

Upholding FIDA Nigeria Mission: Public Relations as a Critical Factor.

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and Assistants.

Introduction

- ▶ FIDA is an association of female lawyers called to the practice of law for the purpose of promoting, protecting, and preserving the human rights of women and children. Publicity is key as well as the image and perception of the organization in the eyes of the public.
- ▶ FIDA may not achieve the mission and objectives if members do not conduct themselves with decorum, respect, integrity and if there is no effective communication, adequate media publicity, friendship/sisterhood and a rancor free relationship.

Statement of problem

- ▶ In recent times, protocols, etiquette, decorum during meetings, activities, conferences and events have become a challenge.
- ▶ Friendship and sisterhood as insignia for FIDANs are fast giving way to rancor and infighting, now giving credence to the saying that women cannot work together peacefully.
- ▶ A coordinated and uniform brand of PR that projects the well known 'FIDA Brand' to the public is being decimated gradually.

Objectives of the presentation

- ▶ To emphasize the need for proper etiquette, decorum, order of protocols and minimum conduct required of members.
- ▶ To highlight some key points on effective communication and good relationship.
- ▶ To sensitize on effective ways of building a formidable FIDA brand that is uniform across the states of the Federation.
- ▶ To promote sisterhood, friendship, interpersonal relationship and in-house conflict resolution mechanism.

Conceptual clarifications

- ▶ Professionalism is the competence or skill expected of a professional, as depicted in appearance, ethics, demeanor, poise, etiquette etc.
- ▶ Decorum is the proper behavior that shows respect and good manners in conduct, appearance and actions.
- ▶ Protocol means a system of rules that explains the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.
- ▶ Brand means identity, reputation and perception.

FIDA Nigeria Mission

- ▶ *“FIDA Nigeria’s mission is to promote, protect and preserve the rights, interests and well-being of women and children through the use of the legal framework to ensure that they live free from all forms of discrimination, violence and abuse in an egalitarian and equitable society”*
- ▶ This mission statement explains the “what,” “why” and “how” of FIDA; and to achieve these, public perception and image is critical, to earn the confidence and trust of the public .

The need for proper conduct and decorum.

- ▶ Members are first and foremost members of the legal profession with a culture of respect, decorum, ethics, orderliness, good manners, proper dressing, poise etc. They shall not be found wanting.
- ▶ Public image and perception is critical because if FIDANs are seen as unprofessional, lacking in ethics/decorum, with bad manners and shabby dressing, then they will not be acceptable and cannot be trusted to deliver justice. They will lack integrity.

Proper conduct contd.

- ▶ FIDANs must conduct themselves decently both in private and in public.
- ▶ They must possess the virtues and attributes of the legal profession by dressing properly for all occasions including meetings; being orderly while taking food, entering buses, positioning for photographs, seeking audience at meetings, while on a courtesy call... every where and at all times.
- ▶ Speaking only when permitted to do so, putting phones in silence during meetings etc.

Order of protocols

- ▶ National Officers take precedence at national meetings, CVP, DCVP, Secretary and other national officers, followed by branch Chairpersons and Secretaries and other branch officers in that order, for food, sitting arrangement in the bus or hall, photographs, sharing of items etc.
- ▶ During NEC meetings, non statutory NEC members do not have right of audience except with the special permission of the CVP.
- ▶ Any branch Secretary representing her branch will take her turn with other Secretaries and not with Chairpersons, to avoid confusion and embarrassment.

Order of protocols contd.

- ▶ At the international level, the hierarchy remains, International, Regional, National etc.
- ▶ The Publicity Secretaries must take charge to ensure that these protocols are observed at various times and levels.
- ▶ Members must obey their officers, show humility, be patient and listen to instructions.
- ▶ It is poor etiquette and decorum to rush for food, items or any thing for that matter.

Communication/ Relationship

- ▶ Effective communication, interpersonal relationship and sisterhood are some of the attributes that will facilitate meeting the objectives of FIDA by members.
- ▶ Effective communication is a key interpersonal skill. Attention must be paid to listening skills; emotional intelligence –self regulation, empathy, respect and conflict resolution.
- ▶ Always hear the other party. Do not act based on one side of the story.

Promoting sisterhood and friendship

- ▶ Minimizing conflict and effective in-house conflict resolution mechanism is very important.
- ▶ Do not patronize people, do not talk behind peoples back or gossip, no back biting, envy, jealousy, character assassination or cliquisim.
- ▶ Show empathy, solidarity, sisterhood, support, forgive those who offend you unconditionally, have an open mind and promote activities that bind together.
[celebrating anniversaries, and special events]

Promoting the “FIDA Brand”

- ▶ The FIDA Brand is an identity and reputation in the public eye, which is packaged, promoted and projected as a group of professional women of integrity and character bound in sisterhood.
- ▶ The public image of FIDA is dependent on her members conduct, demeanor, attributes, decorum etc.
- ▶ A Publicity Secretary is a promoter and must possess good report writing skills, official statements, media statements with good command of English. She must capture events and activities in paper and pictures.

Using the Media

- ▶ Publicity of activities and programs may be through analog and digital media which includes, newspaper, radio, television, newsletters and social media.
- ▶ What goes into these media channels can make or mar the organization if not properly edited to ensure correctness and uniformity.
- ▶ Share your documents with colleagues for editing and comments before publishing. If possible confer with National Publicity Secretary for clarification, approval or validation.

Using the media contd.

- ▶ Social media seems to be the fastest and cheapest means of publicity in recent times. Every branch ought to have a FIDA account on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp Platform, for the purpose of sharing information, publicizing activities, raising discussions on critical legal and social issues, taking opinion polls, educating the public etc.
- ▶ To carry out the above effectively, proper documentation, accurate data processing, good reporting, regular updates and follow ups must be a culture.

Using the Media contd.

- ▶ Read up contents and materials before appearing on a television or radio program. Consult the experts.
- ▶ Involve members with specialty or adequate knowledge in the subject matter for discussion.
- ▶ Always clarify with the national body about FIDA position on sensitive issues before speaking to the press or posting on social media; so all branches are on the same page on all issues.
- ▶ No branch is above FIDA Nigeria or is at liberty to do things contrary to the tenets of FIDA.

Recommendations

- ▶ FIDA branches should set up an in-house conflict resolution committee. Many FIDANs are now members of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators. Let charity begin from home.
- ▶ In-house games that promote friendship and team building should form part of activities.
- ▶ Training and capacity building for officers and members must be a continuum.
- ▶ We must promote the FIDA brand and showcase our activities in an ethical manner.

Conclusion

- ▶ FIDA is not a political party, but a service platform, that service must be selfless and done with utmost integrity.
- ▶ This is a call for more action as we must be the change we want to see in FIDA. To change FIDA ,we must change ourselves first.
- ▶ Let us promote a peaceful environment, sisterhood and friendship; then every other dream will become a reality.

► PEACE BE WITH YOU MY BELOVED FIDANS.