate, the goals should be simple, consistent, and long term; they should have a clear understanding of the competitive environment, carry out an objective appraisal of resources-effectively exploiting internal strengths while protecting areas of weaknesses and finally undertake effective implementation.

Strategy fulfills multiple roles in organizations and it has three managerial purposes. Strategy as a decision support gives coherence to the decisions of an organization. Strategy as a process for coordinating and communicating helps the firm establish long term direction in its development and behavior. Equally, a strategy serves as a vehicle for achieving consistent decision making across different departments and individuals. Finally strategy is seen as target because a fundamental concern of any firm is what the firm wants to be in the future. Hamel and Prahalad argue that a critical ingredient in the strategies of outstandingly successful companies is what they term "strategic intent"—an obsession with achieving leadership within the field of endeavor. This is often made in the company vision which helps establish direction to guide the company and set aspirations and motivation for the company to achieve outstanding performance.

2.2 Concept of Corporate Reputation

Where do corporate reputations come from? How do some companies such as Coca-cola, Microsoft manage to stay at the top? These are some of the questions Fombrun (1996) posed so as to help us understand the concept of corporate reputation. He states that reputation is hard-earned. It is derived from developing a unique style, from comparing oneself with the best in a particular field and sustaining habits that consistently produce high-quality performance. The best-regarded companies rise above the rest in prestige, status and fame because they prize, pursue, and achieve uniqueness. They do so by developing management practices that reinforce their uniqueness and foster consistent images of the company as credible, reliable, responsive, and trustworthy. These images should be benchmarked against the best in the industry and should be communicated to the various stakeholders so as to enhance the company's reputation and build competitive advantage.

Ross (2008) indicates that reputations are both products and by-products of competition. They rest on the foundation of a company's uniqueness-its ability to gain competitive advantage. Fombrun (1996) elaborates that the company's reputation derives from its unique product and the product's uniqueness calls for management practices that stress product quality and customer service. Reputations of large companies such as coca-cola is known for soft drinks, Boeing in aircraft, all these companies derive their success in developing, producing and marketing a unique product or service that suits the consumers. The founders of large companies also bring out corporate reputation and their reputations are product based such as Henry Ford for Ford Motor Company. Strong founders imprint their companies with their personal characteristics. Uniqueness is vital to reputation building and competitive advantage among professional service firms and is a prized commodity.

Benchmarking has become popular in recent years as a powerful tool for encouraging change. It helps companies imitate good management practices as well as build valuable reputational capital. Davies et al. (2003) also highlights that good management is also a key concept of reputation. Although a strong reputation may originate in a unique product, good customer service, good employees, all this has to be reinforced by an array of managerial practices that project image and identity. Management guru Drucker (2007) concluded that success business does not require special gifts, special aptitude, or special training; it is about effectiveness as an executive which demands doing certain-and fairly simple things.

Fombrun (1996) indicates that the best companies in the world achieve their reputations by practicing mundane management. They adhere to good management practices that consistently and reliably produce decisions that everyone approve and respect. These results to increased faith and confidence in the company's actions, credibility and reliability create economic value. Alsop (2006) indicate that a company's good name can be affected for better or worse every time a customer gets into contact with the company, e.g. log on to its website, makes a phone call to the office and so on.

The figure below shows the relationship between a company's identity and its name, image and reputation. The corporate identity describes the set of values and principles employees and managers associate with a company. Corporate reputation represents the good or bad, weak or strong emotions and perceptions-of customers, investors, employees, and the general public to the company's name. The customers, the community, investors and employees all have an image of the company and all this different images constitutes the corporate reputation of an organization. Image is taken to mean the view of the company held by external stakeholders, especially by customers. Fombrun (1996) emphasizes that a name gives a company's legal status and distinguishes each other from other companies. Ultimately, a name crystallizes reputation: it anchors public perceptions about a company, its products and activities. A company's name symbolizes its reputation. Good names become more valuable; bad names lose value.

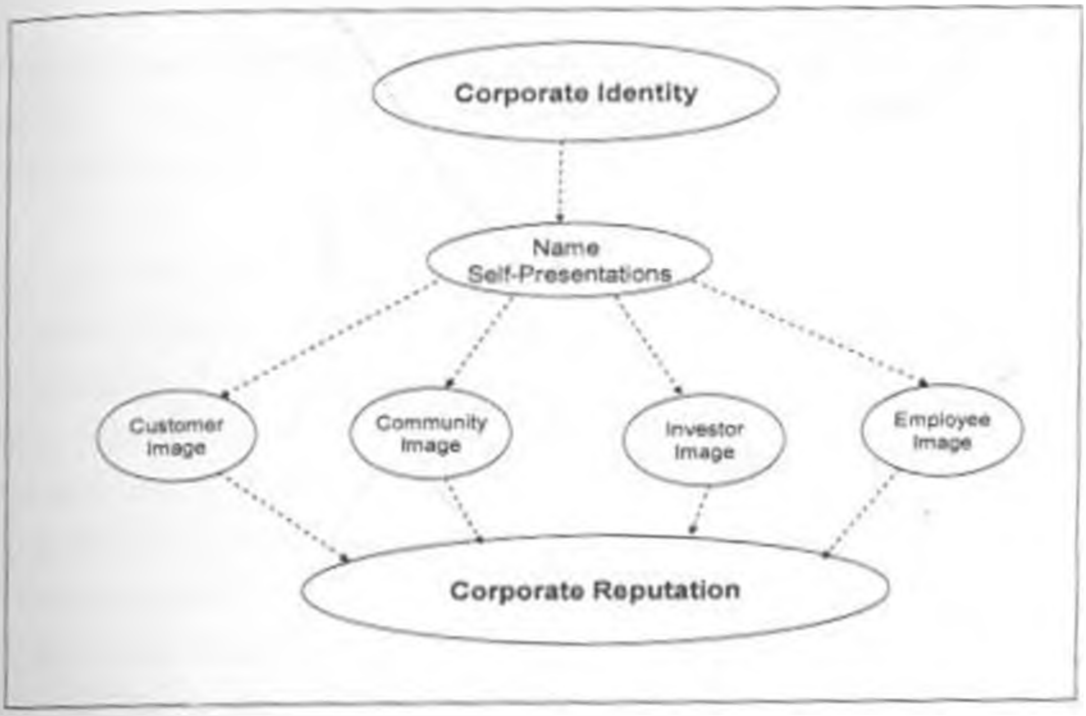

Figure 2:1: From Identity to Reputation

Source Fombrun (1996). Reputation Realizing Value from the Corporate Image. Pg 37

Fombrun and Shanley (1990) considered reputation to be just one of many corporate attributes that includes size, profitability, risk and leverage. They continued to state that corporate reputation is an index derived from within sector rating of eight attributes which include quality of management, quality of products and services, long-term investment value, innovation, financial soundness, ability to attract, develop and keep talented people, community and environmental responsibility and use of corporate assets. They also drew attention to changes in reputation which they noted could cause adverse effect on the way a firm is assessed in the market, particularly if the change signals a departure from an established trend. Kim Harrison a Public Relations Consultant indicates that a US study has also showed that there are ten main components of corporate reputation used in reputation measurement and they are as follows; the organization good ethics, how it treats its employees and if it provides a conducive work environment, its financial performance, good leadership and innovation, has high quality management with a clear vision for the future, recognizes and participates in social responsibility, focuses on the customer, provides quality products and services, it's reliability in providing quality products & consistent services, and finally it's emotional appeal. Additional components include value, differentiation, presence, and communication quality.

2.3 Value of Corporate Reputation

Fombrun (March 2002) in his foreword in the book Corporate Reputation and Competitiveness, poses the question on what drives competitiveness, he highlights three typical answers which are; companies build competitiveness from owning better stocks of physical assets, by gaining better and lower cost access to financial resources and third competitiveness is driven by attracting better human resources. He notes that in the recent years, there is a fourth answer that drives competitiveness and overtime it has gained prominence; and this is maintaining good corporate reputation. Fombrun (1996) also highlights that all companies are engaged in gaining and capturing the respect and trust of consumers, investors, employees and the public at large. He says that respect and trust builds reputation, and that's what creates a competitive advantage. By attracting investors to a company's securities, customers to its products, and employees to its jobs, a favorable reputation improves a company's profitability and enhances its chances of surviving the competitive battle. A company's established reputation helps to protect it from rivals trying hard to imitate its practices.

Davies et al. (2003) stresses that reputation builds strategic value for a company by granting it a competitive advantage that rivals have trouble overcoming. However, to achieve that advantage, a company must develop appropriate practices so that rivals have a difficult time imitating. A good reputation also generates consistent, shared, and favorable impressions among observers about what the company is, what a company does, what a company stands for. In this way, a company's reputation is itself identity defining.

Kim Harrison a Public Relations Consultant point's outs that a good reputation increases corporate worth and provides sustained competitive advantage. "A business can achieve its objectives more easily if it has a good reputation among its stakeholders, especially key stakeholders such as its largest customers, opinion leaders in the business community, suppliers and current and potential employees." He continues to elaborate that if your organization is well regarded by your main customers, they will prefer to deal with you first. Suppliers will be more inclined to trust in your organization's ability to pay and to provide fair trading terms. If any problems occur in their trading relationship with you, your suppliers will be more inclined to give you the benefit of the doubt when you have a reputation crisis. Likewise, government regulators will trust you more and potential employees will be more likely to sign up with you if you have a good reputation. A US survey by Burson-Marsteller on CEO's capital research (2005) found that 95% of chief executives surveyed believed that corporate reputation plays an important role in the achievement of business objectives.

Bromley (1993) indicates that reputation is about more than just the customer view and the quality of its products and services. It is also about attracting and retaining the best employees, finding it easy to be trusted and being well treated by suppliers and the ability to influence local and international government. Davies and Mile (1998) came up with a model to show how reputation can drive business performance. They argue that a good reputation is likely to reduce transaction cost because the customers trust you. In the labor market there will be reduced labor turnover, attracting better quality and more productive employees.

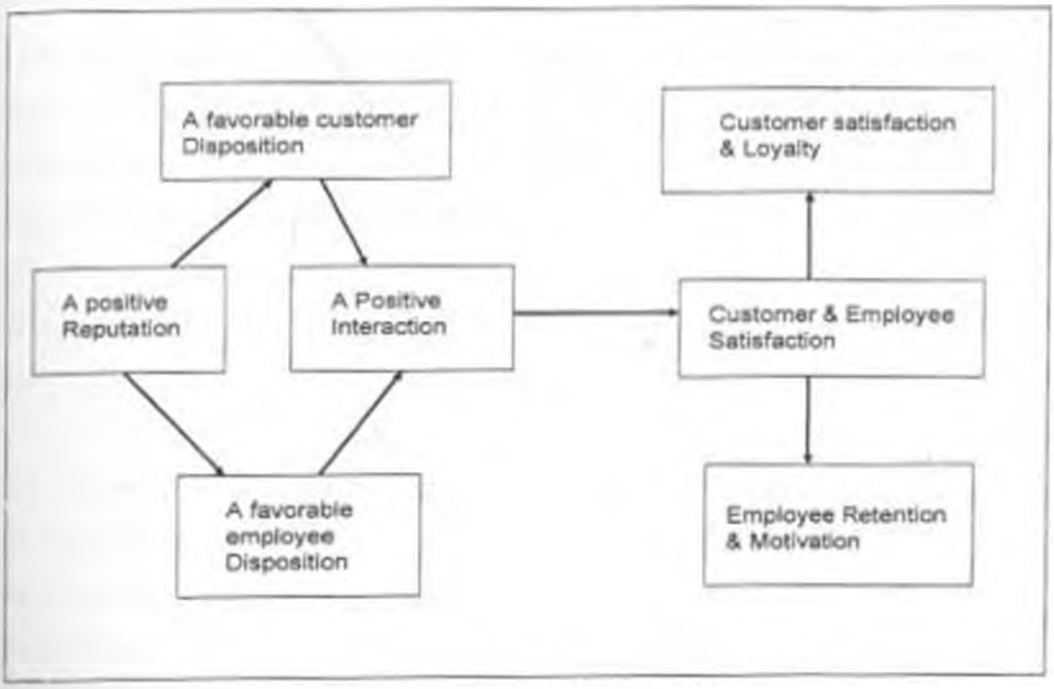

Figure 2.2 Reputation & Business Performance.

Source Davies and Miles (1998) Reputation Management: Theory Vs Practice Pg 70

2.4 Strategies for Enhancing Corporate Reputation

Different companies will deploy different strategies to build a strong reputation. Some companies want to make their presence known, whereas others prefer to keep a low profile. Either strategy can help produce a strong reputation and build economic value. Bromley (1993) indicates that organization reputations need to be established protected and, where possible, enhanced. Failure to maintain standards in products and services starts a cycle of decline-reduced sales, lower profits, poorer operating conditions, reduced investment, lower in morale and difficulties in recruitment. Organizations value their reputation; hence they have to be alert to risk of harm to reputation and to opportunities of enhancement. This means that organizations have to believe and act in accordance with the public image they wish to foster. Alsop (2006) states that persons and organizations with a large, well established reputation are normally at an advantage over those with a small or less well-established reputation. The reason is that they are likely to be involved in many activities of interest to their targeted audience, and so are likely to enjoy more publicity. Bromley (1993) say that the collapse or failure of an organization is not usually attributable directly to a loss of reputation. Rather, the initial loss of reputation is because an organization fails to fulfill the expectations of interested parties. Therefore an entity's reputation is best served by a simple, generalized favorable image. There are various strategies that are used to enhance corporate reputation and they are as follows; focusing on the employee as a critical link, effective corporate image and culture management, focusing on the customer and enhancing their experiences and exceeding their expectations and finally participating in corporate social responsibility.

2.4.1 Corporate Image and Culture management

The corporate image is founded upon modern corporate identity practices, with the understanding that everything an organization does, and does not do, affects the perception of that organization and its performance, products, and services. The corporate image of an organization is a major strategic concern that can have an impact on the level of success of the organization. Howard (1998) indicates that corporate image management focuses on the very heart and soul of the organization, even to the extent of evaluating why the organization exists and determining its key purposes. In the marketing perspective, corporate image helps the organization to differentiate itself from competition, create recognized added value to the products and services marketed and finally helps attract and maintain customer relationships in order to be successful in the competitive market.

Iheaker (2004) indicates that the corporate image comprises of all the visual, verbal and behavioral elements that make up the organization, whereas the corporate identity is the visual representation of the company which takes the form of a corporate signature and a corporate symbol or logo. It is part of the business of corporate affairs and public relations to monitor an organization's reputation in order to protect and enhance it. For this to be effective, there must be a realistic understanding of the organization's identity, the direction of its development, its publics and the means by which its publics can be informed and influenced. Logos and slogans are supposed to trigger the appropriate associations and responses. Bromley (1993) indicates that image has two meanings. First there is the literal image that symbolizes the organization, product or service. Second, there is the pattern of beliefs and feelings associated with the literal image that give it its meaning or psychological significance. Visual identity refers to the visual features that identify an entity, example a company's logo, a product's packaging and so on. These can express tradition, modernity, strength or whatever the organization wants to portray. The visual identity has to be created with the organization policies and practices in mind and it has to work effectively across divisions within the company. Identity and image are both embedded in the culture of the organization, all three interact.

Corporate culture is an aspect of corporate identity and is ideally reflected in the corporate code of conduct. Culture as defined in the *Webster New Collegiate Dictionary* is "the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action and artifacts and depends on man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations" Every organization has a culture, it could be strong or weak but it has powerful influence throughout the organization and has a major effect on the success and reputation of the business. Lorsch and Tierney (2002) define culture as a system of beliefs that members of an organization share about the goals and values that are important to them and about the behavior that is appropriate to attain those goals and live those values

Deal and Kennedy (1982) emphasized on the importance of understanding culture. They indicated that companies that have cultivated their individual identities by shaping values, making heroes, spelling out rites and rituals have an edge over other companies. These organizations have values and beliefs to pass along-not just products and they have stories to tell-not just profits. A strong culture is a powerful lever for guiding behavior. Lorsch and Tierney (2002) believe that culture is central to shaping behavior and attracting and retaining the very best employees. They point out that culture is not given –that it both can and must be managed.

The character of a corporation can help or hinder one to be a source of strength or of destruction. Companies fail everyday, others succeed beyond hopes, most march along good years mixed with bad. There are many theories to attributes of success, the "fit strategy" is recommended, which is a competitive strategy supported by reinforcing internal systems, others say that business is a function of reengineering, vale innovation, customer intimacy, continuous learning, creativity and so on. Goffee and Jones (1998) believe that though all these strategies apply, there is no business strategy or program that can or will succeed without appropriate organization culture in place. An organization is that underlying social architecture and there is no one right culture, there is only the right culture for a business situation. Lorsch and Tierney (2002) recognize that because culture is so invisible, compared to factory configurations and balance sheets it is therefore complicated to manage. A culture is perhaps the single most powerful force for cohesion in the modern organization and leaders can influence the way culture evolves, positioning their organization for sustained competitive advantage-because cultures aren't easy to quickly copy. Culture comes down to a way of thinking which drives a common way of acting on the job, or producing a product in a factory. These shared assumptions, beliefs and values are unspoken-implicit, and yet in their silence they can make the difference between a company that wins and loses.

There is no doubt that culture makes a difference. A good culture focuses on what they can do to achieve both happy customers and sound financial performance. It is a powerful asset and a customer-centered culture should be cultivated. This includes a focus on customer needs, problem prevention, perception, and performance; regarding people as assets and empowering of all employees. Lorsch and Tierney (2002) indicate that culture is dynamic and it is shaped by the decisions that are undertaken in the firm, which then affect behavior, which then becomes part of 'how things are done here' and significantly affecting your firm's competitive position. Alsop (2006) also stresses that companies have to foster reputation conscious culture. He says that employees must be made aware of how each and every one of them affects reputation on a daily basis.

2.4.2 Focusing on the Employee

Corporate reputation is vital to the organization, and employees are the key link to managing it. By recognizing the synergistic role that employees can play in the overall positioning of corporate reputation, management can obtain significant achievements in terms of satisfying corporate strategic objectives. Reputation has a number of elements and the two most important being the views held of the organization by the two main stakeholders, employees, and the customer. The employees are the interface with the customer and other stakeholders and if they are not feeling good and right then the customer will know. Dicker (2004) emphasizes that interpersonal relationships and communication within a workplace need to be high on the priority of supervisors and managers. It is key to develop a climate of association and a duty of care between management and employees and between workers themselves

Kramers (2003) emphasizes that getting the right people is critical to any organization. You do not achieve success without it. Microsoft's Steve Harvey, Director of People, Profit and Loyalty stated that their philosophy is to hire the right people, put them in a job which allows them to do their best work, stick with a great manager and then get them to understand where the company is going. A lot of businesses say that people are their greatest assets, but Shaw and Ivens (2005) indicate that this is wrong and emphasize that the right people are your greatest asset. The wrong person can totally ruin your customer experience. Dicker (2004) also argues that the right people are the most important assets and should have the highest priority in any organization.

Treating employees with respect and offering them great opportunities –professionally and financially-will not only encourage them to keep customers happy, but will also give them a powerful incentive to grow the business beyond everyone's wildest expectations. Some of the reasons cited by Kazanjian (2007) on why people choose to work for certain companies is because there is opportunity for growth and promotion; the company's excellent reputation, the company's commitment to its employees, a friendly, highly motivated work-force, the company's policy of promoting from within amongst other reasons Potential and existing employees want to grow with the company and they want to feel that they are part and parcel of the future of the company. Promoting from within encourages employees because they are assured that someone from the outside won't suddenly come in and become their supervisor. Everyone at the top has been exactly where you are, and each employee's hard work will be rewarded with future promotions. This ensures a high retention rate for the workforce. Offering alternative career paths to employees also motivates them. Giving workers a chance to move around within different divisions of the company benefits both the employees and the organization. Employees are able to expand their horizons, learn new skills, and work in areas they enjoy. The company in turn, retains quality people who are well versed in the company's culture and customer service ethos. Lorsch and Tierney (2002) also believe that the more people in a company are motivated to perform in ways that achieve the company's goals; the greater the likehood the company will succeed.

Diversifying the workforce is also critical; this assures equal opportunities regardless of race, gender, age, or sexual orientation. Organizations need to view diversity as an advantage, as it helps organizational performance, hence bringing in multiplicity of ideas and approaches to achieving goals and dealing with problems. Bolman and Deal (2003) state that promoting diversity mostly comes down to focus and persistence. They continue to say that organizations need to tailor recruiting practices to diversify the candidate pool and develop mentoring programs to help employees learn the ropes and get ahead. It is also essential to help employees set long-term goals and then regularly follow up to make sure they are on track to meet these objectives.

Harris and Brannick (1999) highlights some of the ways of attracting and retaining the best employees and they state that pay is critical because there is nothing as motivating for employees taking a good pay home for the services they have provided to the company. A good pay ensures that employees do a better job every time As an employer, keeping the part of the deal and word is important as it gives employees a sense of ownership. If they feel the rules will change after they've worked so hard to bring business into your company, they are less likely to do so in the first place. Instilling a sense of ownership helps the company in its recruitment and retention efforts as well. Employees get to treat customers right and this customer in turn tell their friend and this brings the company new businesses and profitability improves and employees are better compensated

Martin (1997) indicates that training and development of employees as critical factors of continuous improvement. Training and development leads to reduced waste, errors and accidents and also leads to improved productivity, motivation and commitment of employees. Ross (1995) also states that communication is a very important element. The only way to ensure total involvement of employees is to communicate the quality goals to all employees. Communication that supports quality is usually bottom-up communication. It also requires flatter organization structures so as to shorten the channel of communication and empowerment of employees in quality decision.

2.4.3 Placing the Customer at the Epicenter of the Business Model

Kramers (2003) indicate that the customer is an integral part of any business and is often referred to as the king. Understanding the customer's needs, wants and desires so as to provide them with better service is critical for any organization. Sir Richard Greenbury, the Chief Executive Officer of Marks and Spencer in 1988, emphasized on the customer, he says "if you give customers the product they want to buy and it serves them well, and you give them the service they want, it will lead to a better reputation". Pleasing the customer, ensuring you provide what they want, guarantees a future purchase. You are as good as last night's performance, so if you give a bad performance you are in trouble, but when you give a good performance the customers will applaud you.

The customers and staff are as important as the shareholders; this is because if you satisfy the customers and keep a happy, efficient, contented staff, the benefits eventually flow through to the shareholders. Andrew C.Taylor, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Enterprise Rent-A-Car, also notes in his foreword in the book exceeding customer Expectations, that customers need to be treated well and by taking exceptionally good care of them, you earn their steadfast loyalty. They pay back by doing business with you over and over again. The best opportunities for success are uncovered when you listen and understand your customers and this way you are able to win repeat business which is a key differentiator from other organizations.

Repeat business is valuable and as Kazanjian (2007) indicates, it costs approximately five to six times more to gain a new customer than to keep a current one. If a salesperson is able to please a customer during their first visit, chances are they will come back the next time they need your service or product. He cites several reasons on why customers leave or stop doing business all together is because of various reasons namely; 1% die, 3% move away, 5% develop other relationships, 9% leave for competitive reasons, 14% are dissatisfied with the product or service, 68% go elsewhere because of the poor way they were treated by employees of the company. Successful retention, therefore, means building personal relationships with customers with the goal of keeping them for life. He continues to state that it is always important to view your customers as the most important people who will walk through your doors and endeavor total commitment to customer service and this must start from the highest level in the organization. Small kind gestures such as shaking hands, smiling; greeting people by name go along way into retaining customers and eventually turning them to loyal customers.

Michael Dell, Founder and CEO of Dell Computer is quoted saying "From the start, our entire business-from design to manufacturing to sales-was oriented around listening to the customer" He says that spending more time with customers even for CEO's is critical, because you get to meet face-to-face with them. He adds that you can also invite customers to visit you at your premises where you create a forum where they can speak with the key people in the organization. Whiteley (1993) stresses that structuring the organization around the customer is crucial, the key is to get as many people in your organization as possible involved in satisfying the customer. Ensure they know about the customer's needs, desires, and preferences and so on. Conducting at least one customer survey to keep up with the customer needs is essential. Michael Dell also advocates that in order for large companies to focus on the customer, they have to adopt a small-company mind-set. This way they will get to move faster, respond more quickly, and anticipate customer needs more effectively. Dell has always tried to exceed customers' expectation, not only to delight them consistently by offering better products and services, but to win their loyalty by ensuring they have a memorable experience

In order to harness customer competencies Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2002) indicate that managers must engage their customers in an active, explicit and ongoing dialogue, they have to mobilize communities of customers; they have to manage customer diversity; and they have to co create personalized experiences with customers. To survive, and ride the customer experience wave, companies will have to recognize that ownership of the customer experience pervades their entire organization.

Shaw and Ivens (2005) believe that good customer experience in organization is the next competitive battleground. Products, prices, people and technology are all becoming similar in this age, and the only differentiator will be the customer experience. The meaningful things that customers remember, over and above your product, such as the feel and perception of your organization and your brand, are delivered through customer experience. The customer experience is a strategic board issue, it is about how it makes the customer feels, and it stimulates their emotions. Shaw and Ivens (2005) defined customer experience as "an interaction between an organization and a customer. It is a blend of an organization's physical performance, the senses stimulated and emotions evoked, each intuitively measured against customer expectation across all moments of contact". The interaction is conducted with customers: both potential and existing customers.

2.4.4 Corporate Social Responsibility

The rapid growth of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been proclaimed as a new age for business. Kotler and Lee (2005) define CSR as a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resource. They indicate that the responsible company has become one that not only generates a profit but also looks after and rewards the community in which it operates. Increasingly companies are noting a direct connection between stock performance and corporate responsibility and more so recognizing that their reputations in this area can help them attract and retain top employees. Companies actively committed to social responsibility and who have a rigorous set of business ethics programmes are in many ways more protected against corporate crisis and reputation problems than companies who have yet to recognize the business benefits of corporate social responsibility

Michael Regester the Founding Director of London-based Regester Larkin Ltd, notes that damage to reputation occurs when there is a perceived gap between corporate performance and stakeholder expectation. The key to successful reputation management is the early identification of such gaps and closing them quickly. Corporate social reputation programmes play a crucial role in keeping these gaps closed. In today's complex environment, organizations need to understand and respond to stakeholders' rapidly shifting values, rising expectations, demands for public consultation and an increasingly intrusive news media. There is a growing expectation, on the part of a broad range of stakeholder groups that organizations should perform and behave in a more open, socially caring and responsible way. He continues to say that while the role and importance of CSR in managing reputation is now receiving widespread attention it is in fact, not a new management phenomenon.

Kotler and Lee (2005) indicate that support from companies may take different forms including cash contributions, grants, paid advertising, publicity and promotional sponsorship. They indicate that companies that have existing community programmes stand a better chance of defending themselves when a crisis occurs. The reputation is quickly salvaged because the community knows the benefits of the company to the community. Creating effective community programmes will not only help protect reputation in times of difficulty – they will contribute directly to building sustainable businesses. Long term community activities leads to improved sales, reduced staff turnover, improved morale and helps the company understand better what all its customers want. CSR has the power to change things for the good that such policies must be developed for the good of the recipient and not purely for the good of the reputation. Corporate Social Responsibility programmes are an integral part of good reputation management.

2.5 Challenges and Management of Corporate Reputation

Although corporate reputation is vital to any organization, Kim Harrison a Public Relations Consultant points out that many company's do not place it as a priority because it is an intangible and complex concept, which takes time to change, improvements to a growing reputation is difficult to quantify, reputation is considered a long-term concept and hence senior managers are obliged to deal with more immediate and demanding operational priorities , reputation ranges over such a broad area of the organization's activities that it is difficult to allocate specific responsibility for work on enhancing the corporate reputation to individual functional areas and finally the cost implication is very high.

Fombrun (1996) also points out other challenges of corporate reputation is that because of the heightened visibility of the company, its every move becomes subject to scrutiny of a demanding audience and therefore requires the company to trade careful on its activities. Getting the whole team to work towards enhancing corporate reputation and emphasizing on its importance is not easy and needs to constantly be communicated. Organizations need to realize that times are changing now and they are increasingly required to achieve a balance between commercial success, environmental responsibility and social justice. All of this means that the stakes are becoming higher for companies in their dealings with the outside world. Accountability and responsibility are the watchwords of modern business, and external perceptions of the way in which companies are seen to behave now have material consequences for them. Alsop (2006) points out that in order for reputation management to permeate the culture, companies need to appoint a responsible person to be the primary guardian of reputation.

Davies et al. (2003) indicates that reputation management should be concerned with the image and identity of an organization. Managers should seek to harmonize those aspects. In that there are positive links from identity to staff retention and ultimately identity can be linked through performance. He elaborates these aspects using the corporate reputation chain as shown below.

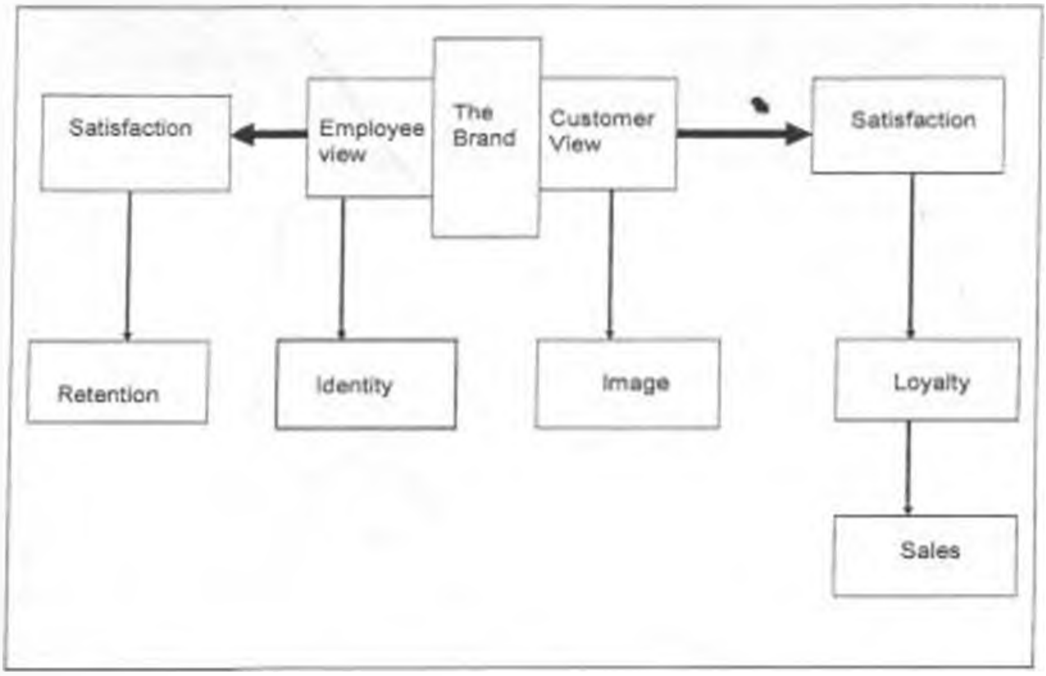

***Figure 2.3:** Corporate Reputation chain.*
***Source:** Davies et al (2003). Corporate Reputation and Competitiveness. Pg 76*

Doorley and Garcia (2006) point out the several ways of avoiding reputation pitfalls and delivering a successful reputation risk and they are as follows; acknowledging that reputation is a valuable asset that needs to be actively managed at the board level, secondly, develop a finely tuned radar and become a listening company, design clear and robust management systems that integrate with routine risk management processes, create your organization code of good behavior and assure your license to operate , treat your stakeholders intelligent and finally work as if everything you say and do is public. Theaker (2004) suggests that in order to manage and build your company's reputation, one should conduct research to know key stakeholders better, assess stakeholder strengths and weaknesses, research on the main factors comprising the reputation of your organization and align them with policies, systems and programs in all functional areas, set plans to exceed stakeholder expectations, involve the CEO in reputation building and finally measure regularly against targets and act to improve the results.

Fombrun (1996) indicate that most successful companies, and those that can endure great challenges, all have one thing in common; strong reputations, or high reputation quotients. According to the research he carried out, he concluded that there are four key principles of the reputation quotient: The first key principle is distinctiveness which he argues results to a strong reputation because a distinct and unique identity of a company results to a distinctive position in the minds of resource holders or consumers. Authenticity is the second principle and arises when companies are genuine. Companies must 'walk the talk' in their media relations, corporate performance and governance. This is the area where many companies falter and find their reputations and profits dropping as a result. Transparency which is the third principle advocates that companies should be transparent in their business dealings because it translates to a strong reputation. This requires constant communication across the various channels of communications so as to reach both the external and internal publics. Ross (2008) notes that reputation is based on the signals or message you send to your stakeholders. The final principle is consistency which contributes in building strong corporate reputation. This is effective when companies focus their actions and communications around a specific objective.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design used was a case study. A case study is one focusing on one organization selected from the total population of other organizations in the same industry. Cooper and Schindler (2006) emphasized on the purpose of a case study which is to investigate a certain aspect comprehensively and they stated that the focus is usually an item, which can either be a single organization, a single location, an individual or a particular community. In this case the focus was Nation Media Group, which is an institution. A case study design was chosen to enable the researcher to collect in-depth data on the population being studied and allows the researcher to explore, unravel and understand problems, issues and relationship and hence give specific and relevant recommendations.

Yin (1984) points out that a key strength of the case study method involves using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. The researcher determines in advance what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use with the data to answer the research questions. Case study research is flexible and when changes are made, they are documented systematically.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Data collected included both secondary and primary sources. The primary data method was in the form of interviews to four senior managers of NMG, namely Corporate Affairs Director, Strategy Director, Marketing Director and Human Resource Director. The research was guided by an interview guide and unstructured interviews were used so as to get the most out of the respondent. The interviews helped in gaining an understanding of the underlying concept of corporate reputation, helped verify in-depth question, helped capture accurate information and overall there was a high good response rate. Open ended questions were used so as to allow elaborate discussions of the research questions. Secondary sources such as use of books, publications, reviews and the internet were also be used to gather data on previous research done on corporate reputation.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data was qualitative in nature; therefore content analysis was used to evaluate the responses and conclusions and recommendations were derived. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) indicate that content analysis consists of reading and re-reading the interview responses looking for similarities and differences in order to find themes and to develop categories. Coding was also done on the text and arranged into manageable categories on a variety of levels.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Strategies Used To Enhance Corporate Reputation and Their Effectiveness

4.1.1 Focus on the Employee

The employee is the greatest link to corporate reputation because they are the representatives of the organizations to the outside world. Every day employees interact with the customers, potential investors, suppliers and other stakeholders; therefore the employee determines how an organization is perceived. The focus on the employee is a deliberate strategy that has been adopted by the organization to enhance corporate reputation. To effectively enhance corporate reputation through the employee, some of the ways used are; training of employees, good pay and benefits, well defined policies, encouraging feedback and transparency, effective communication, reward and performance management systems, a talent management system and a conducive environment.

Focus on the employee as a strategy has been very effective because when employees feel that the employer cares for them and places their interest first, the employee is able to project a good image to the external world and is able to achieve the business objectives successfully. Training has enabled employees improve on their skills hence increased morale and productivity, the performance management system has motivated employees to go the extra mile and do their best because they know they will be rewarded and recognized for the work they do. Communication has also been very effective, and as result promoted transparency in the organization. Every employee gets to know what is happening and can express their grievances, thus creating an open culture. The talent management system gets to identify the best employees and then find ways of keeping them. Once talent is identified, management acknowledges the employees in different ways such as enrolling them in MBA programs, awarding bonuses, providing for foreign attachments and promoting them internally.

The strategy has been effective as many employees have opted to stay and work for the organization- the employee turnover has reduced significantly. The organization has also been able to attract the very best employees in the industry because of the organization good reputation Another measure of the effectiveness of the strategy is the positive feedback from the employees, where they have indicated that because of the open and transparent environment, employees feel free to talk about any issues affecting them without fear of intimidation. The organization also gets to gauge itself against other competing companies based on the standard human resource practices.

4.1.2 Culture Management

Culture management significantly contributes to the overall reputation of the organization because a culture is the single most powerful force for cohesion in a modern organization. A strong culture is a powerful lever for guiding behavior and it is the behavior that is portrayed to the outside world that eventually forms either a good or a bad reputation.

Culture management has been used as a strategy to enhance corporate reputation and there are various ways that have been used to effectively manage and enhance corporate reputation at the organization. It has identified top lines issues that constitute the organization culture. The top line principles include; attracting and retaining the best employees, building team spirit and team work, clear career path, creativity and innovation, customer service excellence, dedicated, committed and hard-working, effective systems, policies and procedures, results oriented, social and community responsibility, good working environment, good corporate governance, pay for performance, responsive to market changes and staff training and development. The organization also goes further to identify bottom line principles that they can't afford to have if they are to manage culture which is a great contributor to corporate reputation. The bottom line principles include; bureaucracy, favoritism, fear and intimidation, poor management, living in the past, monopoly attitude, overwork and burn out, passing the buck, senseless meetings, short-term thinking, staff neglect and wrong people in certain jobs.

The culture management strategy has been effective in enhancing corporate reputation because the organization has been able to commit and work at the top line principles which constitute the company culture. The company has appreciated talent and nurtured it and as a result it has become the employer of choice in the industry and is able to attract the right people for the right jobs. By building team spirit and team work, the employees are able to participate and get involved therefore employees work as one team to achieve one vision, which is "Media of Africa for Africa". A clear career path ensures a progressive career growth for the employees and allows for succession planning. Embracing creativity and innovation has enabled the organization to respond to its environment effectively and hence remain the market leader in creating business solutions. The organization has to remain responsive to market changes and it has to act fast on grabbing opportunities. Customer service excellence, meeting and exceeding customer expectations creates a culture of placing the customer as number one. Adopting effective systems, policies and best practices ensures that employees are guided by certain principles and therefore achieving business goals. Good corporate governance ensures accountability and integrity when conducting business. A result oriented culture ensures that employees are always aiming to achieve business objectives and aim to deliver and strive for excellence. A culture of caring for the community is also emphasized and employees are now participating in idea generation of how to help the community and this motivates the employees to participate fully in giving back to the community.

The culture management strategy has been effective because they have been able to do away with some of the bottom line principles such as bureaucracy, favoritism, fear and intimidation, poor communication, and staff neglect. The organization has been able to attract the very best employees, openness and transparency has been encouraged and more and more employees are airing their grievances without fear of intimidation. Positive feedback from employees has been a perfect measure of effectiveness of the culture management in the organization. The organization also undertakes half yearly internal audits to evaluate if the strategies towards culture management are effective.

4.1.3 Corporate Image, Brand and Identity Management

Managing a company image and identity is critical in enhancing corporate reputation. Many of the world's most successful companies invest in their corporate images. In order to develop fully the corporation's image as a valuable marketing asset, managers must co-ordinate the company's vision, marketing communications, corporate strategy, organizational design and culture. The organization has used this strategy to enhance their corporate reputation because it has very many brands to communicate to its publics and it has to create a corporate image that communicates the general direction guided by one vision.

Smart businesses actively manage their corporate brand as a means of helping to define, maintain, and improve a reputation of the company. The corporate brand represents a set of promises that the company is making to its key stakeholders. The corporate brand serves as the face of the company, and can be used as the primary vehicle for supporting and driving reputation-building.

The organization has used various ways to effectively enhance reputation through corporate image and identity and this includes corporate communication which involves using a standardized way of communicating to the publics. There is a standard format for presentations, memos which ensures a uniform identity of communicating across the group. Internally employees are able to know what is happening and communicate to each other through the use of the intranet. They are also able to engage directly with the Group CEO under the Ask the CEO link and are encouraged to exchange views and engage in debate with each other. Quarterly meetings are organized where the CEO addresses the group and shares the previous financial performance of various divisions and outline the objectives of the next quarter. In-house publications, '*Nation News*' is also used to enhance corporate communications; the publication highlights the divisional plans and outlines the strategy of the organization. The use of the corporate logo is standard and appears on all the company products. Heavy branding in all events is highly used so as to continually have the company represented in all avenues and the brands can become top of mind.

This strategy has been very effective because all departments across East and Central Africa have been able to communicate the same identity. Departments across the group are working together instead of competing as used to be the case. The realization that all departments are working towards achieving the same vision has helped streamline and all energies are directed towards one goal. When employees are outside the organization they are able to communicate one identity to the external publics, hence strengthening the company's reputation.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) also plays a crucial role in designing the image of the company and is a major contributor to the corporate image. The involvement and support of the CEO in all company activities endorses and affirms his commitment to all the stakeholders. The CEO should ideally remain visible, and communicate honestly, transparently and proactively. The CEO is also present to stakeholders, whether it is customers, financial analysts or employees and this enhances corporate reputation.

4.1.4 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is a key component of enhancing corporate reputation and organizations have been forced to give back to the community if they are to survive. Any organization that does not give back to the community has no business been in existence, because it is the community that is your customer and if they are not happy with you, they are not happy with your products.

NMG has used corporate social responsibility as a deliberate strategy to enhance their reputation It is a keen and proud investor in community programmes and has adopted this strategy as one its top line principles that management and staff agree is a must-have in their formula for success. They believe that it is important to give back to the community, helping them and the people within them achieve their goals. They maintain good contacts with key stakeholders to ensure sustainable community partnerships; planning and driving the promotion, co-ordination and delivery of employee participation in community events. They have used community responsibility to align themselves to business goals and ideals and used it to penetrate into new markets.

There are various categories for corporate social activities and they include Education, Health, Environment and Arts & Culture. The education category aims to support education projects because education is essential to the development of any country. Through partnerships NMG has sponsored intelligent but needy students, one from every province in Kenya, since 2006. So far, there are 24 high school beneficiaries. The group has recently introduced a newspaper reading project in schools. The realization that the business operates within an environment and in the process puts a strain on it, the company has initiated projects so as to continually support and sustain the environment. Projects undertaken in the environment category include Save the Mau, Save a Life and the just concluded Nation Aberdare Forest Fund which raised money to fence off the Aberdare ranges. The health category has supported projects such as the Fistula Foundation and the Mentally Handicap Foundation. Finally the Arts and Culture category has supported projects such as the drama festivals, phoenix-films and plays. The categories help the company identify which projects to undertake. The projects to be undertaken are selected yearly and in case there is an urgent need to support any project, the company is flexible. Example is Save the Mau project, which had to be incorporated later in the year because of the urgent need to save our forests.

Fostering partnerships with other organization so as to continue serving the community is highly used as a way of enhancing corporate reputation. Over the years, the company has been involved in various partnerships such as the East Africa Business Summit which saw over 80 CEO's from around East Africa gather in Uganda at Kampala Serena to charter the path for the region's economic future. The Nation Media Group is also proud to be associated with the Kenya Top 100 mid-sized companies' survey which seeks to identify Kenya's fastest growing medium sized companies in order to showcase business excellence and highlight some of our most successful entrepreneurship stories. The East Africa's Most Respected Company (EAMRC) Survey is also held annually and is currently in its 9th year. It is organized by The East African in conjunction with

PricewaterhouseCoopers and remains the only unique survey in the region. The group will be introducing the corporate social responsibility awards from next year, which will be another first initiative from the organization.

Corporate social responsibility has been effective and several ways have been adopted to measure its effectiveness which includes feedback from the community or beneficiaries. There is also a general acceptance from the community whenever the company products are presented or representatives from the organization visit. There is also a yearly audit so as to gauge the success of the projects undertaken and finally, the overall impact the projects have on the decisions makers. The group vows to continue engaging in community responsibility activities for they support the business objectives of the company and build relationships with key stakeholders.

4.1.5 Marketing Communications

The organization has used marketing communications as a strategy to enhance corporate reputation. Marketing Communications involves planning in a systematic way to determine the most effective and consistent message for appropriate target audiences. The use of marketing communications helps to ensure that that all aspects of the brand communications reinforce the brand message consistently and that all marketing communications for brands also support the company's overall identity, image and reputation

There are various ways that have been used to enhance corporate reputation using marketing communications and it involves maintaining a standard outlook for communicating to the external publics, heavy branding of all the company brands and products, the use of influential people such as presenters, writers to endorse products and be present at events organized by the company, sponsorship of key activities based on the target market, hosting client events and giving company merchandise.

This strategy has been very effective, because more and more people are using the company's products, there is top of mind awareness of the brands. Based on internal feedback, employees have continuously been involved in marketing the company product, hence promoting corporate reputation. External feedback, from social networking platforms such as face book have indicated that the campaigns carried out by the organization to promote the products have been effective; this is based on the comments from the respondents. The turn out of people in events is also an indicator that the marketing communication strategy employed has been effective. Finally, a brand tracker is used to gauge what people think of the brands and based on the comments, the organization is able to improve effectively.

4.1.6 Placing the Customer at the Epicenter of the Business Model

The customer is always an important element in any organization and most companies have realized the value of a customer. The Nation Media Group has embraced the customer as a strategy to enhancing corporate reputation. They have made a deliberate effort to focus on the customer, because without the customer then you cannot sell your products nor provide the service. They have identified customer service excellence as a top line principle and they aim to going the extra mile for the customer, meet and exceed customer expectations and always provide the best service. A customer service culture has been cultivated where the customer is treated as king and is incorporated in their vision and mission.

There are several ways to enhance corporate reputation by focusing on the customer and the first is focusing on fundamentals of the product or service the company offers which must be genuinely unique. When an organization offers great customer experience they create a competitive advantage because then loyal customers are created. Organizations that can create an emotional bond, will keep customers coming back again and again. They will be there for you in good times and bad just like our family and friends do. NMG advocates for understanding the customer expectations, finding out what your customers expect both of their needs and of their industry, and then provide and exceed their expectations. One needs to be intuitive and anticipate what the customer will need and then going beyond their expectations. Understanding customer expectations and how they are formed can be done through market research, customer satisfaction levels, employee feedback and so on. Building trust, openness and honest relationships with customers is essential. If you can harness the power of trust and build it to a point where a customer really trusts you, you inherit great power to the organization

The kind of culture and leadership in organization does affect great customer experiences and NMG has incorporated customer service excellence culture in its top line principles It ensures it hires the right people for the job, people who will evoke the emotions it hopes to achieve great customer experience. There are some people who are just naturally good with people and they have the ability to inspire trust, build a relationship and be very comfortable with customers. Great customer experiences are an embodiment of the brand; they should reflect your brand values. If the brand does not portray or create the trust element, then customers will express this by the comments they make and future purchase of the products. If customers do not trust the salesperson they are talking to, then they will not buy the product and you lose revenue-all because you are not engendering trust.

4.2 Overall Value of Corporate Reputation

All respondents agreed that corporate reputation is a key vital aspect that organizations should have and that it does helps in achieving business objectives. Good corporate reputation ensures that employees act in the very best interest of the company and always portray goodwill outside the organization. Most organizations have perfected on customer service, quality products, technology, and therefore the only way organizations will be competitive and differentiate themselves from the others is through corporate reputation. Multinationals such as Coca Cola, Unilever, East Africa Breweries have invested heavily on reputation because they understand the value. These companies have realized that the way in which the outside world expects a company to behave and perform can be its most important asset. Indeed, a company's reputation is able to deliver growth and attract top talent. A company's message must be grounded in reality, and its reputation is built over years therefore must be protected and enhanced.

Corporate reputation is in deed a strategic approach to organizational survival and building competitiveness. The reputation perspective is a timely addition to existing approaches to strategic management. Corporate reputation can now be used to get ahead of the game of other organizations. The value of a good reputation continues to grow largely because of the competitive advantage and market differentiation it delivers — higher sales generated by satisfied customers and their referrals; relationships with the right strategic and business partners; ability to attract, develop and retain the best talent; benefit of the doubt by stakeholders if crisis strikes; spread of positive word of mouth; potential to raise capital and share price; and in some cases, the option to charge premium prices.

Few organizations in Kenya understand the importance of corporate reputation and hence do not place it as a board room priority. Nation Media Group is one of the few organizations that have placed reputation building as a board room issue because management has recognized the importance of good corporate reputation and acknowledges that employees are the representatives of the organization to the outside world. The Group Corporate Affairs Director who is responsible for enhancing and protecting the brand of the Nation Media Group sit in the board.

Organizations big or small need to realize the value of good reputations. Even the greatest companies that have built great reputations can also fail and loss of reputation can strike anytime, therefore building reputation is a continuous process. The poor regarded companies have a hard time attracting talent, new business and customers therefore these companies have to work harder and longer than companies held in high esteem

4.2.1 Reputation and Financial Performance

In the human resource perspective, the respondent agreed that in deed reputation has an effect on financial performance because when employees are happy they are able to achieve the goals of the organizations which translate to good financial performance. If the employees are unhappy, they will spread the negative attitude to other employees and this goes further as it is spread to the external publics, who will also have a bad attitude towards the organization and its products based on the information and attitude portrayed by the employees. The end effect of unhappy employees lead to bad financial performance because the employees are not achieving the company objectives and the customers may shy away to consume the products. Employees and corporate reputation are unique resources that generate positive financial performance and ultimately create sustainable competitive advantage. By recognizing the synergistic role that employees can play in the overall positioning of corporate reputation, management can obtain significant achievements in terms of satisfying corporate strategic objectives.

Stakeholders give companies a license to operate and grow and when stakeholders view a company in a positive light, they spread the positive word across a wide social network and this generate sales as the stakeholders buys its products/services. There is guaranteed repeat business when a company has a good reputation. A good reputation allows a business not only to outperform its peers in terms of shareholder measures, but also to own a distinct advantage and to have a positive impact on corporate profitability and total sales. Positioning of a brand in the market effectively translates into good financial performance for the organization. The key to a successful corporate brand positioning program is having a full understanding of what sets a company apart from its competitors and defines its distinctive character.

4.2.2 Vision and Policies

The vision for the organization is to be the "Media of Africa for Africa". It is part of the top line principles that management and staff agree is a must-have in their formula for success as a corporate. In every organization people have a vision that represents the shared values to which organization should aspire. A sense of vision is vital in creating a strong image among managers and employees. Organizations that have a vision inspire a high level of commitment among the employees and that spreads over to affect the external stakeholders. A clear vision has a financial pay off because all employees are working towards achieving the same business objectives. The vision reflects the organization's ideal corporate image and reputation. At NMG, the corporate image attributes are; high quality products/services, customer service excellence, a safe working environment, good ethical practices, and community responsibility. The group aims to satisfy and provide excellence to all its key stakeholders, from employees, to customers, to suppliers, to investors, financial institutions and the government. This eventually builds a good reputation for the company.

Every activity undertaken by the various divisions aims to work towards achieving the vision. The organization aims to be the media authority in Africa and all policies are geared towards achieving the same vision. Employees have to work as a team, practice good corporate governance, be dedicated, committed and hardworking, provide excellent customer service, and give back to the community so as to enhance corporate reputation. Communicating the vision to the various stakeholders is critical so that everyone can understand what the organization stands for. Some of the ways the organizations has used to communicate the vision is having the vision displayed on the company walls, at the reception, on newsletters, annual reports, on the intranet and it is also recited every time there is a meeting so that it is a constant reminder.

4.2.3 Challenges and Management of Corporate Reputation

The economic challenges facing the world have taken a toil on many organizations and it has becomes difficult to convince management to allocate funds to enhance corporate reputation. The intangible aspect of corporate reputation becomes difficult because you can't quantify, neither can you show it on financial statements, yet intangible assets such as reputation customer relationships, talent, innovation, are now central to company competitiveness and profitability. Another major challenge of reputation is that it takes times to build and management opts to handle more urgent issues.

NMG has various brands in Tanzania, Uganda and will soon be venturing into Rwanda and aligning all the NMG brands to communicate one message and work towards the same vision is the greatest challenge. The Corporate Affairs headquarters is in Nairobi and is tasked to ensure that all these brands are sending the same message and working towards the same business objectives. It is also challenging to have all employees reading from the same script, each region cultivates its own culture but is guided by the standard principles. Corporate reputation matters now more than ever and the challenge is to understand what corporate reputation is and construct a framework for managing it. Finally, on handling corporate responsibility projects there is excess demand from the community to embrace all the projects, yet the company can only undertake the projects that match their business objectives and fall under the categories they have specified.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

There is no doubt that reputation matters and it is what the various stakeholders- customers, employees, vendors, shareholders, local communities perceive the company that constitutes to the overall reputation of an organization. Reputation is shaped by all of a company's actions and inactions. A good reputation allows a business not only to outperform its competitors but also to own a distinct advantage on a number of other operational fronts. A good reputation contributes directly to a company's health by providing competitive advantage and differentiation which translates to a positive impact on corporate profitability.

Different companies have employed different strategies of enhancing corporate reputation. The realization that reputation depends on a variety of attributes, including an ability to create outstanding products and services, a commitment to treat employees fairly, responsibility to the community, innovation, corporate culture, marketing communications, corporate identity management, focusing on the customer amongst others. NMG has used various strategies to build and enhance its reputation.

There is an increasing sense of ownership by customers of "their" brands and the businesses behind them; therefore a focus on the customer Is critical. There is a need to make them feel part of the business and organizations have to exceed their expectations. The ability to build a strong bond of trust with customers gives businesses a competitive advantage one that can be sustained over time.

Employees are the core asset of any successful business and reputation matters to them and is also critical for attracting talented employees. Employees are unique resources that generate positive financial performance and ultimately create sustainable competitive advantage and management must recognize the role that employees play in the overall positioning of corporate reputation.

Culture management significantly contributes to the overall reputation of the organization because a culture is the single most powerful force for cohesion in a modern organization. A strong culture is a powerful lever for guiding behavior and it is the behavior that is portrayed to the outside world that eventually forms either a good or a bad reputation. Managing a company image and identity is also critical in enhancing corporate reputation. Many of the world's most successful companies invest in their corporate images. In order to develop fully the corporation's image as a valuable marketing asset, managers must co-ordinate the company's vision, marketing communications, corporate strategy, organizational design and culture.

Communicating effectively about the company brands to the desired target group is essential. It helps ensure that that all aspects of the brand communications reinforce the brand message consistently and that all marketing communications for brands also support the company's overall identity, image and reputation. Finally, corporate social responsibility is the new age for business, and a company not only generates a profit but also looks after and rewards the community in which it operates. Any organization that does not give back to the community will have a tough time surviving in the competitive business environment.

5.2 Conclusions

Reputation must be built, supported and managed. It must be an authentic reflection of the business — its culture, value system, and behaviors. Reputation building is the new approach to gaining competitive advantage in the ever changing world and is in deed a timely addition to existing approach to strategic management. Reputation is based on five key pillars which constitute a company's reputation and they include people, pacesetters, products, performance and purpose. The people include the employees, stakeholders and a good working environment. Organizations need to appreciate its employees, either in the form of rewards, training and development, recognition and providing a conducive working environment.

The Pacesetters reflect the company's leadership, vision, and governance. An organization should have strong and appealing leaders; it should communicate openly and clearly and define a clear direction for the company. The company products should be of high quality and should deliver value to its end-users. Performance focuses on how the company is performing on the financial and operational point of view. In order to have a good reputation, it is expected to have a strong financial performance and be effectively managed. Finally, the purpose of any organization should be well defined to both its employees and its external stakeholders so as to build a strong corporate reputation.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Although most of the respondents interviewed were willing to discuss the subject at length, some did not want to divulge too much detail on the effectiveness of the strategies, for fear of portraying the organization and themselves not having achieved on the strategies set out.

Different companies employ different strategies based on the industry. The study highlights strategies used by NMG which is a media house, therefore limiting other companies to adopt the same strategies if they are not in the same industry.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

There are very many attributes that constitute corporate reputation and further qualitative and quantitative research should be conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how these attributes influence the company's reputation and find out the key drivers of its reputation.

The CEO's reputation continues to be a strong driver of corporate reputation and further research should be conducted to determine the contribution of CEO's in Kenya to a company's overall reputation. It would also be interesting to test the relationship of reputation and financial performance in organizations. Determine if firms with a positive reputation experience direct economic benefit

5.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

Policies in the workplace are essential because they guide the employees on how to behave and help to establish consistent work standards, rules, and regulations. The necessary policies and procedures also ensure a safe, organized, friendly, empowering, nondiscriminatory work place. Nation Media Group has policies in place which are geared towards achieving the company vision and to enhance corporate reputation. Employees are expected to work as a team, practice good corporate governance, practice good ethics at all times, be dedicated, committed and hardworking, provide excellent customer service, and give back to the community so as to continually enhance corporate reputation.

The organization has outlined top line principles that are a must have for it to be successful. One of those top line principles is the effective systems, policies and procedures. In order to succeed, it has to adopt the best practices in the systems, policies and procedures. The systems have to be organized and well structured and they acknowledge that these policies are their guide. In an effort to enhance the reputation of the organization, the corporate governance policy which is a top line principle has been adopted. This policy contains a set of processes and laws outlining the way the company is directed and controlled. Corporate governance is crucial for enhancing corporate reputation because it involves building the relationships among the many stakeholders. Good corporate governance involves accountability, all round integrity and keeping the best business practices.

The employee policy is also a top line principle at Nation Media Group. It ensures that employees are provided with consistent and fair treatment in regards to the benefits eligibility, training and development, a conducive environment and so on. The pay for performance policy ensures that all employees are rewarded for their performance, and that staff are recognized and appreciated. The employee policy is very crucial to enhancing corporate reputation, because the employee is the greatest link to enhancing and building reputation.

The organization should strive to review the company policies yearly so that they can know which ones are still effective and which new ones need to be adopted. Involving employees in policy making and review is important as it provides feedback that employees will be able to understand and follow the policy. Overall, the groups policies adopted have strengthened and enhanced corporate reputation.

REFERENCES

Alsop, R. J. (2006). *The 18 Immutable Laws of Corporate Reputation: Creating, Protecting and Repairing Your Most Valuable Asset*. Kogan Page Publishers

Andrews, K. (1971). *The Concept of Corporate Strategy*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.

BBC World Service Trust (2006). Kenya AMDI Research Report. (On-line) Available www.bbc.co.uk worldservice/amdi_kenya

Bolman, L.G., & Deal, T.E. (2003). *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*. New York: Wiley Publishers.

Bromley, D. B. (1993). *Reputation, Image and Impression Management*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Publishers.

Buzzel, R.D., & Gale, B.T. (1987). *The PIMS Principles*. New York: Macmillan.

Cooper, D.R., & Schindler, P.S. (2006). *Business Research Methods*. 9[th] Edition. New York: McGraw Hill Company.

Davies, G., Chun, R., Silva, R. V., & Roper, S. (2003). *Corporate Reputation and Competitiveness*. London: Routledge.

Davies, G., & Miles, L. (1998). *Reputation Management: Theory Vs Practice*. Corporate Reputation Review 2 (1):16-28.

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. (1982). *Corporate Cultures: The rite and Rituals of Corporate Life*. London: Wesley Publishing Company.

Dicker, L. (2004). *How to build strong relationships with your employees*. Allen & Unwin.

Dion, Binneman. Guidelines for Improving and protecting corporate Reputation (On-Line) Available www.continuitycentral.com

Doorley, J., & Garcia, F.H. (2006). *Reputation management: the key to successful public relations and corporate communication*. CRC Press.

Drucker, P. (2007). *The effective Executive*.UK: Elservier Ltd.

Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation Realizing Value from the Corporate Image*. Harvard Business School Press

Fombrun, C.J., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation Building and Corporate Strategy. *Academy of management Journal*, 33, 233-258.

Goffee, R., & Jones, G. (1998). *How your company's culture can make or break your Business*. Great Britain: HarperCollins.

Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C.K. Strategic Intent," *Harvard Business Review* (May–June 1989):63–77.

Harris, J., & Brannick, J. (1999). *Finding and Keeping Great Employees* AMACOM Div American Mgmt Assn.

Henderson, B. D. "The Origin of Strategy," *Harvard Business Review* (November–December 1989): 139–143.

Hitchcock, G. & Hughes, D. (1995). *Research & the Teacher: A Qualitative Introduction To School Based Research.* Routledge

Howard, S. (1998). *Corporate Image Management*. Asia: Kin Keong Printing Press.

Kazanjian, K. (2007). *Exceeding Customer Expectations*. USA: Literary Productions.

Kim, Harrison. Why a good corporate reputation is important to your organization (On-line) Available www.cuttingedgepr.com

Kramers, J. (2003). *What the best CEO's know: 7 Exceptional Leaders and Their Lessons For Transforming Any Business.* New York: McGraw-Hill publishers.

Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2008). *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the most for your company and Your Cause* Wiley India Pvt. Ltd

Lorsch, W., & Tierney, T. (2002). *Aligning the Start: How to Succeed when Professionals Drive results*. USA: Harvard Business School Press.

Martin, J.E. (1997). Command Performance: The art of delivering Quality Service. *Harvard Business Review*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Michael, Regester The role of corporate social responsibility in managing reputation (On-line) Available http://www.ethicalcorp.com/

Porter, M. E. "What is Strategy?" *Harvard Business Review* (November-December 1996): 64.

Prahalad, C.K.,& Ramaswamy, B. (2002). Customer Relationship Management. *Harvard Business Review*. Harvard Business School Press.

Ross, G.L (2008). *Corporate Reputation: 12 Steps to Safeguarding & Recovering Reputation*. John Wiley & Sons.

Ross, J.E (1995). *Total Quality Management.* Delray Beach, Florida: St. Lucie Press

Shaw, C., & Ivens, J. (2005). *Building Great customer Experiances* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Steadman Research Services-Kenya (Daily Nation, 2006)

Theaker, A. (2004). *The Public Relations Handbook* Routledge

The Daily Nation. (2009, September 25). pg 6

Whitely, R. C. (1993). *The customer-driven company. moving from talk to action.* Perseus Books Group.

www.nationmedia.com. Company Profile Assessed on August 29th at 3:30pm

Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research Design and methods* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SENIOR MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE
CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING CORPORATE REPUTATION: A CASE STUDY OF NATION MEDIA GROUP (NMG)

This is an academic research paper in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Masters Degree in Business Administration at University of Nairobi. The objective of the research is to determine the strategies used at NMG and how effective they have been in enhancing corporate reputation. The responses will be treated with outmost confidence.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Title...

Length of Employment at NMG..

SECTION 2: OVERALL VALUE OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

(This section will bring out the overall importance on corporate Reputation and policies used to enhance reputation)

1) Does corporate reputation play an important role in the achievement of business objectives, and is it the most critical, strategic, and enduring asset that a corporation possesses?
2) Is enhancing and maintaining corporate reputation a priority in the boardroom?
3) Briefly describe the strategic vision and policies of NMG that addresses corporate reputation
4) What are some of the challenges encountered as you enhance and maintain corporate reputation?

SECTION 3: STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE CORPORATE REPUTATION.

(This section will discuss the strategies used to enhance corporate reputation and their effectiveness.)

STRATEGY 1: CORPORATE IMAGE AND IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

5) Does corporate image and identity contribute to the overall corporate reputation of the organization?

6) Do you use corporate image and identity management as a strategy to enhance corporate reputation?
7) How do you use this strategy to effectively enhance your reputation?
8) How effective has this strategy been in enhancing corporate reputation?
9) Why do you feel that the strategy has been effective?

STRATEGY 2: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

10) How vital is CSR and does it contribute to enhancing good corporate reputation?
11) Do you undertake CSR as a strategy to enhance corporate reputation?
12) How effective has this strategy been in enhancing corporate reputation?
13) How do you use corporate social responsibility to effectively enhance your reputation?
14) Why do you feel that this strategy has been effective?

OTHER STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE CORPORATE REPUTATION.

15) Are there other strategies that NMG uses to enhance corporate reputation, such as leadership, quality management, innovation?
16) If yes, name them and explain why NMG uses them and indicate if they have been effective in enhancing corporate reputation.

APPENDIX 2

SENIOR MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE
HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING CORPORATE REPUTATION: A CASE STUDY OF NATION MEDIA GROUP (NMG)

This is an academic research paper in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Masters Degree in Business Administration at University of Nairobi. The objective of the research is to determine the strategies used at NMG and how effective they have been in enhancing corporate reputation. The responses will be treated with outmost confidence.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Title...

Length of Employment at NMG..

SECTION 2: OVERALL VALUE OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

(This section will bring out the overall importance on Corporate Reputation and policies used to enhance reputation)

1) Does corporate reputation play an important role in the achievement of business objectives, and is it the most critical, strategic, and enduring asset that a corporation possesses?
2) Is enhancing and maintaining corporate reputation a priority in the boardroom?

SECTION 3: STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE CORPORATE REPUTATION.

(This section will discuss the strategies used to enhance corporate reputation and their effectiveness.)

STRATEGY 1: FOCUS ON THE EMPLOYEE

3) Is the employee the greatest link to corporate reputation and why?
4) Do you focus on the employee as a strategy to enhance your corporate reputation?
5) How do you use this strategy to effectively enhance your reputation?
6) How effective has this strategy been in enhancing corporate reputation?
7) Why do you feel that the strategy has been effective?

8) What are some of the practices the company has put in place to focus on the employee? (E.g. training & development. in house promotion, etc.)

STRATEGY 2: CULTURE MANAGEMENT

9) Does culture management contribute to the overall corporate reputation of the organization?
10) Do you use culture management as a strategy to enhance corporate reputation?
11) How do you use this strategy to effectively enhance your reputation?
12) How effective has this strategy been in enhancing corporate reputation?
13) Why do you feel that the strategy has been effective?

OTHER STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE CORPORATE REPUTATION.

14) Are there other strategies that NMG uses to enhance corporate reputation, such as leadership, quality management, innovation, training & development applied to the employee?
15) If yes, name them and explain why NMG uses them and indicate if they have been effective in enhancing corporate reputation.

6) How effective has this strategy been in enhancing corporate reputation?

7) Why do you feel that this strategy has been effective?

<u>OTHER STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE CORPORATE REPUTATION.</u>

8) Are there other strategies that NMG uses to enhance corporate reputation, such as leadership, quality management, quality product, innovation?

9) If yes, name them and explain why NMG uses them and indicate if they have been effective in enhancing corporate reputation.

APPENDIX 4

SENIOR MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE STRATEGY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING CORPORATE REPUTATION: A CASE STUDY OF NATION MEDIA GROUP (NMG)

This is an academic research paper in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Masters Degree in Business Administration at University of Nairobi. The objective of the research is to determine the strategies used at NMG and how effective they have been in enhancing corporate reputation. The responses will be treated with outmost confidence.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Title...
Length of Employment at NMG..

SECTION 2: OVERALL VALUE OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

(This section should bring out the overall importance on corporate Reputation and policies used to enhance reputation)

1) Does corporate reputation play an important role in the achievement of business objectives, and is it the most critical, strategic, and enduring asset that a corporation possesses?
2) Is enhancing and maintaining corporate reputation a priority in the boardroom?
3) Briefly describe the strategic vision of NMG that addresses corporate reputation
4) What are some of NMG policies that address corporate reputation?
5) What are some of the challenges encountered as you enhance and maintain corporate reputation?
6) Is there a deliberate effort to formulate strategies to enhance corporate reputation across the group?
7) How does reputation influence the financial performance of an organization?

STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE CORPORATE REPUTATION.

(This section will discuss the strategies used to enhance corporate reputation at NMG and their effectiveness.)

8) What are the strategies that NMG uses to enhance corporate reputation. such as leadership, quality management, quality product, innovation?

9) If yes, name them and explain why NMG uses them and indicate if they have been effective in enhancing corporate reputation.