



**ELIZADE UNIVERSITY,
ILARA-MOKIN**

**FACULTY: SOCIAL & MANAGEMENT
SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT: MASS COMMUNICATION
SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATION
2018/2019 ACADEMIC SESSION**

COURSE CODE: MAC 418

COURSE TITLE: CASE STUDIES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

NUMBER OF UNITS: TWO (2) CREDITS

DURATION: TWO (2) HOURS

ANWER THREE (3) QUESTIONS IN ALL

QUESTION ONE (1) IS COMPULSORY (30 MARKS)

ALL OTHER QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS (15 MARKS)

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1. Please read and understand the TOTAL case study below and answer the questions that follow.

2. **TOTAL Outrage**

The French oil giant TOTAL became a political football in the 2007 French Presidential elections. When the company announced net profit for 2006 of £8.4 billion- the largest ever for a French company - socialist candidate Segolene Royal called for a windfall tax on petro profit to pay for public transport and home insulation. Leading conservative candidate Nicolas Sarkozy responded to the profit announcement by suggesting that TOTAL should cut petrol price at the pump. I can well imagine the sorts of conversation that this generated in TOTAL's group headquarters: 'If we enter this debate, we risk giving the story legs. Let just stay out of it and watch it blow over.' 'But surely we should not allow the politicians to use the success of our company to further their own agendas.' 'They will move on to something else soon. The best we can do is wait for the agenda to change.'

The path of list resistance for TOTAL would have been to sit tight and wait for the debate to wane, hoping that neither of the candidates would actually turn their electoral posturing into policy once elected. But TOTAL decided to defend itself. This was a risk strategy, as the French company had experienced various high profile crises in the preceding few years: the Erika oil spill off the coast of Brittany, the Toulouse factory disaster and the arrest of its Chief Executive for his alleged role in the oil for food scandal. TOTAL would have been excused for keeping its head down.

However, Thierry Demarest, TOTAL'S outgoing Chief Executive responded to the political debate by saying that Segolene Royal's idea was demagogic populist and dogmatic. This was echoed by his successor Christophe de Margerie who said: 'In a country where people find it indecent to make profits', there is a time when you need to know what you want. If you want to keep big French groups capable of battling internationally, you must not shoot them in the back.' A corporate ally emerged in the form of Daniel Bouton, Chief Executives of French Bank Society Generale, who warned that if this country prefers mediocrity, that [the policies espoused by the presidential candidates] is what we should have.' The result was that the debate quickly moved on. Many newspapers carried the politicians' suggestions and few carried TOTAL's rebuttal, but the senior management's 'fightback' may have been enough to persuade the politicians to shy away from further confrontation. Politician may thrive on conflict, but ultimately they cannot afford too many enemies.

- a) Briefly narrate the issues that confronted TOTAL Oil Company. (10 Marks)
- b) What were the three (3) main dilemmas faced by TOTAL? (6 Marks)
- ✓ c) Identify the two (2) election positions taken by the politicians. (5 Marks)
- d) What were the two strategies TOTAL Chief Executives considered for countering the politicians? (4 Marks)
- e) Comment generally on this case study and give it your own title. (5 Marks)

TOTAL (30 Marks)

7/10
4/4 marks