ACCREDITATION

The independent evaluation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) against recognized conformity assessment standards to ascertain their integrity, impartiality, objectivity and competence to carry out specific conformity assessment activities.

In any business, reputation is something to take care of. What people say about your products, services can be an underlying factor to the success of your business and that is what we have in store for you in this issue of KENAS newsletter. Just like any other business, whether a testing, medical or veterinary laboratory; an inspection company; a food certification body etc., your business reputation needs to be something to nurture and maintain on the positive scale.

On a more technical note, we have featured the basis of product certification and why you probably might need to consider checking if your desk furniture or elevator is well tested and certified for use. An interesting article written to help you understand the scope of accreditation in product certification. The Editorial team would like to thank you all for your comments, great advice and support received from most of you since we commenced this new exciting newsletter. We are continuously improving our product for you.

Thank you!

EDITOR’S NOTE

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UPCOMING EVENTS: Training

MEDICAL LABORATORY INTERNAL AUDITING COURSE
There will be an internal auditing course for Medical Laboratories scheduled for 19th 21st June 2013. This is a three day non-residential training aimed to provide and aid understanding of the internal audit process and its value to management. This will be a highly interactive course Providing opportunities for delegates to perform an internal audit through role-play. The course shall be based on ISO 15189:2012 and ISO 19011:2011— Guidelines for auditing management systems.
Click here to book your space by 11th June 2013.

TESTING & CALIBRATION LABORATORY INTERNAL AUDITING COURSE
There will be an internal auditing course for testing and calibration laboratories slated for 19th April 2013. This is a three day non-residential training aimed to provide and aid understanding of the internal audit process and its value to quality management systems. The course shall be based on ISO 17025:2005 and ISO 19011:2011—Guidelines for auditing management systems.
Click here to book your space.

WATER SERVICE PROVIDERS IS OUR NEXT FOCUS
Water is a basic human right as it is fundamental to life and death. It’s a key asset in socio-economic growth and development at all levels, ranging from the national level to the individual level. Access to water and sanitation is a key factor in improving health, economic productivity and social well-being of the human populace as both the social and economic activities rely heavily on the quantity and quality of water. Access to water is therefore an essential component of any effort to alleviate poverty. In fact all the eight millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are directly or indirectly related to (access to) water. Water supply chains are changing rapidly due to factors such as greater urbanization, technological advances in processing and treatment techniques, changes in consumer demand and tastes, and evermore globalization of supply chains. Further to this, consumers in the developing world are taking more interest in the source, safety and quality of the drinking water. There are a growing number of organisations that check compliance with these standards by providing services such as laboratory testing, calibration, inspection services, and certification services. However, it is accreditation that declares that these organisations are impartial and competent to provide these services. All stake holders in the field of water services provision should therefore endeavor to continually improve and maintain professional standards, integrity and ethics in their field of operation to enable effective and efficient provision of services to all customers as enshrined in the new constitution. This will in turn lead to increased good quality services and hence increased quality of life for everyone.

If you are a water service provider seeking accreditation, contact info@kenyaaccreditation.org.

ASSESSORS’ CONCLAVE
KENAS held a stakeholder’s meeting with its assessors in January 24th 2013 at Kenya Institute of Education. Being a first for KENAS to host such a meeting, the participation rate was more than expected with over 20 assessors within the Nairobi region attending. The assessors were given a platform where they could air their challenges, experiences and areas of growth that they faced as partners of KENAS. Technical experts and assessors registered with KENAS are often called upon to assist in assessing clients applying for accreditation. In addition the assessors were briefed on the expectations of assessor guide/report writing among other discussions.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FOR VETERINARY LABORATORIES - May 9th 2013

STAKEHOLDERS MEETING—VETERINARY LABORATORIES—June. Advise to follow shortly For more information on the above send an e-mail to muenid@kenyaaccreditation.org

NEWS IN BRIEF

INSPECTION ACCREDITATION SCHEME MEET WITH INSPECTION SERVICE PROVIDERS IN COASTAL REGION
A stakeholder’s seminar was held in Mombasa by KENAS for its inspection and verification stakeholders and potential customers in the coastal region. The seminar was aimed at creating awareness of the KENAS inspection accreditation scheme in line with the international standard ISO/IEC 17020:2012. The purpose of the seminar was to share information among the various stakeholders in the region on how they conduct inspections and how best to improve the accuracy of their inspection results. The Mombasa stakeholder’s seminar follows an earlier one held in Nairobi in October last year.

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE UPDATED ON ILAC/IAF REQUIREMENTS
A training was recently implemented for the accreditation committee on the ILAC/IAF requirements, reviewed documents of the KENAS QMS, the code of conduct for certification bodies and they were also brought up to speed on the KENAS 2012-17 Strategic Plan. This event was led by the Deputy Director, Technical Services at KENAS, Susan Munyiri at the EKA Hotel in February.
A DAY WITH THE ‘FRIENDS OF KARURA’

An experience of the outdoors, clean fresh air and warm sun is what KENAS fraternity had in practice of their environment sustainability activities. The employees spent their day planting trees, and learning about the beautiful nature and different types of trees found in Karura Forest. Karura forest’s unique character is that it is one of the only forests in the world within a city, being minutes away from the country’s city center. It borders Runda, Gigiri and Muthaiga estates.

Among the attractions that they enjoyed were the Mau Mau caves, the scenic waterfalls, and beautiful nature trails. We were not lucky to see any monkeys though! Karura forest is well linked with the conservationist and Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Wangari Maathai who in the past carried out extensive campaigns to save this unique forest.

The two species of trees we planted were Makharmia Lutea commonly known as Muu and the Croton Megalocarpus, commonly known as Mukinduri.

THE WORLD HEALTH DAY—7TH APRIL

Hypertension, also known as high or raised blood pressure, is a global public health issue. It contributes to the burden of heart disease, stroke and kidney failure and premature mortality and disability. It disproportionately affects populations in low- and middle-income countries where health systems are weak. Hypertension rarely causes symptoms in the early stages and many people go undiagnosed. Those who are diagnosed may not have access to treatment and may not be able to successfully control their illness over the long term. This year’s World Health Day aimed at describing how hypertension contributes to the burden of heart disease, stroke and kidney failure and premature death and disability. The celebrations explained how hypertension is both preventable and treatable and how governments, health workers, civil society, the private sector, families and individuals can join forces to reduce hypertension and its impact.

WORLD METROLOGY DAY—20th May 2013

20 May 2013 is World Metrology Day (WMD). The WMD website is now live at: http://www.worldmetrologyday.org/. The theme this year is “Measurement in daily life” and the core message being conveyed is how many measurements come into play in the course of a typical day. In the course of a typical day it is surprising how often measurements come into play, whether (among many possible examples) checking the time, purchasing food or produce, filling up a vehicle with fuel, or undergoing a blood pressure check. These, and countless other activities in daily life, require measurements of one sort or another.

Read more here.

WORLD ACCREDITATION DAY - 9th June 2013

9th June marks the World Accreditation Day worldwide. KENAS will be holding its celebrations on 10th June 2013. The theme for this year is ACCREDITATION: FACILITATING WORLD TRADE. International trade is the exchange of capital, goods, and services across international borders or territories. Globalization means that we all enjoy and rely on a vast number and range of products and services supplied from overseas. Most of us would find it impossible to imagine, let alone survive, in a world in which our choice of goods and services was limited to those produced within the country in which we live. Read more here.
Warren Buffet once said, “If you lose dollars for the firm by bad decisions, I will be very understanding. If you lose reputation for the firm, I will be ruthless.” Jonathan Ciano, Uchumi CEO has often stated, “Don’t be drunk with power so much that your reputation is tainted. Be a smart leader and build a positive reputation for yourself and your organisation.” Companies have succeeded or failed because of it. Business scandals continually demonstrate the power that reputation holds.

A well known golf professional in the US endured massive scandals in last two years that tarnished his reputation in the media and with his family. On the other hand, we can see the Kenyan Judiciary has mastered the art of building a positive reputation with the new leadership. Evidently, reputation management is a force to reckon with in any business and more so in the digital age where information is a click away.

Sunny Bindra, a leading columnist of the Business Daily, recently articulated that the things which ultimately drive the profit numbers—loyalty, happiness and reputation—are less focused on yet these are the things which require deep insight and nuanced judgment. Indeed measuring such attributes could be difficult more so because it is a new thought leadership concept that is emerging in the Kenyan industry though widely practiced by many successful organisations in the world.

So, what is reputation management?

In essence, reputation management is all about knowing what your stakeholders perceive about you so that you can know what to say, when to say, how to say it with an aim of building or maintaining a positive relationship with them.

Reputation is formed over time, based on what an organisation has done and how it has behaved to both its internal stakeholders (employees) and external stakeholders (partners, shareholders, clients, suppliers, etc).

As a Conformity Assessment Body, you may argue that you follow set principles and guidelines that would help your reputation grow and chances of having negative reputation ever happening is next to impossible. The challenge is to look at your business at risk of reputation management as it would be to a leading industry or mass producer. Look at it this way: as long as your business has both internal and external stakeholders, reputation management becomes a key strategy of growing your business name, brand, products and/or services. Perhaps your company has received bad public reviews or publicity or feedback and this feedback is accessible by more customers or your own employees.

Often this can get daunting especially because opinions do matter nowadays and having a positive opinion of your services or company brand can be equated to having a social asset. Balmer and Greyser view reputation as a very relevant asset to any organisation. Where it doesn’t exist, it needs to be painstakingly acquired and if properly managed, it becomes a good selling point. Some organisations go ahead and link reputation to corporate profit, serving as proof of relevance of reputation of the organisation. Research has shown that corporate reputation exists along a multiple set of dimensions which include the quality of products and services, corporate social responsibility activities and ethical behaviour which are all important components to any business.

Let us delve a little into corporate responsibility: If you are an industry that needs to dispose waste but doesn’t consider the parameters provided for by NEMA, you run the risk of having sicknesses and contamination within the communities that live around your plant. All it needs is such acts of irresponsible behaviour or decisions to create a bad reputation with the community as well with the media, the public and NEMA. Advisably, solutions can be designed to make sure that your business does the right thing later on, but in essence it can take forever to build a good reputation among these stakeholders.
Leadership views reputation management as the key driver of corporate value, hence the aspect of restricting its functional role to Communications or Public Relations loses the whole ideology of building and protecting the right reputation. Reputation management is a leadership function fundamental to corporate image strategy. All leaders in the organisation should be held accountable for reputation management in their planned activities because the customer will always watch what your employees are doing to gauge their level of trust.

Our current society is made up of what has been called the “vigilante customer” who is technology savvy, knowledgeable of their rights, very demanding of quality and not afraid to go to the internet to air their views on a product tried or service given. Therefore, the ideology of building and protecting the right reputation ought to be linked to the overall corporate strategies so that each management activity looks into how it will either maintain the positive reputation or raise the corporate reputation. Nobody wants a bad reputation.

In addition, many reputation management authors have argued that reputation building is most successful when it starts from within and repeatedly fulfills expectations of external stakeholders. This is because your employees are constantly engaging with customers and who else is better placed to preach positive news about your organisation during any business cycle?

Nonetheless, reputation reflects an organisation’s internal and external behavior and its relationships with all stakeholder groups over time. And due to the fact that it is acquired and shaped over time, reputation is open to mistrust as the public is aware of the image that a company projects of itself isn’t only the result of its authenticity but also the result of how the company manages itself in the public arena. This means that management activities must be continuously subjected to reputation tests.

The Interplay Between Brand, Image and Reputation

When you talk of reputation management, it can be difficult to separate it from brand management and crisis management. At that time when you are looking for effective solutions to build your company’s reputation, it is possible for one to perceive it as a crisis and therefore the strategies to manage the reputation can as well indirectly affect the brand image. However, corporate branding is instilled by your company reflecting how it wants to be perceived by its stakeholder whereas reputation management is built on what your stakeholders perceive about your company. Given a critical look, you are safer with reputation management. The table below explains why:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate branding</th>
<th>Reputation management</th>
<th>Image management</th>
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Asset Value of Reputation

Helio Ared Garcia, a communicator and educator of reputation management argues that most CEOs don’t actually pay much heed to reputation and this is to their peril. Heads of government and non-profit agencies don’t do much better managing the reputation asset, as recent scandals demonstrate. Yet, when leaders get reputation right over the long term, they follow certain principles; they can raise the bar for their organisations.

He continues and states that reputation adds value to actual worth of an organisation. Companies with better reputations attract more and better candidates for employment, pay less for supplies, gain essentially free press coverage worth an annual advertising budget. The main reason cited for not seeing reputation as an asset would be the lack of systems to measure the company’s reputation value. However, there is a proven way of keeping track of your company’s reputation as established by John Doorly in 2003.

John established the “Comprehensive Reputation Management” methodology after talking and meeting with over 30 CEOs and came up with the following 6 components which, I believe, can be good example in the Kenyan business field as well.

> Always have a customized reputation template for your organisation. This template should include truthful facts of what you intend for your stakeholders to know about: your company innovations, quality of management, employee talent and expertise, product quality, governance, transparency through relevant and factual communication, integrity measures, financial performance and social responsibility. Even with all the negative publicity, there is still something good you can say about your existence as an organisation to counter the bad reputation.

> Conduct regular reputation audits of both internal and external stakeholders. This helps realize the gaps between what you think of yourself and your reputation.
Establish **reputation capital goals** that will boost your company’s performance against your competitors.

Always have an **accountability formulae** based on changes in reputation measured against your customized template.

Draw a reputation **management plan** to implement the comprehensive reputation management process. This plan will help you look at behaviour change/perception change and the effectiveness of the communication of the plan. E.g. if the corporate decision was to hold a mass radio campaign to build your company reputation, how you communicate the message in the plan should not fall short of effectiveness since you already know what your end result should be – improved reputation.

Lastly, allow for an **annual follow up audit and assessment** set against the standards or guidelines set in your reputation plan.

For those cases where you can’t quite put a finger at the cause of bad reviews or feedback on your services and products, consider doing a survey to get to know exactly what is wrong. Some companies go to the extent of creating a new website that reinforces positive messages until the season or mood has died down. In all your company communication channels, it is advised to let your customers see good review and testimonials during your down reputation time in hopes of maintaining good rapport and reputation with them.

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Balmer & Greyser, 2003, Reputation Management Theories.
Sabrina Helm, 2011, Management for Professionals: Reputation Management.
Helio Ared Garcia, 2007, Reputation Management

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**PRODUCT Certification**

*What a consumer needs to know*

By Talam Michael, Assistant Director, Certification, KENAS

Would you sit on a chair that has not undergone rigorous testing? Or board a matatu that had never been crash tested? How about using a lift that has not been inspected?

If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these questions, it is likely you may have been putting your life at serious risk.

In our everyday living consumers are surrounded by products which in most cases contribute to ease their everyday life, but which could also pose a threat to their health, safety and environment. Luckily for the consumers, most products are subject to rules and regulations to address these risks and put a pressure on the manufacture/seller of the products to make/sell safe products. The common denominator for most of these rules and regulations is that there is some kind of requirement for an independent body to examine the product and make a statement about its compliance. This is often takes the form of Product Certification or supplier declaration of compliance and safety.

**Product certification** is the process of certifying that a certain product has passed performance tests and quality assurance tests, and meets qualification criteria stipulated in contracts, regulations, or specifications (“certification schemes”). It is a confirmation that a product has met the necessary local, national or international quality standards relevant to a particular market or product set.

According to ISO/IEC 17065, Certification of a product, process or service is a means of providing assurance that the product complies with specified standards and other normative requirements. Product Certification is defined as a procedure by which a third party provides assurance that a product conforms to the specified standards. The product certification process involves both assessing the manufacturer’s production systems and facilities and testing by independent suitably accredited testing facilities.

Once certified, the manufacturer will be able to display the assessing body’s certification trade mark on the products produced, offering objective evidence of its compliance. To retain its “certified” status, the certification process requires regular auditing of the manufacturer’s facilities and on-going batch testing of products to ensure that the systems continue to be effective.
Most product certification bodies are accredited to ISO/IEC 17065 an international standard for ensuring competence in those organizations performing processes and product certifications.

The organizations which perform this accreditation are called Accreditation Bodies and Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS) is one such body. KENAS in turn is assessed by peers in accreditation against the ISO/IEC 17011 standard.

Examples of some certification schemes include KEBS Standardization mark, Diamond mark of Quality, Import standardization marks just to name a few. Certification schemes are typically written to include both the performance test methods that the product must be tested to, as well as the criteria which the product must meet to become certified.

What is a Certification Mark?

Certification marks are seals of approval indicating a specific good or service complies with the quality standards set by the owners of the marks. The presence of a certification mark on the packaging or even on the product itself indicates that the item has been tested and certified by the issuer of the mark, and has successfully passed the tests related to that specific type of product. Products like electronic appliances, food, and computer equipment typically carry some type of certification mark.

Many consumers actively look for a certification mark before making purchases. This is true with most types of products for instance in packaged foods the certification mark indicates to the consumers that the product is fresh and contains the nutritional values claimed on the packaging.

A Certification mark issued by an accredited product certification body indicates the following:

> Evidence that the Product Certification Body conforms to ISO/IEC 17065 International Standard.
> Assurance the accredited certification organisation has ensured that the item that was successfully tested is identical to that which is being offered for sale;
> Assurance that the successful test has resulted in a certification listing, which is considered public information,
> Assurance that the manufacturer is being regularly audited by the certification body; On the certified product.

The benefits of product certification

For many organisations, certification is a vehicle to opening up new markets, or to differentiate between products. Differentiation can be based on conformance to specific standards.

Some of the benefits of product certification include:

> It demonstrates product compliance with national or international standards, eliminating the need for further testing by purchasers or consumers.
> There is demonstration of due diligence to ensure that your products meet the relevant criteria for quality;
> Provides an independent assurance that products are manufactured under an effective system of testing, supervision and control which should result in improved efficiency in production and reduced wastage and rejects.
> Certification demonstrates to customers that the product has undergone a rigorous audit and testing process – providing them with peace of mind and confidence in your product.
> Certified products provide the user an assurance for safety and reliability.
> Certified products enjoy the benefits of protection against competition from substandard products and misrepresentation.
> The Product Certification Mark on certified prod-