

# Reputation management is essential to business decisions

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A lot of organisations big, medium or small do not realise the importance of Public Relations (PR) or in particular, reputation management. I think we first need to define the role of PR.



Source: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

PR is there to build and protect the reputation of any organisation. This is done by creating awareness around the company's customer value proposition (CVP) or offerings. It is also done by ensuring that key stakeholders (both existing and potential customers) are kept up to date with the company's activities. It's always important to ensure that relevant information is always provided about the company to help customers in making informed buying decisions.

Now, let's go back to the importance of reputation management to businesses. My business associate and I were talking about how reputation management is taken seriously in other countries overseas and how it is not an afterthought when companies find themselves in trouble in the media. In other countries, PR professionals responsible for reputation management are part of the strategic business decisions made at board and exco level. PR experts are called in when business decisions are made to evaluate the impact of that decision to the reputation of the company.

## Pro-active reputation management

In PR terms, this is referred to as proactive reputation management. We always advise our clients to allow us to act as their counsel and as devil's advocates to assess potentially explosive situations before they even happen. That way, we are able to come up with strategies or remedies way before the situation gets out of control. At times, we help to advise on the route to take to completely avoid a negative situation from taking place altogether. When I thought about this topic, I was reminded of how the best CEO I had during my time as the Head of Communication at Business Connexion (BCX), the late Benjamin Mophatlane – may his soul continue to rest in eternal peace.



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Miranda Lusiba 20 Oct 2021



You see, Mophatlane knew the importance of PR and reputation management. As a listed company, BCX used to make big business decisions that included any new mergers or acquisitions, HR-related decisions or issues or general business operations made during its “closed period” before the announcement of either their half or full-year results. He always took me into his and his excos confidence to help them evaluate the impact of their business decisions on the reputation of the company. He also asked me to help him to determine the best way to communicate those decisions to their key stakeholders internally and externally – both clients and employees.

This all took place weeks before the actual announcements were made, and this time allowed for the necessary back and forth until final approvals, and this process made sure that we went into the results announcement day well prepared. I really respected him for understanding the importance of proactive reputation management. In most organisations, PR gets called in to pick up the pieces after something has gone wrong.

My advice to businesses that have not yet realised this and to aspirant or young PR profession is that pro-active reputation management is the best way to protect any organisation. This is unfortunately a very important issue that could have an adverse effect on the survival of any business. I'm afraid if this is not taken seriously and very soon; then everyone will always be chasing their tails when something goes wrong.

## ABOUT MIRANDA LUSIBA

Miranda Lusiba is the Founding Director of Strangé Consulting - a boutique PR Agency specialising in Communications, Freelance Writing, Media Relations, Reputation Management and Media Training.

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