



**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION**  
**BAC:3102 FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS THEORY AND PRACTICE**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024**

**Time: 08:00 - 10:00**

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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 Fall of Green Energy Solutions Ltd**

*This case has been developed for purposes of learning and does not in anyway represent the truth of the company or the characters mentioned.*

**Background**

Green Energy Solutions Ltd (GESL) is a Kenyan company specializing in the development and distribution of solar energy products. Founded in 2010, GESL quickly became a market leader, providing affordable and sustainable energy solutions to rural and urban

areas across Kenya. The company's mission was to make clean energy accessible to all, particularly in regions with limited access to the national electricity grid.

By 2020, GESL had established a strong reputation, boasting partnerships with various governmental and non-governmental organizations. The company's success was fueled by its innovative products, robust supply chain, and commitment to customer satisfaction. GESL was frequently featured in the media for its contributions to sustainable development in Kenya.

In early 2022, GESL launched a new line of solar-powered water pumps designed to serve farmers in arid and semi-arid regions. The product was highly anticipated, as it promised to revolutionize irrigation practices in drought-prone areas. The company invested heavily in marketing, with advertisements running across radio, television, and social media platforms.

However, within weeks of the product's launch, reports began to surface about significant malfunctions. Farmers who had invested in the water pumps complained that the devices failed to work as promised. In many cases, the pumps broke down completely after just a few days of use. Some farmers reported that they had lost entire crops due to the failure of the pumps, leading to severe financial losses.

As the complaints grew, so did the media coverage. News outlets and social media platforms were flooded with negative stories about GESL and its faulty products. The company's reputation, once sterling, was now being called into question.

Despite the growing public outcry, GESL's management was slow to respond. The company initially downplayed the issues, attributing the malfunctions to user error rather than product defects. When pressed by journalists, GESL released a brief statement asserting that the pumps met all safety and quality standards. However, this statement did little to assuage public concerns.

GESL eventually decided to recall the faulty pumps, but by then, the damage was done. The recall process was chaotic and poorly managed, leading to further dissatisfaction among customers. Many farmers struggled to get their money back or secure replacements, deepening their mistrust in the company.

GESL had no comprehensive PR plan in place to manage the crisis. The company failed to engage with the media and its customers proactively. Instead of addressing the concerns head-on, GESL's management adopted a defensive posture, which only fueled the negative publicity.

The company also missed key opportunities to rebuild trust with its stakeholders. For instance, GESL could have leveraged its strong relationships with NGOs and government partners to facilitate a more effective recall process or to provide support to affected farmers. Instead, these partners distanced themselves from the company, fearing damage to their own reputations.

By the end of 2022, GESL's brand had taken a significant hit. Sales plummeted, and the company lost several key contracts. Competitors capitalized on GESL's missteps, gaining market share at its expense. The company's attempts to rebrand and restore its image were met with skepticism by both the public and industry insiders.

In 2023, GESL was forced to lay off a substantial portion of its workforce and close several regional offices. While the company remains operational, it is a shadow of its former self, struggling to regain the trust it once had.

### **Question 1 (30 marks)**

1. Outline and extensively discuss five (5) elements you would include in a PR/Communication strategy for GESL. Justify the value of including each, in the strategy. Show how a failure to include these elements resulted in GESL's eventuality. (15 marks)
2. Illustrate how three (3) key approaches to Public Relations practice can be used in helping GESL regain its lost glory. (9 marks)
3. Write notes on two ways that GESL can measure PR efficacy. (6 marks)

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

Writing is a critical skill in Public Relations. Discuss three (3) PR documents and show their value to an organisation and illustrate key things to consider outside of structure, when writing them.

**QUESTION 3 (15 marks)**

PR is a versatile and crucial field, absolutely necessary for any business or organisation. Consider 3 different /varied PR specializations and show how you would creatively apply PR knowledge, to help improve practice in fields of your choice.

**QUESTION 4 (15 marks)**

PR has jargon. Explain any of these terms and show why they are important for any PR student to know.

- i) PR outtakes
- ii) Content Creation
- iii) Advertising Value Equivalent
- iv) Embargo
- v) Boiler Plate