



**Strathmore**  
UNIVERSITY

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION**  
**BAC 4103: BRAND AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT**  
**END OF SEMESTER EXAM**

**DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**TIME: 10:30-12:30**

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**Instructions**

- i) Answer **question one** and **any other two** questions in the answer booklet provided.
- ii) Be sure to write your arguments accurately using grammatically correct language.
- iii) Poor expression of thought and language will be penalised by the deduction of up to 5 marks from the overall score.

**QUESTION ONE (30 MARKS)**

**The Rise of Hekima Ventures - A Kenyan Brand Success Story**

*This case study has been written for purposes of learning and does not necessarily represent the truth of Hekima and the characters mentioned.*

**Background**

Hekima Ventures, founded in 2010, started as a small family-owned business in Nairobi, Kenya, focusing on real estate and property development. The founder, James Mwangi, was an ambitious entrepreneur with a vision to provide affordable housing solutions to

the growing middle class in Kenya. James believed that every Kenyan deserved a decent home, and he wanted Hekima Ventures to be the brand that made that dream a reality.

Initially, Hekima Ventures struggled to differentiate itself in a saturated market filled with numerous real estate developers. The competition was stiff, and many companies were offering similar services. However, James was determined to build a brand that would stand out and resonate with the needs of the local population.

### **The Brand Evolution**

James Mwangi understood the importance of branding early on and knew that Hekima Ventures needed to develop a strong brand identity. He began by investing in market research to understand the needs, preferences, and pain points of his target audience. The insights gathered from this research led to the development of Hekima Ventures' brand promise: "Quality, Affordability, and Trust."

With this brand promise in mind, Hekima Ventures launched several strategic initiatives:

- i) The company underwent a rebranding exercise in 2013, which included a new logo, tagline, and brand colors. The new logo, featuring a house with a rising sun, symbolized hope and new beginnings, while the tagline "Building Dreams, One Home at a Time" reinforced the company's commitment to making homeownership accessible.
- ii) Hekima Ventures prioritized customer satisfaction by offering personalized services and flexible payment plans. The company's focus on understanding and addressing the specific needs of its customers helped build a loyal customer base.
- iii) To distinguish itself from competitors, Hekima Ventures adopted stringent quality control measures. The company worked with reputable architects, engineers, and contractors to ensure that all projects met high standards. This commitment to quality became a key component of the brand's identity.
- iv) Understanding the importance of community engagement, Hekima Ventures launched various CSR initiatives. The company invested in building schools, healthcare centers, and community halls in areas where it developed housing projects. These efforts not only improved the company's public image but also fostered a strong emotional connection with the brand.

- v) In 2015, Hekima Ventures embraced digital marketing to reach a wider audience. The company established a strong online presence through a user-friendly website, social media platforms, and online customer service channels. This digital strategy helped the brand connect with tech-savvy customers and build a modern, forward-thinking image.

### **Brand Challenges**

Despite its success, Hekima Ventures faced several challenges that tested the strength of its brand. The Kenyan economy experienced a slowdown in 2017, which affected the real estate sector. With reduced purchasing power, potential homebuyers became more cautious, leading to a decline in sales for Hekima Ventures. The company had to re-evaluate its pricing strategies and explore new ways to maintain customer trust.

As Hekima Ventures expanded its portfolio to include commercial properties and luxury homes, some customers felt that the company was losing focus on its original mission of providing affordable housing. This perception risked diluting the brand's core identity.

The real estate market in Kenya continued to grow, attracting new players, including international companies. Hekima Ventures had to find innovative ways to differentiate itself and maintain its market position.

### **Current Situation**

By 2024, Hekima Ventures had become a household name in Kenya's real estate industry. The brand was associated with quality, reliability, and social responsibility. However, with the growing complexities of the market, James Mwangi and his team faced critical decisions on how to sustain and grow the brand in the face of new challenges.

### **Case Questions**

1. Define the concept of Brand Equity. (3 marks)
2. Using the 5 ideas on how brands can build positive brand Equity, critique Hekima Ventures and make recommendations on improvement. (15 marks)

3. As a graduate of Communication, Hekima has invited you to help manage the brand. Discuss any 4 areas you will focus on, with specific recommendations and a strong justification for each of your proposals. (12 marks)

### **QUESTION 2 (15 MARKS)**

#### **Top Countries Contributing to a Better Africa**

In 2024's edition of GeoPoll's survey reports, they included countries as brands, asking respondents to name the countries they felt contribute most to a better Africa. Here, African nations comprise 64% of the Top 50 most admired countries. South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya are perceived as the top three countries contributing to a better Africa.

Discuss three arguments on how your country can strengthen its brand based on any of the place branding theories or discussed.

### **QUESTION 3 (15 MARKS)**

Hekima Ventures would like to diversify its product portfolio. There are certain things that you have learned in this unit that they must put in mind, to build a formidable brand. Present any 3 ideas, and include all necessary detail for implementation.

### **QUESTION 4 (15 MARKS)**

Hekima Ventures would like to organise an event.

- a) Raise three arguments that show the correlation between organising events and strengthening both the brand and the reputation of an organisation. (6 marks)
- b) Suggest an event they can organise and:
  - i) Fully describe the event and justify why you recommend they organise it. (3 marks)
  - ii) Predict any 2 obstacles there may be to the success of this event that will harm the reputation of the company and offer 2 mitigators. (6 marks)