



Strathmore
UNIVERSITY

STRATHMORE BUSINESS SCHOOL

MASTERS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION

**HCM 8110: MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS IN
HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: Monday, 24th April 2017

Time: 2 ½ hours

Instructions

1. This examination consists of **FOUR** questions.
2. Answer **Question ONE** and **ANY OTHER TWO** Questions

Question 1 (30 marks)

Read the article below and answer the questions that follow

A German executive working for Mater Hospital recalled a meeting with US colleagues: ‘WTien - one of the Americans from Mater brought up what he thought was a new issue, a German counterpart said, “But we have agreed on this already in an earlier discussion. It is all written in the protocol.” The American looked puzzled, and said, “What protocol? I remember you took some notes, and you sent me some papers recently, but I didn’t think they were important.”’

At the beginning, one side tried to impose its working style on the other’, said Roland Klein, Mater’s manager of corporate communications in Stuttgart. ‘This prompted conflicts and misunderstandings. But even worse, it just didn’t fit with the people’s culture.’

The Germans taking part were irritated by the Americans’ unstructured ways, while the Americans thought the Germans were too rigid and formal. A senior product development executive in Stuttgart said that ‘Each side thought its components or methods were the best.’ Klein said that there were fundamental differences between the executives in Mater Hospital.

‘Germans analyse a problem in great detail, find a solution, discuss it with their partners, and then make a decision. It’s a very structured process’, he said.

‘Americans start with a discussion, and then come back to new aspects after talking with other people—after a process which they call creative—they come to a conclusion.’ Former Mater executives found the system chaotic. They were often puzzled by the American tendency to return to a subject they thought had been settled. Klein said that the two sides also decide things in different ways. In America, he said, ‘At any time you can just pop into your boss’s office and

tell him something. The boss can make an instant decision—without explaining the reasons or involving other employees. It's different in Germany: the underlings prepare extensive reports for the top bosses and make recommendations at formal meetings.'

A high-ranking pharmacist in Auburn Hills said: '(At the old Mater) if an idea had merit, you didn't worry about approval, you just went ahead and did it. People working on the shop floor feel empowered to do things. It's based on management trust. Over there (in Germany) they've got all those smokestack organizations that measure things, survey things. A lot of time is spent on unproductive activities.' The clashing styles became apparent when Mater's US methods were adopted in purchasing operations in Germany. The American style was imposed largely because Mater executive Gary Valade heads Mater Hospital's global purchasing. 'It just didn't work out over here', said Klein. 'There are some European suppliers which you have to approach differently, or even have to deal with in the German language. For Americans, this was a culture shock.' A senior product development executive in Germany said that top management probably underestimated the difficulties.

(Ostle, D. Adapted from *Automotive News Europe*. 22.11.99)

Required:

- a) What cultural problems do you think Mater hospital had? **(10 marks)**
- b) What could they do about those problems? **(6 marks)**
- c) Draw an organizational structure diagram and indicate the position of the corporate communication function. Justify its location. **(10 marks)**
- d) **"Listening is the single most important and underrated skill in business, in social media, and in life."** Explain briefly, 2 ways in which managers in healthcare can improve the listening skills of their institutions. **(4 marks)**

Question 2 (15 marks)

Recruiting and retaining the best talent is the most challenging task of the human resource department in most organizations. During the process of recruitment and while working, it is not only management that interviews the candidates but candidate also interviews the organization. Management must therefore put in place proactive communication effort to make the organization attractive to employees.

Discuss five specific ways in which a corporate can harness the power of communication to attract and retain the best talent.

Question 3 (15 marks)

Kenya witnessed an industrial action by medical doctors this year. The doctor's union, KPMDU, both scored and erred in its management of the trade dispute.

Required:

Based on the lessons you learnt on best practice in negotiation through this course, analyse 3 commendable acts of communication undertaken by KPMDU and two ways in which they erred in handling the strike.

Question 4 (15 marks)

Understanding constituents allows management to tailor communication tools specifically to a target market effectively. Although preferences between digital tools and traditional media is rarely explored, an understanding of media channel preference for different constituents could increase message reception and indicate to healthcare managers how marketing dollars should be budgeted for different consumers.

Required

Examine three characteristics of traditional media that you would consider before making a choice of a traditional media outlet as well as three characteristics of a digital media that would inform your choice of channel.