

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
DEPARTMENTS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN GHANA: A CASE OF
KUMASI METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY**

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COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES**

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

We do hereby declare that this project report is the result of our own original research except for sections for which references have been duly made, and that to the best of our knowledge, no part of it has been presented to this University College or any other institution for the award of a degree.

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I.....have supervised the conduct of the research/project and the report preparation indicated above by the students listed above and **AUTHORIZE** the submission of the report for final examination.

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ABSTRACT

The Local Government Administration in Ghana is growing in terms of scope and functions and communication plays a key role in this process in creating understanding and mutually beneficial relationships with all stakeholders. This communication function is handled by the Public Relations Units that is a sub unit of the Complaints and Public Relations Sub-Committee established by ACT 936 Section 26 of the Local Government Act 2006. It is in this context that it is important to carry out a timely assessment of the effectiveness of the PR Unit to be able to appreciate the gains and challenges confronting the Unit to be able to address them appropriately and timeously. The study focused on Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, which is one of the well-established Local Governance institutions in Ghana. The purpose of the study was to establish the role of public relations practice in local government administration at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. The descriptive study used open ended interview guide to collect information from purposively selected 30 employees across all the departments and units of KMA. The study concludes that the Public Relations function at the KMA is tactical rather than strategic. This explains the enormous challenges confronting the PR Unit at KMA. As a Unit under the Complaints and Public Relations Sub Committee, the involvement of the PR Unit in strategic decision making is non-existent or minimal. This phenomenon is common in most public institutions especially where the activities of the PR Unit is highly centralised. This implies that the PR function is not effective. The study recommends a paradigm shift from using PR for tactical purposes and rather changes the structure of the Unit and also addresses logistical constraints of the Unit.

DEDICATION

We dedicate this work to the Lord Almighty God, our families and all those whose contributions made this study a reality.

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Our success story will be incomplete without expressing our profound gratitude and appreciation to the Most High God, the Alpha and Omega, who has made this work a reality.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	ii
SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study	5
1.4 Objectives of the Study	6
1.5 Study Questions.....	6
1.6 Significance of the Study	6
1.7 Definition of Key Terms	7
CHAPTER TWO	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Review of Related Studies on Public Relations	8
2.3 Role and Management of PR in Public Administration Institutions	13
2.4 Theoretical Framework	14
2.4.1 Two-Way Symmetric Model	14
2.5 Summary of Chapter	15
CHAPTER THREE	16
METHODOLOGY	16
3.1 Introduction	16
3.2 Research Method.....	16
3.3 Research Design.....	16
3.4 Population.....	17
3.5 Accessible Population	17
3.5.1 Study Location	17

3.5.2	Establishment	18
3.5.3	Structure	18
3.5.4	Functions	19
3.6	Sampling	19
3.7	Data Collection Process	20
3.8	Ethical Consideration	20
3.9	Summary of Chapter	20
CHAPTER FOUR.....		21
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....		21
4.1	Introduction	21
4.2	Background of respondents	21
4.3	Personal Experience at KMA	21
4.4	Existence of PR Unit at KMA	22
4.5	The Need for PR Unit at KMA	22
4.6	Structure of PR Department at KMA	23
4.7	Functions of the PR Unit	24
4.8	Challenges of PR at KMA	24
4.9	General Effectiveness of PR at KMA	25
CHAPTER FIVE		26
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		26
5.1	Introduction	26
5.2	Discussion of Key Findings	26
5.3	General Conclusion	29
5.4	Study Recommendations	29
5.5	Future Research	31
References		32
Appendix 1: Open Ended Interview Transcript		34

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the Study

Public relations in Ghana have come a long way, especially in the post-independence era, where there has been significant development in government public relations activities. Public relations have also shown tremendous growth in recent years worldwide and its growth is attributed to numerous reasons. Public relations exist in every activity, which involves human beings, even where it is an individual activity. In addition to reinforcing the ubiquity of public relations, Nwosu (1996:8) spells out its usefulness to governments in contemporary societies, which are democratic and argue that there is the need for the consent, support and mutual understanding of their people for better administration. It is in the light of that relationship that public relations practitioners in government see themselves as the linking bridge between government and its owners and the civil society.

According to Lamb and McKee (2005:1), “no formal organisation is an island. Each is composed of an internal system of social networks, and each exists within a framework of interrelated systems of relationships with key stakeholders such as competitors, consumers, sponsors, regulators, and the media”. Lamb and McKee therefore, argue that public relations is an important subsystem of an organisation and the effective practice of public relations is integrally bound to the health of an organisation.

Public relations (PR) in public administration must be approached from a broader perspective, as the endeavour set into motion by an organisation with the explicit purpose of establishing sympathetic relations with the audience (Dagenais, 1999). From another perspective Lamizet and Silem (1997) explain that as a strategic instrument of communication, public relations refers to all the measures of institutional communication initiated by an organisation, designed to promote all its accomplishments and an improved image of the institution from the point of view of its target audiences, both internal and external - elected representatives and those belonging to government organisations, union representatives, media groups, general public.

Thomlison (2000) in his view argue that the most important characteristics of public relations are deliberation - the PR activity presents an intentional character, it is the result of specific research and targets informing, influencing and obtaining a response from the audience; planning - the resources of any organisation are limited, both human and financial alike, and also from the point of view of equipment and time; performance - the efficiency of the PR team and its results are directly linked to the performance of the client organisation. Ignoring or endangering the public interests by an organisation burdens the results of PR strategies; bilateral communication - PR is grounded in taking over the information from within the environment in which the organisation operates, diffusing new information and following their feedback; public interest - the motivation of PR activity is to satisfy the audience needs, and not to gain at any cost benefits for the organisation; management frame - the higher the decision level regarding PR, the higher their efficiency is. Presenting a multitude of objectives - and this is due to their complexity - PR represents an effective technique

for fading out the negative effects which might be imposed by the rhythm of current changes upon the activity of the institution, thus playing in this context an important part in encompassing how the economic activities can better adapt to different audiences or markets. The main objectives in PR, especially in the case of public institutions are: gaining the trust of the general public regarding the institution and the services provided; knowing and anticipating the expectations of the current and potential audience; stimulating the opinion leaders; engaging the audience through various activities, programmes and events; consolidating the relations with mass media, private institutions, agencies and NGOs; developing an institutional image within cultural environments; ensuring transparency for the institutions' actions towards a specific audience; complementing the weaknesses of other communication forms used by the public administration institution. PR activity, at the level of a public institution, is oriented towards promoting public interest (Thomas, 1995). This does not mean that public relations ignore the interests of the organisation. What is specific to PR is that any decision is fundamental within the importance given to respecting public interests among other elements (Steyn, 2006). As one may easily notice, PR is essentially a communication activity. If PR refers to the management of communication between an organisation and its target audience, based on public interest, the ones in charge with communication from within the public institution must constantly be in close proximity of the target audiences; they should be capable of differentiating their communication needs and they must design and convey messages according to the target audience characteristics and follow the feedback accordingly.

The local governments have automatically become democratised. One characteristic of a democratic institution is their desire to win the understanding and support of the populace. The present democratic posture of the local government demands that they provide information on all they do for the people they govern. This means they have to make themselves, their policies and programmes clearly understood at all times, by those on whose behalf, they act. This is the sacred duty which the democratic local government owes the governed. The extent to which the local government meets these obligations and relates with the people and institutions within and sometimes, outside their area of authority, should largely depend on the efforts of public relations. In fact, PR ought to be imperative for the local government administration in Ghana. Perhaps, the local government should make public relations principles and procedures, their major components of governance, especially at the grass root level, where the actions of government touch the lives of the citizens most profoundly. An organisation organised public relations is capable of yielding a lot of benefits to local government administrators in Ghana. This will enable them to successfully mobilise the rural dwellers and achieve mass education of the people at the grass roots. That the local government can immensely benefit from public relations activities cannot be over-emphasised. Thus, this study examines the place of public relations in the administration of local governments, using Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) as a case study.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Although adjudged to concern every, whether government or non-governmental, the concept of public relations remains largely mis-conceived by many people involved in its practice. Some believe that public relations is publicity given to political aspirants, business executives, etc.; others think that public relations is a series of gifts for journalist, prospective supporters, etc. Some think that it is a means of gaining coverage. The result of this array of misconception is a lopsided perception of what actually constitutes public relations. In the government circles, due to these misconceptions, public relations officers are often treated as “errand” people who must top the list of those to be terminated from service whenever the need arises. Local governments are said to employ public relations efforts through their information offices. However, how far these public relations activities are performed by these offices remains speculative. The present dispensation in the local government settings by observation shows that personal assistants to local government chairmen usurp the functions of public relations unit of such local government areas. The present local government structure in Ghana really shows that the information officers are vested with discharging the functions of public relations. But the question of how adequately organised and how well these information officers are placed to perform their tasks for enhanced governance is the problem this study investigates.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to be establish the role of public relations practice in local government administration at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To determine whether or not Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly carries out public relations activities.
2. To determine the effectiveness of public relations activities or role at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly.
3. To ascertain the factors that militates against effective practice of public relations at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly.

1.5 Study Questions

1. To what extent does Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly recognise and make use of public relations in the administration of the local populace?
2. How effective or well organised is the information unit which serves as the public relations outfit of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly?
3. What are the factors that affect the effective practice of public relations at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Previous research has confirmed that most organisations have not established or identified the role and position of public relations within their organisations. This finding is supported by Cutlip et al. (2000:60) who argue that even practitioners disagree with what is the best structure and place for their functions in various types of organisations. This study is important as it addresses the importance of public relations within an organisation. Therefore, the findings from this study may be utilised by the selected to review the role that public relations plays within their organisation. Organisations can use this study as a guideline in assessing their in-

house public relations departments or any other department under which public relations falls, for the overall interest and success of the organisation.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Public Relations

According to Wilcox and Cameron (2009:6), “the British Institute of Public Relations defines public relations as influencing behaviours to achieve objectives through the effective management of relationships and communication”. On the other hand the British Institute of Public Opinion defines public relations as “the deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and all its publics”. The researchers adopted the definition of PR from the British Institute of Public Relations and therefore defines Public relations as a department or unit that is saddled with the responsibility of planning and sustaining mutual relationship to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.

Local Government

Local government refers to locally elected councils whose main purposes are to provide or administer services with as great degree of independence as modern circumstances allow (Wraith, 1964:15-16). The researchers also define local government as third tier of government such as Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly.

Administration

The interpretation and implementation of the policy set by an organisation’s board of directors. The researchers defined Administration as the management of public affairs.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will cover a review of related literature from available sources of information on the various subjects of the study. They will include materials gathered from libraries, textbooks, published and unpublished but printed materials. Also, it will cover theories from scholars of public relations.

2.2 Review of Related Studies on Public Relations

If the society continues to function in a democratic way through change and adjustment, through accommodation of varying groups and viewpoints of one another, through progress at uneven rates of the constituent elements that make up society, there will be even greater necessity than there is today for a public relations practitioner. Government continues to be the highest employer of public relations practitioners; yet, public relations processes are adopted in a haphazard and inconsistent manner. They exist and in some cases, they are simply non-existent. This goes to say that government often leaves the management of their reputation in hands of people who do not have the requisite knowledge and information on the organisation and its boundaries (Adamolekun, 2005:1).

William Ragan, (as cited in Wilcox et al., 2005) states that the objectives of government information efforts should be to inform the public about the public's business; improve the effectiveness of agency operations through appropriate public information techniques; provide feedback to government administrators so that programs and policies can be modified, amended or continued; advise management on

how best to communicate a decision or a program to the widest number of citizens; serve as an ombudsman by representing the public and listening to representatives; and educate administrators and bureaucrats about the role of the mass media and how to work with them.

Graber (2003) points out that although public relations activities have been and are routinely criticized, when public relations image building practices are put into place, public administrators become responsive instead of manipulative. Public relations professionals should be primarily concerned with keeping the public informed and serving the public effectively, efficiently and responsively. Graber states that unfortunately this ideal is not practiced often enough and that leads to citizen's mistrust of government messages.

Stockwell, cited in Johnson and Zawawi (2004:404) observes that public relations sector in modern democratic governance implements its policies by using various mass media. Government management takes two forms; dissemination of political information and dissemination of public information. Nwosu (1996:204) however opines that very often, many people in government, especially those in developing countries, seem to forget the relevance of public relations in the government circle and as a result, they operate as if they can do without the support and the acceptance of the citizenry. They run state affairs as rulers or feudal lords, instead of leaders or servants of the people, for whom they hold political power and trust. But the theory and practice of modern governance teaches that government, like any other social institution, must be accountable to the people and operate in the people's interest.

Lee (2002) focused on the duty of public reporting in public administration because of the democratic context in which government exists. Government agencies contribute

to an informed citizenry by public reporting on agency activities. A lack of data on the field of government public relations exists. Federal, state and local levels have no costs of how much they spend on public relations.

Ledingham (2001) researched this theory and tested the thesis that when public relations is viewed as the management function of organisation-public relationships, the effectiveness of that management can be measured in terms of relationship building and that, further, ratings of those relationships can act as a predictor of public behaviour. Ledingham tested this theory in relation to the context of the government-citizen relationship.

Lee (2001) researched the image portrayed by public relations professionals in public administration in current pop culture. Of the 20 films featuring government public relations professionals, several attributes were consistent in most of the movies. The characters were mostly men, they worked for the federal government and especially in the military, and they primarily did media relations. This presence in movies was more prominent in the 1990s than in earlier decades. The character was portrayed as a serious character in half the movies and as a comedic characters in the other half. The majority, 18 of 20, of the government public relations characters had minor roles, appearing in only one or two scenes. Lee concluded that popular culture perpetuates the negative images of both public relations and government bureaucrats. Lee points out that popular media often portrays that the bureaucracy is out of control and gives a negative portrayal of the people who staff it. Reporters often refer to public relations professionals as “flacks.”

The government as an institution is an organisation and can only succeed when it maintains mutual lines of communication between itself and its citizenry. Public relations in government in brief, is the concerted efforts of the government officials to establish appropriate and effective communication system that enables them to produce, project and sustain government's goals, aspirations, programmes, activities and policies to reach the ultimate beneficiaries of the programmes, in most cases, the community. Public relations is employed in various ways to help the government to establish mutual lines of communication for faithful exchange of ideas and perspectives between it and the governed and also, to create image for the government, both locally and internationally. The diversity of goals and activities in government is greater than in any other area of public relations (Cutlip, Centre & Broom, 2000:87).

Nwosu (1996:204) says that: whether military or civilian, government must have the support and acceptance of the citizenry to be effective and to even survive for a reasonable period. In theory and in practice, every government derives its legitimacy or rights to govern from the people or citizens. In a true democracy, government is voted in by the people to hold power, influence and control on behalf of the collectivity, the masses or citizenry.

Goodsell (1994:182) states that public administrators should plan events for citizens to have input and a dialogue with them rather than to wait for a citizen's group to initiate the conversation. He states, "if a policy issue is emerging in your programme that is not yet defined, organise a public dialogue on the topic--without controlling the issue".

Black (1976:140) says that public relations is an essential part of management and this is true in central government as in industry. The function of public relations in government is essentially non-political. It is the province of the political parties to organise such public relations activity, as they may consider necessary to publicise or promote their party's policy. Public relations in a government department has two main tasks; to give regular information on policy, plans and achievements of the departments and to inform and educate the public on legislation, regulations and all matters that affect the daily life of citizens. It must also advise ministers and senior officials of reaction and potential reaction to actual or proposed policies. In their work on public relations and the information role of the government to the people, Wilcox, Ault and Agee (1998:333) declare that: There has always been a need for Government communication if for no other reason, than to inform citizens of the services available and the manner in which they may be used. In a democracy, public information is crucial if citizens are to make intelligent judgment about the policies and activities of their elected representative. Through information, it is hoped that citizens will have the necessary background to participate fully in the formation of government policies. In their work on public relations and the information role of the government to the people, Wilcox, Ault and Agee (1998:333) declare that: There has always been a need for Government communication if for no other reason, than to inform citizens of the services available and the manner in which they may be used. In a democracy, public information is crucial if citizens are to make intelligent judgment about the policies and activities of their elected representative. Through information, it is hoped that citizens will have the necessary background to participate fully in the formation of government Policies.

2.3 Role and Management of PR in Public Administration Institutions

Should we consider that public interest organisation act specifically within public space, PR could be considered a public communication strategy. PR, as a public communication strategy, generates a climate and state of social normality. Especially in democratic societies, PR plays the part of generator of communication flows between public institutions, citizens and stakeholders, so that public institutions could become acquainted with the real concerns of the citizens and that the citizens, in return, could trust the institutions and the public officers (Iacob & Cismaru, 2003).

PR is highly important for public institutions because it provides the opportunities for a real communication with the audiences. They begin to show interest towards local issues, as these issues influence, directly or indirectly their interests. Nowadays no government, company or institution can function efficiently without the knowledge of their working environment, namely the workers, partners and clients. Without proper external connections, neither does democracy. The voter must be aware of how it functions, to have the proper knowledge on the decisions made for him and in his name, to be prepared in order to take full advantage of the rights and opportunities democracy provides. PR must engage citizens in knowing their rights and obligations during any kind of government. This is required from both central and local public administration.

Organisations, including public institutions, depend on their environment due to several aspects of their activity: unfolding of action plans, identifying operational funding, the freedom to accomplish their mission etc. These organisations, in order to prosper and to fulfil their objectives, must keep track of the following aspects (Cutlip, 1994): accepting public responsibility as compelled by a more interdependent society

– this is the source of PR thinking in management and the source of ethical behaviour; to communicate, despite all obstacles, with the designated target audience, even if it is often distant and diverse – this aspect explains PR approach as a specialized function of management; to gain integration within the communities they were designed to create and to serve – this aspect defines the purpose of management and the specific praxis of PR.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Theories are of great relevance in every academic endeavour. Asemah (2010:345) observes that public relations theories generally refer to generalisations that are put forward to explain, describe, prescribe or predict the behaviours of the publics to an . It can be said that theories lend themselves to various tests and analysis such that the phenomenon central to the research get explained, clarified and even predicted as the case may be. Thus, for us to have a better understanding of this research, the two way symmetric and Melvin Sharpe's behavioural models are been chosen to provide the theoretical framework.

2.4.1 Two-Way Symmetric Model

The two-way symmetric model as posited by Grunig and Hunt (1984) serves as the theoretical framework for this paper. The duo posited that public relations must be based on the principle of give and take. The model depicts a communication relationship where the sender/ the source and the public's share initiative and power more equally. The two-way communication model lays emphasis on the need for two way communication between an organisation (in this case, the government) and its publics. That is, it calls for feedback. The organisation needs to know about the publics and the publics also need to know about the organisation; in this way, mutual

understanding and goodwill will be achieved, this will however lead to the achievement of the aims and objectives set by the organisation. Thus, the concept envisages the existence of two-way communication with inbuilt feedback between an organisation and its publics. With communication coming from both parties, there will be an attainment of parity and this will lead to mutual understanding. Asemah (2010:356) notes that the two-way communication model uses communication to negotiate with the publics to resolve crises and to promote mutual understanding and respect between the organisation and the publics. Asemah further notes that what public relations is all about is, people learning about each other and developing a mutual understanding and one of the ways to do that is, through the two-way symmetric model. The model is basically a way for two groups of people to share ideas and hopefully gain something from the experience. The import of the above is that the two-way symmetric model lays emphasis on dialogue between two parties instead of monologue. The two way symmetric model is sine qua non to mutual goodwill between the government and its citizenry in the sense that it helps the government and the governed to better understand each other. Through the two-way communication process, members of the public are kept abreast of government's policies and programmes and they are able to access them and react to them.

2.5 Summary of Chapter

The above literature review explains the role and functions of public relations within an organisation. It further discusses how the public relations department is positioned within an organisation as a subsystem. It then uses this review and the theories to underpin the research instrument with the intention of probing the role of public relations within the selected local government authority.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research method that was adopted for this study. It provides information on the research design, population, sample size, sampling procedure, and the data collection and analysis plan. Issues of ethical concern are addressed.

3.2 Research Method

To enable the researchers to directly engage with practitioners and probe beneath their delineated roles and to explore the determining factors which shape their practice, the study used the qualitative investigative approach. A case study approach offers flexibility to explore the multi-dimensional aspects of each practitioner's role and potentially access a wide range of data to explicate role enactment. Yin (2009:18) suggests that case studies are particularly relevant 'when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.'

3.3 Research Design

The design for the study was descriptive research. Descriptive research may be characterised as simply the attempt to determine, describe or identify what is. Three main purposes of the choice of descriptive studies can be explained as describing, explaining and validating research findings.

3.4 Population

A population is a group of potential participants to whom a researcher wants to generalise the results of a study. Welman (2005:52) states that the population is the study object and consists of individuals, groups, s, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. A research problem, therefore, relates to a specific population. A population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. Therefore, the population selected for this study was be the Local Government Authority in Ghana.

3.5 Accessible Population

The accessible population is the population to which the researchers ideally would like to generalise their results. Therefore the accessible population was Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA). KMA is one of the oldest and established Local government institutions and has evolved over the years to become “pragmatic” metropolitan assembly in Ghana.

3.5.1 Study Location

The Kumasi Metropolis is centrally located in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Its unique central position makes it accessible from all corners of the country. It is the second largest city in the country and the administrative capital of Ashanti. It is a fast growing Metropolis with an estimated population of more than two million people and an annual growth rate of about 5.4%. The Metropolis is about 254 kilometres; its physical structure is basically circular with a central located commercial area.

3.5.2 Establishment

The Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) was established by Legislative Instrument 1614 of 1995 under Local Government Law 1988, NDPC law 207, which replaced the Local Government Act 462, 1993. The LI, 1914 which was amended as LI 1805, 2005 divided the Metropolitan Assembly into 10 Sub-Metropolitan District Councils namely Asawase, Asokwa, Bantama, Kwadaso, Manhyia, Nhyiaso, Oforikrom, Suame, Subin and Tafo. In 2012, LI 2112 carved out Asawase Sub-Metropolitan District Council from KMA to create the Asokore Mampong Municipal Assembly. Thus Kumasi Metropolis currently has nine sub-metropolitan districts councils.

3.5.3 Structure

The political governance of the Metropolis is vested in Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA). It is made up of the Metropolitan Chief Executive who is the head and also represents the central government and 136 Assembly members who have power to vote. The 136 Assembly members comprised 91 elected members and 45 government appointees. The Metropolitan Chief Executive or the Mayor of Kumasi is appointed by the President and accepted by not less two-thirds of the General Assembly through voting. For effective administration, Kumasi Metropolis is divided into 9 Sub-Metropolitan District Councils namely Asokwa, Bantama, Kwadaso, Manhyia, Nhyiaso, Oforikrom, Suame, Subin and Tafo. These sub-metros have been further split into 21 Town Councils and 91 electoral areas.

3.5.4 Functions

KMA is mandated by Act 462 to exercise deliberative, legislative and executive functions within the Metropolis. It is therefore responsible for the overall development of the Metropolis and ensures the preparation of development plans and budget. It also formulates and executes plans. Programmes and strategies for effective mobilization of resources, promotes and supports productive activity and social development as well as initiates programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and provides municipal works and services in the sub-metropolitan areas.

3.6 Sampling

Sommer and Sommer (2007:237) state that the entire group of people or cases of direct interest to the investigation is called the population. The smaller group selected for the study is called the sample. It is often impossible to study the whole population. Researchers make use of a sample to select research subjects (participants) who would represent the whole research population. Swetnam (2000:42) postulates that a sample is, therefore, the subset of a population selected to participate in a research study. Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly was selected as the sample for the study based on their size, influence on Ashanti Region as whole and willingness to participate in the study. The selection was also informed by identifying current trends at KMA in terms of the effective roles performed by the Public Relations department.

The study purposively sampled 30 employees of KMA from different Departments and Units to ensure fair distribution of numbers and representation of ideas and views (See Chapter 4 for the details of the sample)

3.7 Data Collection Process

The study used qualitative approach in data collection. An in-depth interview guide containing 12 items (See Appendix 1 for a sample guide of the in-depth interview). Appointments were arranged with the employees of KMA to effectively carry out the data collection exercise. The interview was pre-tested and the outcome of the pretesting was used to modify the instrument before the final data collection was carried out. The data collected and analysed has been presented in chapter 4.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The consent of Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly was sought. It was done through writing of letter before the data was collected. The issue of confidentiality was adhered to.

3.9 Summary of Chapter

This chapter focused on the research methodology employed in this study. It explained the necessary research steps, the instruments used to gather data and the procedures followed in the administration and co-ordination of the research instrument. Based on the data gathered from the interviews, the next chapter will deal with data analysis and presentation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains information on the finding of the interviewed conducted as the main data collection instrument.

4.2 Background of Respondents

The data was collected from the various departments and units at KMA. They include the planning unit, cash office, engineering office, stores, environment and health department, government appointees, community development office, assembly members and the PR unit. A total of 30 interviews were conducted covering these units and departments. This means that the views were widely represented. On average, the employees had worked for 6 years meaning that they have a fair idea of the operations and practices of KMA so far as the PR unit is concerned.

4.3 Personal Experience at KMA

The respondents were asked to express their working experience at KMA and these were sampled representative views:

KMA is a huge institution that helps in the welfare of the metropolis; sanitation is a big problem but I know with time the Assembly will deal with all the problems.

[. . .] KMA is an institution that governs the metropolis and the little experience I have as far as technician engineering is concerned, is the major building projects and developments within the metropolis both temporal and permanent structures. KMA is open to the public.

I think it falls within the local government concept. The assembly members are liaison officers between the Assembly and the local people. We are supposed to collect the views of the people and present for decision making. My working experience in the Assembly is a very good exercise.

When it comes to issues related to experiences I would rather say some of the technocrats are not cooperative. There are certain kind of information that I need to make decisions but sometimes you need to fight for it - lack of cooperation.

4.4 Existence of PR Unit at KMA

The purpose of the study could not have been possible without establishing the knowledge of the respondents on the existence of PR unit at KMA. Interestingly, all the respondents said “yes”. This implies that all the respondents were aware of a unit in KMA called the PR Unit.

4.5 The Need for PR Unit at KMA

The respondents were asked to explain what informed the decision of the KMA to set up the PR Unit. The responses from most of the people indicated that they spoke from rather general than a legalistic perspective. Only one respondent was able to quote a legal document that legitimises the establishment of the PR Unit within the local government framework. The responses were:

First and foremost ACT 936 Section 26 of the Local Government Act 2006 makes it incumbent upon the Assemblies to set up Public Relations and Complaints Committee and through that Committee, we need a PR to be the spokespersons to manage the information of the Assembly. *(Source: Manhya Sub Metro Chairman)*

Every government institution needs a PRO to be able to communicate to the people in the community and I think it is part of our major objective to set the unit.

Its mandatory, every district assembly must have PR unit as far as there is Complaints unit; the PR unit falls under the Complaints and Public Relations Sub Committee.

Other generalistic views were:

Communication to me is a specialized area; you have a lot of departments in KMA so you need someone to impact on its activities.

For me, KMA is an institution and every institution has a PR Department to talk about issues affecting the Assembly.

Sincerely speaking, every organisation needs public relations unit to disseminate information to the public that is act as the liaison between the organisation and the public.

As basic PR systems, if you want the right information to go out you need one source and I think KMA growing into a cosmopolitan need to manage its information well. There is the need to mastermind the information that is shared.

Basically to facilitate the dissemination of information by the assembly to the general public.

The above views represent the opinions on the reason why the PR Unit was set up at KMA.

4.6 Structure of PR Department at KMA

The structure of the PR department was also explored. The findings of the study indicated that the PR unit functions under the Complaints Unit of the KMA. In all, four different “offices” operate at the PR Department namely the PRO, the Assistant PRO, a photographer and a trained journalist. Each of these offices are assigned specific functions and duties for the smooth running of the PR unit. The functions of the PR Unit is discussed in the next section.

4.7 Functions of the PR Unit

Several PR functions at KMA were mentioned as follows:

- Serving as mouthpiece of the assembly
- Sending and receiving information
- Liaising between the Assembly and public in general
- Selling the assembly to the populace
- Organizing events such as press conferences
- Upholding the image of KMA
- Making visible the work of the Assembly to the Public
- Performing educational function
- Organizing media monitoring
- Sensitising and educating the public
- Receiving and acting on feedback from the public

4.8 Challenges of PR at KMA

According to the respondents, the PR Unit is confronted with several challenges; to facilitate the discussion, they were grouped under two main themes: administrative and logistical. Under the administrative function, some of the challenges include: lack of cooperation from the media in putting out information that require corroboration from the PR Unit of the Assembly; lack of proper in-service training for the PR staff at the Assembly; inadequate funds to facilitate PR strategies and tactics; under staffing of PR personnel at the Assembly; lack of cooperation from other department and units within the Assembly.

In addition, the logistical challenges include: lack of official designated vehicle (information vans) hampering the movement of the unit to undertake its activities; lack of internet facilitate to properly update the website of the Assembly; lack of spacious office hampering the activities of the PR Unit; minimum engagement with the public on sensitive issues affecting the people in the metropolis.

Concerning the general challenge views, it emerged that the PR Unit is reactive rather than proactive; language barriers on the Part of the PR personnel at the PR Unit and finally some of the respondents were frank that they didn't want to speculate since they were not working directly in the PR Unit.

4.9 General Effectiveness of PR at KMA

The respondents were asked to rate the general effectiveness of the PR Unit at KMA and these were some of the interesting comments: adjectives have been presented in the table

Comment	Frequency
Excellent	8
Effective	7
Weak	15
Total	30

The above table summarizes the effectiveness of PR at KMA. The views were summarized with three variables.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights and discusses the key findings of the study. In addition, a general conclusion is recommended and the last section looks at recommendations to facilitate the general and specific PR function at KMA. Of course, no single enquiry can wholly address the research interests in Public Relations. The last section of this chapter suggests areas that future study can explore.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

Objective 1: To determine whether or not Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly carries out public relations activities.

The study established that KMA has Unit that works under the Complaints and Public Relations Sub-Committee of the Assembly. The establishment of the Unit is by regulatory framework of the Local Government Administration ACT 936 Section 26 Act 2006. This explains that the Local Government Authority acknowledges the importance of the PR function in its governance structure which is key within the framework of good and accountable governance. The unit has a structure of a substantive PRO, a deputy PRO, a trained journalist and a photographer who covers the events of the Assembly.

The PR unit in agreement with established studies, carry out several functions aimed at managing the external and internal publics of the Assembly. The PR unit serves mainly as the mouthpiece of the assembly by sending and receiving information

between the public and the Assembly. Public Relations in the public sector has that key role to play because exchange of information creates mutual understanding and satisfaction. In more general and professional terms, the PR Unit serves as the liaison between the Assembly and the general public.

Beside the information exchange function, PR units have publicity and event management functions. The study showed that the PR Unit at KMA undertakes these functions which is very good. Publicity, unlike advertisement focuses on bringing your organisation to limelight without necessarily paying for them through the sharing of public interest stories. It is incumbent on the PR unit to positively project the image of the Assembly. One core function of the PR unit is reputation management. Generally, organisations are viewed as “personalities” with some degree of integrity to protect and to earn the respect of the public. This means that the PR unit of KMA must endeavour to positively maintain an image that is consistent with its mission and vision. In the context of best practices, it is advisable that s remain proactive rather than reactive in its communication function. In this case, KMA must not wait till problems crop up in the public space before actions are taken. In this regard, it is appropriate for the Assembly through the office of the PR function to make visible the work of the Assembly to the public in a well-coordinated and structured manner. To remain active to this function, the PR unit must do media monitoring since in these contemporary times most of the issues are discussed in the media. Effective media monitoring will enable the PR Unit to be abreast with the current happenings within the metropolis.

Objective 2: To determine the effectiveness of public relations activities or role at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly.

In relation to the above objective, the study made interesting findings. The views of the respondents were divisive along three core variables – excellent, effective, and weak. Even though the respondents enumerated a number of factors affecting the smooth running of the PR Unit, almost half (50%) of the respondents thought that the PR unit at KMA was on good track whereas the other 50% also expressed that the Unit is weak in its functions. Such a divisive opinion present challenges in establishing the effectiveness of the PR function at KMA. Several reasons could be explored as accounting for this dilemma. Sometimes, lack of understanding of the functions assigned to a particular Unit or Department within organisation clouds one's sense of judgement. In this sense one could either "rightly" or "wrongly" assess the effectiveness of an institution or Unit fairly. However, based on the views expressed by the respondents, it appeared that some of the responses were borne out of sympathy for the PR Unit based on the challenging circumstances in which they operate. One can understand that irrespective of the functions assigned to your Unit, if the resources you need are not provided, it greatly (it is a matter of degree) impact your operations. The next objective discusses some factors that impact effective practice of public relations at KMA.

Objective 3: To ascertain the factors that impact effective practice of public relations at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly.

Several factors were outlined or mentioned as constituting challenges that impact effective practice of Public Relations at KMA. They were grouped under two main headings – Strategic and Administrative. Strategically, Local Government Act that sets up the PR Unit does not permit the latter to be autonomous and take part in decision making and this lapse affects the smooth operation of the unit. Coupled with

lack of coordination and cooperation from the other Departments/Units, the smooth running of the PR Unit is hampered tremendously. Administratively, the PR Unit lacks basic infrastructure such as inadequate office space, lack of access to new information technology platforms, late delivery of insufficient budget allocations, lack of information van to facilitate information sharing at the sub-metro levels and other logistical challenges. Based on these challenges, recommendations have been made in the subsequent sections.

5.3 General Conclusion

The study concludes that the Public Relations function at the KMA is tactical rather than strategic. This explains the enormous challenges confronting the PR Unit at KMA. As a Unit under the Complaints and Public Relations Sub Committee, the involvement of the PR Unit in strategic decision making is non-existent or minimal. This phenomenon is common in most public institutions especially where the activities of the PR Unit is highly centralised. This implies that the PR function is not effective.

5.4 Study Recommendations

In consonance with the objectives of the study, recommendations are made at two levels- tactical and strategic.

Strategic Functions

Technically, there is little that KMA can do in terms of altering the current arrangement where the PR lacks autonomy to undertake strategic functions thus participate in decision making. This will require a change of the Local Government Structure to accommodate the PR Unit as an independent and autonomous

Department. Until the current structure of the PR Unit is changed in the Local Government Sector, there will be the need for the Unit to constantly interact with the other Departments/Units to familiarize itself with their activities and challenges to be able to inform the publics in timely manner.

Tactical Functions

1. The PR unit must be resourced adequately to carry out its functions by timely released of budget.
2. The infrastructural needs of the PR Unit mainly the absence of internet facilities, inadequate office space and absence of information van must be comprehensively addressed. Communication today is largely influenced by new media platforms such as Facebook, twitter, internet, Whatsapp, worldwide web and other IT infrastructure. It is important for the PR unit to fully utilize these platforms to enhance its internal and external communication activities.
3. The PR Unit must harmonize the activities of the various sub-metros to be able to effectively communicate consistent information to the public. Consistency in communication is very critical as it minimises communication overload and underload that create confusion on specific communication needs and interests.
4. The PR Unit must establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationship with the media houses in the metropolis to facilitate exchange of ideas and information on the activities of the KMA. Publicity of the Assembly is critical.
5. The assembly should organise frequent workshops for the staff of the PR unit. They must be given training on how to explore and use new social media platforms. They should apply CSR in their activities.

6. There is the need for the PR Unit to create an effective feedback loops to enable both the internal and external publics to channel their grievances and concerns that need attention of the Assembly.
7. There is misconception that PRO is not politically neutral. This misconception, if not wholly addressed, can work adversely against the Unit. There is the need for the Unit to maintain its neutrality in engendering the confidence of the publics in them.
8. To enhance the internal communication processes, there is the need to organise monthly or at least quarterly meetings to update the employees from the other departments on the happenings within the Assembly.

5.5 Future Research

One of the issues that was overlooked in this study was the professional competencies of the PR personnel in the local government set up. An understanding of this has effect on delivery of the PR function. It is suggested that a study can be done comprehensively to establish the relationship between the professional competencies of the PR personnel and the effectiveness of the PR function.

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Appendix 1: Open Ended Interview Transcript

POSITION OF RESPONDENT

- Assistant Planning Officer
- Assembly member for Adum Electoral Area
- Presiding member of KMA
- Manhya Sub-metro Chairman, KMA
- Chief cashier
- Photographer
- Assistant PRO
- Technician Engineer
- Community Development officer for Kwadaso Sub-Metro
- Planning officer
- Deputy Planning Officer
- Assistant Director
- Presiding member
- Assistant Chief Environmental Health Officer
- PRO
- Part of PR people
- Member of the PR unit
- Government appointee
- Assembly member
- Principal Store keeper
- Environment Health Department – head
- Assistant Public Relations Officer
- Junior Executive Officer
- National Service Personnel
- Journalist

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

- 2 years
- 6 years
- 10 years now
- 10 years now
- 12 years now
- 2 years now
- 3 years
- 7 years
- 5 years
- 4 years
- 7 years
- 5 years
- 5 years
- 16 years
- 4 years
- 7 years
- 2 and half years
- 3 months
- 2 years
- 5 years now
- 7 years now
- 10 years
- 4 Years
- 3 years
- 7 months
- 8 years

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WORKING AT KMA

- It is active and well-structured institution that addresses the needs of our people
- It is a very organised office
- I think it falls within the local government concept. The assembly members are liaison officers between the assembly and the local people. We are supposed to collect the views of the people and present for decision making. My working in the assembly is a very good exercise
- When it comes to issues related to experiences I would rather say some of the technocrats are not cooperative. There are certain kind of information that I need to make decisions but sometimes you need to fight for it---lack of cooperation
- Working here is quite hectic our job demands accuracy because we have auditors who come and audit us
- The PR unit always leads the organisation's events and the activities of the Assembly
- I have noticed that most of the other departments are ignorant about the role of the PR hence there is lack of cooperation.
- Yes KMA is an institution that governs the metropolis and the little experience I have once technician engineering is concerned, is the major building projects and developments within the metropolis both temporal and permanent structures. KMA is open to the public
- As a young employee, you have to learn on the job
- We normally plan for programmes that are mostly communicated
- It's been quite challenging despite other issues that we have I have really learnt a lot
- Well organised institution
- Since I came to KMA, we were having adequate logistics and labourers but of late most of the labourers have retired and we are having challenges but we are working
- Some of the departments and units are not aware of the importance of the PR Unit
- Well working as a PR person in KMA with a team things are very tedious somehow; you also get to meet people and government officials and you get to travel a lot; also sometimes you explain yourself on radio
- KMA in the whole for the PR unit, we bring out information very fast to the public and we have an effective PR unit everyone is doing their work
- We do documentation about the receipt of items and the issue of items being the assembly and outside the assembly.
- KMA is a huge institution that helps in the welfare of the metropolis; sanitation is a big problem but I know with time the Assembly will deal with all the problems
- The PR unit being the mouthpiece of the assembly has been superb as far as the information dissemination is concerned.
- Actually we deal with the organisation of programmes and events at the Assembly
- The PR unit is not well resourced
- Personally I realized that the Assembly does not release adequate funds to run the unit

DOES KMA HAVE A PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT?

- Oh yea sure
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes we have a PR officer for the Assembly
- They do
- Yes we have
- Yes
- Yes
- We don't have a department but a unit
- Of course we have
- Yes we have
- Yes
- Yes please
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes and I am part of that unit
- Yes why not
- They do
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes

WHAT INFORMED THE DECISION BY KMA TO SET UP THE PR DEPARTMENT?

- To announce the projects and progress of the institution to the public
- To provide information to the public about the Assembly
- It's mandatory;-every district assembly must have a PR unit as far as there is Complaints unit; the PR unit falls under the Complaints and Public Relations sub Committee.
- First and foremost ACT 936, Section 26 of the Local Governance Act 2006 makes its incumbent upon the assemblies to set up Public Relations and Complaints Committee and through that Committee, we need a PR to be the spokesperson to manage the information of the assembly.
- As an assembly, it is an entity and we are supposed to have a mouthpiece that represent the assembly when it comes to matters of the assembly
- Ok to help raise the image of the assembly and to ensure professional communication between the assembly and the public.

- It is very important for every organisation to set up a PR unit to facilitate smooth internal and external communication and also to manage crisis
- As I earlier on said, KMA deals with the people within the metropolis hence the need to set up Public Relations unit to deal with troubles so that they can have solutions
- As basic PR systems, if you want the right information to go out you need one source and I think KMA growing into a cosmopolitan need to manage its information well. There is the need to mastermind the information that is shared
- To engage the citizens with information sharing and to advertise the activities of the Assembly
- To update citizens on the Assembly's activities
- Every government institution needs a PRO to be able to communicate to the people in the community and I think it is part of our major objective to set the unit
- To handle issues relating to communication
- What I know is that you cannot achieve anything without having a good relationship with the public because we work directly with the public- we are serving the public
- Sincerely speaking every organisation needs public relations unit to disseminate information to the public that is act as the liaison between the organisation and the public
- Basically to disseminate information to the general public about what KMA is doing about cleanliness
- I must say the PR unit is the mouthpiece of the organisation so I think it is necessary for the KMA to have a PR unit
- Communication to me is a specialised area; you have a lot of departments in KMA so you need someone to impact on its activities
- For me KMA is an institution and every institution has a PR Department so they talk about issues affecting the Assembly
- To gather information and ideas about the Assembly both internal and external
- To gather information both internal and externally to help run the Assembly
- To effectively liaise with the public as far as the activities are concerned
- Actually for the programmes and events organisation at the Assembly for the perfect running of the industry
- To serve as the mouthpiece of the organisation to be able to communicate to the public
- Basically to facilitate the dissemination of information by the assembly to the general public

CAN YOU SHARE THE STRUCTURE OF THE PR DEPARTMENT?

- PRO, Assistant PRO, Photographer and a Journalist
- The unit has the PRO, his deputy, a photographer and a journalist
- I think he is the spokesperson for the assembly-there is a distinction between the PR for the mayor and the assembly.
- As we speak now, we have Public Relations officer who is in charge of sending and receiving information so far as the assembly is concerned. In all we about five people including the PRO, his assistant, a photographer and a journalist
- We have senior Public Relations Officer, the Deputies, and quite a couple of people who assist
- PR, deputy PR, a journalism and a photographer
- the structure of the PRO, Assistant, a journalist and photographer
- the PR Unit at KMA is under the administration because KMA works with departments such as Accounts, legal, etc. he has assistance and unit heads
- Coordinating Director (Administrative head)—PR Unit part of executive council
- The PR unit is linked to the Complaints Unit
- We have PRO, the Assistant PRO, a journalist and a photographer
- The PRO, the Assistant PRO, journalist and photographer
- The unit has the PRO, his deputy, a photographer and a journalist
- PRO, assistant, photographer and a journalist
- We have the PRO, the Assistant, the journalist and the photographers
- We have the PRO, we have the Assistant, and the journalist and the photographers
- No
- I know only the PRO
- Consists of the main boss that is the Pro and other subordinates under him including students on attachment
- The Head of the Pro, its secretary and two deputies
- The PRO, the Assistant PRO, the photographer and journalist.
- We have the PRO, the Assistant PRO, a photographer and a journalist
- Pro deputy, journalist, and a photographer
- The PRO, the Assistant PRO, the photographer and myself

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE PR DEPARTMENT?

- We serve as the mouthpiece of the Assembly
- The PR unit makes the work of the Assembly visible to the public
- They are supposed to present the issues of the assembly-both the resolution and implementation. The administration implements decision by the Assembly and to facilitate this process, the PR has to carry out educational function
- The unit is in charge of sending and receiving information from the general public and they are also there to manage information.
- They represent the Assembly and serve as a mouthpiece to clear the atmosphere
- It is excellent
- We really perform a lot- we organise press conferences, media monitoring, tackling complaints from the public, and also sensitising and educating the public on KMA issues
- The projects and developments that the Assembly carries out, it is the PR's duty to let the public know
- Spearheading the information of the Assembly to the public
- They go to radio stations; brief citizens; educate the public; take feedback from the citizens to inform decision making
- We speak on behalf of the Assembly and serve as the intermediary between the Assembly and the Public
- They serve as intermediary between the assembly and the public
- The PR unit serve as the liaison between the Assembly and the public
- He liaises between the Assembly and the public in general
- We have a lot of things we do; to mention a few we organise press conferences; we write press statements; media monitoring, upholding the image of KMA and all that
- Our main function is to uphold the image of KMA and sometimes receive complaints from the public and give answers
- Generally PR is supposed to sell the Assembly to the populace be it local or visitors; they are to provide information to people who need it in a structured way
- To talk about the Assembly
- To get information from the Assembly members or the staff of the Assembly and also the public within the metropolis
- One of the basic functions is that the PR serves as the mouthpiece of the Assembly
- We organise events, we liaise with the public of the assembly through communication and organise press conferences
- To protect the image of the Assembly, reporting and writing at programmes, media monitoring, public education and also convey messages to and from the assembly
- To disseminate information, organise press conferences, write press statements and to monitor the media

HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE GENERAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PR AT KMA?

- It is a vibrant department
- Its average
- It's above average
- Somehow it is weak the reason being that we always wait for problems to come up before the PR speaks up. Anytime you hear the PR speaks up then there is problem
- I would say average because I would not say they are doing a bad or good job
- They have been doing well. Since the establishment of the PR Unit, there have some information that I didn't because of my busy schedules- social engagement, competencies and cleanness
- Excellent
- I would say it is not bad but more needs to be done with support from the Assembly
- As I know the PR department is up and doing because day in day out we hear about the PR department on radio talking about things that are happening in the Assembly
- On a scale of 1-5 I will rank it 3
- They are very effective in that at least the various media houses contact the PRO almost all the time. In spite of their logistical constraints they are doing well
- Very good
- Very effective and hard working
- Very, very good
- They are doing well
- Good
- It is excellent
- I think we are doing an excellent work
- That is why they have work durbars and other things; they have to know the problems of the employees so that they can be addressed
- Their work is not good for me
- I would say their main role is to gather information and to also give out information and to act as intermediaries
- It's quite commendable and when it comes to reaching to the outside world they have been doing well
- It is efficient and vibrant
- Average performance
- Its good
- Its excellent

HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION FUNCTION AT KMA?

- It is not that strong
- Average
- That one is perfect; there is information flow that one is effective
- Average – information is not shared timely and is also limited
- Coverage of the assembly programme by the media
- Effective
- Internal communication too we are doing our best
- The internal communication I cannot say it is very effective because the unit heads address communication grievances to be channelled to the Metro director
- Very poor
- It's also has its own challenges but so far so good
- It is equally very good
- Despite other challenges, they are doing well
- Excellent
- We communicate; if something goes on they call us and we discuss it
- Good
- It is also good
- Internally, here our organisation, the public sector, sometimes you wouldn't get the information that you; here I will grade us good-I am being realistic
- If you need information, you have to go for it yourself;
- For covering the assembly programmes and also sharing ideas
- They help take photos when it comes to Assembly meetings and they help brand the assembly
- Very proactive in handling issues of communication
- Above average performance
- It's very good
- It's good

HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION FUNCTION OF THE KMA?

- It is normal
- Poor
- That one is weak. People don't even know the projects undertaken by the Assembly –schools, hospitals, libraries, and other projects
- Average – there are so many things that the world must hear about the Assembly but it is not happening
- They monitor the outflow of information concerning the assembly
- Effective
- That one is also good but there are challenges
- The external communication function is done by the PRO so it is the duty of the PR who send external information to the public. The function is effective
- Per the structure of the PR unit, it is building up
- Good
- They are doing well
- Very effective
- Whatever happens outside, people can go to KMA and to lodge complaints and this is coordinated by the PRO
- Near excellent because it is not perfect
- It is difficult to do but its ok; sometimes you need to speak in a different language but people still don't get you but in a way it is also excellent as far as we achieve our goals
- Since we are KMA and the public need our help and support, I think we will give ourselves excellent
- Unless the radio stations call the PR about certain issues concerning the Assembly and he responds
- To monitor the media or the social media be it the twitter and Facebooking and others
- They are doing well with social media engagements; the print media too they provide information to keep people abreast with what is happening in the Assembly
- Above average
- I think it's good
- It's good

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PR DEPARTMENT/UNIT?

- Inadequate facilities and that is impeding our progress
- They are under resourced
- Lack of logistics-it shouldn't be one person
- Yes as a human institution and unit under a department, there will be challenges. There is the need for in-service training so that their activities can improve. They are understaffed
- Sometimes gathering information about a particular project become a challenge and not all people are ready to open up to us
- Small office space; low level of internet access
- Lack of logistics (internet facilities), information vans and spacious offices
- There is a challenge of people labelling the PR with political colours depending on the Party in power
- Sometimes that are not fed-they are always reactive not proactive.
- Logistical challenges e.g. Vehicle to move around; inadequate staff to move around; limited financial support
- Inadequate logistics;
- Most of their challenges can be shared by the PRO unit
- The PR unit is under resourced
- It is a different department on its own so I cannot talk about that one
- Lack of logistics such as internet facilities, office space, information van, etc.
- Well sometimes it is quite difficult trying to do cleaning; to get money to repair public facilities and the education aspects it is kind of problem because we don't get money to do facilitate them
- There are so many challenges-the most difficult challenge is office space
- I can see a certain challenge; for the PRO to work for KMA and can't speak Twi; I know about 80 percent of our people in Kumasi like Twi so if our PRO cannot Twi then it is a problem
- Sometimes the media do not consult them before giving out information to the public
- Gathering information from the external stakeholders is quite hectors; not all of them are willing to provide information
- Lack of spacious office and that is our greatest challenge
- We lack space and logistics for the operation of the unit
- Inadequate logistics and office space
- Inadequate funds, inadequate office space, inadequate logistics, inadequate internet facilities

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE PR UNIT

- Adequate facilities-adequate logistics to ensure the smooth running of the PR Department
- I am appealing to the mayor to better resource the assembly. Am also appealing to the PR unit to back up their activities
- I think the assembly has to decide- we don't focus on the PR department. The PROs have limited themselves in terms of their advice to the leadership at the Assembly.
- The assembly should organize frequent workshops for the staff of the PR unit. They must be given training on how to explore and use new social media platforms. They should apply CSR in their activities. The unit can liaise with the existing number of media houses to get free airtime to publicize the activities of the Assembly.
- The assembly as a whole should take up necessary measures to involve the internal and external stakeholders with respect to information sharing. Now we are growing so we must use technology to facilitate internal and external communication
- There is the need to expand the current office and improve internet access. I think the unit needs empowerment
- I think they can be resolved by periodic orientation courses and organizing programs within the department and providing internet service and spacious office facilities
- The public should know that whoever speaks for the Assembly is not a politician but a public servant. I think the PRO is doing his best.
- Proper coordination with the other department of KMA - engineering (permit), sanitation, administration- engaging the other vital departments of the Assembly. The PR unit should embrace technology and use new media such as Whatsapp, etc.
- There has to be a general assessment of their needs and then management and the assembly has to sit down and give them resources to meet their needs. Adequate funds to be allocated to the PR unit. In the area of projects and programmes, there seem to be a communication gap because they are sometimes not aware of what is happening on the grounds. The human resource needs of the PR unit should be addressed.
- Provision of adequate and needed resources; organizing monthly and quarterly meetings will go a long way to help the PR department
- There is the need to be collaborative effort between the PR unit and the community. They should keep up to their task and work hard for the Assembly to achieve its goals.
- The Assembly should provide them with the needed resources. The assembly should organize capacity building and refresher courses for the PR staff
- I think the assembly should be made aware of the importance of the PR unit to and therefore commit themselves to the growth of the PR unit.

- I think the big men in the institution or government office should try hard to provide funds and the needed logistics to carry out our goals and objectives. The empowerment of staff at the PR Unit should be encouraged.
- The assembly should help put up a structure so that we can work freely without any difficulty. I think we should have our men on the ground who is to get the information about what is happening in the metropolis to help improve Kumasi in a whole.
- Normally when the PR section, the improvement can come when periodic meeting of Heads of Departments are organised. The PR must be there to take notes on issues affecting the Assembly
- Unless we change the PRO and go for someone who can speak the Twi. We should form a formidable PR department and we should have PR office where we get information; for me, as of now, the information I am getting is not good.
- By the media calling out the PR unit to give them accurate information before going to the public. The Assembly should create room for giving more information by the staff or through the Assembly members
- They should keep up and inculcate new technologies as to how to gather information to help run the Assembly. We need enough labour to help with Public Relations activities.
- We appeal for assistance from well-wishers; we are humbly requesting the assembly to provide us with logistics to carry out our work effectively
- We have motivate and empower the unit for effective functioning. I suggest we offer periodic refresher courses for the staff of the unit.
- The unit must be resourced and adequate hands to handle the unit. I believe that more education of the importance of the PR have to be made.
- Funds should be allocated to the unit to run the day to day activities- the Assembly should provide other facilities