

**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

**ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CORPORATE EVENTS, AS PUBLIC
RELATIONS TOOL FOR MARKETING:
A CASE STUDY OF GHANA REVENUE AUTHORITY, MAAKRO BRANCH, KUMASI**

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

We have read the University Colleges' regulations relating to plagiarism and certify that this report is all our own work and do not contain any unacknowledged work from any other source.

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ABSTRACT

The increasing competition among organizations in Ghana has forced many organizations to become innovative as well effective in their activities. Event is a Public Relations tool that has gained increasing importance in recent times. This study sought to assess the effectiveness of corporate events, a public relations tool for marketing in Ghana. The study used Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) Maakro branch, Kumasi as a case study.

The objectives of the study were to find out the role of public relations events as a tool for marketing, to find out the impact of corporate events as public relations tool for marketing, to find out effective strategic public relations event plans for marketing. The Two-way Symmetric model in public relations was used as a theoretical framework. Interviews were conducted with eighteen (18) respondents comprising eight (8) management staff of GRA and ten (10) customers of Ghana Revenue Authority. The findings showed that GRA focuses on marketing its vital products to customers through such as. Also the study showed that corporate events is one of the effective tools used by GRA in achieving its goals and also has effective strategic plans for events which is used as a PR tool for marketing, informing and education.

The study recommends that Public Relations units should be integrated at every major branch of Ghana Revenue Authority in Ghana. It is recommended that the education on the mission and vision of Ghana Revenue Authority should be strengthened through corporate events.

There is a need for Two-way Symmetric model which will result in bartering, negotiating and strategies of conflict resolution to bring about symbolic changes in ideas, behaviour and attitudes of both the organizations and their publics.

DEDICATION

We dedicate this work to God Almighty as well as our families and friends.

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We are indebted to the Almighty God for His sovereign grace throughout our four-year study in Christian Service University College. We would also like to express our profound gratitude to our families for their support which made this study a success.

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We wish to express our profound gratitude to the Management and Staff as well as stakeholders of Ghana Revenue Authority Maakro Branch, Kumasi. We are grateful for their openness and willingness to participate easily in this study. We hope that the findings and recommendations of the study will propel the Events Department of Ghana Revenue Authority to greater heights.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY i

ABSTRACT..... ii

DEDICATION..... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT iv

CHAPTER ONE..... 1

 1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 1

 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 1

 1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT 3

 1.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT..... 4

 1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY 5

 1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS..... 5

 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY..... 5

 1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY 5

 1.8 OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY TERMS 6

CHAPTER TWO 7

 2.0 INTRODUCTION..... 7

 2.1 OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC RELATIONS' EVENTS.....7

 2.2 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING..... 12

2.3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	12
2.3.1.	Two-Way Symmetrical Model.....	12
2.4	SUMMARY OF CHAPTER.....	14
CHAPTER THREE		15
3.0	INTRODUCTION.....	15
3.1	RESEARCH METHOD	15
3.2	ACCESSIBLE POPULATION.....	15
3.3	SAMPLING PROCESS	15
3.4	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT	16
3.5	DATA ANALYSIS PLAN.....	17
3.6	RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS	17
3.7	ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	18
3.8	SUMMARY OF CHAPTER.....	18
CHAPTER FOUR.....		19
4.0	INTRODUCTION.....	19
4.1.	BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS	19
4.2	POSITION OF RESPONDENTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.....	20
4.3	FINDINGS OF INTERVIEWS FROM GRA STAFF.....	20
4.3.1	The Use Of Corporate Events In Promoting Marketing.....	20
4.3.2	The Impact Of Corporate Events As A Public Relations Tool For Marketing	22

4.3.3 The Strategic Plans For The Corporate Event.....	24
4.4 FINDINGS OF INTERVIEWS FROM GRA CUSTOMERS.....	26
4.4.1 The Use of Corporate Events in Promoting Marketing.....	26
4.4.2 The Impact of Corporate Events as a Public Relations Tool for Marketing.....	28
4.4.3 The Strategic Plans for the Corporate Event.....	29
4.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER.....	30
CHAPTER FIVE	31
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	31
5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	31
5.2.1 The Use of Corporate Events in Promoting Marketing.....	31
5.2.2 The Impact of Corporate Events as a Public Relations Tool for Marketing.....	33
5.2.3 The Strategic Plans for the Corporate Event.....	35
5.3 CONCLUSIONS	37
5.4 RECOMMENDATION	38
5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY	39
REFERENCES	40
APPENDIX I.....	42
APPENDIX II.....	43

LIST OF TABLE

TABLE	
4.1.....	20

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Although there is very little existing research in the specific area of ‘Effectiveness of events as a Public Relation tool for marketing’ Getz (1997, P. 249) underlines that “a contemporary marketing is about building relationships” which falls under public relations. Also Bacher (2000) suggest that public relations and events often have a complementary relationship, since only the public relations effects sometimes justify relatively high budget for marketing events. However Nickel (1999) confirms that active participation has strong effect on attitude and behaviour. Moreover, personal contact and confidence create joint emotions between events participants and event organizer (Zanger, 2001). It is for this reason that our study is concluded on the research topic “Assessment of the Effectiveness of Corporate Events, a Public Relations Tool for Marketing” using Ghana Revenue Authority as a case study. This chapter would describe the background to the problem, the problem statement, the purpose statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and scope of the study and operationalization of key term.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Events are opportunities for organizations to gain exposure for their business, promote new products or services and make sure accurate information reaches targeted customers. Events are a chance to counter customer doubts and build customer confidence. A study done by Ceylan in 2007 on the topic, “Public Relation as a tool of Tourism Marketing” found that an event is one of the most popular PR tools used by practitioners in order to

gain public attention for their establishments. Events have become a staple in positioning organizations as community-oriented entities sensitive to their role in assisting efforts to promote the common cause. For that reasons events are been used as a PR tool.

Steinberg cited in Baskin, Aronoff and Lattimore (1997, P.11) that “Public relation is the specific operating philosophy by management set up policies designed to serve both the company’s and publics’ interest. Moreover, IPR, Britain also defines Public Relationship practice as the planned and sustain effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics’. We explain Public Relations as a strategic communications process that helps manage, protect, and enhance the reputation of an organization, its members, and its services. That is Public Relations builds mutually beneficial relationships between organization and its public and enhances reputation.

A scholarly definition of marketing by Dr. Philip Kotler explains marketing as the science and act of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. He confirms that marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desire. Marketing as defined is very broad and need strategies and tactics to achieve its goal. Some of the traditional strategies for marketing are advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling, just to mention a few. Schreiber (1994) summarized the following reasons as the need of moving from the traditional way of marketing to new marketing strategies;

- i. Consumers have become overwhelmed with advertising.
- ii. The media now is fragmented.
- iii. Consumers are also becoming more fragmented.

Moreover, Brikau (2002) found that the evolution from working to a leisure time society has also contributed to the trend that makes organizations now looking for new mediums to promote or market their goods. And according to Nickel (1991) organizations or businesses has discovered that it is essential to take in more interactive processes in communication, and including of personal ways of customer communication such as hosting events would be helpful. As explained earlier, it is important to understand that events create a forum where companies spend quality time with their clients, while enhancing clients view of the company.

With that, what we seek to do is to assess the effectiveness of events, as a public relation tool for marketing, using Ghana Revenue Authority as a case study. Ghana Revenue Authority (G.R.A.) is a state own organization responsible for the administration of taxes and customs duties in Ghana. Now there is a need to assess the effectiveness of events, as a public relation tool for marketing at Ghana Revenue Authority.

1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Emma-Foster (1991), Public Relations is developing fast in Ghana. Many companies and institutions have come to realize the importance of the Public Relations Department. It is from this department that an organization can reach its numerous stakeholders and shareholders especially through corporate events. The problem that exists in some organizations is that, they do not have units or teams that carry out specific functions of the Public Relations Departments like handling of events, and how to deal with customers at hand.

For many years, the promotional function in most companies was dominated by mass-media advertising. Companies relied primarily on their advertising agencies for guidance in nearly all areas of marketing communication. Public relations companies were used to manage the organization's publicity, image, and affairs with relevant publics on an ongoing basis but were not viewed as integral participants in the marketing communications process.

Effective corporate events is one of the most desirable and accurate Public Relations tool that an organization or company can use to reach its shareholders and stakeholders far and near. It is for this objective that many organizations and companies have decided to use corporate events to market and educate the public on their goods and services. A poorly generated Public Relations tool has the effect of misdirecting the general public of the companies' ability of selling their goods and services to the public.

The role events play in an organization is that it helps to generate income to the organization. Again events help in selling the brand product and services of the company to the public. Effective corporate events help the company to spell out its vision and mission to the public. Public Relations activities in some organizations in Ghana are combined with the administrative functions which undermine the effectiveness of using corporate events as a tool for marketing. This study is to assess how effectively corporate events can be used as a Public Relations tool for marketing in an organization.

1.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the study was to assess how events could be used effectively as a Public Relations tool for marketing.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the role of Public Relations Event as a tool for marketing.
2. To find out the impact of Corporate Events as a Public Relation tool for marketing.
3. To find out effective strategic Public Relations event plans for marketing.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of Public Relations Event?
2. What is the impact of Corporate Events as a Public Relations tool?
3. What effective strategic Public Relations event plans can be used for marketing?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study would help the group to gain more knowledge about the effectiveness of events as a Public Relation tool for marketing. It would also be helpful to other researchers who wish to research on the same topic, because it can serve as a source of information to the researchers. The study would also assist the Event Management Board of Ghana Revenue Authority on the importance of holding events in achieving organizational goals.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Ghana Revenue Authority has many branches in Ghana but due to time factor, nearness and willingness of management to provide information the study focused on Ghana Revenue Authority's branch at Maakro New-Road in Kumasi.

1.8 OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY TERMS

Public Relations Practice

PR Practice is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics, according to IPR, Britain.

Public Relations Tools

PR Tools are basically the strategies and tactics used in executing public relations. Examples are, events, press releases, press conference, just to mention a few. Events are that phenomenon arising from those non-routine occasions which have leisure, cultural, personal or organizational objectives set apart from the normal activity of daily life, whose purpose is to enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of people, according to Shone and Parry (2004).

Marketing

Dr. Philip Kotler explains marketing as the science and act of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. He confirms that marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desire.

Assessment

Assessment can be explained as the estimate or determine the nature, value, quality, ability, extent, or significance of something, according to the Word web dictionary.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON CORPORATE EVENTS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on the topic. It includes the meaning of event, public Relations and marketing as well as the meaning of public relations tool at Ghana Revenue Authority. Again this chapter reviewed the works of others and books related to the topic “Assessment of the Effectiveness of Events, a Public Relation Tool for Marketing”

2.1 OVERVIEW OF PUPBLIC RELATIONS’ EVENTS

Event can be described as a public assembly for the purpose of celebration, marketing or reunion. Event can be classified on the basis of their size, type and context. An event can be social or lifecycle like a birthday party, engagement, wedding, funeral just to mention a few or an education and career event like workshop, seminar, debate, contest and competition. Corporate events on the other hand can be described as a way a company or organization offers to its most valued clients. Public relation is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.

Marketing can also be defined as a process of communicating the value of a product or service to targeted audience. It can also be the management process through which goods and services move from concept to the customer. The agenda of public relations and marketing are different. Marketing is interested in the market that is the consumers and demand. Public Relations is interested in building mutual relationships that is reducing

conflict and improving co-operations. Good public relations will create a healthy environment for marketing.

Marketing and Public Relations both work best when they are treated as distinct management functions. These two functions can pull together as equals on a team, and this works to integrate the business or company's process. Marketing is everything a brand, business or organization does to sell its goods, services and values. This ranges from establishing the brand identity, briefing, motivating and inspiring the sales force, and consumer-facing strategies that build awareness.

Changes in the marketing environment have resulted in a broadening and softening of the original concept and its transfer into other domains that is services, not for profit.

This is the reason that Ghana Revenue Authority uses corporate events as a public relations tool for marketing. The main aim or objectives of the company is to build a mutual and beneficial relationship with their clients. With that the Ghana Revenue Authority through does not sell productions or services but therefore they use corporate events to create awareness to the public's on the benefit of paying of taxes to help the Government in reaching out to the deprived areas where help is needed.

It is impossible to carry out a research study without looking for other people's work to find out whether or not the research topic has been fully treated or otherwise since there is nothing new under the sun. Therefore, it is advisable that reviews of those studies are done

to serve as a guide as to whether there is the need to include, or exclude, approve or disapprove the already existing materials.

Throughout history, in cultures all over the world, people have gathered to celebrate for numerous different reasons and events have always been central elements of human society. Human beings in all cultures pay attention in different milestones of life and all find it important to celebrate such occasions.

Ceylan (2007) in his work “Public Relations as a tool for marketing wrote that event is one of the most popular public relations tool used by practitioners in order to gain public attention for their establishments. Roberts (1993) and Deuschl (2006) further state that events can create or include an endless list of opportunities for the operators and points out that one of the basics aims of Public Relations is to provide accurate information. This is possible by targeting specific audience or publics, selecting key messages and selecting the right media to deliver the information.

Getz (1997) also suggested in his work event management and tourism that even though events have been an integral part of human nature for thousands of years, it has only recently developed into real business. It has become part of the tourism industry as a key element of special interest tourism, and around the world, units for event tourism are increasingly being established within tourist organizations. As the phenomenon has grown into becoming a possibility of making business, numerous opportunities for professionalism have come to exist and event organizing firms are increasing everywhere.

Getz (1997) again cited that events is a diverse world of planned occasions of different sizes and scopes for culture, sport, politics and business only to mention a few features. Events are different from built and permanent ones because of their uniqueness in time, and place as well as the various experiences they can offer. As event tourism is a rapidly growing field of business, there is increased competition between destinations regions and communities. Hence it has become an essential feature of marketing strategies, as events can be beneficial in economic, environmental and social functions of communities or publics. Events are therefore important contributors to the wellbeing of communities.

Shone and Parry (2004) argued that events compete for people's time, money and attention with an endless range of hobbies and past time. Marketing efforts are especially important for events as like other leisure services events are intangible, inseparable and perishable. Each special event will be marketed differently depending on its individual purpose, objectives and target markets. Marketing needs to be aimed at the target market meaning the publics one has to influence or persuade to patronize in the products or services of the organization. When there is awareness, desire to attend the event would be created. As most events are one time and unique happening it is difficult to market some product as well as services.

McDonnell (1999) cited in festival and special Event management that the marketing of recurring events can be quite straight forward as it is based on already existing experiences and knowledge. The challenge will be to turn existing visitors into repeat visitors and to attract new ones. Records on attendance information can be help in encouraging repeat

visitors. Information helps identify strengths and weakness of both the event and marketing of it, it enabling future improvements. A journal of management and marketing research state that competitive Marketing Strategy has relationship marketing as one of the key functionality in enhancing business performance creating identification, establishment, maintenance, enhancement, modification and termination of relationships with customers to create value for customers as well as the organization. The competitive marketing strategy includes building partnership, addressing customers better, buying in customer attention, understanding customers psyche and it helps guide moment of truth between the organization and the publics.

According to Ingram and Laforge (2001), believe that marketing research is used in planning to identify the needs of product and service users and in problem solving to evaluate the types of product and services to offer. The opine that the overall objective of marketing research is to reduce risk in decision making by helping management understand its uncertain and changing market place and the consumers and competitors that make up its markets. Marketing research enhances communication between a firm and its markets with the aim of improving managerial decision- making.

Anthony Sopurunchi Anih cited in his Basic strategy in corporate events management (2012) that events have the unique ability to bring people physically together, and to inspire and make them communicate in ways that cannot be easily duplicated by other means or media. In the year 1990, the corporate sector worldwide discovered the place of the event in their business, this trend reflected the recognition of the power of the events and its

increasing use of events as tools both to increase and improve company's morale and business procedures and to increase profitability and income. Corporations or companies are allocating funds, moving from extensive advertising towards the development of event focused integrated marketing programs. Companies are investing money in their events and in their people. Special events are seen as opportunities to motivate and educate their work force in an effort to be more successful at reaching their audience and goals. Consumer lifestyle events are created that brings relevance, influence behaviour and present new choice to the public.

2.2 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

Public Relations and marketing work together by building close relationships with customers, clients and other practitioners in both the Public Relations and Marketing fraternity through zones such as building the image of the company, events, sponsorships and improving the identity of the company. Grunig et al, (2002) stressed that there is much more to marketing than communications and to communication than marketing. This means each of the purviews work hand in hand with the other and supporting each other.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.3.1 Two-Way Symmetrical Model

Marsh (2001) contend that Two-way communications seeks to build consensus and holds that an organization itself, and not an opposing public, sometimes may need to change to build a productive relationship. The Two-way symmetrical model emphasizes communication exchange, mutuality and perfect understanding thereby allowing an

organization to adjust and adapt to each other until unanimity is reached. This model attempts to ethically balance the interest of the organization and its publics and again uses research and communication to manage discrepancies.

Two-way symmetric model aims to generate dialogue rather than monologue. Two parties to a dialogue are relatively equal and thereby create mutual understanding and effect change. The two-way symmetric model leads to changes in both the customers and the organization's point on an issue. Research is used not to measure attitudes but to investigate the understanding that has led to those attitudes, therefore establishing the quality of the dialogue taking place.

Grunig and Grunig (1992) suggested that the most effective public relations practice requires excellence in practice. They described it as Excellent Public Relations. They postulated four-level analysis of Excellent PR and they are;

1. The Program Level which compacts with the “why, when and how” individual communication program are implemented. This means there is a sentient effort to have in place a public relations plan that is strategically geared towards the attainment of organizational goals.
2. The Organizational Level that is the understanding of and respect given to communications processes and customers feedback by the organization and staff. The public relations head has a strong voice within the organization and attempts are made to promote participative rather than authoritative organizational culture.

3. The Departmental Level that is how the Public Relations department fits in with other departments and the organization as a whole and separate from the department of marketing. Two-way symmetric model of communication is promoted.
4. The Economic Level that is the tangible value provided by Excellent Public Relations to the organization in terms of exultant internal and external customers to reach organizational goals effectively.

Organizations using the Two-way symmetric model use bartering, negotiating and strategies of conflict resolution to bring about symbolic changes in the ideas, behaviour and attitudes of both the organizations and their publics.

2.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter reviewed the various research works concerning the works of other scholars which served as a guiding source to place this study in a proper perspective. The next chapter seeks to discuss the methodology of the research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research method used for the study. This chapter covers the research method, data collection instrument, accessible population and ethical considerations.

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative method of research investigates people's ideas, feelings views in an in-depth manner. In this study the qualitative research method was used because it aims at assessing Corporate Event as a Public Relations tool for marketing from the viewpoint organization and its customers.

3.2 ACCESSIBLE POPULATION

The target population for the study was limited to Ghana Revenue Authority Branch at Maakro-Suame and its customers.

3.3 SAMPLING PROCESS

According to Rubin, Rubin and Pele (2005) Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individual for a study in such a way that the individual selected will represent the large group from which they were selected. In this study the non-probability sampling was used. Non-probability sampling allows the researcher to explore certain relevant and accessible

figures for more in-depth analysis about the study population. Non-probability sampling was used because the study sought to explore certain relevant and accessible information for more in-depth analysis from the Ghana Revenue Authority as well as its customers. Rubin, Rubin and Piele (2005) explain that non probability sampling allows to explore certain relevant and accessible artefacts for more in-depth analysis. Non probability does not allow to generalize to other groups or situations, but it is valuable for studying particular groups of people.

According to Dr. Opoku Amankwaa (2009), purposive sampling is deliberately selecting respondent or elements for a study based on certain characteristics or qualities to meet the needs and requirements of a study. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the eight staff members and ten customers. The eight staff members were selected based on the four departments of GRA Maakro branch. The four departments are the administrative department, the tax payer service department, the audit department and the compliance enforcement and debt management department.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The instrument used in gathering the data for this study was an in-depth interview which enabled the researchers to address the objectives of this study. Opoku - Amankwa (2009) explains interviews as a useful tool for finding out individual opinions, ideas, values, as well as beliefs. Boyce and Neale (2006) explains in depth interviewing as a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a smaller number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or

situation. A self- designed interview guide was administered by the researchers in order to get more clarifications of the data needed which was made of open ended questions. The research required interviews because they are a good way of gathering data quickly and concrete. Again an interview guide was a suitable option for this study because it was easier for the researchers to get an immediate response from the respondents. Again, it allows for the soliciting of the exact responses needed by the researchers leaving little room for irrelevant data. Most of the questions were structured in line with review of related literature. Moreover, tape recorders were used to help in recording the interviews. The consents of the interviewees were however obtained.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

In this study, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interview. Data collected was analyzed manually. The interview was recorded by notes taking as well as tape recording and was transcribed according to the questions asked. Similarities and dissimilarities were compared and developing themes were discussed in relation to the research objectives of the study.

3.6 RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Once the study was designed, the researchers introduced the reliability measure that contributed to the quality of the study. Case study research was reliable because the data collection could be repeated with the same results. The measuring instruments was constructed in a way that interview guide was used to measure particular hypothesis and relevant variable that lead the respondent to answer the questions.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Consents of the organization departments as well as the stakeholders were sought before the interview guide was administered. The purpose of the study was made known to the respondents before any form of interaction begun. All issues pertaining to confidentiality were treated as confidential. Personal details of respondents were made optional in order to guarantee anonymity. A copy of the results of this study would be made available to the organization as an evidence of the academic use of the information they provided. This would help strengthen the bond between this institution and the organization.

3.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has discussed the research methodology that was used for this study and how data was collected. It also showed how data for this study was analyzed as well as how it was presented. Also matters of ethical consideration were addressed appropriately.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Data for this study was collected through interviews. The chapter discusses the demographics of the respondents for this study and provides responses from the respondents on specific questions that were asked during the interview. The study focused on Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) Maakro branch and its customer. In all eighteen people were interviewed comprising eight staff members and ten customers. The researchers interviewed three female and five males as staff members and four males and six females as customers. In total, the researchers interviewed nine females and nine males.

4.1 BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

The Ghana Revenue Authority Maakro branch has four main departments namely, the administrative department, the tax payer service department, the audit department and the compliance enforcement and debt management department. The researchers interviewed at least one person from each department, three staff members from the Administrative Department, three staff members from the Tax Payer Service Department, one staff member from the Audit Department and one staff member from the Compliance Enforcement and Debt Management Department. The customers that were interviewed by the researchers were taxpayers who deal directly with GRA.

4.2 POSITION OF RESPONDENTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Table 4.1

DEPARTMENT	RESPONSIBILITY
Administrative Department	Responsible for information and data processing and ensures the smooth running of all other department.
Tax Payer Service Department	Responsible for recording all financial transactions and keeping control over business cash flow
Audit Department	Responsible for inspection of the accounting procedures in the organization.
Compliance Enforcement And Debt Management Department	Responsible for customers' willingness to pay their tax on time.

In both the Administrative Department and the Tax Payers Department, the researchers interviewed three persons including the Heads of each Department. One person each was interviewed in both the Audit and the Compliance Enforcement and Debt Management Department.

4.3 FINDINGS OF INTERVIEWS FROM GRA STAFF

4.3.1 The Use of Corporate Events in Promoting Marketing

To discover whether GRA uses corporate events in promoting marketing, three questions were asked in the interview namely, (1) Does GRA organizes events? If yes, who are your target customers for the event? (2) Is GRA focused on marketing its vital products to customers through events (seminars and workshop)? And (3) why does GRA use corporate event in promoting marketing?

When asked, “Does GRA organizes events? If yes, who are your target customers for the event?”

All the eight respondents answered “Yes, GRA organize events”. They explained that GRA organizes workshops, conferences and seminars and the target customers are tax payers.

When asked, “Is GRA focused on marketing its vital products to customers through events (seminars and workshop)?”

Six of the respondents answered “Yes”. They explained that GRA gets the opportunity to meet tax payers and explain to them the reason why they pay tax and what the money is used for.

Meanwhile two other respondents answered “No” and explain that, indeed GRA events draws GRA to taxpayers but the events GRA organizes, are not enough for marketing.

When asked, “Why does GRA use corporate events in promoting marketing?”

Three of the respondents answered “It is an ideal platform for communication”. They explained that it is through the events that GRA gets taxpayers face-to-face to interact with them.

Another two respondents answered “It is the forum that gets the taxpayers the opportunity to ask questions and get answers to it”. They explain that through the events, taxpayers are given the opportunity to ask anything that bothers them and GRA uses that opportunity to educate the taxpayers and that it is an opportunity for GRA to reach out to a number of its target audience at a goal without wasting much time and resources.

One respondent answered “It is only at such event that the GRA has the opportunity to drive home to taxpayers the need to pay tax”. The respondent explain that GRA uses such events to explain to taxpayers why the need to pay tax, what the money is used for and also advocate for compliance.

Two respondents answered “Event is a tool for marketing”. They explained that it is the public’s responsibility to file and pay the tax but it is also share responsibility and that makes the event as a very important tool to communicate to its tax payers.

4.3.2 The Impact of Corporate Events as a Public Relations Tool for Marketing

To determine the impact of corporate event as a public relations tool for marketing, three questions were asked. (1) Is GRA events well communicated to the public? (2) Did you reach your aim of organizing the seminars and workshop for customers? And (3) is the vision, mission and goals of Ghana Revenue Authority clearly understood by its all stakeholders?

When asked, “Is GRA events well communicated to the public?”

All the eight respondents answered “Yes”. Six explained that, GRA communicates to the public through electronic media and print. With the electronic media, the use TV and radio.

One respondent explained that at times they use the van with microphone to make announcements.

Another respondent explained that GRA mostly communicate through letter but not often.

When asked, “Did you reach your aim of organizing the seminars and workshop for customers?”

Two respondents answered “Yes”. They explained that after the events the tax payers come to terms, the reason why they should pay tax.

Two respondents answered “Yes”. They explained that, anytime GRA organizes the seminar or workshop, there is an improvement of filling the tax correctly, so most at times it gives them a good response.

Three respondents answered “Yes, most times”. They explained that, sometimes we achieve our aim and sometimes we do not get as many people as we want, so it could disturb the achievement of our aim.

One respondent answered “Yes” and explained that, mostly GRA events are aimed at achieving compliance. That is, for the tax payer to understand why he or she should pay tax and what the money is used for. Once they organize the events, the messages are sent out.

When asked “Is the vision, mission and goals of Ghana Revenue Authority clearly understood by its all stakeholders?”

Three respondents answered “No”. They explained that most of the taxpayers’ have low level of education and mostly don’t even see the need in coming for GRA events.

Three respondents answered “Yes”. One explained that all GRA stakeholders clearly understand the vision and mission of GRA. Meanwhile the other two explained that some stakeholders understand but not all the stakeholders.

Two respondents answered “Yes some understand”. They explained that it is not all the stakeholders who clearly understand the vision and mission of GRA, stakeholders such as employees clearly understand but some stakeholders such as taxpayers do not clearly understand the vision and mission of GRA.

4.3.3 The Strategic Plans for the Corporate Event

To find out the effective strategic plans for the corporate event, three questions were asked in the interview namely. (1) Is GRA following its vision, mission and goals? (2) Does GRA have in place adequate integrated marketing communication plan to reach out to its stakeholders? And (3) what was your reason for choosing your target customers?

When asked, “Is GRA following its vision, mission and goals?”

Seven respondents answered “Yes”. They explained that GRA is not there yet but striving to get there.

One respondent answered “Not really” and explained that “. I think in terms of taxation we are deviating from one of our maxim of taxation which is convenience. We are to provide easy access and convenience for tax payers. For instance, we have only two medium tax office in Ashanti region, meaning even if you are at Obuasi you would have to come to

Kumasi to pay your medium tax. This is not convenient and with that Compliance which is one of our goals will not be achieved.”

When asked, “Does GRA have in place adequate integrated marketing communication plan to reach out to its stakeholders?”

All the eight respondents answered “Yes”. They explained that, GRA have two sections; the communication, public affairs unit and the modernization department, so frequently they come out with the plans and organize seminars for the staff to go out and educate the public too.

When asked, “What was your reason for choosing your target customers?”

Two respondents answered “To improve compliance” They explained that a tax payer needs to come out to pay his or her tax willingly, and the reason is to ensure that people eligible to pay taxes do so voluntarily to help us with least cost achieve our set target for any period.

Three respondents answered that “Those who earn income”. They explained that it is mandatory by law for them to pay tax to the government.

Two respondents answered that “They form the backbone of our revenue mobilization drive.”

Another respondent answered that “We are here to collect all the tax that are supposed to come to Ghana from the general public.”

4.4 FINDINGS OF INTERVIEWS FROM GRA CUSTOMERS

4.4.1 The Use of Corporate Events in Promoting Marketing

To discover whether GRA uses corporate events in promoting marketing, four questions were asked in the interview with customers namely, (1) Do you have any knowledge about events?, (2) Which of the events did you attend (seminar or workshop)? (3) Does GRA market itself through its seminars and workshops? And (4) did you discover anything new about GRA through their events?

When asked, “Do you have any knowledge about events?”

Nine respondents answered “Yes”. One of the respondents explains that he is a Public Relations Practitioner and knows much about events.

One respondent answered “No”

When asked, “Which of the GRA events did you attend (seminar or workshop)?”

Seven of the respondents answered “Seminar”

Two respondents answered “Both Seminar and Workshop”

One respondent answered “I cannot say it was a seminar or workshop but what I experienced was in a form of educating the public specifically the GPRTU about the way the taxes must be paid.”

When asked, “Does GRA market itself through its seminars and workshops?”

Seven respondents answered “Yes”. One respondent explained that “This is because on every meeting they account the financial report to the tax payers.”

Three of the respondent answered “Not at all times”. They explained that the events are always to inform them about new rates but not new products and how to get more people to pay tax.

When asked, “Did you discover anything new about GRA through their events?”

Eight of the respondents answered “Yes” and gave different explanation.

The first respondent explained that “Yes because the payment of taxes were done or paid yearly but after them educating us on how to pay that is done quarterly and with that new form sticker would be issued for any tax payer.”

The second respondent explained that “The GRA educate the tax payers more on the use and even how to pay the taxes. Also through these educations that they portray new ideas like the stickers to show that a tax payer has paid his or her tax.”

The third respondent also explained that “Yes, they initiated a new way of the payment of taxes.”

The fourth respondent explained that “Yes, each and every seminar I have attended they issue a new and genuine sticker to aid people or those of us who pay the taxes and also educate us on the use of the tax payers money.”

The fifth respondent explained that “Yes, I used to pay tax on yearly basis but they innovated a new way of payment which would be done quarterly. That is taxes would be paid every quarter till the year ends.”

The sixth respondent explained that “Yes, because they made the financial budget which included the use of the tax payers money and it also include the Government helping the rural areas with good water systems and other infrastructure.”

The seventh respondent explained that “Yes, the mode of payment of taxes was done yearly but after the seminar and workshop the payment has been made quarterly.”

The eighth respondent explained that “Yes I did and it was the payment of taxes.”

The other two respondents answered “No”. they explained that GRA on every meeting promise to widen the tax or the use of the tax payers money and educate the public about the tax payers money but have still not seen or heard any sign of that education.

4.4.2 The Impact of Corporate Events as a Public Relations Tool for Marketing

To determine the impact of corporate event as a public relations tool for marketing, three question were asked namely, (1) Have you ever attended any Ghana Revenue Authority Events?, (2) Did the program meet your expectation? And (3) did you understand the mission and vision of GRA through these Events?

When asked, “Have you ever attended any Ghana Revenue Authority Events?”

All the ten respondents answered “Yes”. One respondent said the event he attended was organised by the Internal Revenue Service which is part of Ghana Revenue Authority.

When asked, “Did the program meet your expectation?”

Eight respondents answered “Yes”

One respondent answered “Not really”. He then explained that “I expected that the Ghana Revenue Authority would be time conscious because the Event was held in a working day and you know as a matter of fact, many people cannot attend the program. Also in the letter there was a section for refreshment but they (GRA) did not fulfil what was expected.”

One respondent answered “No”

When asked, “Did you understand the mission and vision of GRA through these Events?”

Six respondents answered “Yes”.

One respondent answered “Yes” and explained that “Yes I do understand the mission and vision of GRA because on every seminar and workshop they talk about their main mission for such events.”

One respondent answered “Yes” and explained that, “Yes because if I can recall very well, the vision is to be a world class revenue administration recognized for professionalism, integrity and excellence. And they show professionalism through the seminars I have attended.”

Two respondents answered “No”.

4.4.3 The Strategic Plans for the Corporate Event

To find out the effective strategic plans for the corporate event, one question was asked in the interview that it, “How was the invitation to the events issued?”

When asked, “How was the invitation to the events issued?”

Six respondents answered “Through a letter invitation”. One of the six who answered yes expressed a concern that “with technology advancement I preferred it to be issued in an SMS or through mails.”

Three of the respondent answered “Through SMS”.

One respondent answered “Through the media (TV and Radio)”

4.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has discussed the demographics of the respondents of the study and the findings of the interview, which was the main instrument used for the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to assess the “effectiveness of corporate events as a Public Relations Tool for marketing” using Ghana Revenue Authority as a case study. To achieve this purpose, three objective were considered, namely

-) The use of corporate events in promoting marketing.
-) The impact of corporate events as a public relations tool for marketing.
-) The strategic plans for the corporate events.

This chapter presents the findings relating to the specific objectives as well as the conclusions, recommendations to improve the use of corporate events as a public relation tool for marketing and suggestion for further research have also been discussed in this chapter.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 The Use of Corporate Events in Promoting Marketing

The first objective of the study was to establish the use of corporate events in promoting marketing. Eight of the respondents answered “yes” to the question Does GRA organized events? They explained that GRA organizes workshop, conferences and seminars and their target customers are tax payers. As cited by Ceylan (2007) in his work “Public Relations as a tool for marketing” that event is one of the most popular public relations tool used by practitioners in order to gain public attention for their establishments.

Six of the respondents answered “yes” to the question is GRA focused on marketing its vital products to customers through events (seminars and workshops)? They explained that GRA gets the opportunity to meet tax payers and explain to them the reason why they pay tax and what the money is used for, which confirm Anih (2012) that events have the unique ability to bring people physically together, and to inspire and make them communicate in ways that cannot be easily duplicated by other means or media. Meanwhile two other respondents answered “no” and explained that, indeed GRA events draws GRA to tax payers but the events GRA organizes are not enough for marketing.

Three of the respondents answered “it is an ideal platform for communication” to the question “why does GRA use corporate events in promoting marketing? “They explained that it is through the events that GRA gets tax payer face-to-face to interact with. Another two respondents answered “it is the forum that gets the tax payers the opportunity to ask questions and gets answers to their questions, and further explained that through the events, tax payers are given the opportunity to ask anything that bothers them and GRA uses same opportunity to educate the tax payers and that it is an opportunity for GRA to reach out to number of its target audience at a goal without wasting much time and resources.

Two respondents answered “Event is a tool for marketing” They explained that it is the public’s responsibility to file and pay the tax but it is also shared responsibility and that makes the events as a very important tool to communicate to its tax payers. This is in line with the discovery by the corporate sector worldwide in 1990 which states that the place of the event in their business reflected the recognition of the power of the events and its

increasing use of events as tools both to increase and improve company's morale and business procedures and to increase profitability and income.

One respondent answered "it is only at such event that GRA has the opportunity to drive home tax payers the need to pay tax, the respondent explained that GRA uses such events to explain to tax payers the need to pay tax, what the money is used for and also advocate for compliance.

5.2.2 The Impact of Corporate Events as a Public Relation Tool for Marketing

Three questions were asked to determine the impact of corporate events as a public relations tools for marketing which was the second objective of the study.

All the eight respondents answered "yes" to the question "is GRA events well communicated to the public?" Six explained that GRA communicates to the public through electronic media and print, with the electronic media, they use TV and radio.

One respondent explained that times they use van vehicle with microphone to make announcements, another respondents explained that GRA mostly communicate through letters but not often.

Shone and Parry (2004) postulated that each special event is marketed differently depending on its individual purpose, objectives and target markets. Marketing needs to be aimed at the target market meaning the publics one has to influence or persuade to patronize in the products or services of the organization.

Two respondents answered “yes” to the question “did you reach your aim of organizing the seminars and workshop for customers?”, They explained that after the events the tax payers come to terms, the reason why they should pay tax.

Two respondents answered “yes” and explained that, anytime GRA organizes the seminar or workshop there is an improvement of filling the tax correctly, so most at times it gives them a good response.

Three respondents answered “yes” they explained that, sometimes we achieve our aim and sometimes we do not get as many people as we want and that could disturb the achievement of our aim. One respondent answered “yes” and explained that mostly GRA aimed at achieving compliance. That is, for the tax payers to understand why he or she should pay tax and what the money is used for. Once they organize the events, the message is sent out.

Getz (1997) stated that events has become an essential feature of marketing strategies, as it can be beneficial in economic, environmental and social functions of communities or publics. Events are therefore important contributors to the wellbeing of communities.

Three respondents answered “no” to the question “Is the vision, mission and goals of Ghana Revenue Authority clearly understood by its all stakeholders?” They explained that most of the tax payers have low level of education and mostly don’t even see the need in coming for GRA events.

Roberts (1993) and Deuschl, (2006) stated that events can create or include an endless list of opportunities for the operators and points out that one of the basic aims of Public Relations is to provide accurate information.

Three respondents answered “yes” one explained that all GRA stakeholders clearly understand the vision, mission and goals of GRA, and two other respondents explained that some stakeholders understand but not all stakeholders.

Two respondents answered “yes” some understand” they explained that it is not all the stakeholders who clearly understand the vision, mission and goals of GRA, stakeholders such as employees clearly understand but some stakeholders such as tax payer do not clearly understand the vision, mission and goals of GRA.

5.2.3 The Strategic Plans for the Corporate Events

The third objective is to find out the effective strategic plans for the corporate events and three questions were asked in the interview to that effect.

Seven respondents answered “yes” to the question “is GRA following its vision, mission and goals?” they explained that GRA is not there yet but striving to get there.

One respondent answered “not really” and explained that “I think in terms of taxation we are deviating from one of our maximum taxation which is convenient. We are to provide easy access and convenience to tax payers, for instance, we have only one medium tax office in Ashanti Region, meaning even if you are at Obuasi you would have to come to

Kumasi to pay your medium tax. This is not convenient and with that compliance which is one of our goals will not be achieved.

When asked “Does GRA have in place adequate integrated marketing communication plan to reach out to its stakeholders?” all the eight respondents answered “yes”, they explained that, GRA have two sections; the communication public affairs unit and the modernization department, so frequently they come out with the plans and organize seminars for the staff to go out and educate the public too.

Anih (2012) confirmed that companies are investing money in their events and in their people. Special events are seen as opportunities to motivate and educate their work force in an effort to be more successful at reaching their audience and goals. Corporations or companies are allocating funds, moving from extensive advertising towards the development of event focused integrated marketing programs.

When asked, “What was your reason for choosing your target customers? Two respondents answered “to improve compliance” They explained that a tax payer needs to come out to pay his or her tax willingly and the reason is to ensure that people eligible to pay taxes do so voluntarily to help us with least cost achieve our set target for any period.

Three respondents answered that “those who earn income “they explained that it is mandatory by law for them to pay tax to the government.

Two respondents answered that “They form the backbone of our revenue mobilization drive”

Another respondent answered that “we are here to collect all the tax that are suppose to come to Ghana from the general public.”

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The study has shown the effectiveness of corporate events as Public Relation Tool for Marketing. It was revealed that GRA focuses on marketing its vital products to customers through corporate events as confirmed by the staff members. On the other hand, the customers affirmed that indeed GRA market itself through events.

The study has shown that corporate events are one of the effective tools used by GRA in achieving their goals. This conclusion was drawn based on the responses of the customers that a lot is learnt and they are well informed on the reason why they are to pay tax.

The study has shown that GRA has effective strategic plans for events which is used as a PR tool for marketing, informing and educating their customers.

It was revealed that corporate events contribute positively to Ghana Revenue Authority. It is the best platform for GRA to educate and build mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and its customers. Corporate Events as a public relation tool also ensures effective messaging to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

5.4 RECOMMENDATION

To ensure effective corporate events as a Public Relations tool for marketing, the researchers made the following recommendation.

1. GRA corporate events need to be communicated very well to their customers and stakeholders to attract more customers to its events. The researchers found out that GRA mostly use letters which is not that effective as far as the customers are concerned. The researchers believe that an event is a good platform for GRA to educate customers on compliance which will increase the income of the country. That being said, GRA events needs be advertised through the mass media (TV, Radio and Newspapers) to attract more customers.
2. The study recommends that a Public Relations unit should be introduced at every major branch of GRA in Ghana. With that, GRA can decentralize the operations of public relations at all major branches, and events organization could be done at branches.
3. The study recommends that GRA should always introduce new activities to make events more interesting, for instance games competition, dinner, breakfast meetings, just to mention a few. GRA customers who participate in GRA events complained that all the events are always the same way and same information given.
4. It is recommended that the education on the mission and vision of GRA should be strengthened through corporate events. This will help customers to know the relevance of paying tax and why they the need to pay tax willingly.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study only sought for the views of staff members and customers of GRA Maakro branch. The study recommends that further studies be done to find out the PR Practitioners views on corporate events as a Public Relations Tool for marketing. This is because PR Practitioners contribute to corporate events planning and execution.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF

1. Is the vision, mission and goals of Ghana Revenue Authority clearly understood by its all stakeholders?
2. Does GRA organizes events? If yes, who are your target customers for the event?
3. What was your reason for choosing your target customers?
4. Is GRA following its vision, mission and goals?
5. Is GRA events well communicated to the public?
6. Is GRA focused on marketing its vital products to customers through events (seminars and workshop) ?
7. Did you reach your aim of organizing the seminars and workshop for customers?
8. Does GRA have in place adequate integrated marketing communication plan to reach out to its stakeholders?
9. Why does GRA use corporate event in promoting marketing?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CUSTOMERS

1. Do you have any knowledge about Events?
2. Have you ever attended any Ghana Revenue Authority Events?
3. How was the invitation to the Event issued?
4. Which of the events did you attend (seminar or workshop)?
5. Did the program meet your expectation?
6. Did you understand the mission and vision of GRA through these Events?
7. Does GRA market itself through its seminars and workshops?
8. Did you discover anything new about GRA through their events?