

MARKETING EDGE

Promoting the brand idea.

Issue 64, December/January 2020

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WAR OVER SOCIAL MEDIA



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advertising spend in
Nigeria abysmally low

Broadcasters Guild
debuts to raise standard
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20 years of global brand
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Inflation as an albatross



As the year 2019 gradually grinds to a halt, the national economy bleeds and blunders.

Specifically, recent report unveiled by the National Bureau of Statistics shows the economy is unsmiling. It is forlorn and seemingly tough and tedious. According to the report, rapidly rising prices of goods are causing major headache to consumers whose purchasing power remains abysmally low and unyielding.

The National Bureau of Statistics revealed that “Nigeria’s annual inflation rate increased to 11.61 percent in October 2019 from 11.24 percent in the previous month, reaching the highest since May of 2018. It went further to say that prices have risen mainly for food, due to the on-going closure of the country’s land borders and the impact of unusual heavy rainfall on harvest.

The report said: “The urban inflation rate stood at 12.20 percent (year-on-year) in October 2019 from 11.78 percent recorded in September 2019, while the rural inflation rate was recorded at 11.07 percent in October 2019 from 10.77 percent in September 2019.” This is an increase of 0.36 percentage points compared to 11.24% recorded in September.

It added: “On a year on year basis, the composite food index rose by 14.09 percent in October 2019 compared to 13.51 percent in September 2019.

“This rise in the food index was caused by increases in prices of meat, oils and fats, bread and cereals, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fish and vegetables.”

On a year-on-year basis, inflation was highest in Kebbi at 15.20% and lowest in Bayelsa at 9.07%.

For states, food inflation was highest in Kebbi at 17.53%, Ondo at 17.01% and Ogun at 17%. The lowest increase in the prices of food items was recorded in Kogi (12.12%), Katsina (11.18%) and Bayelsa (9.55%).

The report also noted: “Bayelsa, at -0.35%, recorded price deflation or negative inflation” which is a decrease in the general price level of food or negative food inflation.”

Feelers emanating from different market segments have revealed that consumers have remained apathetic due to low

purchasing power. This has had ripple effects on the manufacturers who are daily confronted with the challenges of unsold inventories. As it were, major brands that are marketing and consumer-centric have adopted different strategies and tactics to improve on patronage and sales; but ironically, all these appear not to be working.

The feeler from the government end is that the closure of the nation’s borders since over three months ago is responsible for the spiraling inflation.

As there appears to be no end in sight for borders re-opening, it is assumed that the current pains may linger than can be presently imagined or envisaged.

This must not be allowed to happen as the Federal government must urgently help to cushion the effects of the pains and pangs resulting from the present situation. This can be done by intensifying efforts on the implementation of social security schemes that can help empower the weak and the vulnerable. Government should, as a matter of urgency, encourage slight review or reduction in prices of goods so that they could be affordable in case the current effort of the federal government to ensure maximum out-put in local production of goods, especially the staple foods are not yielding desired results, it should not hesitate to engage direct link with countries producing those goods for export with a view to giving them some imports wavers pending when Nigeria will be self-sufficient in food production. The current practice which has brought hunger and untold hardship on the entire citizenry cannot and should not be allowed to persist. Some urgent and decisive steps should be taken as the sufferings are becoming far too unbearable and extremely inexplicable. The time to act is now!



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ENJOY RESPONSIBLY. NOT FOR SALE TO PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.

In this special edition publication, we have packaged Series 2 of Outstanding Professionals. It is a follow-up on the series one published some months ago.

Our esteemed readers would be availed reading about Nigerian professionals who have become exceptional and a reference point in the annals of their trade.

Professionals profiled in this special edition publication have become the cynosure of all eyes, not only because of their personal successes and achievements but due to the value they have added, impacted and imparted on the corporate Nigeria. They are the beacons of hope and aspirations for a future driven by knowledge economy. We salute them for their giant strides and the heights so far attained as we wish them even more grease and grace in the years ahead.

Also featured in this unique edition is a well researched investigative report on the social media in view of current campaign by the federal government to control and regulate the social media. The national conversation, debates and arguments over the proposed regulation has assumed a frightening dimension. The campaign was further aggravated as a Senator representing Niger state at the National Assembly Alhaji Sani Musa who initiated a bill in respect of social media regulation has suggested death penalty for offenders. He has since deleted death penalty clause from the bill.

Since the bill was initiated, it has generated an unprecedented hoopla and national outcry. Not only are members of the public and civil society groups up in arms against the federal government and members of the National Assembly, there have been open protestations and civil unrest over the planned bill. While the federal government claimed the sector urgently requires to be regulated in view of current hate speeches, campaigns of calumny and preponderance of fake news and character assassinations with attendant libels and seditions, eminent Nigerians, Civil society groups, and the general public are not convinced about the need for a new legislation as they reasoned that there are already in existence more than enough laws, codes and edicts in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, thus enacting a fresh code on the social media is an attempt to muscle the media as well as infringing on the freedom of speech. The battle for and against the enactment of a law regulating the social media rages as only God knows who will win the war. Only time will tell.

Meanwhile, this special edition publication is as rich, robust and authoritative as ever. In line with MARKETING EDGE culture and tradition of journalism excellence, we have packaged a bouquet of exclusive news reports, industry gists and happenings that can only be found in your darling magazine.

Suffice to also announce to our teeming readers that we have upped the game in brand journalism practice as we partner with top out-of Home companies with a view to collaborating to enrich the Nigerian marketing and advertising environment and indeed the Nigerian public about the industry while creating brand awareness and knowledge empowerment.

We remain avant-garde in our self appointed task of promoting the brand idea while we won't ever give up in setting agenda for all the players and gladiators in the Nigeria's Corporate community, with a special focus and attention to the business of brand management and the management of brand business.

As the year 2019 cascades into its last days, we enjoin our teeming readers, friends and associates to fasten their seat belts while we all journey peacefully and gloriously into year 2020 with fulfilled hopes and aspirations. Amen.

We wish you all a very Merry Xmas and a happy new year in advance!

Happy reading! ■



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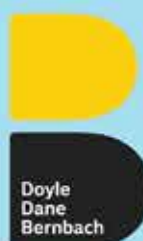
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Admen Confab resolves to reposition industry despite lingering challenges

An overwhelming leadership and membership, including a who's who of Nigeria's marketing communications industry recently converged, the first of its kind, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria. Esteemed sectoral groups, namely – the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), Outdoor

Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), as well as significant stakeholders in the advertising industry which include Advertisers' Forum, the International Advertising Association (IAA) Nigeria Chapter, the Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) and the Association of Communication Scholars and Practitioners of Nigeria (ACSPN) were fully represented at the conference.

Tagged National Advertising Conference 2019 with an ambitious theme: Advertising in the Post Digital Age: The Profession, The Business and Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development, the conference held at the prestigious Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

It was a rallying cry to re-examine and reposition the advertising profession and at same time, Nigeria. In an unprecedented fashion, different generations of admen turned out in their numbers and clustered at the confab where professional specialisations and interests within the industry and the public, including private organisations that employ advertising, no matter how conflictual, were freely addressed.

Declaring the confab open, the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) Acting Registrar, Ijedi Iyoha, noted that the advertising profession had been a key contributor in Nigeria's economic system. The profession's activities, she emphasised, brought positive balance and helpful social effects in the people's dealings with one another, adding that advertising wielded enormous influence in information dissemination and commerce more than the prevailing public perception.

"Many people do not appreciate the role of advertising in our relationship as a nation with other nations and in our existence as a people. Many have not come to the realisation that the advertising industry commands a great deal of influence in information dissemination, technology, commerce, politics, religion, sports, social investment programmes and so on.

"This is an opportunity that is made for every stakeholder to be seen and to be heard. It is an opportunity to open a welcoming chapter in the advertising industry. The prominence of our domestic investment, our ability to persuade and retain foreign investors and the acceptance of our market in the international community cannot be better put together without us – the advertising industry. We have tremendously helped in shaping our economy into what it is today," she said.

Presenting his keynote, Lolu Akinwunmi, Group CEO, Prima-Garnet Africa, who also commands depths and professionalism in the industry, advocated a critical review of public communication policy by Nigerian government, stressing his conviction in the all-encompassing role of advertising and marketing communication in national development.

"There should be an urgent review of communication policy by the government. Nigeria and Nigerians need an effective public communication policy because that is the only way we can accord communication a strategic direction.

"I am convinced that after this conference, the powers that be will begin to understand that marketing communication can do a lot more for this government than it has done for the previous administrations," he said.

For two days, one of the immersive halls of the Hilton heaved and resonated with creative and stimulating discussions about advertising in all its glamorous practice and erudite scholarship. After the robust keynote by Akinwunmi, penetrative panel discussions were held by different sectoral groups, and thought-provoking papers were presented while creatively nostalgic reflections were held with the dean, as it were, of the advertising profession in Nigeria.

Tagged "Breakfast Chat with



Advertising Icon", Biodun Shobanjo, the Chairman of Troyka Group and the doyen of Nigeria's advertising, in the most convivial atmosphere, relayed his creative adventures to an informed and futuristic delegates and audience whose passion for the profession far outweighs survival.

Dwelling on one of the ills bedeviling the industry which is lack of succession among prominent agencies and their founders, Shobanjo insisted that those who dabbled in marketing communications just to survive would always end as a flash in the pan, adding that the only way agencies could outlive their founders was if the agencies earnestly engaged in constant manpower development.

"Advertising business is a knowledge business. I appreciate mostly the manpower aspect of marketing communications business. Many practitioners in this hall can attest to the fact that they acquired their first experience from our group," Shobanjo said.

After engaging in professional soul-searching and telling themselves some home truth, stakeholders from all the sectoral groups present at the conference pointed out that the much desired renaissance and exponential growth expected of marketing communications was a task that must be done by no one else but the industry practitioners. Irrespective of their unique perspectives, each speaker, moderator, panelist, delegate and guest maintained that advertising as a noble profession could only take its pride of place and earn national and international respect when practitioners begin to take themselves seriously.

The confab ended on an upbeat note with delegates taking the arduous responsibility of regulating and repositioning the industry vis-a-vis Nigeria in line with global best practices. ■

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FrieslandCampina WAMCO leads dairy development, signs MOU with Niger state



L-R: His Excellency Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of The Netherlands; His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari; and Ben Langat, Managing Director of FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria Plc



L-R: Mrs. Ore Famurewa, Executive Director, Corporate Affairs; Engr. Mustapha Bello, Non-Executive Director; Mr. Roel van Neerbos, President Consumer Dairy, FrieslandCampina The Netherlands; His Excellency Abubakar Sani Bello, Governor of Niger State; Mr. Ben Langat, Managing Director; and Mr. Moyo Ajekigbe, Chairman of the Board of Directors

President Muhammadu Buhari and his Dutch counterpart, Prime Minister of The Netherlands, Mark Rutte, are happy with the public-private partnership between FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria PLC, producer of dairy brands Peak and Three Crowns milk, and the Niger State government on the backward integration initiative ongoing on 10,000 hectares of land at the Bobi Grazing Reserve in the state under FrieslandCampina WAMCO's Dairy Development Programme (DDP).

Both country leaders witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Governor of Niger State, His Excellency Abubakar Sani Bello, and the President, FrieslandCampina Consumer Dairy, Mr. Roel van Neerbos, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja recently. This is in line with the Government's National Livestock Transformation Plan which seeks to grow livestock farming in Nigeria and transform the dairy sector into an economic force that will yield the twin objectives of economic growth and people empowerment.

As the Federal Government's preferred partner on dairy development and backward integration initiatives, FrieslandCampina WAMCO continues to lead DDP in Nigeria by expanding to more States. Currently the company has developed pasture on 1,000 of the 10,000 hectares of land assigned to it at the Bobi Grazing Reserve, and established key infrastructure including a Milk Collection Centre with a high capacity cooling tank and high quality milk testing equipment. Furthermore, the company has emerged the first to introduce hydroponics – a method of growing high-nutrient grass in harsh environments – a green house pasture development that would ensure

year-round feed for cows. It has also provided solar-powered boreholes to support farmers with potable water and provide water for the cattle.

The MOU between Niger State and FrieslandCampina WAMCO acknowledges the nine-year successes of the latter's Dairy Development Programme (DDP) in Oyo, Ogun and Osun States respectively. It seeks its replication and expansion of local dairy production at the reserve, as well as train dairy cooperatives in Niger State on best global practices.

According to the company's Executive Director, Corporate Affairs, Ore Famurewa: "The Dairy Development Programme (DDP) was officially launched by our company in August, 2010 in Kwara State. This climaxed with the signing of an MoU between the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria as its partner on Dairy Development in April, 2011 and was subsequently renewed in June, 2016.

"The DDP enables dairy farmers to run their businesses optimally with higher yields and better milk quality. This successful and unique model has benefitted over 7000 farmers including 950 women, a Milk Bulking Center (MBC), 6 Milk Collection Centers (MCC) and 20 Milk Collection Points (MCPs) across Oyo, Ogun and Osun states," explained Famurewa.

FrieslandCampina WAMCO with its DDP partners are collaborating to deepen the inclusive model for local sourcing of fresh milk in Nigeria. The Farmer2Farmer is an initiative which allows Certified Dutch dairy farmers share knowledge and

technical knowhow with local dairy farmers through on the farm practical training bi annually.

Specialized trainings are organized on feeding and watering of cattle, calf-rearing, artificial insemination for breed improvement, milking hygiene and practice, milking machine maintenance, hoof care, housing and barn design for local farmers and cooperatives in its over 90 DDP communities to improve milk collection.

The Dairy Development Programme is a sustainable business model that operates the smallholder system. Together with our partners, we empower young farmers and traditional pastoralists with modern animal husbandry methods and provide them a guaranteed market. Through the Dairy Development Programme, the company provides quality nutrition from Grass to Glass by breeding well cared-for cows which are the basis of good quality milk.

According to Roel van Neerbos, President, FrieslandCampina Consumer Dairy, "This mission is an important step in strengthening our longstanding relationship with the Nigerian government. The collaboration aligns with our vision to provide better nutrition to the world with our Dairy Development Programme (DDP). FrieslandCampina enables the local dairy farmers, like in Nigeria, to run their businesses optimally and raise the quality and quantity of their dairy production via the DDP."

The MoU between FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria Plc and Niger State Government was made possible by the intervention and staunch support of the Central Bank of Nigeria; one of the core partners of the DDP in Nigeria.

The signing of the MoU was witnessed by the Central Bank Governor, Mr. Godwin Emefiele; Honorable Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development, Sabo Nanono; Ambassador of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, His Excellency Harry van Dijk; Consul General, Jan van Weijen; President Consumer Dairy, Royal FrieslandCampina The Netherlands; Managing Director, FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria Plc Mr. Ben Langat; The Chairman, Board of Directors, FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria PLC, Mr. Moyo Ajekigbe; Non-Executive Director, Engr. Mustapha Bello and Executive Director Corporate Affairs, Mrs. Ore Famurewa. ■

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MediaFacts rates advertising spend in Nigeria abysmally low

Mediafacts, the periodic market trend information booklet published by Mediareach OMD is out again on news-stands with its latest edition pointing to ever increasing decline in overall advertising spend across the Nigerian media.

According to the details of market trend information contained in the publication, the decline in advertising spend being experienced in the past three years, in the nation's media, continued in 2018 with a drop in total Above -The - Line advertising expenditure to N81billion, as against the N88billion, recorded the previous year, 2017.

In the past five years, the growth trajectory, concerning ad spend in the nation's media has not been too encouraging. For instance, besides 2015, where the ad spend was put at N97.9billion, a significant improvement from 2014 performance of N93billion, the industry has been experiencing a free fall in ad spend, in the past three years.

For instance, the ad spends attracted by the media in 2016, 2017, and 2018, had been N91billion, N88billion and N81billion, respectively, a pointer to a steady decline in ad fortunes of the nation's media. Over the years, MediaFacts, published by mediaReach



OMD, become a key resource for marketing professionals in West and Central Africa.

According to the latest edition of the Report, besides the Press, which recorded a significant growth of 18.4 per cent, that is N20.8billion spend in 2018, as against the 2017 spend of N17.6billion; performances of other media, such as TV, Radio and Outdoor, in 2018, revealed that they did not attract the type of ad spend that came their ways in the previous year.

For instance, while TV could only muster N29.4billion in 2018, as against N33.5billion, recorded in the previous year; the total ATL ad expenditure for Radio in 2018 remains N10.1billion, as against its performance of N12.4billion in 2017. Outdoor did not fare better as its ad spend dropped to N29.4billion in

2018, from the N33.5billion it attracted in 2017.

Interestingly, the nation's telecommunications sector still remains the highest spender, in the ATL category, with MTN, Airtel topping the list of the Top 20 Advertisers for the year, with ad spends of N7billion and N3.6billion, respectively, constituting 13 percent of the total ad spend in the category.

Others in the category include: the State governments, Nestle Nigeria Plc and Reckitt Benckiser Nigeria Plc.

The latest edition of the report coincides with the 20th anniversary of mediaReach OMD in Nigeria. The MediaFacts book which is published in English and French contains all media advertising related information across 23 West and Central African markets.

The MediaFacts Book focuses on providing an in-depth Media overview, covering Consumption of Media, Ranking of Stations & Publications, Media Investment Trends, Top Categories & Advertisers, Demographic Understanding of Consumers. It also provides vital information and statistics about markets in terms of Key Facts and Economic Indicators. ■

DStv rolls out 'dishless' streaming product in 2020

Mulchoice, Africa's leading satellite TV service provider has announced that its flagship subsidiary, DStv hopes to launch its standalone "dishless" streaming product by March 2020.

The company's CEO, Connected Video division, Niclas Ekdahl said in an interview with an online platform (www.techcentral.co.za) that the company has made great progress in developing the product which will use broadband connections instead of satellite for delivery, and would soon be opening it to external

testers.

Until now, the product had only been tested internally. The company had previously said that it hoped to roll it out commercially by the end of 2019.

The launch of this streaming-only offering would be a significant shift for a company that was introduced as a satellite direct-to-home (DTH) pay-TV operator over 24 years ago.

Even though Multichoice has also offered the DStv Now streaming service for the past few years, full access to it remains tied to DTH subscription.



According to Ekdahl, while the company hopes that the dishless service would be ready probably by the end of March 2020, a launch date had not yet been set.

He also did not state whether the new dishless product would have its own brand or MultiChoice would maintain the DStv Now name for it. ■

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Registered APCON members can practice in Abuja without APAAC membership, says Aliyu

With over 300 registered practitioners as members, Advertising Practitioners Association Abuja Chapter (APAAC) commands a considerable sectoral presence in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

Advertising practice should be pan Nigeria as long as a practitioner is qualified, and as a practicing professional, registered with Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), the apex body.

There has, however, been a growing concern among practitioners, particularly those in Lagos, that APAAC as a body, has, in recent times, put some measures in place which make it difficult for advertising practitioners who live in other parts of Nigeria to smoothly carry out a legitimate project without necessarily being members of APAAC. The said practitioners alleged that prospective clients whose businesses were based in Abuja hardly gave briefs to marketing communications experts who live outside the FCT for fear that such project, if won by any agency other than APAAC member, may suffer a setback in the area of implementation.

Speaking exclusively to **MARKETING EDGE** on the sideline of the National Advertising Conference, the largest gathering of advertising practitioners in Nigeria, held recently in Abuja, Ibrahim Aliyu, Chairman of APAAC, said advertising practitioners who were registered with APCON could practice in Abuja without necessarily being members of APAAC.

"A good number of our members are APCON registered practitioners so you don't need to register again with APAAC. We have come together for unity, to support the profession and to enhance its welfare, which includes investing, promoting and projecting APCON code of practice and conduct. That's why we came together.

"Ours is just to see how we can enhance the creativity and innovation aspect of advertising. In fact, we encourage



all practitioners in Nigeria to collaborate. I can get a brief here in Abuja, but for me to make it creative I might need to tell somebody in Port Harcourt or Lagos to share ideas. With the help of digital we can do a lot," he said.

The APAAC boss, recommended that APCON registered members could also register with APAAC for seamless collaboration to enhance creativity, innovation and excellence in the industry.

"Before now, we were just like sheep without shepherd. We would therefore encourage members who are registered under APCON to also register with APAAC so that we can be under one umbrella and do what we are doing right now in Abuja. What is happening in Abuja is also being duplicated in Port Harcourt, Minna, Kano and Jos. So, members are saying that just like Lagos, we also have to come together as professionals. It's a matter of choice.

"In the past, we could not have a sectoral body as we do in Lagos because our members included those from the creative, marketing and media agencies; those from online and social media, those from the print and broadcast media and those from outdoor advertising and so on; but there was no sectoral body here. So, we decided to come together, and by the way, that was how

advertising started in Nigeria before it began to spread and fraternise into different segments of the profession," Aliyu explained.

On why APAAC with its vibrant presence, and as a sectoral body in Abuja could not help in facilitating the constitution of APCON Council for such a long time, Aliyu cited apathy as reason on the part of APAAC members who were not APCON registered, hoping that the recent national advertising confab would positively turn things around for the industry.

"We should have gotten the Council a long time ago. In Abuja alone, we are over 300 registered practitioners but those who work with us as members of APCON are less than 100, the remaining 200 didn't find it attractive because we have not given ourselves hope.

"But with this historic event, we will begin to have a voice; every person in the society would begin to feel advertising because we would regulate ourselves and conduct ourselves responsibly. More people are going to realise and recognise that advertising is a noble profession and would likely want to come in. By the time they are coming in it would be properly regulated and controlled," Aliyu said. ■

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2019 ADVAN Awards rewards innovation, inspires brands

The 2019 Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) Awards for Marketing Excellence has witnessed a huge harvest of awards for brands. The event is the most prestigious awards in the Nigerian marketing and advertising industry, and it was amazing to see that efforts on creativity and innovation were rewarded during the ceremony.

The turnout was wonderful and many brands that entered for the awards were rewarded based on the set criteria.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, the First Vice President of the association, Bunmi Adenigba, noted that the awards had, in no small measure, provided fillip to the brands and advertising industry, adding that innovation and creativity drove business performance.

“What we have been able to showcase with this event is to demonstrate the excellence in all of the ground that has been done by players in the industry, and the reason why we do it is to promote marketing excellence so that any brand that has won today will be inspired to do more and the brands that haven’t won

will be challenged to take their creativity to another level.

“Essentially, we want brands to have a say and a voice to things that really matter to consumers and we want to be sure that the brands are doing exactly that,” she said.

Adenigba stated that advertising had come of age in the country and Nigeria’s ad spend was over N200billion, adding that a lot had been put in.

“Beyond the quantitative of what we are doing, I think the bigger proposition is on the quality of what we are achieving; the kind of narrative and conversations that we are using our brands to drive. Regardless of the absolute amount that we put into it, what matters more is brands connecting to the heart of the consumers and also proper representation of the interests of the consumers.”

On how she would describe the ADVAN awards in terms of the growth of advertising and marketing in Nigeria, Adenigba added that the awards had helped the industry to increase the quality of work that is being put out.

“It’s not just about doing good works

to come here and get awards but also about the standard that each of these brands has to meet to ensure that the criteria are met. For example, being able to show how your creativity has added to business performance. The award is driving depth and it’s something we want to continue to build on because we’ve seen year on year, how brands have shown up and have been able to demonstrate the impacts of their campaigns on lives, businesses and communities.”

She believes the communication that ADVAN drives is bringing back value to the organisation, and is helping practitioners and brand owners to improve the quality of products and services that they give to consumers in return. She urged practitioners to expect lots of collaborations with the realisation that one central thing that brings them together was the consumer, and they must protect their (consumers’) interest at all times.

For Bridget Oyefeso-Odusami, 2nd Vice-President of ADVAN, industry practitioners should not stop creating, using innovation and ensuring that creativity fuels all that they put out there.

“As marketers, creativity should be our fuel, ensuring we do better than the previous year. I think that’s what one of the brands here tonight has done. Year-on-year, we have seen them come out to win great awards and it’s because they keep going back to the drawing board to see how they can improve.

“For ADVAN, they should continue to remain the middle man, ensuring that organisations and policy makers meet and sync to produce policies that favour all the parties involved and as for the marketers like myself, I’m challenged. I kept telling my team that we must be up there next year, even though we are a financial services brand,” she said.

Also speaking, Roselyn Abaraonye, Marketing Manager, Molfix said ADVAN awards for marketing excellence provided marketers something to look out for.

“I would say a big thank you to ADVAN because I strongly appreciate the platform that it has provided for the marketers to be able to showcase their work and get rewarded for it. It helps us to improve and have something to look forward to.

“While doing our work and plans from the beginning of the year, we are always thinking ‘ADVAN’. For me, that’s what I do in order to fall in line with the required criteria, so that at the end of the year we can reward ourselves,” she said. ■

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Folake Ani-Mumuney led ADVAN Exco's Scorecard

The two year leadership tenure of the Folake Ani-Mumuney-led executive committee of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) came to a glorious end, recently. The leadership tenure that spanned between the period 2017 to 2019 could rightly be adjudged as one of the most remarkable and eventful eras in history of the ADVAN organisation since it came into being in the year 1992.

Ani-Mumuney, immediate past president of the association while giving detailed highlights on achievements of the executive committee of the association under her stewardship, in what could best be her valedictory address to a gathering of members who converged at the Muson Centre in Lagos for the 18th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of ADVAN, reeled out a comprehensive roll of achievements which she said resulted from four strategic focus points upon her assumption of office. Her tenure, she noted, specifically aimed at driving visionary leadership to encourage knowledge sharing and capacity building, effective stakeholder engagement as well as facilitating and procuring access to data, research and insight.

According to her, the executive committee in conjunction with the Education and Capacity Development committee recognised the enduring need for capacity development and the reality that the skill sets required to survive and thrive in contemporary marketing communication industry were more complex than in previous years, designed various programmes which were targeted at ensuring that members of the association were well armed with best information for attaining success in today's business environment.

Other achievements of the exco which Ani-Mumuney highlighted included establishment of ADVAN's Centre for Marketing Excellence which is a partnership-base learning opportunity for members of the association.

"We agreed it was best to identify leading establishments (local and international) and collaborate with these institutions to provide a multidisciplinary approach to learning.

"The plan for the centre was to periodically appraise the partnerships and make necessary additions and or adjustments as required. The current partners of the center include, Metropolitan

of the the association. They include, AB Inbev, Sona Group, Wema Bank and Dochase Limited, with assurances from a significant number of advertisers who have promised to sign on soon to membership of the association.

The stakeholder engagement and advocacy committee also had been very active in relating with the various regulatory institutions, tabling advertisers concerns and searching out sustainable resolutions to challenges, the recent one being on the APCON plan to regulate



School of Business UK, Digital Bananas (an affiliate to the London Digital Marketing Institute), Pan Atlantic University, and the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN)," she said.

Other achievements by the exco include deploying the global knowledge base of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) to further enrich ADVAN knowledge base which is presently accessible on the ADVAN website.

During the two year tenure, the exco initiated a very robust engagement and advocacy with key and relevant stakeholders across the marketing communications industry. The engagement exercise included meetings with advertisers, members as well as non-members of the association. This was done in bid to understand advertisers' needs and provide real time value to them.

The exco visited during the period 20 member and non-members companies and through the visits garnered best information to help improve upon service to members and, in addition, signed up no fewer than four new member companies who are presently full members

online advertising.

Also pertinent to note is the current partnership with the NIMN which provided substantial discount and concessions to ADVAN members seeking NIMN certification and trainings.

The exco succeeded also in building very healthy and robust relationships and engagements with other sister associations of the industry, including the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, (AAAN), Media Independents Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) and Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN).

On the pillar of Thought Leadership, the exco succeeded in securing a slot for ADVAN on the Executive Council of the World Federation of Advertisers with ADVAN being the most consistently represented and active association in Africa on WFA activities. ADVAN's participation on the WFA has indeed put Nigeria on the global map of marketing communications. ■



Mitsubishi L200. We call it Unstoppable.

When style meets toughness
The New L200 has been developed to embody the Engineered Beyond Tough keyphrase which underlined its creation. Elements making it significantly more competitive include: more powerful styling that incorporates the latest iteration of the Dynamic Shield front design concept; an enhanced 4WD system that delivers improved off-road performance, and the latest in active safety and driver assistance systems. Overall, the new model features significant refinements to the durability and reliability required by the commercial user and to the comfort and ride sought by the private user.

1. Powerful "Engineered Beyond Tough" Design

The New L200 has been designed to deliver a solid, reliable and comfortable ride. The front face incorporates the new-generation "Dynamic Shield" front design concept. The high engine hood line and beefier-looking lamps located higher up give the new model a more powerful and imposing front face.

Front view-The front face incorporates the new-generation "Dynamic Shield" front design concept. The high engine hood line and beefier-looking lamps located higher up give the new model a more powerful and imposing front face.

'You would too after experiencing the thrill of driving a masterpiece engineered to conquer challenges of all shapes and sizes. With a sleek exterior and a powerful engine, you get the perfect blend of the beauty and the beast. A machine built with Nigerian roads in mind.'

front face.

Side & rear view

Newly sculpted body curves with contrasting sharp lines, extended wheel flares and bright accents embody the strength of a Mitsubishi Motors truck and add modernity. The lighting and bumper parts become part of the tough design, framing the front and rear designs.

Side view-The side view features a high level of aerodynamic efficiency. The side mirrors are positioned to provide a wide field of vision. The side door is designed to be easily accessible. The side window is designed to provide a clear view of the road ahead.

4WD System Gives Enhanced All-terrain Performance
New L200 4WD models are fitted with either Super-Select 4WD, which delivers optimum traction and handling characteristics for any given

by the Engineered Beyond Tough development keyphrase, to the durability and reliability sought in commercial use and to the comfort and ride sought in private use.

Braking performance and feel are improved with the use of larger front discs and caliper pistons.

Ride is improved with the use of larger rear dampers which contain more damping oil. Changing to a 6-speed manual transmission allows the driver to take full advantage of the engine's power.

Chassis-The chassis is designed to provide a comfortable and stable ride. The chassis is made of high-strength steel and is designed to withstand the rigors of commercial use.

Interior-The interior is designed to be comfortable and functional. The seats are made of high-quality materials and are designed to provide support and comfort. The dashboard is designed to be easy to read and use.

Exterior-The exterior is designed to be durable and attractive. The paint is made of high-quality materials and is designed to withstand the elements. The body is made of high-strength steel and is designed to withstand the rigors of commercial use.

3. Pickup Truck Performance & Functionality
The New L200 features many detail improvements, directed

was added to its lineup in 1980 which became the foundation for all Mitsubishi 4WD vehicles and led directly to the PAJERO/MONTERO and DELICA 4WD. The first and second generation pickups were mainly produced at Mitsubishi Motors Ohe Plant in Japan. Since the third-generation model in 1995, production has been moved to the Laem Chabang plant in Thailand, supported by a new plant in Bangkok. This is an important role for Mitsubishi Motors.

Newly sculpted body curves with contrasting sharp lines, extended wheel flares and bright accents embody the strength of a Mitsubishi Motors truck and add modernity. The lighting and bumper parts become part of the tough design, framing the front and rear designs and adding visual width.

Interior-The restyled inside of the L200 expresses a modern and robust feeling with frame surroundings for the switch panel and air outlets. A high quality look is created by soft pad materials and stitching on the floor console, armrests and parking brake. New L200 4WD models are fitted with either Super-Select 4WD, which

Exterior-The exterior is designed to be durable and attractive. The paint is made of high-quality materials and is designed to withstand the elements. The body is made of high-strength steel and is designed to withstand the rigors of commercial use.

4WD System Gives Enhanced All-terrain Performance
New L200 4WD models are fitted with either Super-Select 4WD, which delivers optimum traction and handling characteristics for any given

3. Pickup Truck Performance & Functionality
The New L200 features many detail improvements, directed

delivers optimum traction and handling. The new L200 4WD models are fitted with either Super-Select 4WD, which delivers optimum traction and handling characteristics for any given surface, or Easy-Select 4WD, which simplifies switching between drive modes for different road surfaces. With the addition of new drive modes, both 4WD systems deliver improved off-road performance. New Off-road Mode. Both Super-Select and Easy-Select 4WD systems use a new Off-road Mode which has GRAVEL, MUD/SNOW, SAND and ROCK (in 4LLC only) settings. When engaged, Off-road Mode integrally controls engine power, transmission and braking to regulate the amount of wheel slip and thereby maximize all-terrain performance and self-extraction performance in mud or snow. Hill Descent Control - Vehicle speed is electronically controlled to allow the driver to negotiate steep or slippery descents more safely and with more assurance.



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MITSUBISHI MOTORS NIGERIA

LASAA boss, Mobolaji Sanusi kicked out of office ... *as industry jubilates*



It was jubilation galore in the out-of-home advertising sector as news filtered out that the Lagos state Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu has finally terminated the appointment of Managing Director of Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA) Mr Mobolaji Sanusi.

Feelers emanating from Alausa, Governor's office authoritatively confirmed to MARKETING EDGE "that the sack was informed by the tenure completion of the former LASAA boss, a political appointee of former Governor Akinwunmi Ambode". It further said "that since Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu was not keen on extending the tenure of Sanusi, as the tenure ended three months ago, the appointment had to be reviewed and that exactly was what the state government has done".

"Recall that Mobolaji Sanusi's tenure ended 3 months ago September to be specific, and the governor does not want to elongate it nor grant him a second term tenure in office, his appointment had to be reviewed", our sources hinted.

The news of the sack of the debonaire LASAA Chief, a lawyer turned newspaper columnist was received with wild jubilations amongst top practitioners in the out-of-home sector many of whom had suffered miserably because of the leadership style of the former LASAA chieftain.

As they jubilate over the sack, though still awaiting formal announcement from the office of the governor, practitioners in the OOH reeled out their tales of woes in the business frontier under the out-gone LASAA boss.

Meanwhile, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has approved the appointment of a new substantive Chief Executive Officer for LASAA, in person of Mr. Adedamola Adekunjo Docemo. The appointment which takes immediate effect will enable officer of the strategic agency to kick-start activities as LASAA is considered one of the most important agencies of Government.

Sanusi got his appointment through the former governor Akinwunmi Ambode almost five years ago. He was initially enlisted for a tenure elongation after having turned against his former boss and benefactor and worked tirelessly to ensure Ambode

did not get a second term ticket upon realizing that the former had fallen out of grace with the National Leader of All Progressive Congress, (APC) Asiwaju Bola Ahmed.

Reliable government house sources authoritatively disclosed to MARKETING EDGE that Sanusi was shocked to learn that the governor who never gave him any cause to suspect he won't be re-appointed for the much-coveted position. His shock and disbelief was alleged to have emanated from the confidence that the commissioner for Environment, Dr Tunji Bello who happened to be his political God father in his first coming would prevail on his behalf.

Our sources confirmed the failed confidence on the part of the sacked LASAA boss:

"He actually thought he would retain the job, he pressed buttons, and mounted pressures, but Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has a style, he does not make noise and won't frighten anybody about his plans and actions", the source revealed.

Sources disclosed that barely 24hours after Sanusi's removal, the state Governor directed the Head of Service, Hakeem Muri-Okunola, to issue a letter of appointment to the new helmsman weekend.

The source further revealed that "in approving the appointment of Adekunjo, due cognizance has been taken of his integrity, selfless services and record of impressive performance.

The letter issued December 7th, 2019 with reference number LGS/HOS/178/T/158 reads: "In approving your appointment, due cognizance has been taken of your integrity, selfless services and record of impressive performance. Therefore, I have no doubt that you will bring your wealth of experience to bear on the work of the Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency and continue to justify the confidence reposed in you by His Excellency, the governor.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian advertising and marketing sector, especially, the out-door advertising sector. Majority of the OOH Companies' Chieftains who spoke to MARKETING EDGE though under anonymity were jubilant over the development.

A top player who lost billions of investments due to Mobolaji Sanusi's high-handedness was bitter and obviously excited over the sack.

His comments:

"His tenure (Mobolaji Sanusi) can best be described as a regime of doom for OOH in Nigeria. He came with the mentality of an avenger and dealt terrible blows on our industry. He relegated OOH to the background by frustrating clients campaign on OOH. Because of his high-handedness, our clients diverted OOH budgets to digital advertising and other channels and up till now the OOH has been forced to play the second fiddle with clients now negotiating 2 months, 3 months Campaigns unlike in the past when hoardings contracts are for a full year.

The industry source further lamented that some of the atrocities perpetrated by LASAA under Sanusi have robbed practitioners the fruits of their huge investments in the sector".

Another chieftain who also lamented the Sanusi regime at LASAA also recounted that the former LASAA *contd. on pg. 52* ►►

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Peak Breakfast promo produces 20 lucky winners

Twenty lucky winners have emerged in the Peak Breakfast Promo which was organized by the industry manufacturing giant, FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria Plc.

The peak brand promotional was initiated by the foremost manufacturer with a view to entrenching the healthy breakfast culture amongst its Nigerian consumers.

The lucky winners who emerged at the end of the final draws of the promo event all received the grand prize which is an all – expense – paid trip to Dubai to enjoy a breakfast banquet.

To emerge as winner in the promo event which started in August, all consumers needed to do was to simply purchase a combination of Peak Milk products and collect a coupon from a retailer, which together with the products purchased, can be taken to the closest redemption centre and exchanged for a scratch card to win an instant gift.

Speaking during the promo event which held in Lagos, the Senior Brand Manager, Peak Milk, Isaac Okanlawon said with the breakfast experience and leisure trip to Dubai, the company was only

rewarding loyal consumers and at the same time created unforgettable memories with them.

“As we campaign on a healthy breakfast culture, I would like to emphasize that a nourishing breakfast; especially one with Peak Milk keeps you sharp and energetic from dawn till dusk” he said, adding “A nourishing breakfast with Peak Milk will start and end your day well”.

The draws which were held across major cities in Nigeria; including Owerri, Jos, Abuja, and Lagos was organized in the fashion of a consumer forum and at each of the raffle draw events, retailers in the open markets participated in the contests and thereby cart away mouth watering special prizes.

The promo event was witnessed by representatives of the National Lottery Regulatory Commission, the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, community leaders, market traders as well as members of the general public.

FrieslandCampina WAMCO is a multinational company with a strong local character and people-focused. The company



adopts easy and approachable open policy to its wider base consumer markets, and has over the years positioned itself as the leading milk manufacturing company by investing in people, capacity expansion projects and by being an excellent corporate citizen.

The company is an affiliate of the Royal FrieslandCampina of The Netherlands, the largest dairy cooperative in the world. It pioneered the manufacture of evaporated milk through the Peak brand and is the market leader in the introduction of fortified based milk products in Nigeria.

Often referred to as the Peak Milk company, WAMCO is a manufacturer of various milk products and its evaporated and powder milk brands have been a symbol of quality for over fifty years.

The company was incorporated in 1973 and started local production of Peak Milk, its flagship brand, in 1975. Prior to this period, Peak milk was already available in the Nigerian market through imports which began in 1954. ■

Cars45 set to deliver emergency services

Nigeria's leading automotive trading platform, Cars45, has pledged to bring the incessant car breakdown on the nation's roads to an end, as it introduces its Emergency Service. The Cars45 Emergency Service is set to deliver professional, quick-response services for stranded consumers at prompt notice.

The service is aimed at bringing relief and comfort to road users on every journey providing roadside assistance coverage across issues that range from jump-starting a vehicle if the battery loses charge, replacing a flat tire with a spare, delivering fuel to stranded vehicles, towing off disabled vehicles and lockout services for keys that have been locked inside the vehicle.

Vice President, Customer and Dealer

Experience, Oluseyi Folaranmi noted that this service was borne out of Cars45's commitment to providing its valued customers with essential automotive services that would make their lives easier and more productive.

“The Emergency Service is testament to Cars45's efforts at improving customer experience and bringing relief to road users on their journey. Our commitment is to consistently improve the nation's automotive industry with extensive investment in developing solutions that make life better and delivers convenience to users on every trip,” he said.

To enjoy this service, which is being piloted in the Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Lekki Phase 1 areas of Lagos, consumers should



dial 09094545450 for roadside assistance.

Known for bringing transparency to Nigeria's marketplace for used vehicles, Cars45 has become synonymous with creating delightful consumer experiences by offering people a fast and convenient way to buy, sell or swap their cars. ■



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Stakeholders applaud Plural Media, **MARKETING EDGE** initiative on digital news offering

Key industry players, operators and gladiators have applauded the recent partnership deal between Plural Media, a digital driven Out-of-Home advertising company in Nigeria and Marketing Edge Publications with a view to delivering top industry news on digital billboards network pan-Nigeria.

The collaboration which is considered to be groundbreaking in the industry will provide fresh relevant content and news on-the-go with commercial adverts on the Plural Media digital billboard network to keep the audience engaged.

Amongst the industry stakeholders who commended the two companies on the new initiative are: the Group Head, Marketing and Corporate Communications at First Bank and immediate past president of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney who in a response extended congratulatory messages to

Plural Media and Marketing Edge management on the new feat.

"I congratulate you on this latest industry innovation. This will undoubtedly widen the scope of brand information management and brand awareness to consumers. You have pioneered one of the latest and groundbreaking innovations across the industry. Congratulations and kudos on this wonderful achievement," she said.

Also reacting to the new innovation, the General Manager, Brand Communications, MTN, Mr. Richard Iweanoge in a recent congratulatory message to Marketing Edge and Plural Media commended the initiative by both companies, describing it as an "Excellent" feat.

"We commend your thoughtfulness and visionary management on this latest industry offering. This is an excellent innovation that will no doubt go down in history as a major milestone in brand

information management. You have opened up a new vista in the history of the entire brand building enterprise in Nigeria. Congratulations and kudos to MARKETING EDGE and Plural Media," Mr. Iweanoge commented.

Applauding the initiative in a similar tone, Prince Ademola Babalola, a US based veteran journalist and former General Editor of The Punch, described the feat as the latest innovation to manifest in the history of modern journalism in Nigeria.

"You have just birthed the latest innovation in modern journalism in Nigeria. History has already recorded you and this contribution. Congratulations to Marketing Edge and Plural Media. More empowerment and good health granted by God.

"Let me say that this latest achievement has also imposed more responsibility on you, many of which we cannot fathom now. By God's grace, this step shall lead to further achievements beyond the reach of enemies," he wished.

Speaking earlier on the innovative partnership, Uduak Bassey, MD/CEO, Plural Media said: "We have been a proud partner of Marketing Edge in many spheres and, therefore, find it worthy to come together again using our leading-edge LED screens powered by Robust Content Management Software to achieve this feat. This development ties into our mantra about continuous improvement to make DOOH hard to ignore in the media mix.

"The development in the OOH industry in Nigeria vis-à-vis other channels of communications is amongst the most impressive we have experienced in the few years and we are very excited to be teaming up with an industry renowned brand like Marketing Edge that has proven its mettle and remained relevant in its own space to start this landmark initiative."

Speaking in similar vein, Publisher of MARKETING EDGE, Mr. John Ajayi disclosed that the new partnership with Plural Media, a leading OOH digital out-of-home advertising agency is another radical way of pro-actively repositioning the marketing publication for market leadership and pre-eminence.

The publisher hinted also that the new partnership was further inspired by the publication's current innovation with a Daily Newsletter tagged 'MARKETING EDGE Newsletter' which now keeps regular tabs on exclusive industry news as it breaks.

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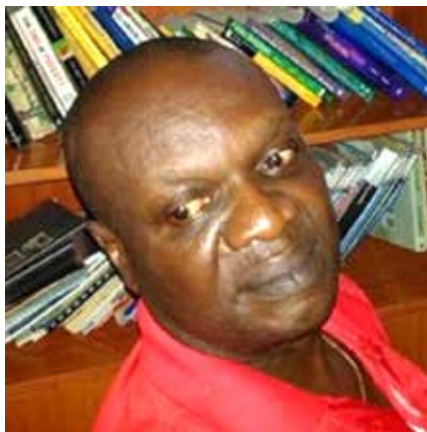
Scrap States regulatory agencies, Adgozo boss advocates

A veteran outdoor advertising practitioner, Honourable Chike Anyaonu, has advocated for the scrapping of the legislative provisions empowering state governments in the country to establish regulatory agencies for outdoor advertising.

Speaking in an exclusive with **MARKETING EDGE** in Lagos, Anyaonu, managing director at Adgozo Limited, a leading outdoor advertising agency in Nigeria also advised stakeholders and operators across the country's outdoor advertising industry to come together and form a united front to fight against the various challenges threatening the growth of the business especially, multiple taxation by governmental agencies.

According to him, the Schedule 4 of the Nigerian Constitution places squarely the regulatory exercise of outdoor advertising practice in the country on local government authorities, hence the powers being exercised by state governments in creating state agencies for outdoor advertising regulation are illegal and, to that extent, they should be scrapped.

He maintained that the creation of



outdoor regulatory agencies for outdoor advertising by several state governments in the country amounted to a total usurpation of the powers of the local governments as enshrined in the constitution and this, he said, must be abolished.

Making specific reference from to Lagos State where the Government established LASAA, the veteran practitioner described the trend as an ugly development which has continued to be replicated in several other states in the country.

In his words, "What they did or are trying to do and are still doing today, to my

mind, did not conform with what is done to enable practitioners to continue practicing in a conducive environment. That of Lagos was like somebody who was trying to do a witch hunt,' adding, "The law that established LASAA should be challenged in the Law court. I am telling you because it eroded the functions of the local government. It, in a way, usurped the functions of the local governments, and placed it on LASAA that is a State agency, now the local governments then are no longer doing anything relevant".

Concluding, Anyaonu emphasized that "Schedule 4 of the constitution says functions of the Local Government shall be to control and regulate Outdoor advertising; to my mind the control and regulation should begin and stop with setting the standards of the boards where they should be, locations, the formats, and the fidelity of those boards so that they don't fall, they can stand the test of time, so that they don't become a nuisance or constitute a threat to the environment; and not to use it to make money for government, having revenue generation or drive at the back of the mind".

MTN holds 5G Demo in Lagos, honours dignitaries

To demonstrate proof of concept and give consumers, including dignitaries, a hands-on experience of 5G technology, MTN Nigeria has played host to the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by the Secretary to the Lagos State Government, Sherifat Folashade Jaji, at its 5G technology showcase event.

Other notable attendees at the Lagos 5G showcase included dignitaries such as the Oba of Lagos, His Royal Majesty, Oba Rilwan Akiolu; Hon. Tunde Braimoh, member, Lagos state house of assembly and the representative of the Speaker, and a host of others.

The occasion was the third of seven demonstrations scheduled to hold in major cities across the Nigeria, followed the successful trial in Abuja on November

25 and Calabar on November 28, 2019, respectively.

The demo events are the result of a strong collaboration between the Ministry of Communications Technology and Digital Economy and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), that saw MTN working with its partners, namely, Huawei (Abuja), ZTE (Calabar) and Ericsson (Lagos), to provide a glimpse into a range of 5G use cases and applications at test Labs designed to show proof-of-concept in these locations.

Emphasising the importance of partnerships at the 5G Demo, Ferdi Moolman, the Chief Executive Officer, MTN Nigeria, said: "Pushing boundaries is easier when your aspirations are supported by like-minded people. We are here today because of the support and guidance of the Ministry

of Communications and Digital Economy and the Nigerian Communications Commission who provided the trial spectrum used for this." ■

He added: "Also key to this achievement are our equipment vendors who shared our vision, and whose capabilities were brought to bear in making the 5G trials across the country a reality. We are grateful for these partners, our customers and everyone who made it possible. Today's success underlines the fact that we are good together."

Also speaking at the event, Mazen Mroue, Chief Operating Officer, MTN Nigeria noted: "In collaboration with our technical partners and the support of the Federal Government, we are proudly putting Nigeria on the 5G technology map. As we continue to invest in technology solutions to meet the wide needs of our customers, MTN will continue to strengthen these partnerships as we move to build our 5G capacity in future, guided by the standards and spectrum set by the Nigerian Communications Commission." ■

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Why Casers Group was honoured with National Productivity Merit Award



Minister of Labour and productivity, Dr Chris Ngige (left), congratulating Casers Group Chairman, Enyi Odigbo (right) as he received the National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award from His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha in Abuja, recently.

One of Africa's foremost advertising groups, Casers Group, has been awarded the prestigious National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award at the 18th National Productivity Day recently in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

The event which is organised by the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment was held at the NAF conference centre, Kado, Abuja, recently. Organisers of the event noted that Casers Group was nominated and subsequently awarded the NPOM Award for its "high professionalism, continuous improvement practice and immense contributions to wealth creation and overall development of Nigeria."

Complete Advertising Services or Casers for short was born a little over 33 years ago when its founder decided to leave a blossoming career in one of Nigeria's biggest and most capitalized companies to pursue a dream. That dream which started with a company has now grown into a Group of companies offering diverse but complementary services. Remarkably, Casers Group has recorded many notable achievements over the years. As a group it has built a consistent track record of winning international creative awards. It won Nigeria's first Epica, Cristal and Loeries awards. Locally it is also the most awarded at the prestigious Lagos Advertising & Ideas Festivals (LAIF).

At the corporate level, the National Productivity Merit Award acknowledges and awards organisations that are self-reliant in their adaptation and application of technology in order to guarantee for themselves cost effective operation and productive efficiency. Also, the award, according to organisers, "recognizes companies which show a trend for sustained increase over the years for sustained increase over the years in such areas as capacity utilisation, sales turnover, profitability, employee welfare schemes and training facilities."

Organisers further noted that the Caser's Group is the only company in Nigeria's Marketing Communications sector that offers that offers free scholarship to all the children and wards of its almost 170 member staff. Since the introduction of the scheme in 1992, over 6000 children have benefited from the Casers Group Child Assist Scholarship from Primary to tertiary education level.

During its 30th anniversary, Casers' Group conducted the first online Youth Challenge (CYC) in Nigeria which involved the participation of over 10,000 Nigerian youths. A total cash prize of \$25,000 was awarded to the winning contestants to empower their further education and talent development.#

Also, Casers Group developed the Voting Ethics for the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) which was

formally presented and received notable commendation from the Vice President of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osibajo. In addition, the Nigeria Unity Orientation Campaign was developed by Casers Group for AAAN.

Speaking to pressmen after the awards ceremony, the Chairman of Casers Group, Enyi Odigbo, who received the award from His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, said that the award speaks volume of the excellence from the Casers stable in helping people make choices by the way they promote brands they work for. Speaking on the implication of the win for the industry, he noted that based on the importance of the industry to the country, a lot more needs to be done. "Our industry has a lot of fundamental work to do but what this tells us is to appreciate the enormity of our responsibility as a profession. We are custodians of public opinion. We must be responsible enough to know that we can shape opinions, actually make people go 'mad'"

Also commenting, Vice Chairman of Casers Group, Ikechi Odigbo told pressmen that the award received is a significant milestone in the Casers Group and its subsidiaries-DDB Lagos, BBDO West Africa, Nexus and DDB offices across West and Central Africa. "For us as a Group, it is a statement, a fulfilment and reward for the vast milestones that we have achieved overtime, it also represents a significant milestone for the entire Marketing Communications sector, because, I believe this is the first time that a marketing Communications Group is being recognised by the Federal Government for its exemplary service and contribution to economic growth and so we are elated on the conferment of the award.

"This award is for every staff within the Casers Group because this is the result of their hard work which has also being shaped by the vision of the Group Chairman whose philosophy is to build a culture where we are enemies of the ordinary. That that commitment to be enemies of the ordinary in the way we do things, in the way we think, how we engage projects and business activities is what is creating the traction and the milestones of achievements we are seeing after 33 years of existence.

This is corroborated by Enyi who three years prior, during the Group's 30th anniversary, said that at the heart of the group's operations lies its people. As he had bluntly put it, the group has achieved its many successes because of its people. "I also learnt that if people are the most important asset, then you have to be very detailed in the way you approach them. In our group and in any company I run today, I think we have some of the most amazing people policies in this industry. I am not talking about casual things. For instance, in the Casers Group we have a high-flying chief protocol officer whose job on a daily basis is to show me how to hire, retain and motivate the most passionate people on this planet."

Casers Group is joined on the organisational award list by Dufil Prima Foods Plc. and 5 others, as well as Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Chairman of UBA and philanthropist, Mr Tony Elumelu, the Chairman of Channels Media, Mr John Momoh and 22 others in the individual category of the awards. Since inception, 333 individuals and 84 organisations have been honoured with the National Productivity Order of Merit Award.

Ideas Festival (LAIF).

From the outset, Casers' vision was to pioneer a new thinking: build a creative business solutions organisation that will be an extension of the clients' businesses rather than just a supplier or service provider. To bring this to life, instead of hiring client service executives, it hired brand managers whose vista and responsibilities extended beyond client servicing to providing business solutions and thought leadership. ■



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Ose Osundeko: The rise of a digital rebel

For Ose Osundeko, the present job offer at Fidelity Bank as Group Head of the Digital Business cannot be said to be a happenstance. Reason? She is a certified digital rebel. With a Masters Distinction certification in strategic marketing of the renowned Durham University Business School, Durham, UK, the restless and relentless marketing Amazon has earlier in life equipped and armed herself with requisite skills and competencies that would serve her aim and purpose in her chosen digital and marketing career. Talking about degrees and credentials, Ose Osundeko's resume is hard to beat and of course an irresistible item to appreciate by a discerning employer of labour in a marketing world that thrives on creative disruptions. Truth be told, Osundeko's curriculum vitae reads like a fictional biography, but it's a true representation of her academic accomplishments and professional laurels.

The Webster University, Wales trained B.Sc degree in Economics and a First class B.A Hons Degree holder in management with special emphasis in marketing and minors in psychology and media communication acquired degrees as if she was actually in academic competition with herself. This pedigree no doubt makes this iconic, petite, humane and humble persona a curious professional object for assessment and review by MARKETING EDGE's hagiographers.

She has been an exciting and engaging personality all her life. Her early romance with the digital world started in 2009 at Listen Fundraising after which she was appointed Digital Centre Manager at Wild Fusion Digital Centre. Her primary roles and responsibilities were centred

on developing and implementing digital marketing strategies and ensuring compliance to budget while performing monthly forecasts on plans. She also worked, developing prospects and clients profiling amongst several other tasks. All of these have been made possible with the Professional Diploma in Digital Marketing from the Digital Marketing Institute based in Ireland, June 2014.

If what she achieved at Wild Fusion Digital Centre was an icing on the cake, her exploits at Insight Redefini Group, where she was Head, Digital Marketing (Starcom Media Perspectives), Digital Acceleration Lead (Insight Publicis) were remarkably unbeatable in the annals of career growth. There, she played the leadership role of leading the digital team covering display advertising, organic and paid search, content marketing, email marketing and CRM, mobile marketing, digital analytics, tech development and budgetary control of all digital marketing activities.

Besides, she played pivotal role in leading a portfolio of global brand and national brands worth over two billion naira (N2bn), including Coca-Cola, Mondelez, Visa Card, ARM and Samsung amongst several other tasks and eadeavours. It is to her credit that while at Insight Redefini, the Year-on-Year growth in profitability of digital services, attained 120% growth between January to December 2016.

She structured the team to ensure specialisation of skills and optimum collaboration in servicing clients. Similarly, she brilliantly implemented processes that ensured media partners invoices were received on time so that the agency could bill clients on due dates while ensuring that agency cash cow was healthy and media partners

were paid promptly. To justify the confidence management reposed in her, she was the only non-director level personnel to be appointed as a member of the executive management team. These and many more landmark career achievements no doubt attracted the management of Fidelity Bank Plc to hire her as Group Digital Head of the irrepressible and vibrant financial brand.

In this new task, Ose Osundeko will be charged with the responsibility of managing a team of digital marketing managers accountable for defining the digital marketing strategy for the bank, product and services, engaging customers digitally to build brand love and affinity, and providing best-in-class customer experiences across all digital touch-points which are all aimed at materialising the bank's aspirations in becoming a Tier 1 bank by 2022.

This cerebral professional has her hands in other pies as well. A forensic review of her past exploits revealed that she was once behind the Empowerment Initiative for Women – Empowering Women with Technology.

Based on the belief that any attempt to improve the quality of life of people in developing countries will be incomplete without progress towards empowering women, she conceptualised and birthed the 'Empowering Women with Technology (EWT) initiative.

EWT aims at promoting economic empowerment of women in Nigeria by leveraging technology productively for learning and commercial activities that lead to financial gains.

The initiative was launched on International Women's Day in 2015 with an event sponsored by a leading financial brand in the country alongside Wild Fusion Digital Centre. It brought together over thirty leading women with a desire to change the course of women and make things happen for them with technology. The event was chaired by Oby Ezekwesili (former Presidential Aspirant, Minister of Education and VP, World Bank Africa), Omobola Johnson, (former Minister for Communication Technology) and Iquo Ukoh (popular food blogger and CEO of Entod Marketing).

To further demonstrate her restless quest to live a proficient and purpose-driven life, Ose Osundeko is poised to meaningfully disrupt Nigeria's nonprofit sector. She would be bringing to bear, her business-like practices and marketing acumen on the sector via her organisation, Right Hand Advisory, dedicated to helping non-profits achieve their individual objectives and roles in the society starting from January 2020. Ose believes that the professionalisation of the nonprofit sector will mark a paradigm shift and bring about the integration of career ideals and values into the everyday world of nonprofit-making work. ■

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Unending price war in carbonated soft drinks market

In a tough consumer economy, pricing and volume can become powerful marketing tools in the hands of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies. Having spent the past few years cutting/increasing volumes and, in most cases, subtly increasing prices to deal with weak and fluctuating economy, players in Nigeria's soft drinks market may not be resting on their oars any time soon.

The focus on volume and pricing became clear when the nation's economy plunged into recession a few years ago. The talk was how price increase and grammage reduction were both necessary because of external factors, including forex restriction on many imported raw materials, a growing unemployment and consumers' loss of purchasing power.

So far, the price hikes and reduction in grammages have been somewhat subtle and the effects for consumers would largely not have been harshly felt yet.

But FMCG firms' commitment to pass on costs to consumers doesn't seem to have abated and might have only assumed a change in strategy from companies, which were previously more concerned with retaining existing prices and elusively reducing volume to retain customer loyalty. However, passing costs to consumers because of the economic situation in the country is unfair and unjust.

The Head of Market Development, German Engineering Federation, Martina Claus, recently revealed that Nigeria ranked fourth globally in the volume of soft drinks sales recorded about three years ago. Claus spoke at the Third International Trade Exhibition on Agrofood, Plastics, Printing and Packaging, recently in Lagos.

She said that statistics on soft drinks sales were sourced from the Euromonitor International, a global market intelligence publisher. The market developer said the statistics showed that 38.68 million litres of soft drinks were sold in Nigeria in 2016.

This puts Nigeria behind only the United States (114.75), China (88.18) and Mexico (45.30) in the top markets' ranking.

This also explains why the battle for market share in the segment, despite the country's economic challenges, is intense. At the last count, there are more than 18 soft drinks brands in the market going after buyers' consideration. For around 30 years, and before the passageway of different brands, Coca Cola, Fanta, Sprite made by Coca Cola Nigeria Limited, CCNL; Pepsi, SevenUp and Mirinda delivered by SevenUp Bottling Company, SBC Plc, and La Casera, made by La Casera Company Limited, overwhelmed the market.

Since the most recent five years, new players in the soft drinks sector have raised a basic test to the current market pioneers, apparently trying to upturn their authority. As of late, new soft drink brands such as Big Cola, created by Ajeast Nigeria Limited, a back-up of AJE Group, a Peruvian soda maker and Bigi Cola, fabricated by Rite Foods Limited, entered the market to test the situation of the pioneers.

Carbonates are mainstream among all Nigerians, particularly the youth segment. Numerous Nigerians expend somewhere in the range of 2 and 8 bottles every day and stay ignorant of the well-being ramifications of their activities. Amid the survey time frame, filtered water was the most unique part regarding all out volume development, at a rate of 46%.

Any brand that controls the cost of the soft drink advert, without substantial decrease, would dependably have a more grounded hang on buyers and the capacity to initiate them to switch loyalty.



Bigi Cola which is pressed in 500ml bottle, has four variations; Bigi Cola, Orange, Lemon-Lime and Apple. Bigi Cola is riding on evaluating, a similar methodology sent by Big Cola to infiltrate the soda pop market when it recently came. A container cost of PET bottle (50cl) of Bigi-Cola is N950, Pepsi-Cola moves for N1,050 and Coca Cola for N1150.

While the retail cost of a 50cl bottle of Bigi-Cola, Big Cola and Pepsi is N100, Coca-Cola moves for N120. Some famous brands, for example, Coca Cola and Pepsi are pioneers in the high-development showcase; others are predominant in the low-development advertisement. In spite of expanding rivalry, Coca Cola and Pepsi still hold firmly to their initial position in the soft drinks showcase, having effectively disregarded threats from competitors with a blend of item quality, tireless purchaser commitment and forceful promotion.

From every indication, Coca-Cola possesses the capacity to rise above all age gatherings. Moreover, Pepsi is slanting towards a similar market course by speaking to all demography and driving constant shopper commitment. Ajeast's discoveries at various retail shops across Lagos, including Apapa, Ikeja, Oshodi, Gbagada and Agbara show that a few customers who have reinforced their dependability on Coke and Pepsi still have the appetite for different brands.

As one of the '4Ps' of marketing (along with product, promotion and place), pricing is a key tool in a marketer's arsenal, yet a double-edged sword, despite arguably being the most effective lever for driving profits. Brands often shy away from increasing prices within a competitive market so that customers don't defect to cheaper brands and they lose volume sales and therefore market share.

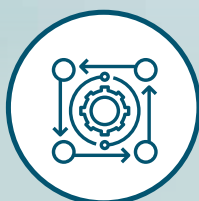
Over the past couple of years, Nigerian FMCG firms have been combating lower demand and increased competition by reducing grammages and slightly increasing prices. Yet analysts believe they may overplay the impact of market forces on their brands if the consumers are squeezed too hard.

The choice by FMCG companies to raise prices now is purportedly due to circumstances, with rising commodity costs, inflation, proposed forex ban on certain consumer goods and foreign exchange rates all forcing their hand.

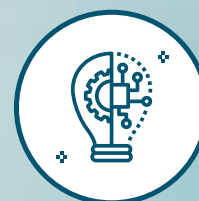
Meanwhile, with prevalent economic worries, Nigerian consumers are more careful with their spending. As pricing and volume strategies have diverged in recent times and the effect is fully felt in the market, marketing has become even more important to explain why consumers should part with their hard-earned cash. ■



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Broadcasters Guild debuts to raise standard for industry



Broadcasters Guild of Nigeria, (BGN) an umbrella organization for all operatives and employees in the broadcast organisations has been established in the country with a view to setting standards and sanitizing the industry for outstanding performance and outcomes.

Announcing the birth of the guild on his LinkedIn page, Chief Executive Officer of CANIG D2DINC, Mr. Samuel Osaze Iyamu disclosed that the guild's arrival in the hotly competitive Nigerian broadcast sector will usher in a new dawn for operators and employees.

The association registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission has as board of trustees eminent broadcasters, professionals and broadcast media proprietors who have distinguished themselves in their various fields of endeavor.

These are: Iyamu Osaze Samuel, Ogunbanwo Olalekan Adeleke, Egbuna Ben, Dalhatu Faruk Mohammed, Momoh Olatchy John, Ejiofor Kelvin Msochukwu, King-Paul Olabisi Margaret, Allwell-Brown Sienna and Adaba Aaze Thomas. These eminent broadcasters were said to have been duly appointed trustees of the new body.

However, the newly formed guild appears to be a major counter poise to Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, (BON) which is a broad coalition of public and private broadcasters as the

nation's umbrella Union of Terrestrial Radio Television (TV) Direct-To-Home (DTH) Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Multimedia Distribution System ECD (MMDS)

Confirming the real motive behind the formation of (BGN), Samuel Osaze Iyamu who spoke exclusively to *MARKETING EDGE* on phone from his base in Toronto, Canada disclosed that the over-all aims and objectives of the visioners and promoters of this initiative are to bequeath to the nation a truly professional, standardized, sanitized and competent industry that is truly ready for the challenges of contemporary business demands and expectations.

Besides, he said the formation of the guild was to help arrest the decline in the broadcast sector as it continues to witness setting up of avalanche of different radio and television stations.

His words: "Our main objective for setting up Broadcasters Guild of Nigeria (BGN) was to help arrest the decline in the sector, we want to set standards and ensure that all operators and employees, irrespective of their different professions are well taken care, motivated, trained and remunerated".

Established in 1973, the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria is today comprised of over 100 members and they collectively own over 250 radio and television stations. BON's vision is to foster

a future-proof environment for radio, TV and new media broadcasters to serve their audiences and contribute to the development of the Nigerian society.

Essentially, BON is an independent, non-governmental umbrella association of all private, public, commercial and community electronic media houses in Nigeria.

It is worth pointing out that before the resuscitation of BON in 1988, there were the following media groups:

- Chief Executives of Federal and State Owned Radio Organization (CEFASORO).
- Television Organization of Nigeria (TON)
- State Owned Broadcasting Organizations of Nigeria (SOBON)

All these three groups fused into one umbrella and resuscitated BON in 1988.

Since then, it has continued to grow in strength, structure and mandate.

Today, there are over 100 members which collectively own over 250 radio and television stations.

BON's objectives include::

- To serve as a meeting point for all Terrestrial Radio, Television, DTH, DTT and MMDS broadcasters.
- To encourage content and technology innovation
- To advance the interest of our members in local, state, national, International, industry and public affairs.
- To serve as an advisory body to the Federal and State Governments on broadcasting matters.
- To encourage and sustain greater co-operation and collaboration among the broadcasting organizations, and other industry players.
- To improve the quality and profitability of broadcasting
- To seek and utilize available resources for manpower development, research and set training standards.
- To set, regulate and monitor professional standards and ethics of its members. ■

Wales International Schools: When academics meet excellence



School Structure

Among the many causes of writer's block (a psychological inhibition preventing a writer from proceeding with a piece), is the absence of inspiration. But, it is arguably impossible not to heal from this and get inspired to write after reviewing the level of quality education offered by Wales International Schools.

Education and learning are made easy through quality human and material resources. An institution with professional teachers and staff that lacks learning facilities is no learning institution at all, as both works *pari passu* in bringing out the best in students and preparing them for future challenges. Interestingly, Wales International School scores a high mark in this regard.

Located at number 5 Unity Close, Aseese, Ibafo on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Ogun State, Nigeria, Wales International prides itself in teaching and non-teaching staff who are result-oriented professionals, playing different roles in imparting knowledge.

Highlighted below are some of the factors that make the school a standard academic institute for excellence.

Ideal school complex

Being an all fur coat with no knickers, the school complex is built on a large and extensive space of land, which caters for the nursery and primary sections. The classrooms are well-spaced to accommodate a maximum of 20 students per class with each student having their own chair and desk.



ICT Room

Laboratory

For students who learn through practical illustration, the science laboratory would indulge them. It is equipped for subjects such as chemistry, biology and physics. Pictorial illustrations and charts are also available there as an ample guide.

Sports

Sporting games such as table tennis, basketball, football among others are organised by the management of the school to build students extra-curricular activities.

This gives credence to the quote by Joline Godfrey, the author of *Raising Financially Fit Kids*, who wrote that "all works and no play doesn't just make Jill and Jack dull, it kills the potential of discovery, mastery, openness to change, flexibility, and it hinders innovation and invention."

Library

The school's library is adequately stocked with books, both academic and non-academic literature, needed by students. The atmosphere of Wales International School is cozy and perfect to digest academic contents.

Sick Bay

The sick bay is also well-equipped with professional medical practitioners to ensure that students are in good health at all times.

Information technology center

At Wales International, students do not just learn how to read and write, they're also taught on IT skills, which will aid their studies in the important Computer Science subject.

Canteen

At break, students of Wales International would enjoy well-spaced canteen, which is kept neat at all times to maintain student hygiene. The meals available are well-prepared by seasoned cooks.

School buses

In a country where security challenge is of great concern to many, the school provide buses that convey students from their homes to school and vice versa.

For prospective students who wish to live within the school, Wales international has boarding hostels, located near the school. Among the facilities to enjoy include stable power supply, beddings, non-stop water supply, internet WIFI and living room.



Hostel for Boarders



JC DECAUX backs down ... Gets condition for OAAN membership

After three years of grandstanding and unwarranted prevarication, JC Decaux, a Paris based globally acclaimed outdoor advertising firm and its local partner, Grace Lake Partners have finally backed down from their high horse as they have indicated intention to formalize and regularize its business registration papers with the appropriate regulatory authorities.

The global outdoor company which has for a long while prevaricated and dragged feet on registering its business operations legally and procedurally as it should be was alleged to have written a formal apology letter to the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, (OAAN) an umbrella body of all registered outdoor companies in Nigeria.

Recall that JC Decaux, a leading global OOH company entered into the Nigerian Out-of-Home market in 2014, partnering with local investment firm, Grace Lake Partners allegedly owned by the serial investor and entrepreneur, Mr. Ladi Delano without properly registering its business operations as an OOH company with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Despite this legal lapse, the company went into business taking most juicy multi-national advertising accounts using its pedigree and networks

amongst expatriate Chief Executive Officers of the blue chip companies.

Aside that, the company which entered the local out-of-home market with huge funds in foreign currency dabbled into investment in high-cost OOH infrastructural facilities and street furniture thereby igniting more competitive fire in the sector.

Alleged to get the full backings of the former Lagos state governor, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, the company further created enmity for itself as it went on unbridled acquisition of strategic billboards locations hitherto approved and operated by local competitors by different and respective regulatory agencies.

Specifically, according to industry sources, "JC Decaux has since its entry into Nigeria resorted to various unethical business practices which are against global best practices or even the relevant law of the land. The company aided by its access to funds and deep ties with government has been able to outmuscle local operators and shut them out of potential business opportunities."

According to a report on *COMPLETENEWS*, an online news platform, MediaWorth, a local OOH firm which is now the complainant has recently been at the receiving end of JCD's

alleged illegality in Nigeria. Established in 1994, MediaWorth has over time made huge investment into its outdoor operations in the country. But the company now faces a bleak future following JCD's takeover of its site in Lagos.

In a statement of claims obtained by *COMPLETENEWS*, it was revealed that sometime in 2012, Media Worth had embarked on strategic sites hunting and found the Oworoshoki end of the Third Mainland Bridge suitable for a proposed digital electronic billboard. It immediately applied to Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) for approval.

But LASAA in a letter dated 18th October, 2011 referred MediaWorth to the Federal Ministry of Works which is statue-empowered by the virtue of Federal Highways Act to grant approvals for right of way on Federal roads. Consequently, an application was made on 22nd, February, 2012 by the local advertising firm to the Federal Ministry of Works. The Nigerian agency received an approval on 12 March 2012 and was asked to pay N2 million to the federal government coffers.

MediaWorth made the payment and began mobilising men and materials to the site. But not long after it

BEHOLD....



The brand management business and the management of brand business gets a new fillip as
MARKETING EDGE Publications Ltd.
a leading top of the market, brand-focused magazine in partnership with



TVC Communications,

a flagship digital driven broadcasting TV Station kick started
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It is a **half hour potpourri of news, gists, personality interviews, product launches and robust conversations** on contemporary issues in
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Aimed at promoting the brand idea, the much awaited industry programme
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MARKETING EDGE on TV : promoting the brand idea.

commenced construction on the site; the Nigerian company received a stop work order from the Lagos State Ministry of Environment and later Ministry of Town Planning and Urban Development, citing public safety concerns.

While MediaWorth was still in the process of getting the controversial order lifted, it was gathered that LASAA revoked the approval initially granted. At this stage, according to court papers filed by MediaWorth, it had invested over N150 million. The Nigerian agency also claimed it is still indebted to the tune of \$100,000 to its technical suppliers

MediaWorth also said that after the alleged illegal revocation of its site, armed policemen invaded the property to destroy its erected structures. It also stated that the site has been illegally hijacked and handed over to JC Decaux to construct an LED board in the guise of public safety.

Meanwhile, JC Decaux in a counter affidavit deposited to before the Federal High Court, Ikoyi, Lagos, initially claimed to have gotten necessary approvals from relevant government agencies including the Federal Ministry of Works.

However, upon discovering that the Federal Ministry of Works, which is the first defendant in the case denied issuance of approval to any advertising firm other than MediaWorth, JC Decaux recanted and claimed it acted in error and therefore did not have FG's approval. By law, only the Federal Ministry of Works can give approval for right of way on Oworoshoki end of the Third Mainland Bridge and Federal Highways across Nigeria.

Interestingly, MediaWorth is not the only Nigerian OOH agency engaged in a legal tussle with JCD, the French company has also been dragged to court by Moving Media for alleged usurpation of site. However, the foreign firm has resolved the crisis it has with Moving Media. While the multinational company also has a pending court case with Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN).

It will be recalled that the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, (OAAN) had instituted a suit at the Federal High Court in the Lagos Judicial Division against JC Decaux over alleged illegal and improper business registration to practice out-of-home advertising business in the country.

In the suit filed 19th February, 2018, OAAN the plaintiff joined as

Defendants, JC Decaux, Corporate Affairs Commission and Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON). In the suit with the File No. FHC/OK/249/19, OAAN is seeking the following reliefs:

DECLARATION that the 3rd Defendant was not validly incorporated by the 1st Defendant pursuant to the provisions of the Companies & Allied Matters Act.

A DECLARATION that not having been validly incorporated in Nigeria, the 3rd Defendant cannot practice the profession of advertising and in particular, outdoor advertising, and is therefore not entitled to a licence or other authorization to practice in the outdoor sector of the profession of advertising in Nigeria from the 2nd

AN ORDER of the honourable court setting aside or directing the 1st Defendant to set aside the incorporation of the 3rd

AN ORDER of perpetual injunction restraining the 2nd Defendant from issuing a licence or other authorization to the 3rd Defendant which would permit it to practice the profession or business of outdoor advertising in Nigeria.

AND the determination of the following questions:

Whether the 3rd Defendant was validly incorporated by the 1st Defendant pursuant to the provisions of the Companies & Allied Matters Act?

Whether the 3rd Defendant not having been validly incorporated in Nigeria, can lawfully practice in the outdoor sector of the profession of advertising in Nigeria?

Whether it would be in the interest of the rule of law for the honourable court to set aside or direct the 1st Defendant to set aside the incorporation of the 3rd Defendant and restrain the 2nd Defendant from granting a licence or other authorization to the 3rd Defendant to practice outdoor advertising in Nigeria?

An affidavit was sworn to in support of the originating summons by Chief Folusho Akinbobola on behalf of Incorporated Trustees of Outdoor Advertising Association.

However, realizing that it may not win the many battles it has been fighting on different fronts, JC Decaux it was reliably gathered by MARKETING EDGE may have finally succumbed to reason and logic as it waves an olive branch to OAAN.

Reliable and authoritative industry

sources hinted MARKETING EDGE that truce may be on the way sooner than envisaged as both OAAN and the company have been genuinely engaged in frank and sincere conversation. According to sources, OAAN team negotiating with the company were said to have presented a long list of demands and conditions for JC Decaux as a prerequisite for final resolution of the face-off.

Some of these conditions, MARKETING EDGE can authoritatively report include: payment of a yet to be stipulated fine by the foreign firm; proper registration with OAAN and payment of all dues since arrival into the country, withdrawal of Appeals on litigations in court, change of name and business operations within ethical and statutory confines as may have been stipulated in the constitution and other regulatory bodies.

Feelers emanating from the industry have revealed that the foreign company appears sober and apologetic, as a result ready and willing to abide with most if not all of the conditions stated.

"We could see that JC Decaux is for once sober and reflective. The firm appears apologetic and sounds convincing about its intention to toe the line this time around", explained a very top OAAN source who would not want to be quoted.

He stated that though OAAN is not completely convinced about JC Decaux, what we know is that from the tone and language of its apology letter, it is very clear, the firm is sincere and wants to play ball.

"Again, we are not unmindful about the fact that there is a change of baton in Alausa, the seat of Lagos State government, so all of these may have informed the humble posturing and gentle man resolve of JC Decaux now that their backers in government are no more," the source hinted.

Meanwhile, all efforts to get the comments and reactions by JC Decaux management proved abortive. A very reliable source and former ally of JC Decaux said it is unaware of the latest truce trip with OAAN, adding that all counsel given to the firm hitherto was turned down.

As it were, all stakeholders in the OOH sector are eagerly awaiting the revert by the local partners which told the negotiating team that it will go and table the proposed resolution plans and conditions before its parent company in Paris. ■

AAAN'S 46TH AGM IN PICS



L-R: Mr. Ikechi Odigbo and Mr. Victor Johnson, former MD, MC&A Saatchi and Saatchi as they listened to the citation of the latter being read



L-R: Alhaji Garba Bello Kankarofi, immediate past Registrar of APCON shaking hands with Mr. Emmanuel Ajufo, President, Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, OAAAN



L-R: Mr. Kola Ayanwale, Group MD, CentrespreadGrey Advertising; Mrs. Bola Thomas, former President of AAAN (then AAPN); Alhaji Garba Bello Kankarofi, immediate past Registrar of APCON and Mr. Ikechi Odigbo, President, AAAN



R-L: Mr. Steve Babaeko, Mr. Ikechi Odigbo and Lekan Fadolapo, Executive Secretary, AAAN following the proceedings in deep concentration



L-R: Mr. Lere Awokoya, Chairman, TBWA Concept in a warm embrace with Mr. Kola Ayanwale



L-R: Mr. Funmi Onabolu, MD/CEO, Bates Cosse; Alhaji Garba Bello Kankarofi and Mr. Kola Ayanwale



L-R: Mr. Steve Babaeko presenting the AAAN Rising Star award to Adebola Adegbulube of Leo Burnett



L-R: Mr. Ikechi Odigbo presenting AAAN Special Recognition award to Mr. Victor Johnson



L-R: Mr. Ikechi Odigbo presenting AAAN Special Recognition award to Dr. Mrs. Tendai Mhizha, MD, Insight Publicis, representing Mr. Jimi Awosika, Vice Chairman, Troyka Holdings



L-R: Mr. Demola Olusunmade receiving a Certificate of Recognition from Mr. Ikechi Odigbo, President, AAAN



Mrs. Bola Thomas on the dancing floor at the AGM

Jumia opens e-commerce platform for brands and companies to advertise

Nigeria's leading e-commerce platform, Jumia, has opened up its e-commerce platform to brands and corporate organisations to advertise. The company's Head of Growth & Partnerships, Olusegun Martins who made the disclosure recently during an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, disclosed that the platform is one of the most visited in Nigeria and Africa.

In his words, "We are in 13 countries of Africa, and in each country we serve consumers absolutely everywhere. We are much more than "e-commerce", we have hotels, flights, restaurants, classifieds portals and many more platforms, which give us even more data and more ability to target the right audience for brands looking to reach a wider and more targeted audience", adding that in 2018 alone, page views on the Jumia website were over 700 million; and that it now averages over 90 million views per month.

Said Martins, "We have bespoke solutions for various needs; we can help brands build awareness, consideration, engagement, sales, and even multiple products to tap into. We can segment users in a very unique way based on their real shopping interest at the most granular level. We help brands to target users geographically in the most effective way. We have run very successful campaigns in multiple countries and advertisers who choose Jumia decide to allocate recurring budgets to our platform".

He further disclosed that Jumia digital advertising platform is growing very fast. Every day, more users access Jumia and use it as a source of research, inspiration and shopping, adding that "No other platform is growing faster; its campaign reporting tools are objective and independent; and Jumia is adapting the model of leading e-commerce platform in the US, Amazon. We have the online shopping audience. Amazon Advertising is growing very fast, because brands and advertisers see it as a great alternative for other advertising channels".

Martins informed that the decision by the Jumia to veer into the advertising business space arose out of the popular demand by various customers of the company who had long been yearning to have an advertising platform owned by Jumia to expose their services and brands.

According to him, over the last seven years, Jumia had remained one of the top 10 most visible websites in Nigeria, adding that the clamour by customers for an advertising platform from Jumia was on the increase, hence the decision by the company to give it a trial this year.

In the words of the Head of Growth & Partnerships, "We decided to open our platform starting from October. There is a huge opportunity for brands to showcase their services and products to our audience and that is why we opened our platform. The way we want the brands to look at it is to think of Jumia as a search engine. The perception is that people come

to Jumia to buy only. This is not entirely the case. A large chunk of people that come to Jumia come to make informed decisions; at that point when they are searching, their minds are receptive to whatever communication is available. So, people need to look at Jumia as a search engine".

Shedding more light on who the target audiences for the new advertising platform are, the Jumia boss observed that every brand that aims to reach Nigerians was a possible target.

According to him, already Jumia was working in close collaboration with some strategic agencies who have indicated long term interests in partnering with the company over the new advertising platform.

Martins continued: "We have always made it possible for sellers on Jumia to be able to advertise and all our vendors know this. But over the last couple of years we have been getting enquiries from banks, insurance companies, telcos and different sectors of brands who don't necessarily sell on Jumia, but are interested in reaching their targets by placing ads on our platform. We want to enable brands reach out to people we call "quality audience" because the people that are coming to shop on Jumia are not just there to look around; they are at an advanced stage of the purchase funnel. They are in an active mode of purchase and at that point, they are receptive to communication". ■





Mrs. Ijedi Iyoha, Ag. Registrar of APCON being interviewed by journalists



Dignitaries at APCON's National Advertising Conference



Mr. Biodun Shobanjo, Doyen of Nigerian advertising industry and Chairman, Troyka Holdings making his presentation



Biodun Shobanjo in a handshake



Cross section of Dignitaries and guests at the Conference with APCON's Ag. Registrar, Ijedi Iyoha sitting 3rd (left) on the front row



Dignitaries and guests with Mrs. Ijedi Iyoha, APCON's Ag. Registrar sitting 2nd (left) on the front row

Winners emerge at MIPCOM Diversify TV Excellence Awards

Reed MIDEM recently announced the winners for the MIPCOM Diversify TV Excellence Awards 2019, held in partnership with A+E Networks and Diversify TV.

Dedicated to championing and promoting diverse and inclusive content that can make an impact on wide audiences; the third edition of the MIPCOM Diversify TV Excellence Awards was held at the Carlton Hotel, Cannes, France. The awards are part of the world's entertainment content market, MIPCOM, which took place in Cannes from 14-17 October. The winning programmes are: MIPCOM Diversify TV's Excellence Award for Representation of Disability Scripted. MIPCOM Diversify TV's Excellence Award for Representation of Disability Non-Scripted. MIPCOM Diversify TV's Excellence Award for Representation of Race and Ethnicity – Scripted; MIPCOM Diversify TV's Excellence Award for Representation of Race and Ethnicity Non-Scripted and MIPCOM Diversify TV's Excellence Award for Kids' Programming.

About Reed MIDEM – Founded in 1963, Reed MIDEM is an organiser of professional, international markets that are essential business platforms for key players in the sectors concerned. These sectors are MIPTV, MIPDOC, MIPCOM, MIPJUNIOR in Cannes, MIP China in



Hangzhou and MIP Cancun in Mexico for the television and digital content industries; MIDEM in Cannes for music professionals; Esports BAR in Cannes and in Miami for the esports business; MIPIM in Cannes, MIPIM UK in London, MIPIM Asia Summit in Hong Kong and MIPIM PropTech Summit in New York for the real estate industry; MAPIC in Cannes, MAPIC Russia in Moscow, MAPIC Italy in Milan, MAPIC China Summit in Shanghai and IRF brought by MAPIC in Mumbai for the retail real estate sector.

About Reed Exhibitions – Reed Exhibitions is the world's leading events

organiser, with over 500 events in over 30 countries. In 2018 Reed brought together over seven million event participants from around the world generating billions of dollars in business. Today Reed events are held throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Asia Pacific and Africa and organised by 38 fully staffed offices. Reed Exhibitions serves 43 industry sectors with trade and consumer events. It is part of RELX Group, a global provider of information and analytics for professional and business customers across industries. www.reedexpo.com ■

Jumia calls for pitch, shortlists 4 agencies for finals



To effectively tackle the consumer backlash and other negative brand effects of Citron report on its brand reputation, Jumia has called for a pitch to select an agency to help arrest the situation as many partners are alleged to be withdrawing their merchandise.

An inside source at Jumia confirmed to MARKETING EDGE that four agencies

had been shortlisted for the final pitch which held recently. The source, however, did not mention the shortlisted agencies.

According to the source, no share price or valuation has been given but there was speculation that Jumia could be valued at 1.5 billion dollars despite the fact that it reported a loss of 170 million Euro in 2018.

Marketing intelligence also revealed that stakeholders and staff of Jumia have been agitating as the brand continues to drop in shares since the fraud allegations by Citron. It has been a lingering crisis of sorts for Jumia.

Recall that Jumia has been having crisis shortly after its listing on the New York Stock Exchange. The e-commerce company was given a 1 billion dollar valuation in

2016, but Jumia continues to offer a range of online goods in different segments of the market.

According to a BBC Africa Business report, however: "The inconsistent quality of the products Jumia sells and delivery challenges it faces have often made the company a target of criticism on social media. Its biggest selling point, however, is the acceptance of mobile money payment across the continent where few people have credit or debit card."

In documents filed in New York, Jumia warned it could not guarantee achieving or sustaining profitability in the future, citing challenges such as robbery at its Kenyan warehouse which saw merchandise worth 560,000 dollars stolen. ■

Interbrand celebrates 20 years of global brand ranking... Releases top 100 global brands in 2019

Interbrand has released its Best Global Brands 2019 report, the 20th edition of the world's first brand valuation survey, showing that Apple, Google, and Amazon continue their success as the world's three most valuable brands worldwide.

The report also revealed that the luxury and retail industry is still the fastest growing sector. Taking into account Interbrand's unparalleled wealth of 20 years of brand valuation data, this year's report examines the world's most successful brands through the lens of Iconic Moves, focusing on the end of a traditional approach to brand positioning and industry leaders' navigation of the rapid ongoing change among consumers and competitive landscapes.

"Twenty years on from its first report, customers today are more informed, more connected and more demanding than ever before through a combination of wealth of choice, erosion of loyalty and shifting frames of reference wanting immediacy, abundance and intimacy – all at the same time," said Charles Trevail, Global Chief Executive Officer of Interbrand.

"The age of brand positioning is over. In a world where customer expectations will continue to move faster than businesses, static brand positions and incremental change will just about keep brands in the game – but it will take, brave, we would say 'iconic,' moves, to make brands leap ahead of customer expectations and ultimately deliver extraordinary business results."

The technology sector continues to lead the Best Global Brand rankings in 2019. Tech companies account for half of the top 10 brands — Apple (#1, USD \$234.24B), Google (#2, USD \$167.71B), Amazon (USD \$125.26B), Microsoft (#4, \$108.85B) and Samsung (#6, USD \$61.1B) — and show an average growth in brand value of nine percent, tied for second behind only the luxury and retail sector.

Dell (#63, USD \$9.09B) returns to the rankings after a six-year absence, Uber (#87, USD \$5.71B) and LinkedIn (#98, USD \$4.84B) are all new entrants in this year's list.

Facebook first entered the Best Global Brands report in 2012 at #69, seeing a steady stream of growth in the following five years. At its peak in 2017, Facebook was ranked at #8 with a Brand Value of USD \$48.19m. 2018 saw the brand's place



slip to #9, and after falling an additional 11.8 percent in 2019, now sits at #14 with a Brand Value of USD \$39.86B.

Rounding out the top 10 brands in this year's report are: Coca-Cola #5 (USD \$63,365m), Toyota #7 (USD \$56,246m), Mercedes-Benz #8 (USD \$50,832m), and McDonald's #9 (USD \$45,362m), with Disney #10 (USD \$44,352m) returning to the top 10.

The 20th edition of Interbrand's annual brand valuation report features a series of individual sector reports which delve deeper into the technology, luxury and retail, consumer packaged goods, media, automotive, travel, and financial services industries.

The top growing sector for 2019 was luxury and retail with 15 luxury and retail brands making the top 100; this sector sees the highest average brand value growth rate year-over-year at 11%. The most successful brands in the luxury space are those that have adapted to rapid changes in the global marketplace, including catering to a younger consumer base whose stylistic tastes have shifted toward street wear, who are tech-first in their purchasing habits, and who increasingly demand for shareable, memorable moments from any brick-and-mortar retail experiences.

Gucci (#33, USD \$15.95m) was emblematic of the luxury sector's success, showing a 23 percent increase in brand value. Venerable brands Louis Vuitton (#17, USD \$32.22m) and Chanel (#22, USD \$22.13m) saw a 14% and an 11% increase, respectively, since last year's report.

Mastercard (#62, USD \$9.4B) demonstrated the fastest growth of any brand this year, showing a 25% increase in brand

value, jumping eight places in the rankings.

While Mastercard's ascent has been fueled in part by its transition from purely a financial services provider to a technology-forward enterprise, it bucks an industry-wide trend toward stagnation. Financial services are broadly represented in this year's rankings, with 12 brands representing \$145 billion in brand value in the rankings, however, none of those brands reached the top 20. Many of the sector's leading brands have been slow to embrace the disruptive forces of technology, even as Apple, Facebook and Google make bigger moves into financial services.

Interbrand launched the Best Global Brands report 20 years ago to provide marketers, investors and consumers unprecedented insights into the state of the brands that have come to define modern consumerism and the evolution of the sectors in which they operate.

Looking back on 20 years of brand valuation data can provide many insights for the future:

Only 31 brands from the first report in 2000 remain on the list today, including Disney, Nike and Gucci. 137 brands, such as Nokia and MTV have dropped off the list in the intervening years. Coca-Cola and Microsoft are the only brands to have retained top 10 spots.

In 2001, the first year in which the table included 100 brands, the cumulative brand value residing in the world's top 100 brands was \$988B. Today, that value stands at \$2.13T, representing a 4.4 percent average compound annual growth rate (CAGR) and a more than doubling in total value. ■

Pepsi launches December consumer campaign



Flagship soft drinks beverage brand, Pepsi on the stable of Seven Up Bottling Company, has unveiled its latest December seasonal campaign through which it says it hopes to well resonate and bond effectively with varying consumers of the brand across the Nigerian market.

The campaign which goes with pay off tag “We got Taste” is aimed at delighting the consumers all through the yuletide season and is being deployed via two major channels of football and music.

The move, according to the brand owners is to further build upon the brands reckoning for being in the forefront of driving contemporary pop culture across Nigeria’s

social scene.

Addressing journalists on the flag off campaign which broke out in the media recently, the Marketing Manager, Seven Up Bottling Company, Segun Ogunleye said the company was very excited to be unveiling the December Campaign for the brand Pepsi.

“Consumers want to experience the best things out of life. Music and sports are two powerful means of expression. Dreaming big isn’t an experience, but we are big on taste. We are committed to giving experience to our consumers, music wise, and we’ve got the taste,” he said

Ogunleye explained that since the company flagged off the December Campaign in 2016, Pepsi had continued to “own December” through interactions with top football legends and music stars in a bid to constantly connect with the consumers.

According to him, the campaign will be deployed through the various multi-media channels across the Nigeria market, including the print, radio, television, out-of-home billboards and LED as well as via online digital platforms.

Giving highlights on the history of the December Campaign, Ogunleye recalled that the campaign had made its initial

debut during December month in year 2016 when it ran with the initial tag “Pepsi Turn Down to Turn up” and was followed up in 2017 with yet another hilarious tag of “No Shaking, Carry Go December.”

In 2018, he noted that the campaign ran with the tag “No Chill Disember” and this year the brand owners decided to amplify the exiting campaign using the latest tag “We Got Taste” which is a sure way to bond and resonate with consumers, this yuletide.

He added that the brand would be collaborating with top music labels such as MTV Base, Hip TV, Trace, Urban and Sound City to feature top performing music artists, including notably, Davido, Wizkid, Tiwa Savage among others.

Pepsi is a carbonated soft drink manufactured by PepsiCo. Originally created and developed in 1893 by Caleb Bradham and introduced as Brad’s Drink, it was re-named as Pepsi-Cola in 1898, and then shortened to Pepsi in 1961.

Pepsi Bottling Ventures has a broad product portfolio, with Pepsi brands having major representation in the cola, flavor, and non-carbonated segments. ■

AfDB, Microsoft introduce coding for employment programme across Africa

The African Development Bank and technology firm Microsoft has introduced the ‘Coding for Employment’ digital training platform, an online tool to provide digital skills to African youth, wherever they are across the continent.

The Coding for Employment Program is a crucial part of the African Development Bank’s strategic agenda to create 25 million jobs by 2025, and to equip 50 million African youth with competitive skills. The Bank piloted the program in five countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire) in partnership with The Rockefeller Foundation and Microsoft and is currently developing 14 ultra-modern centres specialised in ICT and entrepreneurship skills trainings for youth.

The digital tool was unveiled to help African youth learn to code, with a view to scaling up the programme to 130 centres of excellence across the African continent over a 10-year period.

Coding for Employment was launched at the recent 2019 African Economic Conference in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, and committed to promoting a continuous learning culture among young people and building their capacity to shape the continent’s future.

According to Hendrina Doroba, the African Development Bank’s acting director for Human Capital, Youth & Skills Development, “The youth employment and skills development challenge is a complex issue that requires systemic thinking and bold partnerships to address the existing skills gap and link youth to decent and sustainable employment”

“The skills training platform launched today is a testament to the impact that such partnerships can achieve and the Bank looks forward to strengthening similar partnerships.”

Also speaking at the launch, Ghada Khalifa, Director of Microsoft



Philanthropies for the Middle East and Africa, said: “A defining challenge of our time is ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity to benefit from technology.”

“Forward-thinking initiatives such as the digital training platform represent our commitment to helping drive the momentum needed. Though there is still much work to be done, we believe that through dynamic partnerships such as these, we can help build a knowledge-based economy in Africa that leaves no person behind.”

The platform teaches technical courses such as web development, design, data science and digital marketing and will be constantly adapted to respond to market demand. It is accessible on mobile devices, even in low internet connectivity settings and has an affordable, easy-to-navigate, secured and private interface. ■

Cannes Lions announces €279,000 distribution of Sustainable Development Goals Lions proceeds

Cannes Lions has announced that the funds generated from entries in the Sustainable Development Goals Lions will be distributed to The Lion's Share Fund. A joint initiative from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FINCH, founding partner Mars, alongside creative agency BBDO, The Lion's Share won the SDG Lions Grand Prix at the 2019 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.

The aim of The Lion's Share is to make a lasting impact on biodiversity and animal conservation, by recognising that the natural world is in crisis. Nine out of the 10 most popular animals in advertising are endangered or threatened. The Lion's Share aims to raise \$100m a year by asking advertisers to contribute 0.5% of their media spend for every advert that features an animal.

The €279,000 contribution from the SDG Lions, which received 834 entries in 2019, has been distributed to the United

Nations Development Programme to support wildlife conservation and animal welfare projects across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the oceans. The Lion's Share initiatives tackle a range of critical issues from wiping out elephant poaching, to supporting all-female ranger teams and preserving marine species in the Coral Triangle.

Introduced with the support of the United Nations in 2018, the Sustainable Development Goals Lions set the benchmark as a global award, honouring creativity and effectiveness for humanity. The Lion challenges the industry to harness creativity to positively drive change and support sustainability. Winning work must contribute to or advance the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to impact people, the planet and prosperity.

The Lion's Share captured the hearts and minds of the SDG Lions jury in 2019. Jury President, David Droga, founder

and creative chairman of Droga5, said: "We had to scrutinise and look at it beyond just how wonderful the creative idea was, beyond just the intentionality of the idea," said Droga. "This had to be actually proven that it was something that was having genuine impact and something that could scale up."

Philip Thomas, Chairman, Cannes Lions, said: "We launched the SDG Lion to ensure the industry is harnessing its creative power to transform the world and support the United Nations' Global Goals. It's a privilege, on behalf of all the entrants, to donate the proceeds to such an impactful project that asks the industry to contribute to and consider animal conservation in advertising."

Boaz Paldi, Engagement & Partnership Manager for the United Nations Development Programme, said: "Winning the Grand Prix is the very highest endorsement from the industry and has opened so many doors for The Lion's Share. By raising our profile, conversations with new companies have increased. The United Nations Development Programme and our partners would like to send a huge thanks to the Cannes Lions community. This generous contribution will go a long way to making a difference for conservation and preserving the natural world."

The Lion's Share Fund was first announced at the 2018 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, with ambassadors Sir David Attenborough and Game of Thrones star Nikolaj Coster-Waldau.

Cannes Lions, owned by Ascential plc, is committed to supporting projects and causes that campaign for creativity as a force for good. Alongside the See It Be It gender initiative, the #MoreLikeMe diversity initiative and membership of the UN Women's Unstereotype Alliance, revenues generated from both The Glass and SDG Lions are given back to relevant charities.

Source: Cannes Lions ■



Coca-Cola launches biggest ever Christmas campaign to drive consumer engagement

Coca-Cola's 'Holidays Are Coming' ad has made its return, backed by the biggest ever media spend for the soft drinks giant.

The campaign launched with the Coca-Cola Christmas Truck Tour, which kicked off last week, and will stop at 19 different locations. This year, Coca-Cola has partnered with national homeless charity Crisis and will donate 10p for every can sampled and recycled throughout the truck tour.

Meanwhile, the TV ad (shown above) will launch this weekend followed by a new global advert that Coke said will "remind us that there is more that unites us than divides us."

"For many people, the Coca-Cola Holidays Are Coming campaign signals the start of the festive season said Kris Robbins, marketing director at Coca-Cola Great Britain and Ireland.

"This year, we've taken the iconic and much-loved campaign and made it the biggest yet by bringing back the elements people love and adding new partnerships, activity and special moments to bring it to life in even more ways that we hope our



existing fans and new ones will love."

This year's media plan will feature TV, out-of-home and include take overs of digital screens and spaces in travel hubs around the UK, including major train stations. Coke will take over busses in London, decorating them with lights and a lenticular visual of Santa, as well as Piccadilly Lights throughout November and December to host Christmas karaoke.

A partnership with Snapchat will see it

release a dedicated filter while it's worked with navigation app Waze to have the voice of Santa direct drivers.

Finally, marketing the return of Coca-Cola zero sugar Cinnamon for the second year, the brand will take over Oxford Circus station and make it cinnamon scented, supported by an activation at Winterland which will see it create a cinnamon inspired igloo experience.

Source: The Drum ■

Facebook deploys brand safety tools to pacify cautious advertisers

Looking to dial back advertisers' brand safety concerns, Facebook has begun rolling out two whitelisting tools and a host of product updates designed to 'maintain a high-quality ecosystem.'

Before now, advertisers could already view where their ads might appear and where they did appear, and control where they appeared within content.

They could also build a block list to prevent ads from appearing on specific publishers and add inventory filters to avoid being adjacent to any specific content.

Now, Facebook has made its advertiser controls more sophisticated with a slate of new brand safety announcements. These include:

The testing with 'select advertisers' of white lists on the off-Facebook, app-based Audience Network, and in-stream video ads on Facebook.

The roll-out of another white listing tool through 'dynamic content sets', which will allow partners to update and adjust video content placement 'routinely'. This

will be open to advertisers currently working with Integral Ad Science, OpenSlate and its new brand safety partner, Zefr.

The creation of a one-stop shop to create block lists, get delivery reports and set inventory filters within Business Manager or Ads Manager. This means advertisers will be able to create a master brand safety setting that can be applied to all of their campaigns; previously, they had to work on campaign at a time.

Additionally, Facebook has begun to form greater relationships with industry bodies. It has been hosting sessions with these organizations to educate members on how its operations team reviews content and enforces Facebook's community standards.

In a blog post, the company said it now employs 35,000 people across its safety and security divisions. Their remits include removing 'billions' of fake accounts, reducing the spread of fake news and taking down harmful or offensive content.

"While we have zero tolerance for



harmful content on our platforms, we recognize that doesn't mean zero occurrence," Facebook wrote in the post.

"It's why we are tackling this challenge across the company working with industry, enlisting expertise across subject matters, and continuing to invest in the technology, tools and advancements that advertisers are asking for."

The updates come just over 18 months after the Cambridge Analytica scandal, which led a small but vocal group of advertisers to stop spending money with Facebook altogether.

Despite healthy profits predominantly driven by advertising revenues, clients have remained cautious about spending money in certain of the platform's territories. Audience Network is one of these areas.

Source: The Drum ■

PwC budgets \$3 Billion to upskill its employees and boost technology



PwC has said that it plans to invest \$3 billion to upskill its employees and develop share technologies to support clients and communities. The consultancy firm said it made the decision in view of the realisation that that one of the world's most pressing challenges is the growing mismatch between the skills people have and those needed for the digital world.

The company stressed that there is an urgent need for organisations, governments, and educators to collaborate with a view to fix this growing problem and business has an important role to play. It added that the \$3 billion investment will be spread over the next 4 years.

"The skills gap is an issue that goes to the heart of our purpose and we have the scale and experience to make a measurable impact. That's why today we are launching 'New world, New skills' – a commitment to tackle this important problem for our people, our clients and the communities in which we operate," said Robert E. Moritz, Global Chairman PricewaterhouseCoopers Int. in a statement.

Moritz has been working at PwC for 24 years and was the head of the U.S. division before moving into the global role a

few years ago. PwC has been upskilling a select group of employees for a while now, but then it became clear that this program should be opened up globally to the company as a whole. And PwC chief digital officer Joe Atkinson is overseeing the developing of the training apps and tools.

The upskill program — which will be available for all of PwC's 276,000 employees — will focus on 4 key areas.

PwC is going to roll out different programs that meet their particular needs ranging from skills academies to digital fitness apps to leadership development. And a proportion of PwC's workforce will develop specialist skills in areas like data analytics, robotics process automation, and artificial intelligence. This would help PwC's workers understand the potential of new technologies so they can advise clients, communities, and other stakeholders.

And PwC is also advising its clients on the challenges posed by rapid technological change and automation. This includes identifying skills gaps and mismatches against likely future needs, workforce planning, upskilling programs, and cultural change.

Plus PwC is going to work with governments and institutions to reach

more people. This is evidenced by PwC in Luxembourg helping develop the Luxembourg Skills Bridge — which brings together trade unions, associations, and businesses to build digital industries and develop digital skills, including among those populations most "at risk."

But, generally speaking, technology is only as good as the leaders who identify its opportunities, the technologists who deliver it and the people who work with it every day. That's where companies can come up short: their people may lack new skills and those skills can be hard to hire for.

As a result, 46% of global CEOs said that their first priority to remedy the issue is upskilling their existing workforces. Even though many leaders are saying that upskilling is not providing a return-on-investment, organisations need to set up a new approach. The approach should be the right mix of skilled and adaptable people who are aligned to the right culture and with the right mindset to power their business. And as automation and "thinking machines" are replacing human tasks, changing the skills that organisations are looking for in their people becomes much more important. ■

Smirnoff rolls out first global campaign in 25 years



Smirnoff has rolled out its first global campaign in over two decades to pay tribute to its 155-year history.

At the heart of the 'Infamous Since 1864' marketing push is a 60-second ad directed by Rupert Sanders, behind films like *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *Ghost in the Shell*.

It tells the story of Smirnoff's roots in Russia to being resurrected in France, before making its way across Europe to its role in the cocktail revolution that took place in the US in the 1950s.

Neil Shah, global marketing director, Smirnoff, said: "We're delighted to share the far from ordinary story of Smirnoff and what it took to become the world's no.1 vodka brand. This will be the first truly global campaign on the brand in more than 25 years and will launch with significant media investment in markets, including North America, Europe, Latin America

and Africa.

"It's been a privilege to work with renowned director Rupert Sanders, who shared our bold ambition for this campaign, and we are thrilled to soundtrack the film with an original composition of El Michels Affair's cover of the iconic hip hop track 'Shimmy Shimmy Ya'."

The concept was developed by global creative agency 72andSunny and will roll out across Europe this week. This will be followed by a global roll-out across international markets that include the US, Canada, Brazil, Argentina and Kenya.

It will be supported with broadcast, OOH, digital, social and print advertising.

Source: *The Drum* ■

Search advertising will rise 9.6% to \$135.9bn, says global ad report



In a new report released by Warc it is revealed that investment in search advertising will rise 9.6% this year, to \$135.9bn – equal to 22.0% of all advertising spend worldwide. But this growth rate is the softest since 2015 and is a marked slowdown from the 16.9% rise in 2018. Search's share of internet advertising has now flatlined at 45.8% – the lowest in more than a decade.

Google and Amazon are battling for smart speaker control as growth in paid search cools, but voice search remains a niche marketing pursuit.

—The squeeze on Google's main source of revenue has forced it to confront Amazon head-on in the smart speaker market, as it looks to facilitate voice search in future paths to purchase. But Amazon has a first-mover advantage in many markets, notably the US, UK and Japan. Control of voice search could be critical to either's success in future; most marketers understand its potential in the coming years but few have plans to use voice search today.

Mobile is driving growth in the search market

Mobile search adspend is expected to rise 19.2% to \$88.1bn this year – almost two-thirds (64.8%) of total search spend worldwide. The US alone accounts for 43.0% of this total (US\$38.1bn in 2019), while a fifth (21.8%, or \$19.3bn) is transacted in China. Japan (\$6.1bn, a 6.9% share) and the UK (\$5.3bn, 6.0%) follow.

Google accounts for 95.4% of all

mobile searches worldwide, higher than its share of desktop search traffic (88.6%). Google's share of mobile search traffic in the US (94.4%) and UK (97.9%) is close to its global rate but in China, its share is near zero, with Baidu the incumbent on 79.9%.

Mobile's share of search advertising investment is rising ahead of mobile's share of search traffic, which has plateaued globally since 2017 as consumers spend more time in-app (over 80% of mobile usage is in-app, according to comScore).

Instagram is used to discover, Google to research, and Amazon to buy

Research by Mindshare shows that Instagram is used by 69% of consumers to discover products, ahead of Snap at 64% and Facebook at 61%. Google is used most to research, with 70% of consumers utilising the platform in this way (versus 51% for second-highest Pinterest). Crucially, however, Amazon is used most to buy; 78% of Amazon users report this, compared to 40% using Google for the same purpose.

One in three (32%) online purchases in the UK begins on Amazon, rising to 52% for entertainment products, 50% for children's products, 47% for household items and 40% for electronics. Comparatively, one in five (19%) online purchases begins with a search engine, such as Google.

Amazon made \$35bn from e-commerce in Q3 2019, up by a fifth from the

previous year and putting it on course to reach close to \$150bn in sales for 2019 as a whole. Over one in ten (11%) product page views come from sponsored ads, according to data from Jumpshot.

Voice is becoming a new search battleground for Amazon and Google

Voice is an area of growth for search advertising, aided by the rising popularity of smart speakers – an area where competition between Google and Amazon is fierce. More than one in ten internet users in the US and UK now own a smart speaker. Amazon enjoys a healthy lead over Google in a number of key markets, including the US, where three-quarters of smart speaker owners use Alexa. In the UK, that share is 77%.

The 'first-mover' advantage is crucial here, however. Google was first to launch in Australia and enjoys a comfortable lead over Amazon (86% penetration versus Amazon's 15%), and the same is true in Singapore (76% versus 24%). This may not bode well for Facebook, which is developing an AI assistant for its Portal devices and is playing catch up to win market share in this area.

For all the potential, voice search remains a niche pursuit for advertisers today: only one in ten US practitioners plans to include it within their marketing strategy for 2020. A quarter (25.2%) believe it will be an 'extremely' important marketing channel within the next three to five years, but half (48.9%) have no plans to utilise the tech in the short-term.

James McDonald, managing editor, Warc Data, and author of the research, commented: "Search has boomed over the last decade as practitioners have put a greater emphasis on performance-related advertising to lift ROI – few marketing strategies exclude a search element today. Warc research shows that practitioners regard it as the easiest channel to measure accurately, and it is more cost-effective in driving conversions when compared to online display formats such as video.

"But the industry is beginning to question whether this focus has been beneficial in the long run, with a number of large, consumer-facing businesses

considering a pivot back to more conventional brand-building formats. This could explain, in part, the slowdown in search investment this year, a cooling which will reignite Google's drive to control the next frontier: voice-assisted search."

Global media analysis: A round-up of search advertising

3.5% conversion rate for mobile search ads on Google

9.6% rise in global search spend this year, to \$135.9bn

19.0% online purchases that begin with a search engine

22.0% search's share of all advertising spend

45.8% search's share of internet advertising spend, the lowest in over a

decade

48.9% share of North American marketers with no plans to leverage voice search capabilities next year

Other new key media intelligence on Warc Data

Brand activism becomes key strategy for content campaigns

Spend on martech rapidly increasing in North America

APAC consumers engage more with local brands than internationals

Successful drinks brands are top spenders on TV

37% of consumers pay for two or more SVOD platforms

Global Ad Trends is part of Warc Data, a dedicated online service featuring current advertising benchmarks,

data points, ad trends and user-generated expanded databases.

Global Ad Trends, a monthly report which draws on Warc's dataset of advertising and media intelligence to take a holistic view on current industry developments, is part of Warc Data, a dedicated independent and objective one-stop online service which rigorously harmonises, aggregates, verifies and evaluates data from over 100 reputable sources, including new category data drawn from a collaboration with Nielsen featuring current advertising benchmarks, forecasts, data points and trends in media investment and usage.

Source: Bizcommunity ■

Advertising Week Africa holds in 1st half of 2020



Advertising week, the world's largest annual gathering of advertising, creative, entertainment, marketing, media and technology industry leaders has announced its maiden Africa edition slated for Johannesburg, South Africa. The event will now take place in the first half of year 2020, between 11 to 14 May precisely, according to information on its website.

Coming to Africa for the first time, Advertising Week Africa is Advertising Week's sixth global edition and will bring industry professionals together throughout the African continent for a week of thoughtful conversations with leaders from the marketing, advertising, technology and creative spaces.

The date change, meanwhile, comes after a joint decision by the event's Africa-based Advisory Council and other local and international stakeholders, following xenophobic attacks in South Africa and the related reprisals across several African countries.

However, Stillwell Partners, global producers of Advertising Week has re-affirmed its commitment to Africa.

"Our commitment to launching Advertising Week Africa in Johannesburg is only stronger. From adversity often comes opportunity and we will continue to accelerate all planning and development to ensure the success of Advertising Week Africa in 2020," said Stillwell President Lance Pillersdorf.

According to the event organisers, the following lead up to Advertising Week Africa milestone events will continue as planned. For example, an Advertising Week Africa gala reception honouring the 20th anniversary of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in New York City on 25 September as a centrepiece of the 16th global edition of Advertising Week.

The next edition of Advertising Week Europe in London in March 2020 will shine the spotlight on the spirit and impact of African entrepreneurs and storytellers.

South Africa House on Trafalgar Square will host a special Road to Advertising Week Africa Leadership Reception during Advertising Week Europe.

On his part, Tunji Adeyinka, Republicom Group Managing Director and Chair of the Advertising Week Africa Advisory Council said: "The message of Advertising Week Africa has always been that there is strength in our diversity, and therefore we stand against violence anywhere on the continent. And as our central theme 'Great Minds Think Unalike' succinctly illustrates, we are excited to showcase the fact that we may have different languages, practices and belief systems across the continent, but those very differences create a rich tapestry of culture, industry and creativity that represent a massive and hugely positive contribution to our continent and to the world."

Advertising Week is the premier global event for marketing, brand, advertising and technology professionals. Now in five different major cities across the globe – New York, London, Tokyo, Mexico City, Sydney and coming to South Africa for the first time this year – each edition of Advertising Week presents endless opportunities to learn, network and liaise with the industry's best.

Next year, Africa will join the other global destinations to host its maiden edition of Advertising Week Africa (AWAfrica). This will consist of thought leadership keynotes, seminars and workshops led by some of the greatest minds in the industry by day, to world class entertainment in some of the city's iconic venues by night. ■

Social media is augmenting rather than killing advertising



Is social media killing advertising? You've probably heard this question 1,000 times lately.

It is undeniably true that social media has taken the world by storm. However, it's the kind of storm that has brought positive and negative impacts.

The impact

Social media made communication borderless, rapid and everything happen in real-time. It has also revolutionised the commercial market in many ways;

businesses are now more accountable to the customer than ever before. And it has opened the world of marketing and advertising to anybody who has the understanding and know-how of selling.

On the negative side, people no longer enjoy the same privacy as they did pre-social media.

Maybe we should zoom into the marketing and advertising context – where there is a seemingly louder outcry of social media's negative impact.

Social media increased the impact of advertising by adding a channel that has vast reach and affirmation. And while some corporates still believe in the 'old' ways of advertising and marketing, those days are officially gone now.

Augmenting and reinforcing

Corporates need to wake up to the fact that social media isn't killing advertising, but has rather made it easier and cost-effective for advertising to reach the customer in a more sophisticated manner. The days of one-way communication have become obsolete in this current world.

My advice for those who think that social media is cannibalising on advertising? Embrace change!

With that said, a majority of corporates have social media accounts while continuing to invest more in organic and paid social advertising. Social media halved the outsourcing of advertising services from agencies, but it has also opened up a new stream of digital and social media marketing agencies.

So, social media is definitely not killing advertising but, rather, augmenting and reinforcing it. ■

» contd. from pg. 22

LASAA boss kicked out

boss would be remembered for championing campaigns aimed at allowing JC Decaux, a Paris based Company alleged to have been encouraged to set up in Lagos state by former Governor Ambode to attempt buying over Nigeria OOH Companies.

"Sanusi was the one practically encouraging local OOH Companies to sell off their Companies to JC Decaux. He even appointed LASAA officials to escort agents of the foreign company to Nigeria companies which he wanted JC Decaux to buy over forcefully. Thank God that regime has ended".

In another breath, two past former helmsmen of LASAA who also would not want their names mentioned were equally excited.

"We saw it coming. We knew all of these would end one day and he will learn his lessons", said a former LASAA chieftain who is very relevant in Alausa current politics.

Similarly, a former chieftain said there is no condition that is permanent.

"No condition is permanent. Like I always pleaded with OOH practitioners who used to complain bitterly about Sanusi leadership, I always tell them that their pains will end one day". It is the nature of government appointments, nothing lasts forever. Now he will go and sit back and rethink his past actions".

An industry expert, Docemo is an accomplished professional with over 12 years cognate experience in outdoor advertising, media, telecommunications and

engineering sectors.

Prior to his appointment, Docemo was the CEO of Viadotech Limited, a foremost player in the Outdoor Advertising,

Telecommunications and Engineering sectors in Nigeria.

He also worked at various times with Bell & Bell telecommunications Limited, Private Networks Nigeria Limited and Emotion Advertising Limited.

Adedamola Docemo is a graduate of Mechanical Engineering from Yaba College of Technology, Lagos with a Postgraduate Diploma from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Osun State.

He is a member of the Project Management Institute as well as the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria - APCON. ■

5G Subscriptions to top 2.6 billion by 2025

– Ericsson Mobility Report



Ericsson, one of the leading global providers of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to service providers, in its Ericsson Mobility Report for November, has projected that by the end of 2025, 5G mobile communication technology would have 2.6 billion subscriptions covering up to 65 percent of the world's population and generating 45 percent of the world's total mobile data traffic, making it the fastest developing mobile communication technology to have ever been rolled out on a global scale.

The forecast is alongside a range of other forecasts with an end of 2025 timeline and communications service provider insights.

According to the report, average monthly data-traffic-per-smartphone is forecast to increase from the current figure of 7.2 GB to 24 GB by the end of 2025, in part driven by new consumer behaviour, such as Virtual Reality (VR) streaming. With 7.2 GB per month, one can stream 21 minutes of HD video (1280 x 720) daily, while 24 GB would allow streaming 30 minutes of HD video with an additional six minutes of VR each day.

Notably, 2019 is the year leading communications service providers in Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America switched on their

5G networks. South Korea has already seen a big 5G uptake since its April 2019 launch. More than three million subscriptions were collectively recorded by the country's service providers by the end of September 2019.

China's launch of 5G in late October has also led to an update of the estimated 5G subscriptions for the end of 2019, from 10 million to 13 million.

Only recently, telecom giant, MTN Nigeria launched its 5G services in Nigeria.

Ericsson's Executive Vice President and Head of Networks, Fredrik Jejdling, was quoted to have said, "It is encouraging to see that 5G now has broad support from almost all device makers. In 2020, 5G-compatible devices will enter the volume market, which will scale up 5G adoption. The question is no longer if, but how quickly we can convert use cases into relevant applications for consumers and enterprises. With 4G remaining a strong connectivity enabler in many parts of the world, modernizing networks is also key to this technological change we're going through."

Given its current momentum, 5G subscription uptake is expected to be significantly faster than that of LTE. The most rapid uptake is expected in North America with 74 percent of mobile subscriptions in the region forecast to be

5G by the end of 2025. North-East Asia is expected to follow at 56 percent, with Europe at 55 percent.

Other forecasts in the Ericsson Mobility Report include a total number of cellular IoT connections now seen five billion by the end of 2025 from 1.3 billion by end 2019 – a compound annual growth rate of 25 percent. NB-IoT and Cat-M technologies are estimated to account for 52 percent of these cellular IoT connections in 2025.

According to the report, Year-on-year traffic growth for the third quarter of 2019 was high at 68 percent, driven by the growing number of smartphone subscriptions in India, the increased monthly data traffic per smartphone in China, better device capabilities, an increase in data-intensive content, and more affordable data plans.

In a collaborative article written with SK Telecom, the report takes a detailed look at how the South Korean service provider is applying a 5G cluster deployment strategy centred around providing a premium 5G network experience and innovative services to customers in selected geographical locations.

Another article, co-authored with the MTN Group, examines how the South African-based service provider's focus on user experience and customer loyalty has resulted in measurable network improvements and commercial gains in Rwanda and Ghana.

The report also takes an in-depth look at service providers' tariff plans, revealing that most service providers who have launched 5G have priced 5G packages about 20 percent higher than their nearest available 4G offering. Lastly, there is an article describing how automotive IoT meets different use case requirements of automotive and transport applications.

It would be recalled that Ericsson Mobility Report provides industry-leading projections and analyses of the latest trends in the mobile industry, including subscription, mobile data traffic and population coverage. Our forecasts are based on past and current data, validated with extensive network measurements. ■

MasterCard, national identity card and the rubbishing of a mega brand

When a firm is exposed to corruption, then it is also exposed to massive damage to its name. As the general public, including the company's loyal shareholders, get a negative perspective on the business, they may never trust the company again and, by extension, they may never trust its products and services again.

Like a black hole fraught with danger that swallows anything thrown at it, Nigeria's national identity card project is enmeshed in a fresh dispute. For the umpteenth time, another legal gridlock has caught up with the project albeit among the major concessionaire and a global firm it signed on in the course of executing the contract.

Recently, a Federal High Court sitting in Lagos ordered about 22 Nigerian banks not to honour any MasterCard transaction that has the logo of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) on it pending the determination of a design infringement suit filed by Chams Plc, and Chams Consortium against the Singaporean payment and financial technology company.

The suit which also has as defendants; Ajay Banga, president and CEO of Mastercard International, Omokehinde Ojomuyide, Country Representative of Mastercard in Nigeria, Daniel Monehin, the Staff of Mastercard, the NIMC, and 22 commercial banks, made a claim of N114 billion (about \$360 million) in damages.

A broad and meticulous review of the saga by **MARKETING EDGE** reveals that the project in question had, many times in the past, been frequently wrecked by the actions of sleazy government officials in cahoots with venal contractors who were predominantly foreign firms. This time, however, the culprit happens to be a corporate Singaporean giant, MasterCard. In fact, from 1981 that the project was first awarded to Avant Incorporated to date, more than N121 billion has been reportedly spent on the project, meant to verify the true identity of every Nigerian, with nothing to show for it.

What's more, the current saga started in 2006, when the Federal Government opened bidding for the National ID

project. Chams competed and emerged the winner, beating several other bidders to the National Identity Card (NIC) concession. Before and upon the execution of a concession agreement with NIMC, Chams Plc pursued the implementation of the NIC concession by incorporating Chams Consortium Ltd (CCL), a special purpose Vehicle (SPV) with the sole purpose of implementing the NIC concession.

Meanwhile, MasterCard Asia/Pacific Pte Ltd (MasterCard) was said to have entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Chams Plc by which the parties noted that they were considering working together to facilitate the issuance of identity cards to Nigerian citizens. On 18 November 2012, CCL also entered into a Customer Business Agreement (CBA), with MasterCard setting obligations of both parties. The CBA contained several clauses including non-disclosure and non-compete clauses.

Over a period of many months, MasterCard worked closely with Chams on architecture of the National ID project designed by Chams. Chams has alleged to have exposed the entire architecture to MasterCard while working jointly to integrate MasterCard functionalities into the architecture of the National ID project, adding that in the course of these developments, MasterCard received confidential information from it (Chams) as contemplated under the CBA.

In an open letter to President

Muhammadu Buhari and published earlier in the year, Chams and CCL had asked MasterCard to accept its wrongdoing, apologise for the breach of contract and pay compensation to CCL and Chams for their more than \$100m investment and accumulated losses.

However, MasterCard has not issued any public statement on the ongoing saga and the order of interim injunction restraining it from further manufacturing, producing, designing and or printing or authorising the manufacturing, production, designing and or printing of any National Identity Card with MasterCard logo pending the determination of the motion on notice filed for hearing.

No matter the stiff competition in the business sphere (B2B or B2C), the world is still craving for honest brands more than ever. Bringing some honesty in their approach to daily transactions can serve brands well in the long haul. There may be no perfect business relationship anywhere, but there is just one thing every going concern wants from business dealing; to not be cheated.

Corruption may wear many faces, from extortion to embezzlement to bribery and various underhand methods. The existence of this robs many businesses of not only their profits but also of their credibility in the eyes of their customers and partners. Rebuilding the brand of the business is never easy or swift, and it may well take many years and a massive PR campaign to achieve. ■





: Communicating brand purpose with African fashion

Purpose is the reason why a company or a brand exists. It is the underlying essence that makes a brand relevant and necessary to its customers. A brand with a strong purpose not only helps the overall good of society but also helps customers know what they stand for through purpose-driven brand and marketing actions. Beyond brand equity and heritage, for a brand to be relevant and live up to its billing, it must solve a problem or meet a need.

In a digitally transparent world in which consumers can quickly find out if brands are acting on their promise, it is crucial for brands to create connections and a strong relevance with their consumers. While brand purpose must be carefully honed and aligned to the values of customers, certain dimensions outshine others. Such dimensions include brand quality, culture and transparency.

Understanding how to instill a sense of brand belonging through a clear and relevant purpose has now become a prerequisite for competitiveness. Those that successfully activate a purpose-led brand create a community of loyal, engaged and valuable stakeholders which can help fuel innovation, deliver growth, and inspire a new ecosystem partnership. Simply put, having a purpose is good business.

To further demonstrate that purpose sits firmly at the centre of its brand vision and informs every business decision it takes, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, one of the nation's leading financial brands, recently launched a campaign tagged "WhatIf" on its social media handle. The video has been trending on WhatsApp and other social media channels. The 58 seconds video emphasises the limitless creativity and innovative use that can be applied to Ankara, an indigenous print that originated in Africa with a cultural signature that has gone global, extensively leveraging technology. It vividly communicates that the function of the popular African fabric goes beyond clothing, including vehicle furniture, hand bag and phone pouch, etc.

The thematic of the campaign brilliantly raises salient brand and positioning questions such as; "What if Ankara?"



"What if Adire?", "What if Asooke?", "What if greater attention is paid to the textile industry?" and "What if our traditional attire becomes our corporate attire?" Meanwhile, the second to last line instructs: "Make that decision today; wear more Adire, Ankara, Asooke!" – "Help our textile industry grow." "FirstBank @ 125 – Woven into the fabric of society."

In commemorating the 59th independence of Nigeria, the bank made a bold fashion statement to promote the local textile industry. Upon resumption on 2 October 2019, all staff of the bank wore an Ankara to show their commitment to the growth of the textile industry. "With the Western fashion largely embraced, it is very imperative we encourage the players in our textile industry with the required support as an institution and patronage as individuals," a statement from the bank said.

FirstBank has remained committed to the development and growth of Nigeria for over 125 years. The bank, a long-standing institution, has impacted the nation and the world through various product innovations and services. From a very modest beginning in 1894, the bank has traversed an incredible journey of delivering financial services to its customers and supporting the building of the modern day Nigeria, including its early pivotal role as the monetary and fiscal policy regulator for the

entire West African region.

As a well established institution, which even predates Nigeria as a unified entity, FirstBank has shown itself to be firmly entrenched in the nation's development. And what other way to demonstrate its commitment to the largest black nation in the world than to champion the global marketing and positioning of its indigenous fashion brand (Adire, Ankara and Asooke).

Adire, Ankara, Asooke and many clothing of African origin have become our core cultural extensions. In many ways, the brands we choose are extensions of who we are. The test of a mutually beneficial, satisfying brand relationship is rooted not in grand gestures or even in constant chatter and interactions.

Smart brands are committed to their customers' beliefs. They also leverage their customers' energy and involve them in everything from co-creating new products and services, to using their insights to rapidly test and iterate new features and capabilities. Capturing customers' words, actions and insights enables companies to hone their competitive agility. A brand must solve a problem or meet a need. How well it does that, and how well it creates loyalty, affinity and connections with its customers determines the winners from the losers. And FirstBank is clearly on the path of this brand purpose. ■

EXP: SETTING THE PACE IN NIGERIA'S EXPERIENTIAL MARKET

Having led the pace in the Nigerian experiential marketing sector for 23 years, EXP remains at the frontline of the industry. In today's rapidly shifting landscape, advertising and technology go hand in hand. Tech empowers more visible campaigns and clients, in turn, expect more proactive solutions, agility, speed and efficiency from agencies. As one of the agencies that invest in new tech and thought leadership, EXP has moved into a new generation of tech-powered advertising. Just recently, after creating ripples across the IMC sector with outstanding revelations from their intensive research about understanding millennials. During an exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE in Lagos, Rosemary Akpo, Managing Director, EXP and GA Production, said the agency was poised to think and create out of the box. MARKETING EDGE also spoke with two of Akpo's colleagues who are co-drivers of the agency. Excerpts:

**A RELATIONSHIP
WITH CLIENTS
HAS GONE
BEYOND
PUTTING UP
POSTERS;
IT'S ABOUT
THOUGHT
LEADERSHIP
— AKPO**



Rosemary Akpo

Who is EXP and what is the relationship with GA productions?
The word EXP itself was derived from 'experiential'. We were also the first experiential marketing agency in Nigeria. We set up business in Nigeria 23 years ago, even though we had been doing business before then in South Africa.

Experiential marketing is different from above-the-line marketing because we create experiences for brands. You can put a TV or radio ad on air but the only way people can touch, feel and sense your brand is when they experience it. So, our job is to take whatever your brand stands for and create an experience out of it.

Group Africa production is a sister company to EXP; it started a couple of months before EXP started in Nigeria. It is a turnkey events

company; we are experts in big, medium and small events and provide technical support to other agencies and brands who want to run events for themselves. We have stages, lights, generators, Logistics and other equipment.

In terms of positioning, where do you stand presently and what has brought you to this phase that you are now?

Nearly all other experiential agencies have their history tied to EXP; we are like a learning ground for experiential marketing. We enjoy the unique position of being the first to start up this business; the onus then is to continue to remain relevant. The good thing about EXP is that it keeps reinventing itself and tries to remain at the cutting-edge with investments in technology, people and resources because it is the benchmark for what experiential marketing is.

We set the standards. Right now, we are just going through another renewal process. For example, there is a new leadership team; we have moved the office to a bigger space, and we have new offerings in spaces that we didn't have before. It's an exciting time for the company.

Who are your clients and what offerings do you have for them?

We have over 42 clients on our list. We used to have over hundred, but we had to streamline the number of clients we have. We differentiate clients in different sectors and categories. We have some in the communications sector, banking sector, alcoholic segment, soft drink segment and so on. One of the advantages we have is that it is rare for marketing directors to move from the client side to the agency world, but we have quite a number of people in the leadership team who have been on the client side. This has enabled us to create offerings that are perfect for brands having been in their shoes.

What is the content of the recent study conducted by EXP?

It's in line with our wanting to lead in the space of thought leadership that made us undergo the research. For a while now there has been a challenge on connecting with millennials. We found out that there was lack of depth in understanding millennials, who they are, what appeals to them, how they make money, what they spend money on, and so on.

There are lots of studies on millennials on the internet but most of them are not specific to Africa. EXP across Africa decided to invest in a research that would enable us to understand them (millennial) better. The research majored in three countries, Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya. Even with all my years of experience in the industry, the study was still a massive eye-opener for me. One of the things that came out quite strongly for me is that millennials still go to the website of a brand to find out the truth about that brand; meanwhile, as a marketing person, we spend quite a significant amount of money on the social media drive. That is not to say that it's wrong. I'm just saying you must box with both hands. Another thing is that, they (millennials) trust the judgment of their family members more than their friends. This came as a surprise to me and we asked over 10,000 of them. That tells you that if you want to influence them, you have to go through the people they trust.

What would you say stands EXP out and why did you have to relocate to this current location?

We were hidden before but now; we are out where everyone can see us. What stands us out is not the amount of money we make or anything else but the people down from me to the last person that works here. People from here, people on our clients' side and the people our clients are serving. Our focus is usually who we serve and not the money we want to make. People are our focus and our priority.

Co-creating a brief with a client is one of your innovations, what does it entail?

Rather than sit back and wait for a client to send you a brief, we go to the client, look at the data and come up with a brief. What it does is that, from the go we understand what we are solving. There are several clients that have bought into it and are doing it with us, and I have consistently found that the results are better when your agency is part of creating your brief. The output becomes more inspiring. We also leverage on our network with other EXP markets across Africa to bring a more robust solution and even better execution.

What drives you in this business? How has your experience of being on the client side influenced your strategies and also your team?

This is what I was made for. And just as I said, what drives me is the people. I'm always interested in solving 'people' problem because if the people are fine, everything else will be fine.

Being the client in the agency adds a lot of value. If I would not approve something as a marketing director, then it would not get past me here. We have become better at our jobs because we are the clients and at the same time the agency. It impacts even our cost because we cost more efficiently.

How will you assess the experiential business in Nigeria?

It's very diverse and there are lot of players and contenders but I think the sky is big enough for all of us to fly. There is enough happening in the industry to keep all of us busy. I don't think the competition has become toxic.

What should we be expecting from EXP?

We are planning big expansions. We want to invest in capabilities we don't have today that would make us more relevant to our clients and consumers. In the next one year you would be hearing of ventures that EXP has gone into. There is a lot of growth coming; we would probably triple our size in the next 5 years. We will keep investing.

How has the relationship between EXP and its clients been since you took on the role as client service and strategy director?

Personally, I have the distinct advantage of being a client for most of my career. This has been helping me to relate effectively at client meetings, and know what is being said and what is not, including the pressure the clients face. Also, it has helped improve relationships with our clients. That is not to say it's all about me; it is a team effort.

As product owners, our first point is to understand our clients and I believe that I have seen a significant improvement in the relationship with our clients. ■

AS PRODUCT OWNERS, OUR FIRST POINT IS TO UNDERSTAND OUR CLIENTS - OTOME OYO

Mr. Otome Oyo, EXP's Client Service and Strategy Director, reveals, in this interview with MARKETING EDGE, that there is still more to be offered by the agency

What is the company's client base? Are there new clients?

Every business is looking for growth. What we seek is not growth for growth sake; we seek strategic partnerships. When you get into strategic relationships with your clients, there is a holistic understanding of their business. When we meet with our clients, we don't just give experiential solutions, we try to provide holistic business solutions and that is what it means to be in a strategic relationship because the clients know that when they have a problem, they can always come to EXP even if we are not the ones who will ultimately execute the idea. Our goal is to be in the room with our clients when they need the best brains in the industry.

Are there any challenges dealing with the clients. If there are, how have you been able to surmount it?

The first challenge you have as an agency is proving yourself and we have done that for 23 years in this country. However, you have to stay ahead of the curve at every point in time and that is what we have tried to do even across Africa, because of the network we have. We have quite a few clients across Africa and every EXP business unit across the African continent has had different experiences. So, we try to share as much information as possible so that we can always bring something new and fresh to the table. There will always be challenges; if there were no challenges there would be no problems to solve and if there were no problems to solve, we won't be in business. We exist so as to be able to take some of pressure off our clients. Clients' requests and deadlines are sometimes very tasking but we like



to say that 'we do the impossible as our day to day job; miracles will only take a little more time'. Regardless of what it is that our clients ask us for, our job is to provide solutions.

What is your advice to clients while engaging an experiential agency?

Like I said, it's all down to strategic partnerships. The first thing is to always understand your clients. Once you understand your clients' pain points and what they want to achieve, you will be able to provide solutions based on that. At EXP, we prefer to be in sync with our clients and fully embedded. To clients I would say this though, great ideas take time to develop, so it's better to start conversations with your agencies earlier rather than at the last minute as it becomes harder, but not impossible to develop the ideas you need.

EXP is a 360 degree experiential

agency, what are your offerings to your clients?

In terms of core capabilities, we have experiential marketing solutions based on sales, awareness driving and end-to-end events in partnership with our sister company, Group Africa Productions.

We also do sponsorship management and sponsorship procurements. We run consumer promotions for clients because it can be really time consuming for them. Another exciting offering is something called Social Marketing. Social marketing, this time around, is not about selling a product but selling a mindset which is something we are currently doing for the International Finance Corporation to increase penetration of solar lamps in the market and also the International Organisation for Migration trying to reduce the rate of irregular migration across the African continent, even in Europe. Basically, our social marketing offering is not about selling brands but changing mindsets.

Looking at your experiences over the years, ranging from Sahara Group to Airtel and Suntory; what are the possible impact that you are likely to create in EXP as a top experiential agency in Nigeria?

I have had quite a wide experience but I think every organisation that I have worked for had prepared me for this moment. The fact that I've worked for a diverse number of brands and categories means that I can understand the challenges of different products and brands and that we should be able to serve our clients better. For me, it's about what I can bring to the industry and make a difference. Having been on the client side, I can ask the relevant questions and get the clarity that we need to provide relevant solutions. ■

WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON KEEPING UP TO DATE WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNOLOGY

- TREVOR

Mr. Trevor Henning, Head of Operations, EXP Group Africa Productions, in this interview with MARKETING EDGE, points out how the agency takes a lot of pride in investing in creative talents.

How has it been managing the operations of EXP and GA Productions?

GA itself is an events production company. I was with GA since inception. Back in 2001, I was part of the pioneer team so I've seen how GA has impacted the industry and how it has been the backbone of the events segment in Nigeria. Back then, it was recognised as a leading company in the industry and I've always stayed within the group. Although I went to Kenya and a couple of other countries but I kept coming back to GA. The opportunity arose when the vision of a new strategy came and I was part of that vision. It was a challenge that I had relished and I'm glad to be back again.

What are the major challenges facing experiential agencies in Nigeria?

The biggest challenge is remaining creative, efficient and relevant to our clients and to what the industry needs. It's typical for any business and it's the same for us as well and also to deliver continuous experience. It's not about the equipment that you have but how you use it. Technology has moved; devices that used to be very big are now smaller and cheaper as well. So, the main challenge is to retain the clients and keep attracting top class clients.

What measures have you taken to ensure team building and capacity development in EXP?

We pride ourselves on keeping up to date when it comes to technology. We interact a lot with international people and we



do a lot of international shows; so we are continually exposed to the latest industry standards that are demanded by these international acts. Standards cannot be compromised, so we have to continually be exposed to trainings, attend fairs and keep updating and upgrading skills.

We have a training that GA is well known for. We bring young stars in and help bring them up through the industry and we are the only company that does that in the production business. We raise them even up to international standards.

What do you think stands EXP out from other agencies?

Our heritage is very strong. We have a proven and reliable track record. What makes us stand out is our people. We take a lot of pride in our people and a lot of investments and efforts go into our people. We show that we own our own supply chain; whether its human resources or technical resources. Managing an event from concept to execution is what sets us apart and others know that. It's about the people and nothing else.

This is your second time working in EXP. What new value are you bringing to boost the growth of the agency?

Part of my leadership role and international experience is staying ahead of the curve, having passion and commitment, having a good strategy to lead and to also implement the strategy. I'm very fortunate to be in a position where passion meets what you do for your day to day job. For me, it's about buying into the vision, strategy and growth of GA and working towards making it remain the premier events production agency on the leading edge. ■



COMMITTED TO FINDING LASTING, IMPACTFUL INTEGRATED BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

One thing you cannot miss once you visit its homepage is a red lettered statement in all caps that will greet your eyes as you scroll down the page, **OUR NAME TELLS OUR STORY**, with a rider, ...defines our purpose and our approach to your business. Sodium Brand Solutions Limited, an upwardly mobile integrated marketing communications company in Nigeria.

With a vision "To become the preferred Integrated Marketing Communications provider in Africa"; and a mission "To provide the perfect chemistry between brands and their consumers by creating solutions that enable brand equity and market leadership", SBS (as it is simply known) has, since its inception, combined creativity with sound strategy, consumer's insight, market intelligence, and full drops of commitment to deliver results for its clients and positive reactions from the markets.

Peopled by professionals who pride themselves as brand scientists and who, in their diversity, and with super talents, defy the rules, challenge the norm, and simplify marketing complexities and, more importantly, take the pursuit of finding the right answers a step further, the agency prides itself in offering services that are tailored to meet its clients' needs and delivered on time.

These corporate credentials have paid off for SBS as they have impacted positively on its ever increasing clientele that cut across several sectors of the economy and landed it several enviable laurels. At the recently held EXMAN Awards 2019, for instance, SBS emerged the biggest winner with four Gold for its creative and innovative ideas – in such categories as Best Activation of an Entertainment Property, Best use of Props in an Event and Best Event (B2C), all of which were for Coke Studio; and Best Activation of a Sporting Property for the Coca Cola Golf Tournament.

In an exclusive interviews with MARKETING EDGE, the agency's lead brand scientist, Mr. Abisoye Fagade speaks on the agency and its great strides

We have been putting innovative ideas and smart work into the building of our Clients' brands – **Fagade**

Congratulations on the performance of Sodium Brand Solutions at the EXMAN awards. What was your major take away from the awards, given your agency's impressive performance at the event?

My major takeaway is the celebration of an industry. It is amazing. I agree that Sodium Brand Solutions had a great night but I would like to look beyond our performance and look at the awards holistically.

The EXMAN Awards is a step in the right direction. It's a major milestone and a sign that the industry is evolving. We now have one voice and I hope more agencies would join the association.

Secondly, the celebration of the quality of works done by agencies by giving awards to outstanding ideas would spur agencies to do more. The quest for recognition on the big stage would make agencies come up with more creative ideas. Hopefully, in a few years, Nigerian agencies would be competing with other African agencies on the continental stage.

Work hard and get rewarded, this is dream some of us who are the early players in the industry had and we are glad it is coming alive.

How does the award reflect on the performance of your agency in the last couple of years in view of the challenging business environment?

The awards are a true testament to the innovative ideas and smart

work that Sodium Brand Solutions has been putting into the building of our Clients' brands. We didn't just start last year, so people should not be surprised. We have consistently provided a decade of quality and innovative marketing solutions and Coca Cola, the brand that won big with us that night, has been one of our longest standing clients.

As far back as 2009, Sodium Brand Solutions organized and executed the Coca Cola Christmas Tree event idea. The Christmas tree was the biggest in Africa. Do you also remember Sprite Triple Slam? It had the SBS imprint on it. We have had so many campaigns executed for big brands. We have always been very active.

The awards were timely. They came at a time we are planning on celebrating our 10th year anniversary. So, it was like saying "See this people, they've been silently doing amazing jobs, let's celebrate them before they celebrate themselves". We are glad they came at the time they did. We would not relent in our efforts and hope to win many more awards in the coming years.

What are the major strategies that have kept Sodium Brand Solutions strong in the face of intense competition and budget cut from clients?

Dedication, innovative ideas, smart work and a wonderful team who would go all out to make the clients happy have kept Sodium Brand Solutions strong through the years.

We are dedicated to our clients and their goals. We do not let the size of the budget determine how involved we would be. Once we take up a brief, we own it. We are a fairly compact team and we all get involved. All our staff, apart from our auxiliary staff, have an idea of what is happening on every project. We don't take any project for granted because at the end of the day, no one asks about the budget, it is the idea and how it is executed they see. So, the burden of performance is constantly upon us.

As brand scientists, we constantly innovate. We come up with ideas regularly. We have ideas sessions where our people just share and critique marketing ideas. We have an ideas bank, so, if we are called upon at any time, we would have something to unique to offer.

The team works smart. We avoid unnecessary duplications of roles or tasks and we outsource when we have to.

How has Sodium Brand Solutions been able to evolve to meet the demands of clients for more result-driven innovative marketing solutions?

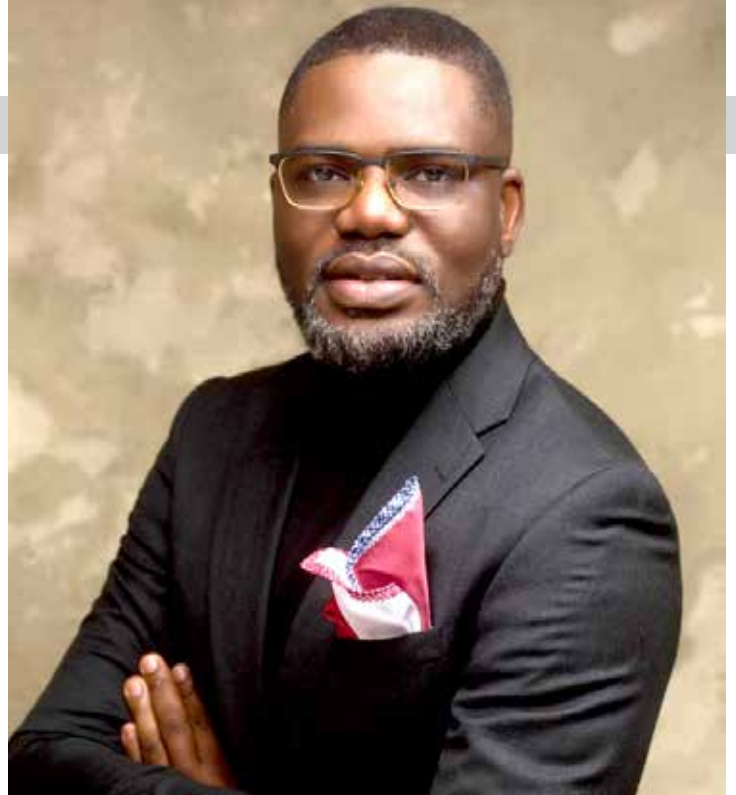
Our experiences over the years have taught and shaped us. We have learnt to focus on what is necessary and discard what is not. The most important thing to us is making our clients happy and exceeding set targets.

We have a team of professionals in-house in different fields. They are well rounded in our areas of expertise. The team can conveniently take on any brief and deliver the execution smoothly anywhere in the country and beyond based on our extensive network. Like I said earlier, we avoid unnecessary duplications of roles or tasks and we outsource when we have to.

We also have subsidiaries that give support on campaigns when necessary.

How does your agency cope with the dynamics of the IMC industry in terms of frequent pitches, account wins and losses?

We understand the uniqueness of the industry, that's why we don't mind being invited for pitches. We know that we win some and lose some but the more pitches we are invited for, the more



opportunities for us to win. The fear of losing a pitch never crosses our mind. We always put our best foot forward.

Personally, if I had my way though, I would want brands to pay for pitches and keep the ideas presented in their ideas bank for referral when the need arises. That way, the brands would limit the number of agencies they invite for a particular pitch per time and reward participating agencies for their efforts.

We have had situations where some brands invite as many as 8 or more agencies for pitches on projects they might end up not needing more than one agency for. The time and resources spent by the agencies in preparing for the pitches are huge and it could be discouraging to younger agencies.

At SBS we love pitches. We love the opportunity to sell ourselves. But over the years, we have also gotten referrals; so, it is not only through pitches that we get our businesses.

What are the major challenges that affect growth in the experiential marketing industry in Nigeria and how has an agency like yours helped to combat these challenges?

Digital marketing has taken a huge leap on the marketing spends of many brands. Therefore, any experiential campaign being proposed now has to infuse elements of digital marketing. Players in the experiential marketing industry need to grow with the trends, we need to be consumer focused and realize that internet and social media are reshaping the market expectations. There has to be an integration of both the online and offline, to create an area of interaction between the consumers and the brands.

Our campaigns are now an integration of both, as can be seen with the award-winning Coke Studio campaign. Our staff have been trained to be up to date with demands and changes of the industry assessment of the experiential marketing industry in terms of innovation, diversity of offerings and growth

What is your assessment of the experiential industry in Nigeria in terms of innovation, diversity of offerings and growth?

The industry is growing and it is interesting seeing new ideas and innovations regularly. The infusion of digital experiences in some activation campaigns has made the experiential marketing industry interesting. The industry is growing and we are taking advantage of it. ■

Verve: The African Key to Exchange

The development of electronic payment systems (e-payments) in Nigeria and Verve Card's journey of resilience can be viewed as two peas in a pod.

More than ten years ago, before the introduction of Verve Card, local cards available then were the less secure magnetic strip cards. Cards of foreign origin were already offering superior EMV technology-based products. Africa had a huge gap; payments were left to these big foreign players who could deliver best in class technology. This technology was, however, offered at higher costs to issuers and other participants in the value chain. InterSwitch identified the need to have a secured domestic card scheme in Nigeria and therefore, approached industry players and government agencies. At the time, initial responses from industry stakeholders were: (a) "It's impossible to have a successful debit card network in Nigeria," (b) "It's extremely risky to do domestic card business in Nigeria."

Meanwhile Central Bank of Nigeria mandated all operators in Nigerian payment industry to migrate to EMV (Europay, MasterCard & Visa) in a bid to curb fraud cases associated with card payments. Magnetic strip cards were scheduled to be completely phased out by September 2009.

Verve Card was launched in 2009 with EMV technology to achieve the same level of best in class global standard, and at lower price in order to serve the unserved. Over the past 10 years, we have delivered a local card scheme with a better understanding of the local market compared to foreign alternative cards. Verve Card met all the security requirements of international card schemes, with a transparent pricing model. Intercontinental Bank (now Access Bank) was the first bank to issue Verve Card to their customers, and today, Verve Card has built partnerships with banks and other institutions across international boundaries and borders in Africa and beyond.

This year (2019) witnessed three significant milestones in the Verve story: (a) launch of Verve Global card, (b) celebration of Verve Card's 10th year anniversary and (c) the formal launch in Accra, Ghana of Verve Classic Cross Border to 21 African countries.

VERVE TO THE WORLD

In August this year, Verve, in partnership with Discover Global Network, introduced the 16-digit Verve Global Card in order to meet the increasing payment needs of Nigerians and other

Africans who travel abroad for business or pleasure and need a local card scheme that works seamlessly abroad. To herald the launch of Verve Global, a "first transaction" event took place at Swarovski, international jewelry retail chain, in Times Square, New York on Monday, August 12, 2019. Present at this event where senior executives from Verve, Discover Global Network, major Nigerian banks (Access Bank, First Bank, Fidelity Bank), members of local and international press, etc.

The event saw Verve grow from a domestic card scheme to a globally accepted payment solution, offering seamless payment solutions in over 185 countries, flexible exchange rates on international transactions, foreign exchange rebates and lower transaction and maintenance fees with great loyalty and reward schemes.

On the heels of this, in November, Verve Global Card was launched in Dubai for the UAE markets. Nigerians traveling outside Africa, including UAE can now make payments on the Discover Global Network anywhere Discover, Diners Club International, Pulse and affiliate network cards are accepted.

Verve Global Card also delivers additional benefits to cardholders including broad reward and loyalty schemes and benefits that are available both locally and internationally.

Mitchell Elegbe,
InterSwitch Group

Managing Director, commented during the first transaction event in New York: "The agreement with Discover Global Network will enable Verve compete with other global card offerings, providing cardholders with an enhanced customer experience when transacting globally outside Nigeria. Creating a solution that facilitates international payments for our consumers will help to eliminate existing barriers and simplify the process when transacting abroad."

Ricardo Leite, Senior Vice President of international markets at Discover Global Network also spoke during the New York event. He said, "It is important to us that we are working with groups around the world to extend acceptance for their cardholders. At Discover, we recognize the importance of being able to use your card of choice no matter where you are traveling."

Mike Ogbalu III, Verve International Chief Executive Officer, also commented: "The launch of the Verve Global card, provides customers with the ability to transact globally across



the US and other countries, addressing challenges that many Nigerians have experienced while travelling abroad. Our partnership with Discover Global Network will help us to optimize the overall experience of every Verve Global card holder by facilitating consistent and efficient payment solutions regardless of where they are in the world”.

Verve Global cardholders can now make payments with their cards in U.S., U.K., Dubai and several other international destinations.

THE TEST OF TIME

On Friday, September 27th, 2019, Verve officially kicked off the celebration of its 10th year anniversary with the celebration of ten years of resilience and breaking boundaries.

The celebration started with a media parley at The George Hotel, Ikoyi, Lagos, which had in attendance members of the press, partner banks, other trade partners and a representative of the payment industry regulator – Mr. Samuel Okojere, Director of Payment Systems Management, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Mitchell Elegbe, Interswitch Group Managing Director, noted that over the years, Verve Card scheme has experienced steady and sustained growth in the digital payments sector.

He said: “Our card scheme has grown from just an idea to solving payment inefficiencies in Nigeria, into a bouquet of innovative payment solutions for Nigerians, Africans and the rest of the world. I consider these first 10 years as years of consolidation and growth. We anticipate the next 10 years to be years of investment in unprecedented payment service delivery.”

The card scheme has blazed the trail for 10 years in the Nigerian and African e-payment space. It continues to meet the payment needs of Africans and continues to deliver reliable payment solutions. Despite starting off as a debit card product, it has grown into a portfolio, with five products: Verve Global Card, Verve Classic Card, Verve Life, Pay-Code and E-cash. Today Verve has several issuer and acquirer relationships.

Mike Ogbalu III, CEO of Verve International, believes that the story of Verve is one of resilience, innovation, determination and most importantly, a business proposition that has stood the test of time.

He said: “At the time Verve was introduced, Nigeria was dominated by international card schemes. There was the need to have a domestic card scheme with a better understanding of the needs of Nigerians and Africans. Today, we have built a payment solution that does not only allow ease of payment across Africa, but also a scheme that the rest of the world is willing to embrace”.

He added: “Verve is not only a payment card; Verve has become a lifestyle for its users. It is the way we pay, play and interact. Verve is both a contact and contactless payment solution, a physical and virtual store of value. It is the key to African exchange; the African Key to exchange”.

COLLABORATION FOR DIGITAL PAYMENT GROWTH IN AFRICA

The city of Accra welcomed Verve International on Friday, October 25, 2019. The event was the formal signing ceremony between Ghana Interbank Payment and Settlement Systems Limited (GhIPSS) and Verve International. It heralds the initiative to drive growth of e-payments in Africa.

Implication of the partnership signing ceremony that took place at Accra Marriot Hotel is that Verve Card users (both Verve Global and Verve Classic) can now transact across channels throughout Ghana. This acceptance of Verve card is available in a total of 21 African countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Gabon, Gambia, among others.

Archie Hesse, Chief Executive Officer of GhIPSS, believes that the partnership has the capacity to boost the Ghanaian digital payment system, stating that the development of the digital payments system in Africa was critical to Africa’s competitiveness in the world.

He said: “We are excited to collaborate with Verve International and to midwife Verve acceptance in Ghana. We are positive this will open a new vista of opportunities for improved services and development of more home-grown solutions. The card portfolio within our banks will increase and Ghanaian cardholders will have more exciting world-class services and benefits to enjoy. Together, GhIPSS and Verve will develop the digital payments ecosystem across the sub-region and beyond.”

Mike Ogbalu III, CEO of Verve International, stated that the partnership was strategic because Verve and GhIPSS shared similar vision to grow digital payments in Africa.

He said: “We are excited about this occasion. It marks the beginning of a great synergy between two organizations with similar aspirations to drive the growth of digital payments across Africa. Because we typically share the same payment and economic challenges in various African countries, it’s also logical that the solution should be via African collaboration. In our attempts to solve these challenges, we realized the importance of partnerships; we also realized that GhIPSS’ vision for Ghana is consistent with that of Verve: to drive growth of digital payments in Africa. So today, we are witnessing the commencement of partnerships between Verve International and the Ghanaian financial and payment ecosystem to grow digital payments, intra-Africa trade and ultimately drive economic prosperity.”

The partnership reiterates Verve’s commitment to providing solutions that suit the needs of Africans.

Verve is Interswitch Group’s innovative payment scheme, offering products and solutions that enable consumers to transact all over Nigeria and across international markets. As the largest domestic card scheme in Africa, it has built a best-in-class value chain ecosystem that benefit from the services that we provide.

Interswitch, its parent company is a leading technology-driven company focused on the digitisation of payments in Nigeria and other countries in Africa. It is a leading player with critical mass in Nigeria’s developing financial ecosystem and is active across the payments value chain, providing a full suite of omni-channel payment solutions.

Founded in 2002 as a transaction switching and electronic payments processing business, building and managing payment infrastructure, delivering innovative payment solutions and driving transactions across Nigeria and other African markets, the company provides secure payments solutions and services that facilitate convenience and real value for consumers, businesses, governments and other organizations, helping to reduce costs, improve operational efficiency and drive sustainable revenue growth. ■



ADVAN: Threshold of a New Dawn?

The 2019 annual general meeting of Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) may have come and gone, yet the memory of the glamorous and colourful occasion will continue to linger. More specifically, the ADVAN awards of Marketing Excellence which touched the heart of marketing practice, process and profession will continue to resonate with all stakeholders in the business of brand management and the management of brand business. Not only that it will continue to linger in the annals of brand achievers who despite keen competition in the various market segments in Nigeria were able to out-perform competitors and hauled laurels and awards for their market leadership.

While the excellently packaged and delivered ADVAN awards would be unforgettable in the history of marketing in Nigeria, same way will the body's annual general meeting which held some days earlier before the award event.

As an industry watch, MARKETING EDGE can authoritatively confirm that the 2019 annual general meeting where the out-gone President, Mrs Folake Ani-Mumuney presented her exco's score cards and performance within two years in the saddle was more historic, momentous and epochal.

Though a yearly event, the convocation of this year's general meeting of ADVAN came a little late behind earlier schedule. Billed to have taken place since 8th August, 2019, the yearly meeting had to be tactically delayed till November because of some expedient and exigent issues.

Indeed, very keen industry observers would agree to the fact that the little



adjustment in the timeline for holding this year's annual general meeting was not a mere happenstance. Rather, it was a conscious and deliberate decision taken in order to put finishing touches to the strategic reform efforts of the Folake-Ani-Mumuney led exco to re-define, retool, restructure, re-engineer and reposition ADVAN before it finally hands over the baton to a new set of leaders whose task, it has been reliably and reasonably gathered would be to implement the new template on good corporate governance for ADVAN while strategically and pro-actively playing its leadership role in the sector.

Authoritative industry sources reliably informed MARKETING EDGE that the general meeting of the Advertisers body witnessed very frank and sincere reflections on ADVAN's journey so far and the years ahead.

In the weeks and months preceding the annual general meeting, the out-going exco which has achieved so much within just two years in the saddle have proactively engaged ADVAN's board of Trustee members in series of strategy sessions which eventually culminated in mapping out a sustainable development growth plans and a blue print for the advertisers group.

For the uninitiated, ADVAN is the

umbrella body for all corporate organizations that engage in advertising in Nigeria. It provides an organized forum for corporate organizations (advertisers) to express their views and influence developmental changes in the Nigerian marketing communications scene. Founded in 1992, ADVAN was intentioned to advance the interest of the marketing industry in Nigeria by spear-heading and ensuring global best practices as well as facilitating collaborative partnerships with relevant stakeholders. Today, ADVAN according to information on its website is a strong voice of over 70 of the biggest organizations in Nigeria representing over 200 brands with an annual marketing spend of well over Two hundred billion naira (#200bn). ADVAN is an executive council member of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), a body of global brands and marketing associations in over 60 countries of the world.

Its major pillars are: Visionary, Thought Leadership, knowledge sharing and building, Stakeholders engagement and Data, Research and insight.

Nevertheless, the association has in recent times felt the need to do a holistic review of its raison d'être while doing a thorough over-hauling of its organic internal structure and systems. While the association has lived up to the aims and objectives of its founding fathers at initial stage, along the line, the generation of leaders that have emerged midway into its second decade existence took certain things for granted and in the process lost the steam of pro-active good governance and social re-engineering that are essential pre-requisite of a dynamic organization like ADVAN, which plays a pivotal role in the overall

national economic sphere. More specifically, a well managed and administered ADVAN is sine quanon to the health of good brand management business in Nigeria.

Although the administrative lacuna that evolved as a result of this lapse may not be readily visible, a very keen and close observer of the industry and indeed the association would readily attest to the repercussions of the weakened internal administrative system.

While other sectorial bodies maintain a very strong, virile and organic administrative system, the ADVAN system have become somewhat pliant and relatively weak as it revolves around just one person.

Investigations conducted by MARKETING EDGE revealed that a lot is fundamentally wrong with the present composition and constitution of ADVAN secretariat where the executive Secretary functions more exclusively as Chief Executive Officer of the organization. While it is the duty of the executive Secretary of the advertisers body to over-see the day to day activities of the association on behalf of the elected executive members, especially as an administrative assistant to the President, the occupier of the position is expected to take directives from the President or the executive board of ADVAN as represented by the exco.

However, the reverse has been the case for quite a while as the executive Secretary of ADVAN has become more or less an institution on its own. Without sounding unduly alarmist, Mrs Ediri Ose-Ediale has literally and allegedly assumed the role of a defacto general on the war front as she practically initiates and takes decision on behalf of ADVAN exco without prior consultation.

Amongst several infractions of the executive Secretary were the unilateral appointment of a board of trustee member for the association without the knowledge and in-puts from any executive members.

Besides, there were severe allegations of master-minding the election of officers into ADVAN exco, especially for her most favoured friends and associates. Added to this is the allegation of off handedness in the treatment of junior employees of the body.

This however was alleged to be

unclear to ADVAN leadership until a surreptitious review of her activities were carried out. It was also alleged that the ADVAN executive Secretary was in the habit of undermining exco decisions on most important issues.

A very reliable and authoritative ADVAN source informed this magazine that "Madam Ediri Ose-Ediale would only properly execute an idea or project that originates from her table. Anything that did not originate from her, she will ignore. She has done so on several occasions".

Continuing, the source said, "the last annual general meeting of ADVAN was another case in point. We asked her to ensure massive media coverage, but she went ahead to be selective in the choice and numbers of media houses to be invited. At the end of the day, very few media houses were invited and there was very scanty news reports on post event media reviews on such an all important industry event. We were surprised that even the few media houses she invited later complained of not being properly taken good care of", the source revealed.

In the past, ADVAN used to hire friendly agencies which are related in auxiliary businesses to handle its yearly Marketing Excellence Awards for Sponsorship and Profitability as event agencies, this idea was later jettisoned unilaterally by the executive Secretary as projects are now sourced and handled internally with the very few number of staff with little results to show for them. The association activities have advertently and inadvertently become objects of micro-managing, which gives little or no room for good corporate governance practice while further limiting and inhibiting growth.

The generation of leaders of the respected body could not be blamed for this in a way. Reason? Most of them are very busy, chief marketing and commercial Directors, top executives and all who are daily battling with meeting company targets and consumer demands in their various paid employment situations. For these top marketing executive officers and top notch marketers, there is simply no luxury of time for full management of the internal dynamics and functions of the association. This therefore puts the task squarely on the Executive secretary appointed as a paid employee of



the august body. Perhaps in this new role, the executive Secretary has become more or less a defacto authority in the association.

Reliable and impeccable information at the disposal of MARKETING EDGE revealed that the exercise of the absolute powers by the executive secretary had in some cases ran counter and in breach of the position of the executive council of the association over the years. Not only had some junior employees of the association being frustrated to resign their employments from the organization in the past, it was gathered reliably that the running of the ADVAN secretariat has been largely dictatorial and in bad governance taste.

These and many other issues became the concern of the out-going exco who in alliance with the ADVAN board of trustees agreed to develop a new template for good corporate governance practice with a view to relishing an unfettered authority to fostering seamless administration that is focused, strategic and visionary. Although the madam Folake Ani Mumuney exco has done just two years, unlike previous regimes that spent two terms of four years, the exco has indeed performed outstandingly, especially given the present state of national economy which have also impacted and imparted negatively on members business. While this piece won't be given full coverage of President Folake Ani Mumuney outgoing exco score-cards, it must be emphasized that the team's visionary effort in restructuring, retooling and repositioning the association in close collaboration and co-operation with its board of trustees is salutary and commendable.

It is one singular act that posterity will not forget even in a hurry. Not only that, the in-coming exco would definitely find it much more easier, smart and easily operational the task of leading ADVAN to the next level of success if it follows the reforms template already put in place by their predecessor. It is only in doing this that ADVAN can regain its lost momentum. In saluting this team, it is pertinent to unveil the team who made this task possible alongside with the visionary, the Corporate Amazon, Mrs

Folake Ani Mumuney.

These are: Mr Wasiu Abiola, 1st Vice-President Mrs Nkiru Olumide Ojo, 2nd Vice President Mr Onome Asagbara, Publicity Secretary, Mrs Nnnena Osi Anugwa, Treasurer, Others are Mr Uche Onwuchiwe, Ex-Officio, General Osugo, Ex-Officio, Babatunde Abiona, Ex-Officio and Ediri Ose-Ediale, executive secretary. It is to credit of this team that ADVAN advances further on a new today.

Indeed, it is a great task ahead for

the new exco as they emerged and take charge of ADVAN ship of state accordingly. We however wish them all the best in the task ahead while congratulating the out-going exco for a very successful and dynamic tenure in office. Bravo to ADVAN as it advances ahead as a market leader in the sector.

When MARKETING EDGE confronted Ediri Ose-Ediale, she debunked some of these allegations, thanking MARKETING EDGE for attempting to balance its story. Below is her response. ■

ADVAN Executive Secretary Justifies Actions

Thank you so much for your mail on the enquiries. It shows your healthy interest/concern in the affairs and progress of ADVAN as a major stakeholder. This is highly appreciated. Be assured we hold the media, particularly your good self, in high esteem. We look forward to your piece on the next level of ADVAN, it underscores your commitment to partner with us for the development of the association and industry.

Today, I work as the Executive Secretary of ADVAN and the role and duties of the Executive Secretary are guided and regulated. Also, there is a reporting line subject to ADVAN corporate governance. Because the Executive Secretary aside being part of the Executive Council also functions to run and keep the secretariat, the occupant of the office would enjoy some visibility and presence in the activities of ADVAN as the regular face of the association. However, these cannot grant sole running of the association's affairs to the Executive Secretary. Occupant of the office MUST function with the support, cooperation and participation of all interested stakeholders for success. The modest growth and achievements recorded by ADVAN attest to this. On a personal note, the issue raised shall be treated as a feedback from an interested source. Deliberate efforts shall be made to clear whatever wrong impressions could have generated such an assumption. As Executive Secretary I have never heard such accusations before as our affairs are always professionally

handled. Going forward, we shall put in place corrective processes to get more interested members visible and involved in ADVAN events so the image of the association is not maligned in any way by unfounded opinions.

The ADVAN Board of Trustees and the Executive Council govern and direct the affairs of the association in accordance with the extant laws. Because the secretariat services the board and council, the Executive Secretary is assumed to be influential in the businesses of the board and council. This assumption cannot be stretched to the Executive Secretary determining the decisions of the seasoned top level professionals and eminent citizens that constitute the board and the council. It will be preposterous and very disrespectful to these distinguished business owners and managers, with tested independent minds and ideas, to so conjecture. Neither the ADVAN Secretariat nor the Executive Secretary, saddled with the dual responsibilities of planning and implementing the decisions, could afford to undermine the Executive Council in any way. The Secretariat and the Executive Secretary do not have favourite members, but must treat and service all members respectfully, equally and fairly. Appropriate measures and in-house hygiene shall be followed to remedy the wrong impressions.

On the media coverage of ADVAN activities and our last AGM, inasmuch as we desire massive positive publicity, the large number of reporters on the field

makes it necessary for us to manage the press at our events so we do not create a motley crowd and bring the Forth Estate of the Realm to odium or ridicule. As you know, the reporting of activities are at the discretion of the media houses. ADVAN cannot afford to impinge on the media houses' prerogative. However, we noted our regular partners and indeed some new friends support our affairs. Importantly, we plead that ADVAN be excused from such moral burdens that could compromise the integrity of the press. While ADVAN is very committed to media welfare and courtesies, we cannot afford to be seen as an association that would compromise lofty media ethics via financial inducements and whatever form of gratifications that could malign the integrity of our media partners. Be assured ADVAN secretariat shall look into the mentioned "lukewarm" media attitude to ADVAN and clear whatever misgivings could be within the ADVAN cum media ecosystem or relationship with the main aim to put in appropriate measures to correct such misgivings.

Permit me again to thank you very warmly for your interest in ADVAN affairs. We welcome your enquiries and clarifications ALWAYS. We are happy your media house's reputation for balance has compelled you to get our side on the possible flying rumours, gossips, false accusations or wrong opinions. We count on you to support us to put right such inappropriate impressions and perceptions. ■

Knocks for Lawmakers on Socio-Media Regulation Bill



Prominent Nigerians and well-meaning individuals have continued to lambast the lawmakers at the National Assembly as they appear poised to allow the bills scale through the hallowed chamber.

It will be recalled that the Federal government had indicated intention to regulate the social media. This has prompted a Lawmaker representing Niger East Senatorial District, Alhaji Sani Musa to initiate a bill on the issue saying that the bill on social media was aimed at guiding the user and not to gag media practitioners in Nigeria.

In a similar development, the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) has lent its support to the call for social media regulation, proposing that it will begin its oversight functions on the social media with effect from January next year.

However, notable Nigerians and industry stakeholders have decried the proposed regulation.

Notable among critics that have kicked against the move are: His Eminence John Cardinal Onaiyekan and Chief Afe Babalola (SAN) as well as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), through its Director, Legal and Public Affairs, Kwamkur Vondip and Nobel Laureate for Literature Professor Wole Soyinka who have all carpeted the lawmakers.

Rev. Onaiyekan said: "I am basically against capital punishment. I reject any idea for a law that is not so clear as hate speech and that Nigerian lives should be put on line. Seriously, hate speech is bad, when it is done it can cause a lot of damage. Therefore we should do all we can to avoid it. It is my own strong opinion that the laws on the ground are enough to handle this issue. There is no need for another law.

"The worst form of hate speech is when

it is packaged by government agencies. And we should not forget that the hate speeches that have caused the worst damage have been government-inspired hate speeches.

"And we need to do something about the kind of propaganda we push out in our country – both from the point of government and from opposition. These are the matters we should sincerely face.

"Whatever the bill may say, it should be stopping capital punishment and not introducing more. Our problem in Nigeria has not been laws, but the implementation of the laws. That bill is useless. Hate speech becomes dangerous, especially when government is behind it."

Aare Babalola, who is the Founder of the Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti (ABUAD), kicked against the proposed Hate Speech Bill.

According to him, the bill is an attempt to undermine democratic governance by taking away the people's inalienable constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of speech.

Noting that Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution explicitly guarantees freedom of expression, the Senior Advocate of Nigeria said that democracy can only thrive when people are given the free will to impart information and ideas without modicum of restrictions.

Babalola said: "The provisions of the proposed bill are clearly antithetical to the principles and ethos of democratic governance, noting the sustenance of the nation's democratic status is under serious threat."

The legal icon described the 'obnoxious bill' as undemocratic, dictatorial and unnecessary, noting Nigeria already has a preponderance of constitutional provisions and extant law to sanitise public expression space.

He said: "I believe this is the beginning

of dictatorship. There are enough laws like defamation, libel and slander to deal with anybody who publishes falsehood against someone and it comes by way of taking the person to court.

"So, there is no need for making new laws to deal with somebody who publishes falsehood. There was no need whatsoever for additional laws to deal with that.

"Though, people are complaining, because the police are not doing well by delaying prosecution of offenders."

He added: "Irreparable damage has been done to the judiciary since the very day when the Department of State Services (DSS) ransacked the houses of judges at night, because no judge will give judgment against a government when he has the impression that his house will be searched at night."

Vondip advised the lawmakers to dissipate their energies on issues of national development rather than the ones that will limit Nigerians from expressing their views on governance.

The CAN official said: "I think the hate speech bill is for the purpose of checking publications that will damage a system, or threatening a system. What is a major concern by the content of the hate speech bill is the fact that it makes provision for capital punishment. To be honest, every Nigerian needs to be concerned about that. When laws like that are made, one could read a lot of meanings into it.

"The fact that it is coming from politicians, and the fact that it is difficult to define what hate speech is. If it is the court that is supposed to define what hate speech is. So when you make a law like that you are likely to expose innocent people to unwarranted danger.

"CAN will never be a party to such laws and we will never support it in its entirety. Any law that will shut the mouth of the citizens, we will not support such.

"That law violates the provision of the fundamental rights of the citizens as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution as amended. Every Nigerian has the right to speak or comment. And to make a law that would prevent Nigerians from lamenting on issues at this critical time is worrisome.

"We call on all Nigerians to resist it, and also call on all the members of the National Assembly to resist same. We also want to warn them that the law they are making today may turn against them tomorrow. We have laws in Nigeria that provide for defamation, and libel. They should take advantage of such provisions in the constitution." ■

War Over Social Media

...Regulation Fuels Furore

BY JOHN AJAYI

“War is what happens when language fails” – Margaret Artwood.

The raging furore over the proposed regulation of the social media by the federal government of Nigeria can best be situated within the context of the above quote by Margaret Eleanor Artwood, a Canadian poet, critic and essayist of blessed memory.

When in the 19th century, Artwood, very famous for her prose fiction and feminist life espoused her war philosophy; little did her teeming readers reckon that Nigeria would one day become the laboratory of her ideation. However, unfolding bickering and fillbustings on the proposed regulation of the social media have poignantly brought out the truism in Artwood’s war theory.

Indeed, one issue that has in recent times assumed the colour and status of national conversation with feverish tempo is the position of the federal government on social media. The debate, which has patently pitched the federal government against the majority of the populace has elicited some discordant tunes even within the government itself and a very bitter cacophony of voices by the citizens who are wont to believe that the proposed plan was not meant to curtail the freedom of expression granted all citizens in the nation’s constitution. Not only that, the conversation has also touched the heart of industries and social relations groups thereby making it to be more intriguing and unending.

To fully distil the import of the fuss and fury which the debate has sparked across all sectors of the country, it is apposite to offer a brief interpretation of the social media notwithstanding that this has become more or less a common national and global lexicon in the ever evolving post digital age.

An online research report revealed that “the social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration”. The report further revealed that “websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media”.

Prominent examples of the social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, Google, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Reddit, Instagram and Pinterest. Others are Brian Solis, a principal analyst studying disruptive technology and its impact on business at Altimeter Group, a research firm acquired by global brand management consultancy Prophet in 2015 created the following social media chart, known as the conversation prism, to categorize social sites and services into various types of social media.

Business application of social media

The online report further revealed that social media is fast becoming an

integrated part of life online as social websites and applications proliferates. “Most traditional online media platforms include social components, such as comment fields for users. In business, the social media is now used to market products, promote brands, connect to current customers and foster new business.

Social media analytics is the practice of gathering data from blogs and social media websites and analyzing that data to make business decisions. The most common use of social media analytics is to mine customer sentiment to support marketing and customer service activities.

Social media marketing (SMM) takes advantages of social networking to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach. The goal is usually to create content compelling enough that users will share it with their social networks. One of the key components of SMM is social media optimization (SMO). Like search engine optimization (SEO), SMO is a strategy for drawing new and unique visitors to a website. SMO can be done in two ways: by adding social media links to connect such as RSS feeds and sharing buttons, or by promoting activity through social media via status updates, tweets, or blog spots.

Social CRM (customer relationship marketing) can be a very powerful business tool. For example, establishing a

Facebook page allows people who like your brand and the way you conduct business to like your page, which creates a venue for communication, marketing and networking. Through social media sites, you can follow conversations about your brand for real-time market data and feedback.

In terms of customer feedback, social media makes it easy to tell a company and everyone else about their experiences with that company, whether those experiences are good or bad. The business can also respond very quickly to both positive and negative feedback, attend to customer problems and maintain, regain or rebuild customer confidence.

Enterprise social networking allows a company to connect individuals who share similar business interests or activities. Internally, social tools can help employees to access information and resources they need to work together effectively and solve business problems. Externally, public social media platforms help an organization stay close to their customers and make it easier to conduct research that they can use to improve business processes and operations.

Social media is also often used for crowdsourcing. Customers can use social networking sites to offer ideas for future product or tweaks for current ones. In IT projects, crowdsourcing usually involves engaging and blending business and IT services from a mix of internal and external providers, sometimes with input from customers and/or the general public.

On the other hand, the integration of social media in the business world can also pose challenges. Social media policies are designed to set expectations for appropriate behavior and ensure that an employee's post will not expose the company to legal problems or public embarrassment. Such policies include directives for when an employee should identify himself as a representative of the company on a social networking website, as well as rules for what types of information can be shared.

Social Media Marketing Is Fleeting

In the early days of social marketing, there was little competition for the dollar – not so today. For example, you can spend thousands of dollars on a Facebook ad campaign and, sometimes, get no return on your investment. By its very nature, social media is a short attention span media—it is much harder



to get someone's attention with a Tweet than it was to get someone's attention with a newspaper ad. That's because ad headlines and copy are harder to write on Twitter or Instagram.

You Must Be Active on Social Media

One of the biggest mistakes retailers make is to open up accounts on every social media platform they think is relevant and then leave them alone with no activity. Having an account with any of the social media platforms does not mean your business is into social media any more than owning golf clubs makes you ready for the PGA. In fact, social media users are turned off by the retailer who opens account and does not engage with clients and the public and consequently become labeled a pretender. The reality is, it is better to not have a social media icon on your website if you are not going to actively engage with it—and actively means on a daily basis.

Don't Make It All About You

The other big mistake retailers make is to use social media to talk about what is important to them rather than talking about what is important to the customer. As a retailer, you may think it is greater to shout that you have a sale going on; and in some regards, this would be true. But, if that's the only reason you are getting involved in social media it won't be beneficial. Your goal should be to provide content that is relevant to your customer and engage with them to the point that they want to share your post with others. If you use social media you need to engage with your customers, involve them in a dialogue, and ask them for their opinions. Post a picture of two

items you are considering carrying in your store and ask customers which one they like best. This creates a dialogue which leads to shared posts which leads to engage followers. Plus, if you follow this example, it will also lead to enhanced margins because your back and forth conversation will prevent you from buying the items that won't sell.

Images Are Key

Another thing to consider is that the most commonly-shared content on social media is an image. So, always include an image with your posts. This will dramatically increase your chances that one of your followers will share the post with their network. While building up a large network of followers is great, ultimately what you want is to have your followers—no matter how many you have—share what you're posting with their network, and those people will share your post with their followers, and so on. This is the new form of "word of mouth" and it's what people mean when they say a post went "viral".

Federal Government's conflicting positions

In view of the relevance and value addition of the social media to the brand building business, it is therefore not surprising why relevant stakeholders are up in arms against the Federal government on regulating the social media.

While the Vice-President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo first canvassed a zero regulation of the social media, the Honorable Minister of information and culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed was quite of divergent view as he insists the Federal government has concluded plans to regulate the sector.

Although the Vice-President had in January this year called for the regulation of the social media, saying it's the only way to counter the phenomena of hate speech. Professor Osinbajo had at the time maintained that the social media was under multi-jurisdictional regulation, necessitating more collaboration amongst nations to regulate them.

His words then; "In other words, shouldn't we be looking at some kinds of conventions, some kinds of agreements between countries, between nations that help us to regulate the social media much more effectively?" However, in what appears like a sudden twist, the Vice-president has again reversed himself, insisting that it will be pointless if the federal government should regulate the social media. He made this known following a statement by the Information and Culture minister, Alhaji Lai Mohammed who had stated that the online media space in Nigeria will soon be regulated.

In reversing himself, the Vice-president had said; "I don't think that government regulation is necessarily the way to go, but I believe that we as persons of faith and we, as leaders, and those of us who use the social media actively owe a responsibility to our society and to everyone else, to ensure that we don't allow it to become an instrument of conflict and instrument of war". He nonetheless cautioned Nigerians against the abuse of social media.

According to him, "the social media can precipitate war and violent conflict if used to misinform". He also warned against using social media platforms to promote religious disinformation, which he believed could easily lead to a breakdown of law and order.

Beyond the cacophony of voices and the saber-rattling, Alhaji Lai Mohammed has revealed in a recent news interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the federal government has commenced the process of injecting sanity into



Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed



President Muhamadu Buhari

In reversing himself, the Vice-president had said; "I don't think that government regulation is necessarily the way to go, but I believe that we as persons of faith and we, as leaders, and those of us who use the social media actively owe a responsibility to our society and to everyone else, to ensure that we don't allow it to become an instrument of conflict and instrument of war".

the social media space to prevent it from setting the nation on fire.

His words: "As a matter of fact, we have already put in motion the machinery for this. We have written letters to the major stakeholders who would nominate representatives and we are going to sit down together to decide on how best to confront this menace".

The minister noted that government had the responsibility to keep the country together, therefore, social media would not be left alone to destabilize the nation.

He stated further that the government welcomed the debate that had followed the decision and announcement to sanitize the social media space and the air-waves.

"We are glad about the criticism because what we set out to achieve is to bring the matter to the front burner of discourse".

We are however glad that there are more people who believed that the social media poses imminent danger to the unity

of Nigeria, especially as they have become merchants of fake news and hate speech", he said.

The minister noted that those who had opposed the regulation of the social media had not denied the fact that the platform has become purveyors of fake news and hate speech with grave consequences.

"Their concern largely, which is unfounded is that it might lead to the stifling of the freedom of press or gagging the media. However, we want to make it clear that it is not our intention to do this. The only people who are afraid of the decision to sanitize the social media and the air waves are the purveyors of hate speech and fake news.

"It must be put on record that Nigeria is not the only country that is doing something about this, Germany, Egypt, Russia, India and the UK are all doing something about regulating the social media platform", he said

The National Assembly Saga on Social Media Bill

As if the brouhaha which the issue of social media regulation had generated was not enough, an elected Senator from Niger state, Senator Sani Musa formally presented a social media regulation bill at the National Assembly.

The Senator representing Niger East Senatorial District, has said that his bill on social media was aimed at guiding the users and not to gag media practitioners in Nigeria.

The bill titled, "Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019, passed first reading on the floor of the Senate recently.

Justifying his reasons for reintroducing the bill in an interview with journalists, Musa said it was aimed at ensuring sanity on social media.

He said individuals who post false information on the internet, when found guilty would be asked to pay a fine of N150,000 or they are sentenced to three months imprisonment.

The Senator added that any corporate organization that refused to block false information after the regulation agency had alerted it would be asked to pay a fine of ranging from N5m to N10m.

He also said telecommunication firms that allow their network to be used to disseminate false information, could risk yet-to-determined sanctions.

He said, "Nigeria is not only for government but for every Nigerian and we must all work towards moving the country to where it needs to be.

"You can see America and other advanced countries today, they have been for hundreds of years. They have their period

"It (social media bill) is not to stop people from going online to do whatever they feel is legitimate. What is wrong is for you to use the medium to document information that you know is false, just because you want to achieve your desirable interest.

of turmoil and challenges like ours but they have been able to pass through.

"How did they do it? There were legislations, and the rule of law because people adhere to laws.

"For a country like Nigeria today and with the advent of social media, there is every reason for a country to as much as possible focus its attention to see how this new media can be tolerated."

He said it was possible for individuals to stay in a room and post a piece of false information just to attack someone.

The Senator said, "I have a passion for IT and I know what it takes to disseminate your information, it is at the speed of light.

"Some journalists will look at this legislation as if we are trying to bring a law that will gag the social media or the right to free press.

"It is a legislation that will guide how we can tolerate our activities on social media.

"False information has been disseminated so many times and they have



Senate President, Dr. Ahmed Lawan

caused so much chaos in different parts of the world.

"There are so many things that are positive within social media. For instance, a young lady that is getting married and wants the world to know could do so through social media.

"I felt we need it in this country. If countries like Philippines, Singapore, Italy, Malaysia, Australia, France, Indonesia, Egypt are attempting to control social media to prevent the spread of false information, what stops us from doing it?

"There has never been a time when Nigeria has been very fragile in terms of its unity than this period.

"It (social media bill) is not to stop people from going online to do whatever they feel is legitimate. What is wrong is for you to use the medium to document information that you know is false, just because you want to achieve your desirable interest.

"If you commit an offense of this nature, and by virtue of what you have committed, the law enforcement agencies will take you to court.

"There will be a court process that will prove that you have done something wrong.

"You can appeal. It will serve as deterrence to others, we should fix certain penalties that when you know that you will cough out something, you won't do it.

Digital marketers kick against social media regulation, demand representation on APCON, AAAN Awards

Digital marketing practitioners, under the umbrella of Association of Digital Marketing Professionals of Nigeria, (ADMPN) have expressed serious resentment over recent actions of

the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) aimed at regulating advertising activities on social media platforms.

The marketers who expressed their grievances recently during a media chat

with MARKETING EDGE said they were completely opposed to APCON's recent pronouncements to impose special levies as well as outright ban on advertisements via the social media.

Making known the group's position



Mrs. Ijedi Iyoha

on the issue was a digital marketing expert, and member of the organisation, Tunde Badmus who described the move by the regulatory body as being out of place and capable of stifling business activities of digital firms on the social media.

Similarly, the group expressed further reservations on what is perceived as “poor representation” of its members’ activities on industry awards organised by Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

The group maintained that with a wide spectrum of activities all over the social media, its member agencies deserved greater representations in various categories of the awards.

According to Badmus, who is Founder and Head of Innovation at Spark Something, a digital advertising platform, the group was finalising plans to make formal demands for representation and recognition by APCON, adding that being represented on the council would create opportunities for wider consultations for a more effective regulation in the industry.

“A body like APCON is a respected body because of all that they do. There has been a lot of checks and balances

because of its activities in terms of even consumer rights and all that and which makes sense. But there is this recent development where we don’t have a digital arm in APCON. I believe we are not represented in that body; if we are, then the recent ban on online ads, if it was properly thought out, wouldn’t have come into place at all,” he said.

He explained further that APCON’s decision to impose financial demands on the digital firms was completely out of place, considering that the digital firms were already making payments to internet platform managers such as Google, Facebook, and Instagram, hence it amounted to putting excess pressure on clients to make more payments.

He noted that while it was in the interest of the group to remain as part of the existing industry awards, the AAAN should re-examine its stance by giving more recognition to digital advertising agencies in the various award categories.

Stakeholders opposing views on social media regulation NIPR Chairman, **Olusegun McMedal**

It’s going to be very tough for APCON to regulate into that space, because even the offline platform is also very hard. Assuming that they even had the privilege of having that right to control what goes in there, they can’t handle the volume. There was a judgment sometime last year that says that APCON cannot regulate non-members of advertising. The law says it is your members that you can regulate their activities, so there is that judgment but sometimes APCON sets aside this judgment especially where people don’t know that such exists. But it’s going to be very very tough for them to attempt to control that medium.

BIDEMI ZAKARIYAU AKANDE, FOUNDER/ CEO, LSF PR

How much can they regulate? Is it the small businesses that are running little ads or the bigger corporations? There are too many people on the social media for you to say you want to regulate. Now what the US and UK do is, they have an advertising regulatory board, rules and standards, for example, they are the ones that determine if you have

30,000 followers, you are now classified as celebrity, so they have different things like that, they also want to regulate when you are pushing products to consumers, you must put ad, so that your audience knows that this is an ad and you are pushing it to them not organically but you’ve been paid for it. So a lot of these rules are the things they have in place to regulate, not that you have to come to APCON first to get your social media ad approved before it can run. I am not 100% sure what the APCON law specifies, I am not sure if they are saying you have to come to us to get your social media ad regulated or if you are running a social media ad this is what you have to comply with. In other markets, there is a compliance element; you just have to comply with particular things instead of having to over regulate every single ad that goes into the social media.

How do you see it impact on Brand’s social media activities?

It’s even not just that. How do they plan to regulate ads that are targeted to Nigerians?

There are brands abroad, for example, that target Nigerians on Facebook, on Instagram, and on Twitter; so you can see ads from other markets being run in Nigeria; how does APCON plan to do that?

How also do you see the sudden wake-up on the part of APCON to now want to regulate the social media?

Well, technology is growing, social media is growing; and they’ve seen that. However, I don’t think it should be a regulation thing; rather, it should be more of compliance. Do you comply or are you complying with X, Y, Z, so your ad is good to go?

What about the impacts on builders of brands, consumers and stakeholders in general?

We don’t know yet, it is still a proposal; it has not yet come into place, it has not been solidified, we don’t know yet what the impact would be, we don’t know what they are going to end up doing; ■



Verve Global Launch



Staff of Interswitch Group, Verve International, Discover Global Network, Fidelity Bank, First Bank Plc and Access Plc in front of the Verve Global card billboard at Times Square during the Verve Global card Launch in New York on August 12, 2019.



Verve Global Launch, Dubai:

L-R: Griffith Ehebha, Chief Risk Officer, Risk Management and Control, Interswitch; Lade Tubi, Discover Global Network; Margaret Okhoya, FCMB; Cherry Eromosele, Group Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Interswitch; Jerry Fosker, Discover Global Network; Shamsudeen Fashola, FCMB; Mike Ogbalu III, CEO, Verve International, Cards & Tokens; Mitchell Elegbe, Group Managing Director, Interswitch; Lanre Oladimeji, Zenith Bank; Adewole Adejebi, Group Head, Verve Marketing; Jonah Adams, Divisional CEO, Industry Vertical Solutions, Interswitch; Nneka Onwuegbuche, Zenith Bank; Opeyemi Olu-Opaleye, Verve International; Ugo Obasi, Verve International Country Manager, Nigeria, Issuer & Acquirer Management; Ehia Erhaboh, Chief Transformation Officer, Interswitch at Verve Global card's first transaction in Dubai on November 16, 2019.

L-R: Joshua Gbolahan, ED/Chief Operations and Information Fidelity Bank Plc; Mike Ogbalu III, CEO Verve; Oremeyi Akah Chief Core Operations Officer, Interswitch; Mitchell Elegbe, GMD/Founder Interswitch Group and Chinyere Don-Okhuofu, Divisional CEO Interswitch Networks during the Verve @ 10 Media parley in Lagos, September 27, 2019.



From Left to Right: Archie Hesse, Chief Executive Officer, Ghana Inter-Bank Payment and Settlement System (GhIPSS) and Mike Ogbalu III, Chief Executive Officer, Verve International, during the Verve Cross Border launch in Ghana on October 25, 2019.



From Left to Right: Mike Ogbalu III, Chief Executive Officer, Verve International; Archie Hesse, Chief Executive Officer, Ghana Inter-Bank Payment and Settlement System (GhIPSS); Dr. Settor Amediku, Head of Payment Systems Department, Bank of Ghana (BOG), Samuel Okojere, Director of Digital Payment, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Mitchell Elegbe Group Chief Executive Officer /Founder, Interswitch Group, during the Verve Cross Border launch in Ghana on October 25, 2019.

ADVAN Awards for Marketing Excellence West Africa 2019



The Dufil team receiving one of the company's awards



Mr. Abiona Babarinde, GM, Marketing and Corporate Communications, Coscharis Group with a guest



L-R: Mr. Femi Adeniba, MD, Media Seal, his wife, Mrs. Bunmi Adeniba, 1st Vice President, ADVAN and two other guests



L-R: Mr. Kola Oyeyemi, General Manager; Customer Experience MTN Nigeria and Mrs. Tolulope Adejebi, Marketing Director, West Africa, A-BlnBev



L-R: Mrs. Sola Salako-Ajulo, Special Adviser on Communications and Strategy to the Governor of Ekiti State, Bridget Oyefeso-odusami, Head, Marketing Communications, Stanbic IBTC Bank and 2nd Vice President, ADVAN and Mr. Ogechukwu Udeagha, Manager, Media and Communications at Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited



R-L: Mr. Allen Ose-Ediale, co-founder, the RECHARGE center and two other guests



Ours is a company with great experience and expertise in the African Market

– GPFI boss

Dr. MKO Balogun, Group Managing Director of Global Properties and Facilities International, is an astute entrepreneur, property magnate, teacher and influencer. He is the founder of the DMB Foundation that offers scholarships annually to outstanding indigent students in Lagos, from secondary to tertiary institutions. He is an authority in the real estate business. In this exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE's **Tamuno Kiri**, he speaks on the sector, in general, and his company, in particular.

Congratulations for building and managing the Global Properties and Facilities International brand to become an enviable reference in the real estate sector.

Thank you.

How would you describe the impact of the Real Estate sector on the Nigerian economy in terms of its contributions to the nation's GDP?

The contribution of Real Estate to GDP has been very poor due largely to the structure of the market. Today, there is no order and sense to the Real Estate market, development are not centred on impact to the economy, as a major component of the economy, Real Estate has been on negative trend until end of last year. According to NBS, the end of Q1, 2018 marked the 9th consecutive negative growth quarter for the Nigerian real estate service sector and its worst quarter in over 5 years. This is an indication of the performance of companies and businesses in the sector. The figures indicate that the profitability levels of many real estate service firms currently trading is poor and this may be largely driven by a slowdown in market transactions during the recession, especially in the luxury segment.

How has Global Properties and Facilities International Group fared amidst the invasion of a host of multi-national property firms with better financial power, global affiliations and presence in

different countries?

First, we are not a development company, we are a Real Estate services company with focus on supporting global businesses operating or trying to operate out of Africa, to create and maintain a world class environment for their businesses. The influx of international Real Estate companies is a good sign that Nigeria has come of age and there are opportunities, we are not threatened, rather we are excited of the opportunity it presents. Global Properties and Facilities International is a company with great experience and expertise in the African market and therefore companies look forward to working with us.

What does Global Properties and Facilities International do better than the rest, in terms of Value Proposition, Thought Philosophy, and Consumer Experience?

First, we are a customer centric company not a services/solutions company; what this means is that our business is designed not only to respond to customer demands but anticipate their expectations, we have built a strong support base for our business over the last 19 years, with experienced employees, our business partners (suppliers, vendors, global technical support partners), to ensure our clients get the best of the best world in any location we are with them.

Secondly, our company is focused on ensuring consistent value for money – what do I mean. In delivering FM services the expectation is simple; consistent quality delivery, year-on-year cost reduction, innovation and sustainability; this is what we offer our clients. We have over the last 7 years received



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recognition from home and abroad because of this. As a business, the only way we can be on a contract beyond the initial signed period is to deliver beyond the ordinary, create new ways of work, improve environment, introduce new ideas, manage with new technology and equipment, make the work less monotonous for our teams and continue to develop and improve their level of understanding of the industry, business environment and client expectations.

It is often said that “there is government in business”, how would you describe the impact of government regulation, as it affects the real estate sector?

I think it's not adequate and needs to be strengthened. There are a lot of dubious people in the industry who are daily destroying the value the RE industry can bring. We should be contributing not less than 15% to GDP but we are just probably at 1.5% now from negative grow

How does modern architecture enhance the dynamics of urban, sub-urban, and community development in metropolitan cities such as Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja?

The world has advanced beyond what we are still doing in Nigeria and mostly we are not focused as a nation on developing sustainable cities and communities. We have in the past focused on proper city and community development with the likes of industrial parks in Apapa, Ikeja, Ilupeju in Lagos and the FCT developmental master plan. We need to go back to that, this is not only the responsibility of government but also that of players in the RE sector – Arcs, Engineers, Developers, Town Planners, etc. Our current building designs and development does not maximise space utilisation and are not modern, we are building boxes and utilising a space that can take a 20-storey building to develop 8-10 storey buildings.

How would you assess consumer patronage (individual and corporate), to your services, taking cognizance of the fact that there is recognizably a slow growth of the middle class with the buying power to afford such services?

Our business is a B2B and we have had a positive response from corporate mostly international firms to our business which is good for us.

Finally, how does Global Properties International, attract and retain quality manpower to secure new businesses and retain existing customers, which is critical to company growth?

As a service business, the key to our business is happy, motivated, well trained and supported employees. In GPFI, our business is built around employees – identifying, developing, motivating, inspiring, supporting our employees is our model. We have several best practice schemes and processes that help us achieve this and we have seen time and again that the results show that it's working. If we manage a client's space well, it becomes our reference site. ■

I am determined to make a difference

– Stephanie Obiano

Stephanie Obiano, the Chief Operating Officer of Furalle Travel Management Limited, is a thoroughbred professional who has spent decades at executive level, in the aviation industry. She is a skilled negotiator, business strategist, with a strong focus on international businesses. She is a front running professional cum entrepreneur in the travel management sector of Nigeria's economy. She recently spoke with MARKETING EDGE exclusively.

We would like to congratulate you for building and managing the Furalle Travel Management Services (FTMS) brand to become an enviable reference in the Travel Management sector. How has the journey been, so far?

It has been an interesting journey, one of drive, consistency, tenacity and, of course, passion. Without passion you can't have the drive to deliver. It has been a challenging journey; our business has evolved and we are still growing. I am more determined to make a difference. More often as a woman in business, you have to work harder than your male colleagues to be respected. The journey has been as exciting as intriguing but of course worthwhile and i am looking forward to learning a whole lot more, so that we can give more.

How does the increasing need for better customer service enhance the dynamics of

best business practices in these postmodern times that technology dictates the pace of business?

We are techie and trado/conservative in service delivery for our business, hence, we marry both methods within service delivery and product modeling, and hence we are able to deliver our services and products to all market segments. We are very mindful that technology delivers accelerated access and we use it accordingly, and of course with the realisation of the evolving scenarios of internet penetration levels in our society, we deliver via the traditional access where necessary. As much as we know that technology has made the world smaller and we use it effectively. We know it cannot replace the human factor and personal touch. So, for us as a business, there is a mixture and this delivers the balance for our services and to keep our relationships, even our email interacts with you, our client.

How has FTMS fared amidst the invasion of a host of competitors, local and foreign?

We are purposely driven, with a

vision for continuous and sustainable innovation as a business, being mindful of competition, we are poised to make a difference that the markets need, the consumers need, always something refreshingly new every day we must offer, we are not afraid of doing things differently, because its innovation that sets new standards Competition keeps you on your feet; as you know the global majors are never resting on their oars, so also are we.....we are driven by that desire and purpose to be a super brand from Africa

What does FTMS do better than the rest, in terms of Value Proposition, Thought Philosophy, and Consumer Experience?

Customer, Customer, Customer, their satisfaction is what we are all about, they are the purpose of our business, hence services for them, when they need, where they need and the way they want it. Our sector is all about experience and that we deliver it in a manner that will remind them that there is yet no other way to have a service better than the way and how we deliver. Our customers have helped us evolve over time, and that is



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why, they are our only priority.

It is often said that “there is government in business”; how would you describe the impact of government regulations, as it affects your sector, concerning the exchange rates and immigration laws, and multiple business taxation?

Definitely there is the government factor in even business; the government has a role to play by constantly creating enabling environment through policy and fiscal frameworks. In a business such as our exchange rates has an effect on the purchasing power of our clients. We would want the government to provide a more enabling environment for businesses generally, enhance our national dignity work on more bilateral relationships to enhance our passports have more visa free access to more countries. In terms of taxation the government can help tailor tax reliefs on new businesses 0-2 years. Our immigration laws have improved with the introduction of VOA, I believe we will have increasing economic growth with enhanced ease of doing business framework

How would you assess consumer patronage (B2B, and B2C), to your services, taking cognizance of the fact that there is recognizably a slow growth of the middle class with the buying power to afford such services?

At B2B and B2C we have been quite progressive. People really don't know that Luxury is not always expensive; it can be affordable. We also encourage our clients to explore our local tours, relaxation points, our country and continent is so blessed. So beyond the international offerings we offer local deals as well

Finally, how does FTMS, attract and retain quality manpower to secure new businesses and retain existing customers, which is critical to company growth?

One critical key to any successful business is human capital, we work with employees who have become stakeholders in the business, all working tirelessly to ensure we have the competitive advantage; together we have been able to build our business and retain our clients. ■

We have come of age; can now compete with expatriates in construction industry – **Ogunbusola**

The Founder and Managing Director, of S&M Nigeria Construction Ltd, **Mr. Solomon Ogunbusola**, who has evidently executed over 87 contracts without anyone been abandoned for MDAs, private and international organizations, across the country in this interview with **DELE OGBODO**, x-rays his humble beginning, the challenges facing the construction industry and the imperative of entrenching integrity into the business for the overall development of Nigeria. *Excerpts:*

Kindly lead us to the handle of your beginning/background and what fueled your interest in construction engineering?

To the glory of God, I'm in my very late 50s, a builder and construction engineer crowned as Fellow in the building profession. I delved into the construction sector, immediately after my graduation from the University of Jos, took up employment with Dantata and Sawoe Nigeria Limited: a reputable construction company well known within and beyond the shores of Nigeria. This was in 1991. It was Dantata and Sawoe, that groomed and honed me to take up challenges that lie ahead, and today we have climbed up to be where we are through the grace of God. I was able to also build my capacity with the help of the other expatriates and Nigerian engineers at Dantata&Sawoe. This is however not without the various courses/programmes that I did in civil engineering works within and outside the country. Due to my diligence and my hard work, I was noticed by the management and the late Chairman of Dantata and Sawoe, Alhaji Abdulkadir Dantata. I got their approval and assistance when I told them in 2009 that I wanted to start my own outfit in 2001. That was the beginning of S&M Nigeria Limited that has grown to what it is today, creating waves in the industry without compromising integrity which has always been our watchword.

Did you get into civil engineering by accident?

While growing up at a very tender age in Omuo-Ekiti, Ekiti State, a conspicuously farming community, I was excited at the sight of seeing ongoing engineering works through the various road construction works that were ongoing at that time. It was this mechanical 'wonders' that triggered my love for the engineering profession and I have never looked back, even when I had the option to pick from other field of study, I never did because I had become fixated to do construction engineering. At first, I wanted to be an Architect but I later found out that that was not the dream that I wanted as it is only through civil engineering or building engineering that I can get what I wanted. So, my foray into civil engineering was not by accident and today, I'm enjoying that dream.



I feel very proud about the work because of the passion that I have put into it, I get to the office as early as 6.30 a.m every day and don't leave until about 7 pm. I'm a 'field and site' man and so I'm always there to carry out proper supervisory works among others.

How would you assess the impact of indigenous engineers in the industry?

Nigerian engineers are doing enough; the problem is the imbalance in infrastructure and technological-know-how, because you will find out that even when a dull person goes overseas he becomes very brilliant and will top the class. If a student is weak here and getting pass here in Nigeria by the time he or she gets to UK or U.S, such student ends up making A's because the theory is always backed up with practical knowledge. For instance, I did practical

titration only twice before my WAEC examinations and yet I still made credit in that exam. Because we never had a well equipped lab, we had to go to another school of about 60 kilometres from my school for us to be able to do titration; but if you are overseas this is what you are exposed to daily at school. The availability of electricity is part of the infrastructure that I'm talking about; but in this clime, we have to resort to the use of candles and lanterns to read as compared to the use of electricity to read overseas. So, why won't overseas students come out in flying colours. I had the experience of studying under a very difficult and harsh environment than what obtained abroad. No wonder our children who go overseas to study come with First Class and brilliant grades because of the conducive environment and conditions there.

Why are local jobs still being awarded to expatriate companies despite the deluge of Nigerian engineers in the field?

In the past, jobs and contracts were awarded to expatriates contractors; but not now. Today, construction companies being managed by Nigerians are doing excellently well. At the Federal Ministry of Works, Federal Housing Authority or Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), they will confirm that we are one of the indigenous companies that have worked diligently with them. There is no job that they have given us that we have not completed. An example is the Suleija-Barkinku road in Niger State with a length of 60 kilometres has been completed in the last 6 years and yet there are no pot holes. We have completed jobs for both the federal and state governments that are worth billions of naira. We have been invited by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) more than 4 times to defend our work. We are patriotically doing our job and managing it very well without necessarily incurring debt or borrowing from banks. It was in the past that people believe that it is only the expatriates that can do it, our work has shown that it is no longer so, this is not to say in its entirety that the indigenous do not have fault. Every contractor cannot be like S&M.

There has been a lot of concern about project failures across the country. How can this be stemmed?

Project failure is not only limited to Nigerian contractors alone; even some of the big companies are susceptible to it. Project failure cuts across sectors especially in areas like road and buildings which is very common nowadays. For instance when a newly constructed road or infrastructural collapse within 2 years of its lifespan instead of its 20 years lifespan span which may result in pot holes causing accidents and killing people, government should insert a clause in that contract that will compel the contractor to be answerable for the cause of that accident and therefore be commensurably punished. I will also suggest that a tenancy agreement for the maintenance of roads constructed be given to the contractors so that they monitor and see to the maintenance of such roads after the initial lifespan of say 10 or 20 years. If contractors are made to be accountable no contractor will undertake work that will result in failure 3 years after the job was completed. As it is happening today, government has started prosecuting contractors, builders and owners of collapsed buildings, in the same vein government should move to address contractors who construct roads that fail resulting in the deaths of Nigerians through road accidents occasioned by that road failure.

Assumed that you are made Minister of Works today, what will you do differently especially on the deplorable state of Nigerian roads?

I will give or allow contractors to maintain the road that they have constructed say after the initial lifespan of 10 years with some

financial implications built into the MoU. If this is done, I can assure you that there will be practically no pot holes or failure because the contractor will always respond quickly to any emergencies on that road. Also there will be no accident on the road and if somebody over speed and gets involved in accident that will be a different matter entirely, but if somebody gets accident-ed because of a big pothole that was not done right by the contractor wherein the person dies, the contractor will now be held responsible and be made to face prosecution. If this is being done both the foreign and local contractors or companies will know their responsibilities and they will not do a job that will fail within 2 or 3 years.

Building collapse is becoming more and more frequent, what could be responsible for this and can the disaster be averted?

There are several factors that contribute to building collapse not only in the major cities but also in the villages, take for instance our local building in the villages which is just a mixture of earth, mud and some other components and some of these houses are still standing perhaps with very little maintenance. Buildings are collapsing because they are old. But, when the original builders of such building have passed on you still see people hanging around such building and in the instance of heavy downpour and other natural disaster such buildings will give way because they are supposed to be pulled down naturally because that is naturally done abroad. In Canada for example, when houses are old they will remove them and put a new structure there. However, the building now can last for a very long time because all the structures, the design and the strength of materials are appropriately put in place. The older the age of a building, the more chances of collapse because of weakened structures. However, about 20 percent of collapse can also be attributed to human factor, where developers want to cut corners using inferior materials, inadequate materials and may be not mixing cement professionally which may result in overweight due to lack of proper reinforcement the thing will collapse or give way.

How can the role of quacks in building collapse be eliminated?

While it cannot be denied that there are quacks in almost every profession, some of these quacks may even be good. Yes, as a Fellow of the Institute, and I know that even though the quacks may not know why they doing what they are doing they stick to it by doing religiously but the professionals know why a certain number of bags of cement to mix a certain quantity of sand. And so the only problem between the quacks and the professionals is that the professionals know why they are doing like that but the quacks don't know why it is being done like that.

What has made S&M so unique and different from others over these years?

First and foremost, it is the quality of our job which is done to 100 percent specification which we must follow. Therefore, I will say that, the quality of our job is what is speaking and sustaining us. Also, we adhere to timelines in delivery our jobs. You can go to the various MDAs to ask. We are cognizant of the fact that timely delivery of jobs saves a lot of money which may result from inflation.

How many contracts have you been able to execute successfully so far?

We have done about 87 contracts and we have never abandoned any of our jobs. We have across several sectors within the public and international sectors like the World Bank, Niger State, Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA). We have supported the telecommunications industry in building and construction of

their infrastructure. We have worked with the Federal Housing Authority, virtually all the Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory like in Abaji, Gwagwalada, etc, etc.

Is Public-Private-Partnership the quick-win way in project implementation in the country?

My quick reaction is to find out if PPP is actually working in Nigeria. I was the immediate past president of the Federation of Construction Industry (FoCI) and from what I observe it is the government that is directly or indirectly funding the PPP initiative because the expected contribution of the private sector is almost a failure as they don't contribute their counterpart funding.

Is it true that the cost of construction in Ghana and other neighbouring countries are far cheaper than what you have in Nigeria?

It is difficult to just generalize the cost of construction in Nigeria and Ghana like that. It is like asking somebody that if the cost of vehicles is more expensive in Nigeria than overseas? The cost of these brands of cars depend on their make for instance Toyota and Nissan cannot attract the same price. The cost of construction however can vary just like the quality of different brands of cars. Most of the construction works in Abuja have about 7 layers and if the road is done very well there cannot be pot holes on that road in the next 25 years and that extra cost cannot be compared to the normal cost of road construction that you are used to.

What are some of the impacts of corruption in the construction industry?

There is no doubt that corruption in the past may have impacted on the construction industry, but nowadays and with the coming in of the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) some of these things are brought down. But when you go to selective tendering where people are not fully involved then the element of corruption can creep in because it is no longer competitive unlike where everybody is participating. Again, when it is an all comers affair and every contractor is involved and the contract being awarded to the lowest tender it will result to abandoned project. Because, these people will collect their advance payment and will never appear on site. For instance a job that should cost N10 billion and being bid with 100 contractors and after pre-qualification of about 30 contractors there is no doubt that some contractors will bid as low for N5.5 billion just to get the job. A job that ordinarily should not cost less than N10 billion but because you have about 100 contractors bidding for the same job I'm not joking and may be about 30 contractors were pre-qualified that they can do it then 30 are clear that they can do the job. Out of this 30 they now the lowest bidder will get the job they will now start cutting the cost down and before you know from N10 billion

which is supposed to be the standard cost somebody will now be offering about N5 billion or N6 billion because they know that once they get the job they will get advance payment made to them.

What strategies should Nigeria adopt to get world class infrastructure?

The first is that the BPP has to be strengthened. We (Nigeria) are losing money both in quantity of works to be done that are almost based on approximation most of the time. A good survey will certainly suffice here on whatever project that they want to do. Besides strengthening, BPP should be given free hand to operate. Delay in payment for work can also hinder infrastructural development. When government awards contract they should make sure that it is backed up with budgetary provision. For example, a contractor gets a N20 billion job, with a completion period of 36 months/3 years with an appropriation of N2 billion in the first financial year. So, how do you expect the contractor to complete the job in 36 months? Lack of proper and adequate provision in the budget often leads to project failures. An ideal situation would have been that if a job is N20 billion for 36 months, it should have N8 billion every year or it should have N10 billion in the first year and N5 billion for the second and their year. This is how you will be able to deliver the work timely.

Who is this person that has impacted your life so much?

The late Alhaji Abdulkadir Dantata, who was the founder and Chairman of Dantata Sawoe Nigeria Limited, has made so much impact in my life. I don't have any regret coming across this man. His humanitarian and selfless principle caused our company to be where it is today.

Any regrets in the course of your construction work?

A certain Minister of Works and Housing before Mr. Babatunde Fashola SAN, out of greediness made life so uncomfortable for us for no genuine cause. He deliberately inflicted pain and punishment on me. At the tail end of his administration, he held on to our money and was never ready to pay us for works done despite certification of completion of job for the ministry. He held our money and I wasn't paid. He made me to become hypertensive and up till today I'm still treating it. Our company took a loan to execute a contract of N35 million which he refused to pay even after completion of the job. And before you know it the bankers were on our neck with interest and capital accruing to N70 million. Meanwhile, the notorious minister would be in the United Kingdom, dictating who should be paid and not to be paid through text messages. It was when President Muhammadu Buhari administration came in 2015 that Fashola, SAN, became Minister that he ordered that we must be paid even without our meeting him. ■

In the past jobs, contracts were awarded to expatriates contractors but not now. Today, construction companies being managed by Nigerians are doing excellently well. At the Federal Ministry of Works, Federal Housing Authority or Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), they will tell you and confirm that we are one of the indigenous companies that have worked diligently with them.

The very good foundation that I got helped in the building of my business – *Brenda Nwagwu*

Mrs. Brenda Nwagwu is the Principal Communications Consultant at QVT Media. An Accountant by training but with a passion for marketing and advertising, she has combined her training and experience in two leading media advertising agencies with her passion to birth a company that has carved a niche for itself in the Nigerian media advertising landscape. Her exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE is exciting as it is inspiring. Excerpts:

What informed your Choice of Career? What led you into this field?

Like I told you, I didn't want to be in the back up room, I started with accounting in ARM, I was in the finance department doing management accounts and stuffs like that. Even when I was studying accounting I knew that is not where I wanted to be. My father said do a professional course, and well ok, I did a professional course but it didn't just fit me, it wasn't working and so after a while I left. I set up a classified arts paper, I used to publish a magazine because I felt Marketing is everything and that's how it started for me. Next thing I now saw is the ad that said, Do you like figures and do you like people? It was an advertising agency and I felt that would suit me.

How will you assess an accomplished professional?

I would say that an accomplished professional is somebody who the industry takes as a point of reference, especially in terms of the subject matter of our profession. If it is Communications, if it is creativity, if it is tech, and tech is big now and everybody is trying to automate every process right now to make it faster, to make it more efficient, make it more intelligent as well; you have the AIs, etc, also coming in. So for me, first of all you have to be a point of reference. You have to be somebody they would say, if you want this, this is somebody you can talk to. If it is in advertising, this is the master of consumer insights. That is what I understand as a professional; somebody who knows his onions, to whom skill is key. The second thing is consistency, they know you for this, they know you for your stand and your word is your bond.



What impact do you see professionalism play in the success of entrepreneurship?

It ensures your customers come back and it ensures that they prefer you because that's how business grows. Word of mouth is like the strongest thing you could possibly have as a good referrer from a client that I worked with this person and if you want, this is where you should go. So professionalism make people know that for sure, you know what you are doing, and two, your output is quality, you are striving for excellence at all times. And so what it will do to entrepreneurship is that, right now, even in the industry, there are quite a few smaller agencies and they are actually competing with the so-called big agencies because they can be professional, if you come out together, all of us are on the web now, we can be equal, depending on the work we do especially in the creative area.

How has it been growing through the ranks to become a company CEO?

I don't consider myself a CEO. On my card I don't have CEO, I have Principal Communications Consultant. Anybody who requires the role of CEO should please take it because it has a lot of things that it comes with; but I think that in anything that is a profession, the best you can be is to start right from the ground up. When I started media planning and buying, I went to every area of it and then of course I did my APCON exams and I had to actually get more exposed even to copy writing even though I was working in a media agency. So I work as a planner but I learnt buying. In fact, from the start, within the first year in MediaReach, I was part of the team that built the software that would help our deployment of media purchase orders to improve and to speed up. So for me, it is necessary to start right at the bottom so that if you understand it then you can grow it and you can build it for yourself.

So, starting from there and then moving more into contents I started working into sponsorship and I started a company called BTY Limited which is a part of the group where MediaReach is, and that is basically content marketing and content buying for clients. I started that; and so for me I was already a mini CEO even in MediaReach. And then I moved to Mediacom, thereafter; now it's called Zenith. I love those two places I've been. I learnt a lot of knowledge of Communications and of Media, working in MediaReach. It was a very good foundation. I learnt the business from Dr. Ken in Mediacom. He is an economist and he is always about the bottom line. So for me, I think I got very good foundation to be able to build the business by myself.

So what really inspired you to get to this level?

If it's an inspiration, whenever you start you don't want to stay in one place and you don't want to stagnate. Anywhere I am, I look towards the top; the only thing that motivates me is that there is actually a space at the top. So if there is no space at the top then what am I still doing? When I first started too, I found out that a lot of agency top people were men. In fact, when I go to MIPAN meetings there were so many men; but there are more women now than there used to be; you could go there before and it would be only men, so it's wonderful as women are coming up now and showing that they can stand their ground.

What things do you consider as basic challenges of the business and of the Industry generally?

Funding is the number one thing. Debts, there is so much debt

and that's why funding is rather difficult. Professionalism in that part I think is the biggest issue; and it cascades down. If Mr. A doesn't pay Mr. B, Mr. B cannot pay Mr. C and so you will now be wondering who's telling a story and who is not telling a story. For instance, I've had some clients pay me after two years of running a campaign. How then do you explain to the owner of the media house, why he has not received his money two years after? Then again you have some agencies that collect the money and then don't pay. The other challenge is professionalism. In the Industries you find a lot of people and then they just think it is a market. Recently I went somewhere, and after I finished talking about the deal, I said to them so how much are you going to use to facilitate the deal, I said facilitate what, as in they will do a deal with somebody who has crappy content as long as facilitation fees are available. So I think professionalism which goes hand in hand with integrity and that's where I'm standing on.

What things would you proffer as solutions to addressing these problems?

For funding, I think banks are not yet hungry; they have found out how to collect charges from people, they don't know that their real work is to give monies. But, again, people that take loans many of them are very irresponsible, that when they even take it they are not planning to pay back; so they spoil the road for the next person. No doubt, we need some more patient capital, we need money for the Industry that will allow the Industry to be creative and to grow at a normal rate and not something else. Some people will give you 10 percent per month, why can't I get 10 percent and get it for 5 years, so that I can grow my business? To me, if we say it's from government, government can't do a lot of things; that is the challenge and many of us are so impatient that we don't put our monies into stocks anymore because it doesn't give quick returns.

What are your viewpoints concerning industry regulations – APCON, MIPAN, and the likes?

I was a member of judges at the ADVAN awards, and I was representing MIPAN on that panel. I enjoyed the experience and honestly it's something I know would probably bring some improvement and if it can be done very objectively across different bodies. AAAN has one, know, ADVAN has; if MIPAN has and every other sectoral body then that's one of the things that would help to raise the bar.

For the APCON, I think the biggest challenge now is that the Council is still not set up and we are really looking forward to that because it's affecting the industry quite negatively. In fact, the most recent pronouncements from APCON were not so complementary, where they were talking about regulating the digital on social media; but they were not speaking from a point of knowledge. Let me not use a harder word because you want to regulate something then show me the real things you should regulate; how can you be talking of regulating a post, so whoever is coming up with these things has to understand it. They need to work and understudy a digital agency and understand that thing that they want to regulate is; it's very important. You can't just come and regulate what you don't know because you won't even know where to start. The Council is very important, so that there will be sanity in the industry. For me, that's the challenge. ■

We are poised to become Africa's largest environmental sustainability media platform **GreenHubAfrica** boss

Mr. Henry Bassey is the founder of **GreenHubAfrica**, Africa's First Environmental Sustainability Media Advocacy Platform that tracks, measures and reports green initiatives whilst celebrating and rewarding solutions that tackle our environmental challenges to create and leave behind healthier sustainable communities.

GreenHubAfrica is built on the environmental pillars of the SDGs and focuses on solving measurable environmental challenges by Designing, Aggregating and Amplifying content that transforms tactical sustainability efforts into strategic purposeful brand storytelling. In this interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, he speaks about the organization and its activities.



DigiBrands and GreenHubAfrica are your twin organization; what visions birthed them; and what missions are they to accomplish?

DigiBrands is a Strategic Marketing, Media and Communications Advisory firm with a bias for the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainability that align with the UN SDGs. We have carried out a project on the social pillar of sustainability and we consult for a youth empowerment initiative on the economic aspect of sustainability. Having in mind that to truly achieve a sustainable community, the three legs of sustainability have to be balanced hence, GreenHubAfrica.

GreenHubAfrica is a product from DigiBrands and is an environmental sustainability media platform that is attracting and growing a community of earth enthusiasts comprising 3Ps (i.e.), People, the Public sector and the Private sector who engage in the climate change activities of Recycling, Tree Planting, Beach and Street Cleanups, Cycling, Environmental Art and Design and Green Energy to create and leave behind healthier sustainable communities. Our vision is to be Africa's largest environmental sustainability media platform with the highest number of stakeholders by 2030 – by solving measurable environmental challenges, creating awareness through the amplification, celebration and rewarding of stakeholders. The Eureka moment came from when I saw a huge gap from the client's side and recognized the role that brands could play towards doing good for our environment and leaving our environment better for generations to come.

How fast and how far are those missions getting accomplished?

For DigiBrands, even though we still do marketing communications for FMCGs, financial services, governments, etc, we recently repositioned as a marketing media and communications advisory firm with a bias for sustainability and recently finished a project on irregular migrations for the UK Home office in London.

For GreenHubAfrica, we are focused on raising awareness,

reporting amplifying, celebrating and rewarding of stakeholders. We strategically align with world environmental dates to hold events and campaigns aimed at raising awareness on environmental challenges in the bid to getting people to build a relationship with their environment.

Have any milestones hallmarked their existence, to date?

On the 21st of September, 2019 was the International Coastal cleanup Day, the World Cleanup Day and the Zero Emissions Day. GreenHubAfrica and over 1000+ volunteers collated 15,910kg of waste in 5hrs after cleaning the Elegushi Beach and the Sura Sangrouse market simultaneously. GreenHubAfrica and its volunteer partners involved a leading transportation network company to mark the zero emissions day by encouraging volunteers to car pool to the cleanup venues.

For DigiBrands, Irregular Migrations project were held in Benin, Kano and Lagos. We worked with 5 NGOs and delivered outstanding results and findings.

You have always maintained that GreenHubAfrica is not an NGO. Can you shed some light on this? How do you fund its activities?

We are a media platform. DigiBrands has been the major promoter of GreenHubAfrica. However, when we have initiatives, we approach brands that support us. We fund it through strategic partnerships and alliances and we currently have a few multinationals as strategic partners.

Would you like to talk briefly about your forthcoming GreenHubAfrica Awards?

Our Green Heroes awards will be recognizing people who are doing awesome things in the green space. We have identified a few outstanding lovers of the environment and would be sharing with the general public. We have a credible jury made up of renowned earth enthusiasts who will be at the fore front of the awards. ■

No professional should consider himself accomplished

Tolulope Medebem

Mrs. Tolulope Medebem is the Chief Operating Officer/Lead Strategist at Aster Integrated Marketing Limited (AsterIML), a full service experiential marketing, PR and event agency in Nigeria, with footfalls Pan Africa. The agency parades an experienced team with years of capabilities and consistency in superb delivery. Its personalized services ensure and guarantee successful implementation always, having as its key words: Excellent Delivery, Service and Integrity. A graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University with an MBA from China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) Tolulope, in this interview, speaks to **MARKETING EDGE Clifford Amuzuo** about her career, her business, professionalism and entrepreneurship, among other things.



Who is Mrs. Tolulope Medebem?

My name is Tolulope Medebem. I have been in this industry for the past 18, 19 years. My major foray into the industry began in year 2000 when a long-time friend of mine, Segun Giwa, came to me and said that he would like me to join him to start up a company.

We discussed it and that time Experiential Marketing was still pretty new in Nigeria, so to say. The journey started for me in 2000 when we started Marathon Events in collaboration with Octagon8, a South African company. We were affiliated to them and some of our accounts then included MTN, Super Sports, Nigerian Breweries as well as Face of Africa (Oluchi's win) and then the launch of Super Sports 3.

We also launched Strongman in Africa for MultiChioce.

In those days, Marathon Events then probably would have been one of the biggest experiential company around but for ego, human elements and other such, the company obviously didn't last long and so I moved on to Miss Commonwealth. We ran the Miss Commonwealth pageant for two years or so and then from there I moved

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on to Troyka Group. We started a company then in Troyka called FK which later grew to become FKG2. By the time I left it had become Azzagi. We were affiliated with a South African company VWV Group and had a lot of international trainings going to and fro. Insight Communications was another training school for me as I am sure that you are aware of that almost all the practitioners in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) passed through Insight, and I think I benefited a whole lot from working within the group. It was a beneficial and symbiotic relationship as we were giving our best and also getting as best as we could. Always, I give it up for Mr. Biodun Shobanjo, and Mr. Jimi Awosika as they were and still are probably the greatest in the industry.

From there, I moved on to Dangote Group, Dansa to be specific. I was Consumer Marketing manager for Dansa Group but I didn't stay there too long as it was quite a distant, being around Trade Fair, so I left. For me, yes you want to make money, you have a whole lot of plans BUT, at that point my children were very young

and I needed to be a mother for and to my ladies.

Honestly, irrespective of anything I am today, my children and my family come first. After this, I got an option to work with either Union Bank (during the rebranding) or an agency - BrandFootprint Communications which was in Ikeja GRA and guess which I chose - The agency which was closer to my children's school.

What informed your choice of career?

I studied Dramatic Arts. I went into school to study Law BUT didn't get in for that. The first year came and everybody started to change over; but at this point, I knew I wasn't changing any longer, I stayed on and enjoyed Dramatic Arts where I majored in Broadcasting. I served with Klink Studios and honestly thought I was going to be on the commercial side until I discovered IMC. Today, I can confidently say I have done the client's side and I have also done the agency's side BUT the entire IMC process or industry is pretty much a learning process. There is really no time you can say that you have known it all.

In recent times, we had a client that made us dig deeper into whatever it was that we thought we knew about IMC. For instance, AsterIML is an experiential agency and we also have a sister company that does advertising but with this client we found ourselves having to foray into a wider sphere of learning and digger well beyond what we thought we knew. So, I should say yes, I stumbled on it (IMC) and so far I have enjoyed myself, developed a career and stayed on.

How would you assess an accomplished professional?

I honestly do not know who an accomplished professional is. Like I said, we are learning every day. For me, I am open to learning. Sometime last week (before this interview) when you spoke to me, I was in Abuja. I was in Abuja because I had been called up as a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Management Consultants. I got the letter and I was like 'how?' So I went skeptically, I got in there and it wasn't a sham. I saw everyone, I mean everyone. I saw people like Emeka Mba of Multichoice. I think he was in NCC at some point. The guy sitting next to me was special adviser to the Cross River State Governor on something. There were over 100 people there and indeed these were not men and women to be taken lightly. I think, for me, that point was one of the greatest achievements of my life because

I was like 'wow, so I am also considered a management consultant!'

Honestly I don't really know what it means to be an accomplished professional. For me, being a professional means that you are consistently learning and getting better. If you say you are accomplished that means you have finished getting better!? It's evolving, like I would often say to my guys here in the office, 'you are only as good as your last activity. A new activity means you have to be better than what you did before'.

What was it that gave you courage to stand alone and delve into entrepreneurship?

Like I mentioned earlier, from the last agency I worked with, I started and ran a partnership with a friend - EventPlus for ten years till November 2018 when we both decided to expand our horizon and 'do more'. Today, I realize that, my professional life is mostly an exploration; and I think it helps me better. As at that time people said to me, "is it now that EventPlus appears to be getting a firm foothold that you people want to change?" While it is true that the reason why we are working is money; for me, the reason at the end of the day, is also fulfillment. Being an entrepreneur means that you will fall BUT surely, you will rise. Today, we talk about Walt Disney and the likes; If they didn't take the risk, he / they wouldn't have been anywhere. Remember that he / they have not always been like they are now. All risk takers (entrepreneurs) have had their failures, so if we don't take the risk, we won't fail; if we don't fail, we won't grow. So taking the risk only makes you an entrepreneur, and by the grace of the Almighty you fall and you rise again.

As an entrepreneur what visions and goals are you working towards?

I want to be the best in everything that I do without stepping on anyone's toe. How possible that is, I don't know BUT my understanding in life is to strive to be the best that I can be, giving all glory to the Most High. So, whatever it is that I aim at, I want to keep on working at it in line with the company vision of being the best in everything we do which for me would be: as a mother, a wife, an entrepreneur, and a leader to my people (in that order). The bottom line is that I am striving to be the best that I can be within the realm of reason and within the space that the Almighty has given me. ■

Technology endangers marketing communications and traditional advertising, says Ugoagwu



Paul Ugoagwu is the Managing Director of STB McCann. In this interview with **MARKETING EDGE** on TV, he evaluates creative business in Nigeria and gives his verdict on contemporary issues.

What is your assessment of the creative business in Nigeria; how will you rate it?

I would like to talk about where I operate which is the marketing communications sector, because when you talk about the creative business, it involves Nollywood and the music industry. You need to be creative in order to deliver marketing solutions to the needs of clients; in that way, the creative business is diverse. It's an all comers affair and it's getting interesting, especially because of evolving technology.

How would you assess the evolving and changing dynamics that we have seen in the entire brand management system?

Brand management is evolving truly, especially in the areas of practice and general business environment. In the past few years, we have seen the commoditisation of some brands. For example, in the telecoms sector, we have seen the entrance of many players compared to the way it was when it started, including the internet providers that are also eating into that market. When you have so many players like that, the category becomes commoditised such that everybody is offering the same thing. It poses a challenge to the marketing communications industry because how then would you differentiate one brand offering from the other? It's also the same thing in the financial services sector. Because it's an all comers affair, it has become a bit generic; it is now the survival of the most creative.

We have seen some professionals in traditional management services delving into advertising, what do you make of this?

Advertising is a bit like journalism where anybody who studied

anything could go into it. The same goes for marketing communications because what is required to practice is not limited to any formal training. So, when consultants see a sector that looks promising, they delve into it, especially because there aren't too many regulations preventing them from getting in.

Would you now say that the creative marketing business is endangered because of these incursions?

I would not say endangered. I would rather say it's getting more competitive. What endangers marketing communications and traditional advertising as we know it is technology. Before, mass communication meant beaming information to a large number of people, probably with no feedback. But with the way convergence in technology is going you can receive information anywhere, anytime, even if it's live, on your own terms with the ability to also receive and give feedback immediately. The incursion of these management professionals is not endangering advertising; it's just throwing up more challenges because the profession is here to stay. It's not going to go away.

What would you say is the biggest attraction for these consultants?

The biggest attraction is that sometimes, the budget could be very, very attractive. For example, if you go into an election year, the candidates could command a lot of budget, and the government also sometimes commands a lot of budget. When there is a big budget you find people that are not necessarily qualified or competent delving into it.

To what extent do you expect this competitive aggression to be played down?

By distinguishing them and by being very professional because the only way to separate the chaff from the wheat and the boys from the men is to have standards; such that whoever doesn't meet these standards finds his way out. I mean standards that could be met by core professionals.

Would you say the interests of these consultants were due to the shrinking business in the traditional territory?

You could say that a well because when one door is closing, you look for others that are open. Also because there is a free entry and exit into the marketing Communications profession, it looks like a low hanging fruit that can easily be plucked.

How would you describe the current delays we've seen in payment, talking about the experience of media owners and vendors alike?

I do not think it's necessarily different from the client/supplier relationship. In an organisation, there are rules that people keep to. The 120 days does not have universal applicability, there are some you actually pay immediately. For example, if you want to put up an advert in some newspapers, they don't allow you the luxury of 120 days; its upfront payment. I think if media houses live up to their billing and have high ratings, they should be able to dictate terms. But generally, advertising agencies do not necessarily delay payment, it's what and when clients pay. Sometimes there is a change at the top in the organisation and this always causes payment delay. But generally, even Nigeria owes.

Is the new payment policy by some multinationals a deliberate attempt to elongate credit lines?

I do not know the real reason why they are doing that; but everything is there to manage cash flow. Cash flow management is a big part of business. Some things may need to be verified before money comes in or goes out. For example, if you put advert in the media, you need to also employ the media monitoring agencies, and they have a certain period of time they need to verify what is put out there. So, the client may be waiting for such verifications and there may be other factors responsible; maybe not deliberately to stifle funds.

Would you say this is a favourable development to creative agencies and other service providers in the IMC industry?

Well, any process that allows for verification, that makes sure you get what you pay for is good. It allows for good practice and it pays everybody. It's like you know what you are expecting and you know when you are expecting it, so you can easily plan.

Let's talk about your company, STB McCann.

STB McCann was established in 1990. It started as STB Associates and was later affiliated with McCann Ericsson and finally became STB McCann that same year. That same year, we jumped into the big league because we won the Coca-Cola account. We have been in the big league from the very onset. From then up until now, the agency has retained the status among the big players. We are very competitive; we have maintained our international status and we are looking at being more relevant in the industry.

To what extent would you say your company has

achieved its ambitions?

Our vision is to be the number one in providing solutions to clients. Clients have marketing problems and we are there to partner with them, so we are like an extension of the marketing arm of our clients. We want to make their brands relevant to their customers and to the country.

What would you say is your company's competitive edge?

It's professionalism; and we have been very strategic. In marketing communications, strategy is everything. You can't just go into the marketing battlefield without a strategy or some insights. One of our core values is "Truth well told" which means finding the truth about the brands we manage and making it relevant. This has to do with a lot of strong consumer insight, and that is what differentiates us.

What's your creative philosophy/mantra?

Again, our mantra is "Truth well told". For us, creativity comes from truth.

How would you assess your input to the organisation since you came on board?

I'm not entirely new, I have been with STB McCann in past years and I worked in various departments and capacities. I was the creative director, strategy, planning director and so on, but I later left to pursue other endeavors. I only came back last year, and the reason for my return is to bring back that very core McCann tradition of infusing professionalism.

It's been 29 years of experience, what would you say are the challenges of big advertising agencies?

The swinging fortunes of businesses due to changes in affiliation is one of the major challenges. One may have big clients today as a result of affiliation and lose them as a result of change in affiliation.

What are your plans for the next five years and also the immediate future?

In the next five years you would hear our name, no matter what level you are, big, medium and small. By next year we want to double what we have currently. We also intend to branch into new areas in the marketing communications. For example, in the past couple of years, we have begun to carve out a niche for ourselves in the area of behavioural change communications; so businesses that need this type of specialisation know where to come to.

Who would you say Paul is?

I'm just a regular guy who wants to play his role and part in the marketing communications industry; to leave a legacy for the next generation. I'm a teacher and an author and all this is just to make sure we leave something behind; to leave the industry better than we met it.

What's your work philosophy?

Integrity and professionalism. I want to be able to stand before God and man and say that I have done this business according to best global practices.

Who are your role models?

My late father; he was somebody who did his best according to the means available to him. ■

The concept of Media Independents in Nigeria is not in sync with the globe

Feyi Olukoya



Mr. Feyi Olukoya is the managing director/chief executive officer of Media Stamp, a fast rising media independent company in Nigeria. In just seven years of its existence, the agency, very much in keeping with its name and corporate credo, has stamped its name on the list of media independent agencies to reckon with in Nigeria – through its service offerings in Strategy, Acquisition, Monitoring, and Planning – all of which are acronymned by the word, STAMP in its name. Feyi, as he likes to be simply called, speaks on sundry industry issues in this interview.

Who is Media Stamp and how would you describe the present state of the agency?

Media Stamp is a media independent company, we started about seven years ago, specifically in 2013; and to spare you the details we are into all facets of media. If you look at our name a lot of people don't know what Media Stamp represents; they just see media and they see stamp, they don't know that the stamp behind the media stands for what we do. That word (stamp) represents the core of our business, the s in the stamp tells you we do strategy, acquisition, monitoring, and planning. That is the stamp, and that is the core of media independent business, and we stamp it well, because from where we are coming, and from the experiences we've garnered over the years, know our onions in the business.

What is your impression of the Media Independent business in Nigeria, in view of the fear that greeted their entry into the IMC industry?

Yes, we have added value. You see, everything in life reacts to time; the coming of media independents to Nigeria was a reaction to time. The good book tells you that there is time for everything. When the

media independents came, it was the right time because as at that time there was this agitation that the core advertising agencies, the so-called integrated marketing communications companies were not doing things right, and then it was also becoming the norm internationally because it also signified the birth of so many media independent companies worldwide; they were looking for companies that would do same in Nigeria. Most of the core advertising agencies then had media departments which were not doing what they were supposed to be doing. There were the issues of them not paying the stations, issues of discounts, volumes and all that; and it was becoming like who will do this for us. Those who saw it and who saw that that was the future of the business came up with this idea about media independents.

Initially, a lot of people were skeptical; but over time we have seen that as a matter of fact it is now the core of the business such that now, there are some core advertising agencies that are not counted to be serious just because they don't have media independent companies. Right now, media independent companies are now like the tripod upon which some advertising agencies are standing.

Looking at Nigeria's consumer market, what do you see? What are your projections for the market?

You see, a lot of things are changing; in the next five to ten years there will be serious changes that will shock the market. For instance, five years ago, we talked about ATL and BTL. The budget, as at then, was split between above the line and below the line. Most of the time, it's always about 75% or 80% above the line and 15% below the line. Five years down the line, it has changed, you've heard about the new business in town which is called experiential marketing. Experiential marketing has virtually taken over the media business because the core factor in consumerism which is the ability to get a feedback which the old media are expected to deliver is what more or less the new media or experiential marketing is delivering. When you take a brand face-to-face to the consumers you can measure acceptability, you can measure reception and get a feedback at the instant; and then you can react to the feedback that you have gotten, that is what experiential marketing is delivering and so it has placed the old media at a point where they now play the second fiddle.

What do you see as challenges of media agencies and what solutions can you proffer to these challenges?

There are so many challenges. One is that we have too many quacks in the industry. Unfortunately, too, virtually all the media suppliers recognize these people because it's cheaper for them to deal with people like that, than to deal with the core media independent companies.

The regulatory industry is also not doing enough. For instance, we in MIPAN, AAAN, etc, must get our jobs accredited, whereas these quacks get away with so many things. Media houses will also run such quacks' campaigns even when they know that they are quacks; yet, there is a law that says if you do not have all these certifications, if you are not registered you cannot do this business. They are doing this business and they are getting better discounts.

There was a time I went for a pitch, a one man portfolio came for the same pitch, we did all the talking and all the strategy and at the end of the day they told us you guys we love your strategy and everything but you know what go and work with him! I then said ok if you want to work with me these are my conditions. In this case, as in many such, a registered practitioner is expected to work with a quack; and nobody is seeing anything wrong with it. The quacks can get as much as 40-45% discount because there are insider collaborators in the media houses. It's a very tricky

thing; it is a form of corruption which is rampant in Nigeria; and you know that corruption thrives on greed.

As a matter of fact, we have some people in some radio stations that have their own agencies and they are still working there; they get jobs directly from clients and they run it in their own stations and the stations don't even know that they are there.

Let's look at the relationship existing between agencies and their clients; issues like transparency, integrity and the like; what is your experience like?

Honestly, I won't tell you that most of those relationships are cordial. For instance, when we talk about debts in the industry, how do we get there? When you get some jobs the client will tell you ok, do this job but it takes me 30 or 60 days to pay you; and after 60 days he is not paying; 90, 120, even in some cases, 360 days you are not paying. Meanwhile, I went to TV station, radio station and promised them based on the same promise I got from the client, then what becomes of the relationship? If perpetually, the clients end up not paying at all, for one reason or the other, then integrity will be at stake. I can tell you for free that we have had to take two of our clients to court, one of which has refused to pay us for jobs done for four years.

As you can see, sometimes the relationship is cordial, especially when you start it; when they see what you able to do, they are happy knowing well that oh, you have what it takes to handle the job; but sometimes when it comes to payments some clients are not really nice.

Funny enough, sometimes when we tell media houses that client is yet to pay they don't believe because there also are times when clients have actually paid some agencies and they'd eat up the money.

Therefore, the relationship with clients is what you make out of it. For us, we have enjoyed some of the best relationships with some of our clients, because we are able to understand them.

Account movements in and around the industry, what is the situation like; which accounts have moved to you and which ones are you chasing after?

Accounts will always move, there are so many reasons why accounts will move. I don't get enthusiastic about account movements anymore. In those days, I used to tell

people when you told me this or that agency had won so and so account. Sincerely speaking, I used to hold such agency in high esteem; I clapped and revered them because I believe you must have done a great job to get an account. But nowadays it's no longer so anymore. I don't celebrate anything anymore. If I win an account I simply run it, because you are not sure; tomorrow it might not even be with you anymore. Nowadays, there are so many conditions attached to winning an account; it is no longer based on hard work, intelligence; it's no longer based on knowhow. There are so many other factors, human factors, situational factors, environmental factors, relationship factors that determine who wins an account. Worse still, a lot of clients are now setting up their own media departments in their companies and they recruit professionals from the media agencies to head such media departments. Meanwhile, such agency staffers poached by companies for their in-house media departments will tell the clients all the tricks and everything about their industry and then the client can circumvent all the rules to their advantage which is now a bigger problem.

To be very sincere, this industry is already threatened. Go round now, you will see that only few media independent companies are succeeding; the big agencies in this industry are now retrenching; they are downsizing because of these challenges.

If they want to survive MIPAN and other umbrella bodies must rise up to tackle all of these problems with all the seriousness they deserve.

Account pitching, account fees, agency remuneration are other controversial issues; what's your experience like?

It's not an issue any more and everybody knows that. Nobody pays anybody any fees for any pitches anymore! Some ten years ago these things came up when the industry insisted that any client that must invite you for a pitch must give you a pitch rejection fee if they qualified you. Some of the leaders in this industry were fighting and pushing for it; but the desperate young and old agencies in the industry were circumventing it. Remember that in those days you could do a plan without anything, just in your brain based on what you know; now you need media tools, to do a GRP based plan. A GRP based plan can cost about N300,000 to N1million to do; assuming you don't have all those media tools, you don't have the knowhow and you have to outsource it you will pay about a million Naira to do it because you are going for a pitch. Now you go for that pitch

having expended about a million Naira and then you come back with nothing? If you do 3 pitches in 3 months or in a month, where would that money come from? That is obviously a death knell for the agency. These are serious issues that are not being addressed; and if we are refusing to address them, this industry will go into oblivion, right in our own eyes.

Are there any plans in the area of funding to assist operators in this industry to grow their businesses?

I have not heard of anything like that. It is not just important in this industry that runs on money. If there's any industry that trades on money it's the media advertising industry. Media is basically about money.

By the way, let me tell you something, the concept of media independent worldwide is not what we are doing here, in Nigeria. Media independent is about money management, client management; air time acquisition, value addition. Over there, what they do is go to stations, they buy airtime like one year ahead, they buy space with huge sums of money, they negotiate rock bottom discounts, and so it's good money investment for them, good money to the media suppliers, and then they now begin to sell the airtime and the space to would-be clients. That way, you can determine your profit ahead of time, you know the clients are coming so you don't even need to start pitching or looking for anything, those who pitch will come and buy the airtime, you don't need to go and beg anybody; you can project ahead of time and you would know what your profit is going to be at the end of the year. That is the true concept of media independent. Here, however, we don't have the money, so we rely largely on the advance payment that the client will give us which is what we take to media suppliers to go and negotiate, discount; and because we don't have money most of the time we often negotiate at our own disadvantage. If we have an industry that will help us to get money at a lower interest rate, we will be able to do what true media independents should do.

For example, if I can get N100 million today and a radio station walks up to me and says if you give me N20 million I will give you 55% discount; if I give that Radio station N20 million and I get 50 % discount, that means that the airtime that I have is worth N30 million. Once sell I will sell N30 million worth of airtime, I would have N10 million cooling off for me somewhere. If am able to do that with about 4 or 5 stations in a year I know how much I would have made. And, in that case, I would have added value to the stations, to my client and to my business. ■

Mitsubishi motors

...102 years of driving ambition

All brands are not created equal. Some brands create a much larger tectonic plate of quality, functionality and epistemic value, rooted in consumer emotion, affection, and identity. These brands forge deep bonds with consumers through enduring narrative devices, such as storytelling. The legendary Mitsubishi brand sits in this VIP class.

To celebrate its centenary activities, the brand looked inwards to tell its one hundred and two years iconic story on four fronts... Brand Enablement, Consumer Engagement, Marketing Disruption, and Purpose-Driven Marketing.

Anchoring this story is Funmi Abiola (Head Marketing, Massilia Motors). A consummate brand specialist per excellence. Armed with a Master's Degree in Marketing from ISEG Business School, France. Poised with a must-win candor, and the gab of a first-class auto professional, she fashioned the Mitsubishi brand narrative on the tagline...Drive your ambition.

Brand Enablement: In 2016, a joint venture partnership of CFAO and Chanrai, became one company, called Massilia Motors, as the sole distributor of Mitsubishi cars in Nigeria. This partnership ensured quality manpower, technical superiority and an end to the dual distributorship of the car brand in Nigeria.

Consumer Engagement: To celebrate the centenary celebrations in 2017, the new tagline... Drive your ambition, was created by Mitsubishi Motors Corporation Japan. The essence was to renew commitment to the values and aspirations of its drivers and to fashion a new direction for the brand, with a real focus on the SUV segment of household names such as (Pajero, and the never-say-die L200).

Marketing Disruption:

In 2018, the brand celebrated its Heritage Week, by creating a MAZE WALL in its Victoria Island, Lagos showroom, to

depict the Mitsubishi brand journey of producing iconic cars. Visitors were led through the historic library of the unique masterpieces of the Mitsubishi art and craft in pioneering auto technologies. The week-long event was celebrated in partnership with renowned and heritage brands established in Nigeria.

The brand later launched its Eclipse Cross model, a compact SUV with sharp coupe looks during the 2018 Lagos Fashion and Design Week. With a dedicated runway show, a collection inspired by the SUV was created by Sisiano. After this, came the launch of the famous L200, the generic name for pickup utility van. The launch was done at the beach to showcase the strengths of the model on off-road terrains, with glitz, glamour and racing competition.

Purpose-Driven Marketing: In a bid to create an impact on the society, the brand uses storytelling to share the journey to success of Nigerians breaking grounds in various sectors with interviews on board Mitsubishi vehicles. These stories in partnership with networks such as She Leads Africa and Under 40 CEO's are told to inspire the Nigerian genuine hustle and are tagged: Drive Your Ambition.



Chiedu Ugbo: an accomplished Professional



Mr. Chiedu Ugbo is the managing director/ceo of Niger Delta Power Holding Company, NDPHC. He is a legal practitioner and an infrastructure regulation specialist, with extensive experience in advising clients on electric power and gas-to-power, sea port and other transportation modes – including sector reforms, privatization and commercialization, concessions, project development and off-take agreements, etc. His Specialties include Electric Power and Gas, Infrastructure, M&A, Privatisation, and Public-Private

Partnerships.

Prior to his appointment, he was the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Power Privatisation in the Office of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He was also the Acting Head of the Advisory Power Team in the Vice President's office.

Chiedu, as he is simply called, is an electric energy law specialist. He qualified as a lawyer over 26 years ago and possesses an extensive experience in electricity industry reform, power project documentation and privatisation.

He served as an embedded legal consultant to the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) where he assisted actively in electric power reforms and in negotiating and concluding several successful privatisation transactions. He also acted as a counsel in the transaction advisory team to BPE where he actively participated in and coordinated the legal work stream for the privatisation of 20 successor electricity companies created out of the erstwhile utility in Power Holding Company of Nigeria Limited. He also acted in the corporate restructuring of Niger Delta Power Holding Company Ltd. and the privatisation of the electric power plants and assets held by the company.

Prior to joining the Presidency, he was engaged under the USAID Power Africa Transaction and Reform Program (PATRP) as an embedded adviser to Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading Plc (NBET) providing legal support on electric power contracts including power purchase agreements for different fuel sources and the related credit support documentation.

This iconic professional and company executive holds a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree and a Master of Laws degree both from University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos. He also holds a Diploma in International Legal Practice from The College of Law of England and Wales; a Certificate in Electricity Industry Restructuring from Canadian Energy Research Institute, Calgary, Canada and a professional certification as Certified Regulation Specialist, from Institute for Public-Private Partnerships, Washington D.C., USA in conjunction with WEDC, Loughborough University UK.

He is married with children. ■

SONA GROUP

A Proudly Nigerian conglomerate

In the comity of conglomerates in Nigeria, Sona Group of Industries, a well-diversified Group stands out and stands very tall. For about four decades it has remained a key player in the nation's industrial growth. It has even expanded its operations to Ghana over the past years.

The Group's corporate footprints are indelible in diverse sectors of the Nigeria's economy. In all of those sectors it has continued to lift the standards of products and services on the one hand, and the standards of living of the Nigerian people on the other hand. This, it does, by developing and providing world-class products at locally-sensitive prices while effectively providing platforms for technology transfer to Nigerians and engaging various sections of Nigeria's local communities through its backward integration programmes to empower local farmers, skilled workers and suppliers.

At the initial stage of its evolution in Nigeria, Sona Group adopted a corporate strategy of acquiring previously sick companies and quickly turning them around to winning ways. It made a roaring success of this such that the Group has been uniquely regarded as a corporate surgeon and a never-failing turnaround corporate strategist.

As the years rolled by, the Group ventured into birthing start-up companies;

and by its characteristic strategic investments in modern technology, state-of-art machines and modern management techniques, all of its erstwhile start-ups have grown into hugely successful subsidiaries of the Group with each of them providing high-value Business-to-Business and Business-to-Consumer (B2B and B2C) products and solutions.

With a vision "To continually raise quality standards in everyday needs and deliver optimal value to all stakeholders" and a mission "To deliver the best possible quality of products at the most affordable prices, at all times, for mutual benefit", Sona Group now has eleven subsidiaries each of which parades a very robust portfolio of highly successful brands that boast of very strong brand equities in the market place and many of which are leaders in their segments.

More instructive and more interesting, however, is the one common denominator which characterizes all of them – they all have almost 100 percent local contents! This, as the Group claims, derives from its "Ideology of Indigenization".

Sona Group's high-performance subsidiaries include: Coronation Power and Gas Ltd; Coronation Real Estate Development Ltd; Euro Global Foods and Distilleries Ltd; Food, Agro and Allied Industries Ltd; Shongai Packaging Industry Ltd; Shongai Technologies



Chairman, Sona Group Of Industries, Mr. A.K. Mirchandani

Ltd; Sona Agro Allied Foods Ltd; Sona Industrial Gases Ltd; and Techblow Nigeria Ltd; Avnash Industries Ghana Ltd.; and Coronation Real Estate Ghana Ltd. Half of these industries are based on 100% local manufacturing!

Through them, the Group has blessed Nigeria and Nigerians with great brands many of which have since become household names in the country and some of which have since been exported to other countries along the West Coast of Africa, a development that has made Sona Group's brand portfolio both rich and exciting!

As the list of its subsidiaries clearly shows, the Group's present business focus includes: Manufacturing of Glass Bottles, Glass Containers and Glass Products; Manufacturing and recycling of Plastic Containers and products; Production and marketing of food and beverage products;



Chairman of Sona Group - Mr. A.K Mirchandani

Electricity generation and distribution; Manufacturing of 360-degree packaging solutions to Nigeria's manufacturing industry; and Real Estate development, with a focus on low-cost housing.

Significantly, Sona Group has been known to be a Corporate Champion of local sourcing of raw materials and of the backward integration policy of the Federal Government of Nigeria. Little wonder that that the Group is a corporate leader in the generation of hundreds of thousands of employment, an indispensable volume of revenue contributed to all the tiers of government, very robust marketing and brand building initiatives and Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR/Sustainability credentials that stand out.

These, no doubt, are in consonance with its philosophy of being the Pride of Nigeria, a philosophy which no other corporate entity has equaled in the

annals of Nigeria's history.

Worthy of note is the fact that Sona Group's uniqueness derives from the person and passion of its progenitor, Mr. A. K. Mirchandani, an industrialist of over four decades, who has always believed in industries based on local raw materials.

To him, such industries are sustainable in long term and cannot but have impact on any economy. He also believes in backward integration and capacity building based on local raw materials through labor training which ultimately leads to job creation and adding value to the economy.

Mirchandani's entrepreneurial vision is pan African. In his words, "The vision is how Africa and each of the countries in the continent got freedom and independence." To him, Africans, today, are strong enough to stand on their feet. He is also of the view that Nigeria has

deceived herself by being dependent only on export of oil to the maximum, cautioning that Nigerians should stop worrying about oil exports; but rather should shift focus to Agriculture. Interestingly, he sees himself as a Nigerian; and has remained committed to Nigeria and Nigerians in all his entrepreneurial endeavours.

While giving a brief update on some of the latest strides of the Group in an interview, the Chairman disclosed, "About eight years back, we started on recycling. Last year alone, we did about 6,000 tones; but in the next 12 months, we are building more companies in recycling. What we are likely to do is that we have a vision of achieving about 20,000 tones of recycling where we produce plastic, and all sorts of items.

"We are looking at the agricultural sector. We produce about 40,000 tons of sorghum to help every farmer that is available.

"Today, we are branching out to cassava. We can utilize 1,000 tons of cassava. We can convert it into sugar, starch and so many other things.

"We have all the industries and as far as food is concerned, we are going into the planting of coconut. We are establishing plantations of hybrids coconut.

"Today, the technology is available and we can do it. The government has also given a good support through the CBN and other government agencies".

"We have vegetable oil, we have fat, we have soap detergent and we have a number of food products. We have a rice plantation and I can say that we have the biggest rice farm where we have given five hectares per person. We have 500 tons of rice production per day and we associate with our farmers in Ghana in producing almost 32,000 tons of rice".

And, while talking about the Group's plan for the immediate future, Mirchandani said matter-of-factly, "We are still growing; we will have another five industries in the next 12 months", adding, "We look at FMCG and every aspect where we can invest in so that we can have a self-sustainable economy. I am committed to this and that is my mission. We must stand on our feet to make Africa totally free. Civilization only comes by self-reliance". ■



MOUKA @ 60

A FUTURE FOCUSED MARKET LEADER

It hit the Diamond age as a corporate entity in the Nigerian nation and as an iconic brand with impeccable standing, brand equity and reputation in the Nigerian market, recently; Mouka, Nigeria's foremost mattress and other bedding products manufacturing company.

The company's story is intriguing as it is inspiring. Founded in 1959 by Faiz, scion of the Moukarim family, the company started out to manufacture furniture and iron beds and so was christened Moukarim Metalwood with the ancient city of Kano as its location.

It was in a bid to actualise the vision to integrate backwards as a supplier of raw materials to the furniture and bedding industry that Mouka Foam was established in Lagos in 1972 to produce flexible foam products; and Mouka Pipe in 1976; both of which form Mouka Limited.

With a vision to, "To be the clear leader in the polyurethane business in Nigeria"; and mission, "To add comfort to life", the company has, since its inception, combined perfected design with advanced technology to produce top quality products that guarantee comfort at all times. Little wonder that the company has soared to dizzying heights in corporate Nigeria with its brand name becoming a household name in the Nigerian Market.

From its humble beginnings at its humble location, Mouka Limited has metamorphosed into a corporate colossus, having established over 1,000 branded outlets pan Nigeria, while remaining first choice mattress brand for millions of Nigerians.

In its 60 years of existence in Nigeria, this great company has recorded several milestones and has taken giant leaps. Among its many milestones are:

- Establishment of production facilities in Benin and Kaduna, in addition to Lagos, from where it distributes to other parts of Nigeria.
- In 1992, Mouka spearheaded the end of carbon-flouro-carbon (CFC) materials during production.
- In 1999, it became the first foam company to receive ISO 9001 certification (Laboratory) in Nigeria, thereby setting the pace for other brands.
- The company recently built a multi-billion naira manufacturing facility in Benin and a similar structure in Kaduna such that today, it has three manufacturing hubs in Lagos, Benin, and Kaduna.
- Additionally, Mouka has depots in Aba, Enugu, Abuja, Ibadan, Kano, and Jos all of which ensure that its products are close to its teeming clientele nationwide.
- It became the only African company to be listed twice in the

London Stock Exchange Group's companies to Inspire Africa report published in 2017 and 2019.

- The company launched a bio-technology driven Mozzi repellents; a multifaceted insect repellent range widely described as the first of its kind in Nigeria's beddings industry

Operating with such core values and operational philosophies as Quality (a commitment to producing and delivering high-quality products), Customers (meeting their needs at all times), Community (ensuring Safety of the Environment and supporting the communities where it operates); Business process (that is best-in-class); and People (empowering its employees); the company has birthed such innovative products like Mouka Mondeo Spring mattress, Mouka Dreamtime Children's mattress, Mouka range of pillows, Mouka Mozzi range of insect repellent products, and Mouka Flora mattresses. Also recently, the company introduced an improved version of its orthopedic mattress range, Regal and Regina to meet the physiological needs of users of the products.

Instructively, The Nigeria Association of Orthopaedic Manual Therapists (NAOMT) and Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (NSP) have both endorsed Mouka for its ability to address the sleep needs of consumers.

While celebrating the 60th anniversary of its corporate trajectory in the Nigerian market a couple of months back, Mouka expressed a resolve to truly continue to redefine the country's mattress and other beddings industry.

At a grand gala marking the event in Lagos, Raymond Murphy, the company's helmsman, disclosed that the company was certain to make innovation its watchword in the country's fiercely competitive market.



Cutting of the Mouka's 60th Anniversary Cake

He said Mouka was setting the benchmark for competitors in the country's beddings sector which it is poised to redefine through training and development of its manpower.

He also hinted that the effort at redefining the industry would involve a yearly upgrade of manufacturing facilities, ensuring that its operations are to the highest local and international Health, Safety and Environmental Standards with Information Technology (IT) as a major enabler of its innovative drive.

Citing an independent research, the MD/CEO disclosed that Mouka was the only brand with over 90 percent unprompted awareness in the world's most populous black nation.

According to him, the 60th anniversary presented the company an opportunity for self-evaluation.

In his words, "This is a big milestone for us. At 60, we are the market share leader in the mattress and beddings sector. Recent research, according to some marketing professionals whom I met on my last trip to Dubai also attests to the fact that Mouka is not only the leader in Nigeria, but also in Africa and the Middle East".

The anniversary celebration was also a conscientious effort at reminding other players in the sector, and consumers alike, of the transformation which the foundation of the Mouka brand laid in 1959, had undergone. Hence, its helmsman said through its 60 years of operating in Africa's largest economy, the mattress producer had been able to establish over 1,000 branded outlets nationwide, and had remained first choice mattress brand for millions of Nigerians.

According to him, the expansion of the indigenous business venture which started on a small scale six decades ago had in no mean way contributed to the growth of Africa's largest economy.

Said he, "Mouka has been engaged in the creation of generation-to-generation business partners; job creation and sourcing local materials; Mouka is also reputed for high levels of governance and compliance; we pay our taxes accurately and on time. We contribute back to society through donations and contributions to the local communities where we operate".

The indigenous brand's contribution to national economy is also evidenced in its leading position in Nigeria's mattress and beddings industry, in which it maintains the largest market share. The firm's boss said the local manufacturer continues to make giant strides, in keeping with Global Best Manufacturing Practices, improving its manufacturing standards and product portfolio.

He emphasized that it was an undying resolve for brand and service excellence that saw Mouka become the only African company to be listed twice in the London Stock Exchange Group's companies to Inspire Africa report published in 2017 and 2019.

Mouka was listed in the LSEG's companies to Inspire Africa 2019



L-R: Zahi El Khatib, Managing Director, Actis Nigeria and Majority Shareholder, Mouka; Janah Moukarim, Chairman and Shareholder; Raymond Murphy, Chief Executive Officer; Tolu Olanipekun, Head of Marketing and Oladimeji Oasingunwa, Chief Commercial Officer; at the Green Gala Night to mark the company's 60th Anniversary.

report after it made the 2017 inaugural edition. According to Raymond Murphy, the mattress and other bedding products company had to work earnestly to consolidate its performance in the sector to make the list of companies to inspire Africa for the second consecutive edition.

To be included in the list, companies need to be privately held, and show an excellent rate of growth and potential to power African development.

Considered owners and enhancers of sleep in Nigeria, industry experts adjudge Mouka the leader of innovation in the sleep business. An attestation to this fact was the endorsement of the brand recently, by the Nigeria Association of Orthopaedic Manual Therapists (NAOMT) and Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (NSP) for its ability to address the sleep needs of consumers.

Mouka's dint of innovation also translated to the launch of a bio-technology driven Mozzi repellents; a multifaceted insect repellent range. Widely described as the first of its kind in Nigeria's beddings industry, this innovation remains a no mean feat yet to be matched in bedding sectors across the African continent.

On how Mouka has been able to remain consistent with reference to quality delivery despite the stiff business environment within which it operates, the company's Chief Operating Officer, Femi Fapohunda said, the brand's ability to weather the storm is tied to its adaptability to the changing business environment.

"...We study the economic situation in the country at every point in time and brainstorm in order to come up with solution to every challenge and obstacle and that's how we've been able to be around for this long," Fapohunda explained.

Also speaking about Mouka's innovative drive, Tolu Olanipekun, Head of Marketing for Mouka, disclosed that the indigenous company is noted for considering the total wellbeing of its consumers in its overall marketing strategy, a business approach that has positioned the brand positively in the minds of the target audience.

In her words, "At Mouka, we do not only provide our consumers with quality offerings, we also ensure they are well educated on what Mouka product is best for them based on their age, body build, lifestyle and income".

This development led to the laurel it earned in March 2019 when it emerged the Foam and Mattress Company of the Year at the Nigeria Real Estate and Property Awards.

On how Mouka received the enviable laurel, Joshua Uwabo, founder of the awards, who gave a hint that Mouka is good at what it does, explained that Mouka's emergence as the Foam and Mattress Company of the Year was hinged on quality delivery and brand excellence which clearly put the brand ahead of other competitors.

Not only is Nigeria's leader of mattress production good at what it does, the company is also a champion of safe work environment, an attribute which earned it a recognition from the National Employers Consultative Association (NECA) for exceptional safe work environment. This recognition was anchored on NECA's 2018 Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) audit exercise.

The occasion was graced by founding members, the Moukarim family, management staff, business partners of the company, top Nollywood personalities and other stakeholders.

Only recently, (in November 2019, to be specific), Mouka won the Iconic Brand of the Year Award at the Marketing World Awards in Ghana.

At 60, Mouka has restated its commitment to quality delivery, brand excellence and route to market approach. The brand has chosen to continue to blaze the trail in innovation with an agenda to position itself as a market leader on the global turf. Its corporate eyes are set on the future; and its future is bright. Very bright! ■

WIMBIZ: Winning game for women

The 18th Annual Conference of Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIMBIZ) held recently in Lagos with a renewed emphasis and increased demand on the women folk in Nigeria, across Africa and the larger world to rise up and get the more empowered through building enduring collaborative networks capable of putting them in the right stead in fashioning out the truly deserved greater future to themselves.

The two-day activity-pact event which ran with the theme: *Shaping the Future, Strategising to win* has, over time, become the flagship program of WIMBIZ, holding in November of every year since it debuted in 2001. The event brought together well over 2000 progressive women cutting across all social and economic strata across Nigeria and beyond. MARKETING EDGE had brief chats with some officials of the organization. Below are their comments on varying issues. Full texts of their interviews could be read on www.marketingedge.com.ng.

Audrey Joe-Ezigbo, WIMBIZ Executive Council Member on Gauging the impact of WIMBIZ conferences over the past 18 years:

There is no gainsaying the fact that WIMBIZ has made tremendous impact over the past 18 years, from our annual conferences and indeed from all our programs. Each conference has been bigger, better, more engaging, power-packed and insightful than the one before. Conference is an annual strategic reset for me personally, as I know it has been for every one of our participants. It is that annual outing where we leave fully equipped to take on whatever the next

year will bring. Through our conferences and various other programs and initiatives, WIMBIZ has certainly lived up to our mission to be the catalyst that elevates the profile of women in management and business and in public service. Through our conferences over the last 18 years, WIMBIZ has been instrumental to capacity building amongst women of various ages, professions, industries, and social strata, directly and indirectly, our conferences have presented platforms for thought leadership,

the shaping and molding of perspectives, of charging and walking women past their apparent or assumed limitations; we have created pathways to help women walk into the fullness of their potential, pathways to helping them start new businesses or careers, helping them up the ante for their existing businesses, opening them up to global perspectives and opportunities; and creating strong strategic and meaningful networks across different industries, sectors, and so on

Olubunmi AboderinTalabi, WIMBIZ immediate past Executive Chairperson on WIMBIZ collaborations with local and international organizations to deliver programs which have influenced over 107,465 women:

WIMBIZ has collaborated with organizations such as UN Women to shed light on the value that an economy will gain if women were adequately represented in decision making circles. WIMBIZ has collaborated with IE Business School in Spain as well as Lagos Business School to run the WIMBOARD Training Program for women who want to improve their company director skills or who want to be prepared and qualified when a board appointment comes their way. WIMBIZ has collaborated with McKinsey to launch

the Women Matter Africa Report in 2016. WIMBIZ has collaborated with PwC (PricewaterhouseCoppers) on their Nigeria SME Study 2019. WIMBIZ has collaborated with the Lagos, Ogun, Niger and Sokoto State Governments to run the Big Sister Program in a select number of their public schools. WIMBIZ has collaborated with the IFC (International Finance Corporation), IOD (Institute of Directors) and DCSL Corporate Services to produce the Women on Boards in Nigeria Report 2019.

WIMBIZ has also partnered with

multinationals such as Unilever and Procter & Gamble to support the Big Sister Program. In addition, WIMBIZ has organized a Leadership Masterclass with the support of the US Embassy in Nigeria. WIMBIZ has organized the Winning Without Compromise Programs in various university campuses across Nigeria with the support of the African Women's Development Fund; the Australian High Commission and the US Embassy. WIMBIZ has organized the Impact Investment Program and the WIMBIZ Capital Program with the support of ACT



Audrey Joe-Ezigbo



Tosin Adefeko



Olubunmi Aboderin Talabi



Ijeoma Taylaur

Foundation and AXA Mansard. WIMBIZ has organized a Mentorship Program for Young Girls and Women in Leadership with the support of the TY Danjuma Foundation. WIMBIZ has organized Training Program for Entrepreneurs in

Handcrafts as well as Supplier Diversity Training with the support of Vital Voices. WIMBIZ has even worked with Ebony Life to develop the televised Sisterhood Awards.

In its 17+ years, there are many more

programs, events, training sessions and town halls that WIMBIZ has worked on in collaboration with credible domestic and international organizations, just to mention a few.

Ijeoma Taylaur, WIMBIZ Conference Planning Committee member on how WIMBIZ is contributing to making a change in women:

WIMBIZ's vision and objective is to be the catalyst that affects and elevates the lives of women. Essentially, we are real women on a mission to bring real change to our industries and to our country and to mentor other women, so that they too can achieve their full potential. To achieve this vision, WIMBIZ has four key pillars through which it delivers its programmes – To Advocate, Empower, Inspire and Connect women;

- * Advocate: Wimbiz provides a strong voice for gender parity by advocating

for women through WIMBOARD (a programme that actively seeks to get more women on boards); WIMPOL (a programme for women in politics); and the CEO/ Policy Makers Interactive Series (A breakfast meeting for CEOs and policymakers);

- * Empower: WIMBIZ seeks to empower women to achieve career/business and public-sector leadership through training, mentoring and other such capacity building programmes;
- * Inspire: We inspire our members to achieve professional development,

entrepreneurial exploits and community development through programmes like the Annual Conference, Annual Lecture and Big Sister programme, to name a few; The Winning Without Compromise and Big Sister programs are outreach programs which have made significant impact on hundreds of young ladies of school age (both secondary and tertiary institution).

- * Connect: Finally, we connect our members with each other through our roundtable lunches.

On how WIMBIZ is contributing to nation building:

At the 2014 Annual Conference, one of the issues that was highlighted was the low representation of women in politics; more importantly was the dearth of suitably qualified female professionals in politics and the effect of this gap on national development. As a result, female involvement in politics and in public offices generally became one of the focal issues for WIMBIZ in 2015. This brought about the creation of the WIMBIZ

Women in Politics Program ('WIMPol'). The WIMPol trainings and other dialogue events are curated to bring together women with the zeal and passion for nation building in Nigeria. These events are designed to ensure that topical economic and socio-political issues are discussed and to strategically position women as they navigate the political system in achieving their potential and meaningfully contribute to economic development.

Coincidentally, WIMPOL successfully organised an event to encourage dialogue around improving women's involvement in the next political cycle (in 2023) and beyond. This event was well attended by both public and private sector participants. WIMPOL continues to seek ways to push the dialogue such that we are able to drive conversations around public-private collaboration to address current gender gaps and reshape gender parity for the future.

Tosin Adefeko, Conference Planning Committee member on WIMBIZ is going to be part of putting an end to anti-women cultural practices in Sub Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria:

I think beyond advocacy which WIMBIZ and many other women focused groups and NGO's are already actively pushing, we have a lot of mindset shifting to do and that can only happen through continuous

education and enlightenment. The bias is clearly buried in cultural practices that have eaten into the fabric of our very existence. We need continuous re-orientation and exposure. Thankfully the narrative is

changing albeit slowly but our collective voices across various stages is starting to make a difference. I like to think that it is a good time to be a woman; it is quite clear that it is not business as usual. ■

Our desire at DDB is to always reinvent ourselves, says **Tunde Dosekun**, MD, DDB Lagos

Mr. Tunde Dosekun recently stepped into the office of Managing Director at DDB Lagos, a leading creative agency in Nigeria. He was, before the elevation, the Business Development Director of the frontline agency. In announcing this iconic professional and business leader's new status, the company, in a statement, applauded Tunde (as he is fondly called) for helping to drive the agency's growth through an impressive record of account pitch wins and, in addition, providing strong account management leadership of the Non-MTN clients' portfolio. In this exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, the new helmsman reminisces on the past, reflects on the present and takes a look into the future of not just his agency but also of the industry and the market in which he plies his trade.

How do you view your appointment as Managing Director of DDB Lagos, Nigeria's foremost creative agency?

This appointment is one that I'm very proud of for three reasons.

Firstly, it is a confirmation of the quality of succession planning which the founder of the Agency (Mr. Enyi Odigbo) set in place over a decade ago. Succession planning is a hot button issue for most corporate organisations in this part of the world and to see the transition executed so seamlessly in our Group is indeed remarkable.

Secondly, I consider the appointment as a huge show of confidence in my person and abilities. Being charged with the responsibility to lead such a major player in our market and sub-region is humbling and it's a challenge that I am happy to take on dutifully.

Thirdly, it is also a personal career milestone that I'm fortunate and proud

to have achieved.

How do you see the task ahead?

It's significant yet exciting. DDB Lagos has grown to become a dominant and leading player in our industry and market. It goes without saying that my focus will be on maintaining that enviable position. That's certainly not an easy task given how well our industry continues to grow. But with the quality of talent, clientele, and other partners we have built over the years, I'm confident that exciting times lay ahead of us.

What aspirations have you come into your new office with?

The one thing that summarises my aspirations coming into this role is to ensure that we maintain and further build on our growth trajectory. This encompasses every facet of our business today either as a commercial entity or as a creative powerhouse.

You have been specifically applauded by the company for impressive account pitch wins. Can you tell us more about such pitches and the factors that contributed to DDB Lagos winning them?

I won't take sole credit for our impressive record in new business acquisition over the years. We have done remarkably well as an agency and as a team. In my previous role as Business Development Director, I was responsible for organising all the agency's resources towards an aggressive and continuous expansion of our client portfolio. The key ingredient in achieving success in this regard however was our collective drive. That desire to always be competitive and eager to avail our services to more and more brands was essential to our successes.

Of course, each pitch exercise has its own peculiarities, which I won't go into the details of. However, our team



has arrived at a point where there is an impressive blend of excitement, appetite, curiosity, and a will to win whenever we receive a pitch brief. The presence of these factors continues to be, in my opinion, critical to our successes.

What is a typical pitch process like at DDB Lagos?

At the risk of revealing too much details about how we work, I would say the pitch process is majorly a learning experience for us as a team. Such exercises afford us the opportunity to discover a lot about the category of interest and the major brands just as we learn a lot about target

consumers. One important point also is such exercises provide us with a chance to learn a lot more about ourselves as a team and the limits we are willing to push ourselves to for the collective good. Of course, we have certain proprietary processes that we run through but beyond that is the people and the passion they bring to such exercises.

Should we see your coming on board at this time as a generational shift or is it a paradigm shift, or both?

I wouldn't go so far as describing my

appointment in such glowing terms, especially not so early in the day. What I would say though is that it's always a positive when a business or industry continuously seeks to reinvent itself and is equally fortunate to have the necessary resources (people especially) to achieve same. Our desire at DDB Lagos is to always reinvent ourselves and my appointment, among other recent developments, bears testament to this commitment.

How would you describe DDB as a corporate brand?

If there's one word that captures what we are about at DDB, it would be Influence. We are all about helping our clients and brand create influence in their respective markets and with their consumers, just as we also seek to create influence in every market we serve.

What should industry stakeholders expect from DDB going into the future?

Lot more of what has made us the widely-acclaimed agency we have become over the last 32 years of our existence in Nigeria. Creativity that builds influence for our clients and brands, our commitment to developing the best standards in our industry, and a strong hand of partnership with all our other stakeholders.

What has made the agency consistently tick over the decades?

The people are the most important part of our business. Without the incredible team we have, we wouldn't be where we are today. Great people build great brands and great brands build great businesses. This truth is at the heart of our successes as a business.

What is your personal assessment of the advertising industry in Nigeria today?

I believe we've come a long way as an industry, and we've managed great successes despite the challenges we've had to contend with. But there's always room for improvement and it's very encouraging to see the several commendable efforts being made, both by our regulator (APCON) and our association (AAAN, under the leadership of Mr. Ikechi Odigbo) in this respect. ■



We are driven by a purpose to create value – **Cars45 boss**

Mr. Etop Ikpe is CEO of Cars45, Africa's largest digital automotive trading platform. Cars45 is an innovative technology platform that empowers the mobility industry across Africa. A seasoned entrepreneur who has been at the forefront of African technology and innovation for more than a decade, Etop has served as CEO at Dealdey.com, Nigeria's largest discount store and as Commercial Director at konga.com, one of Nigeria's largest e-commerce platforms. He founded *Cars45* in 2016 and has overseen the company's rapid expansion across Nigeria and most recently Africa. He is passionate about supporting the development of young people across Africa. In this exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE, Etop Ikpe, shares how his company has changed Nigeria's automotive brand and marketing landscape through innovative solutions.

In the last two years, Cars45 has become a household name. For those who still don't know what Cars45 stands for, what would you say to them?

A household name is something that is driven through public perception. A lot of guys have come up with marketing campaigns and at this point I must really commend our marketing team for creating very exciting marketing campaigns. But at the end of every marketing campaign is the value proposition.

From day one, we have always been about bringing trust and transparency into the market. We found that a demand had come from an initial service that we had provided which is easy liquidation for anyone that wanted to sell their car and similarly supply to car dealers. A demand had come for us to look deeper into the market, beyond the initial problem that we had solved because we are very keen on taking customer feedback. We began to craft our business to address the most common challenges in the market which is easy access to verified cars. Taking a lead from that is affordability; if you look at the industry, you will notice that the automotive industry and financing go hand in hand. Our solutions have solved the problem of valuation and verification which has now made it possible for financing houses to lend and provide financing for people to purchase cars.

The structures we have put in place have made people who bought cars in the system to ask what next in terms of servicing and maintenance. And that has brought us to where we are currently working which is with 3rd party workshops in terms of the data we have that could help them understand customer requirements, stocking of parts and planning of repairs. These are the things that our platform does, more than just trading vehicles; it's a platform where anything automotive can be achieved.

For those that don't know Cars45, it is a platform that is for safe and transparent trading of vehicles and we go deeper into providing other automobile services.

When did you realise that the Nigerian market was ready for your value proposition?

We didn't really consider the market being ready or not. We saw a gap that needed to be filled and we filled it. Business is about identifying opportunities. We have listened to complaints over time, we have fallen short and where customer demands are and that is basically how we craft strategies around solving problems. We started out solving problems and we will continue to solve problems. We have a vibrant and commercial population in Nigeria; so, our products are typically designed to meet market challenges.

What would you say have been the major challenges which Cars45 has faced in confronting this segment?

We are building the discipline as an organisation to stay true to our values and that means taking criticism even when considered to be unfair - understanding that it is a long journey and at the end of the day, the truth will always win. Our values of providing solution to customer problems will never go out of fashion.

As a market maker, it takes time for people to understand what your value propositions are. So, there might be initial scepticism and resistance from the market because people fear what they don't know. We have done a lot of engagement with the authorities and one thing that is consistent is that as we unravel and move forward, the goal becomes clearer. The biggest challenge has always been staying true to our values beyond the criticism that we receive and maintaining our discipline.

What about the challenges of access to industry data?

Customers get enormous value, especially an automotive lifetime experience. The reality is that by coming into our ecosystem, you are not just buying or selling a car, you are buying an automotive experience. We are that platform that gives access and also helps in your decision-making process, making it more transparent for you to understand the things that are necessary and giving you the best value towards maintenance, disposal and purchase of a car.

challenges are there, but if those challenges weren't there, we wouldn't have opportunities. I'm not one to say the environment should organise itself. The question is: Why won't anybody want information access? Because prior to this time, information access had not been used to create value in this industry.

For us to be able to provide more information and create more value to support our ecosystem that creates jobs and wealth for people, the authorities, people who have access and people who have databases have become more receptive towards sharing and listening to our ideas about improving the industry. As a business in Africa, you must be patient, learn how to speak better and clearer, stay true to your values and with time you will get to where you are going.

What factors would you say have driven your growth in this market?

The first factor is being data-driven in our approach, taking customer feedback,

measuring every single customer touch-point that we have and using that to improve our processes. Every business has limited resources. If you can channel your resources towards core problems, you'll get faster acceptance and results.

The second factor is really addressing the tough problems. Not everybody would go through some of the pains we've had to go through in terms of building our data bases for verification, working closely with a very fragmented market, investing and supporting the development of car dealers - a segment that has been greatly underserved - and helping them get access to financing options.

These are tough problems people will usually shy away from, but we went into it with our sleeves and trousers rolled up. One more thing is that we have a good team of entrepreneurs who are always looking forward to solving problems. We can largely attribute our success so far to these factors.

Is there any demography that is critical to the long-term growth of the business?

In terms of demography, I think Nigeria and Africa have the right demography for any growing business. We have a young population that is eager for information; we have a very aspirational population as well. The easy access to internet and social media has shown people what is possible so the demands for people on service and product quality are high.

The Nigerian music industry is a very clear example of typically people with limited resources being able to match global standards using creativity. You can't ignore a blemish of hardship but there are people who don't want to go backward but forward. So, I think you can't ignore that.

These factors are beneficial to business. All you have to do is think globally and set global standards and they respond because people see and interact with global best practices and so they recognise within the environment, brands that are adopting global standards and immediately resonate and align with such businesses.

What innovative trends have stood the business out?

We are very humble about our knowledge and we've learned to respect the market. So, we don't come with an attitude that we know the market, but we come with the mindset that as long as the market demands it, we are going to deliver it.

We will not go by what we believe the market should have. We will continue

to be flexible and innovate as the market demands. So, I think with flexibility and humility in mind as a company, we will never know it all or think we have arrived. We will continue to innovate according to what the market demands.

What other value addition do customers get from Cars45?

Customers get enormous value, especially an automotive lifetime experience. The reality is that by coming into our ecosystem, you are not just buying or selling a car, you are buying an automotive experience. We are that platform that gives access and also helps in your decision-making process, making it more transparent for you to understand the things that are necessary and giving you the best value towards maintenance, disposal and purchase of a car. We also give the best advice and a wide range of options as well; so, really, it's a 360-degree lifestyle that we provide. We come up with a lot of products to service our customers.

From the marketing communications perspective, how best do you sell the brand to your consumers?

When it comes to marketing communications, you have to be very direct. You know these days; you only have 3 seconds to catch the consumers' attention. I think, for us at this stage, it is the trading which is to buy or sell a car in a transparent and affordable way. That has been our benchmark in terms of how we communicate.

Our goal is to have the customer interact with us, and then we can provide them with more options. However, we have been very direct with our offerings. We are constantly trying to ensure we deliver excellent service when customers come into our ecosystem.

What was it like for you choosing this career?

I had always dreamt of doing something that would be remembered. I've always wanted to leave a positive mark and so I naturally gravitate towards opportunities that can create grand value across board; opportunities that help me address big problems. I don't particularly look at an opportunity; I look at the problem or the potential value that that can be created in solving that problem. I think from an analytical approach, the biggest problems also create the biggest opportunities. My career has revolved around identifying problems and creating solutions for these problems.



Is this in line with your course of study?

Not really. Just like a lot of people that go to the university here, you don't really have a clear guiding principle as to the course you study. It would be more of things I watched and read. It's in line with identifying your purpose and chasing that purpose.

How would you describe the journey so far?

I've been extremely lucky to have been selected to take this ride. Five years before now, I never knew I would be in the automotive industry and ten years ago, I never knew I would be doing discounts. But the key thing is that I look for the right environment.

There are key things I see when trying to make a decision and one of them is going into partnership with people that have like minds. We are driven by a purpose to create value. And an environment where there is an overriding ideology for value creation sets the rules and agenda for everyone. The second thing is that I've pushed myself to think big, farther than where I currently

am and to be brave enough to take positive steps and positive decisions.

Where does your optimism come from despite economic hardships?

I draw my strength from those ahead of me and those that have succeeded. The reality is that a society is built by its people. In other words, a society is a collective of its people. There is a reason why the most successful countries in the world have the most successful businesses and individuals. Nigeria is where it is today because there is a collective of low-income people; to change this we need more successful organisations and individuals.

What's the future for Cars45?

Cars45 is on a journey to empower mobility across Africa. So, the future for us is to continue to deliver best in class solutions in the automotive sector across Africa. In the next five to ten years, we will be in more African countries and provide more services. We are on a long and patient journey. ■

E-payment transactions reach N203.35 trillion between January and June



Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) half-year e-payment figures have shown that Electronic payment (e-payment) transactions worth N203.35 trillion were carried out by banks between January and June, this year.

The data, released recently, showed that the deals occurred through cheques, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Point of Sale (PoS), m-Cash, CentralPay, Remita, Nigeria Interbank Instant Payment (NIBSS) Instant Payment (NIP), mobile money, among other channels.

The report showed that 3.4 million transactions worth N2.2 trillion occurred through cheques; 504 million transactions worth N49.35 trillion through NIP; 424.5 million transactions worth N3.23 trillion through ATMs. PoS attracted 187.6 million transactions worth N1.39 trillion, while web transfers attracted 47.9 million deals worth N223.9 billion.

Others are mobile money, 104.7 million transactions worth N1.9 trillion and

Remita's 21.6 million transactions worth N9.8 trillion.

On annualised, the data showed that nine million cheques were issued last year compared with 10 million in the preceding year; 875 million ATMs and 295 million PoS transactions, among other data.

The e-payment powers were conferred on the CBN by Sections 2 (d) and 47 (2) of the CBN Act, 2007, to promote the development of efficient and effective systems for the settlement of transactions, including the development of electronic payment systems; the CBN hereby issue the following Guidelines on Operations of Electronic Payment Channels in Nigeria.

While pushing for the full use of e-payment, CBN Governor Godwin Emefiele said for Nigeria to actively play at the world stage, "our payment system must be successfully benchmarked against the global best practices, as in most developed nations of the world."

He said e-payment provides safe and efficient mechanisms for making and receiving payments with minimum risks to the CBN, payment service providers and end-users.

To make the e-payment vision a success, the CBN, in collaboration with key stakeholders in the payments community, developed the National Payments Systems Vision 2020 (NPSV 2020). The NPSV 2020 is a sub-set of the Financial Systems Strategy 2020 (FSS 2020).

UBA rewards 20 customers with N1.5million each in Wise Savers Promo

United Bank for Africa (UBA) has rewarded 20 customers of the bank with N1.5million. The presentation ceremony happened on the occasion of the bank's promo grand finale tagged 'Wise Savers Promo'. The nationwide promo had also seen 60 customers rewarded in the previous

quarters. The initiative is to promote entrepreneurship and give funding to SMEs and equally teach people how to build successful businesses.

According to Dupe Olusola, Group Marketing Director, UBA, the bank values its customers and would continue to encourage them to develop the culture

of savings to have greater access to cash.

"Almost 2 million customers have participated in the promo so far. The essence of the promo is to ensure we save for the future of our children and families," she said.

On his part, Anant Rao, Group Head Director, Customer Fulfillment Centre, said the aim of the promo was to help the customers inculcate the habit of savings in order to meet their financial goals.

"UBA had gained almost one million customers, with almost 170 billion naira profit collected on the Promo with more patronage of large customers," he

revealed.

Also speaking at the event, Ogechi Altraide, Group Head, Sales, said: "UBA Wise Savers Promo is indeed a milestone and it's very important to us. The promo started in 2018 and every quarter, UBA rewards its customers. Today, 120 million naira will be rewarded to the customers. They made this a reality. Without our customers, we can do nothing you all made it a reality to us."

The Lagos lottery regulatory board Representative, Samuel Rolland assures the customers that the promo was registered and encouraged the customers

who did not win to keep playing as they might one day be lucky.

One of the winners while expressing her gratitude said: "I was surprised when I got the call and I couldn't believe it when I later received the alert, in fact I will remain grateful to UBA."

To participate in the promo, a person must have an account with the bank and must have been saving at least three months spontaneously.

Recall that UBA had a marketplace event that held in Abuja with over 120 vendors, market women and SMEs given the opportunity to sell their goods and show case their brands.

First Bank convenes **Fintech Summit**, set to disrupt Nigeria's digital space



Focused on how technology can aid the solving of large scale societal problems within the context of financial services in Nigeria, First Bank of Nigeria Limited hosted the third edition of its annual Fintech summit themed "Banking + Tech = Solving Real Problems". The event held recently in Lagos with a conference and panel sessions comprising tech experts, start-ups, regulators and other stakeholders to deliberate pressing issues, trends and upgrades in the application of technology in the financial services industry.

The summit navigated multiple panel sessions to deliberate issues and prospects in business management across the financial technology ecosystem with a view to having participants exposed to the trajectory of current and future opportunities in the Fintech ecosystem.

Speaking at the event, Gbenga Shobo, Deputy Managing Director, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, said: "Our Fintech Summit 3.0 was convened to set the tone for discussions that promote disruptions

in the digital space, especially in the financial industry, as we recognise the opportunities for inclusive growth and influence of FINTECH not just in banking but also business operations across all industries. The 2019 edition of our FINTECH summit would build up from the successes achieved in the last two editions."

He added: "FirstBank, in the last few years, has used technology to deliver solutions to promote financial inclusion. With over 33,000 Firstmonie Agents in 36 states doing over N2 trillion worth of transactions, we are reducing poverty with our Agency Banking footprint. Our Firstmobile application has become the foremost mobile banking application in the country with over 3 million users doing over 14 million transactions monthly. It is one of the major gateways for Financial Inclusion where everyone can download the app and open an account at their own convenience! This was not the case a few years ago. Our USSD channel, *894#, is also solving Financial Exclusion problems for those who do not have easy access to internet data. With over 8 million users today, transactions worth over N4 trillion have been consummated using this channel."

The panel sessions comprised experts with over two hundred combined years of experience in the Financial and Technological Industry space to deliberate on topical issues in today's technologically driven business world. Topical issues discussed are: Solving Business Problems;

Solving Regulatory, Security & Legal Problems and Solving Lifestyle Problems.

Amongst the FirstBank team of speakers and moderators were Folake Animumuney, Group Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications; Olayinka Shittu, Chief Transformation Officer, Oluwatoyin Aina, Group Head, Energy Downstream & Int. Oil Trading; and Taiwo Shonekan, Head, Customer Experience & Value Management.

Debo Odunlana, CEO, Doctoor Health; Damilola Emuze, COO/Co-Founder, Scholarx; Edward Popoola, CTO/Co-Founder, Cowrywise and Chinedu Azodoh, Chief Technology Officer, Max. Ng were the panelists in the Solving Lifestyle Problems session.

The Solving Business Problems panel session included Victor Asemota, Founder, Swifta Systems & Services; Lola Ekugo, Head, Digital Innovation Lab, FirstBank; Akindele Phillips, CFO/Co-Founder, Farmcrowdy; Deepankar Rustagi, CEO/Founder, Vconnect & Omnibiz and Dayo Ademola, Head of Innovation, EFInA.

The panelists in the Solving Regulatory, Security & Legal Problems were Sam Okojere, Director, Payment System Management Dept, CBN; Tosin Faniro-Dada, Head, Startups (Lagos Innovates), LSETF; Odunoluwa Longe, Co-Founder, DIY-Law & The Longe Practice; Bunmi Akinyemiju, CEO, Venture Garden Group and Harrison Nnaji, Chief Information Security Officer, FirstBank.

Access Bank launches “DiamondXtra promo” to Celebrate Nigeria @59

To further celebrate Nigeria at 59, Access Bank Plc has unveiled a cash incentive campaign tagged “DiamondXtra Independence Splash,” to reward over 30 DiamondXtra customers daily with cash prizes.

The campaign ran from October 2 to October 31, 2019 and rewarded over 600 loyal customers during the campaign period.

The Executive Director, Retail Banking, Access Bank plc, Victor Etuokwu in a statement, stated that the bank introduced the daily rewards promo in commemoration of the country’s Independence to give as many Nigerians as possible financial freedom and empower them to fulfil their day to day needs.



He said: “The DiamondXtra Independence Splash is a testimony to our commitment to empower Nigerians financially irrespective of their educational, religious and social status.

“For 30 days of celebrating Nigeria at 59, we will be rewarding more than 30 lucky customers daily with cash prizes ranging from, N10,000, N20,000 and N50,000 respectively. This is our own little way of giving back to our loyal customers.

“To qualify for the DiamondXtra Independence Splash reward scheme, which is open to both new and existing customers, new customers are required to open a DiamondXtra savings account with just N5,000 by dialling *901# or walking into one of our branches to open the account. However, the more multiples of N5,000 both new and old customers save, the higher their chances of winning at the daily draw,” he added.

Fidelity Bank introduces GAIM season 4 to promote savings culture

Fidelity Bank Plc, top Nigerian lender, recently announced the introduction of a new savings campaign in Lagos, as part of concerted efforts to promote the culture of savings amongst Nigerians. The Savings campaign which will ride primarily on digital technologies is one of the many initiatives of the bank aimed at rewarding new and existing customers for their unwavering loyalty and patronage.

Dubbed “Get Alert In Millions (GAIM) Season 4”, the savings promo is expected to run till April 2020, a duration of six months and will see customers cart away a total of N120 million in cash prizes.

Speaking during a press conference heralding the commencement of the promo in Lagos, the Bank’s MD/CEO, Nnamdi Okonkwo, pointed out that the campaign was the ninth in the series of savings promos organised by the Bank in the last 12 years to incentivise its customers.

Okonkwo who was represented by the Executive Director, Shared Services & Products (EDSS&P), Chijioke Ugochukwu explained that the campaign seeks to reward customers for their loyalty and patronage. Whilst the savings promo is targeted at a cross section of customers, Chijioke noted that the Bank apart from using traditional channels would

utilise digital platforms such as its Quick Response (QR) code and Virtual Assistant to reach unserved areas.

Giving insight into the rationale behind organising this initiative, Okonkwo added that savings promos remained an integral part of the Bank. He asserted that the promo was focused on reaching out to the unbanked population across the nation.

“We embark on campaigns like this to drive financial inclusion in line with the financial inclusion strategy of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). This savings promo allows us to take banking services to the

nooks and crannies of Nigeria.

“It also gives us an opportunity to promote a savings culture which is critical to building up investible funds for individuals and companies and a key component of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth,” he added. Stating that the lender remained on course to achieve its strategic objective of becoming a tier one Bank by 2022, the MD explained that building a robust and solid saving volumes for the institution was a critical pillar to attaining the aforementioned target.



L-R: Past winner of N2million Naira, Ifeanyi Chiedozie Luke; Head, Savings Group, Fidelity Bank Plc, Janet Nnabuko; Regional Bank Head, Apapa, Fidelity Bank Plc, Jude Monye; Executive Director, South, Fidelity Bank Plc, Aku Odinkemelu; Past winner of N1million Naira, Abudu Fred Osemudiam; Executive Director, Shared Services and Products, Fidelity Bank Plc, Chijioke Ugochukwu; Executive Director, Lagos and South West, Fidelity Bank Plc, Nneka Onyeali- Ikpe; Past winner of 2million Naira, Akpamgbo Stella Ngozika Ada; Executive Director, Operations and Information, Fidelity Bank Plc, Gbolahan Joshua, at a press conference, announcing the official launch of the Fidelity Get Alert in Millions Promo Season 4 recently in Lagos.

CBN fines 12 major banks N499.1billion

For breaching its guidelines on lending to the real sector of the economy, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has fined 12 major banks N499.1billion.

According to an approved debit instruction, the affected banks and the amount they will pay are: Citibank (N100,743,055, 321); First Bank of Nigeria (N74,668,880,480); FBNQuest Merchant Bank (N2, 697,456,144); First City Monument Bank (FCMB), (N14, 371,064, 742) and Guaranty Trust Bank (N25, 147, 933, 628).

Others are Jaiz Bank (N7, 525, 165,552); Keystone Bank (N4, 162, 938, 879); Rand Merchant Bank (N2, 823,177,399); Standard Chartered Bank (N30,027,137,984); SunTrust Bank (N1,703,205,427); United Bank for Africa (N99,676,181,916) and Zenith Bank (N135,629,337,625).

The banks will lose the money at source from their Cash Reserve Requirement (CRR) with the CBN. The CRR is a portion of the banks' deposits kept with the CBN for regulatory reasons.

The apex bank, on July 3, 2019,

directed banks to maintain a minimum Loan Deposit Ratio (LDR) of 60 per cent by September 30, 2019.

The LDR, which was being reviewed quarterly to improve lending to the real sector, was 58.5 per cent as at May. It has now been raised to 65 per cent for the last quarter of the year.

A CBN Circular headlined, "Regulatory Measures to Improve Lending to the Real Sector of the Nigerian Economy," says in order to ramp up economic growth through investment in real sector, the CBN approved that all banks should maintain a minimum LDR of 60 per cent by September 30.

Based on the guidelines, failure to meet the minimum loan to deposit ratio of 60 per cent by October 1 would attract a levy of fine which is additional CRR equal to 50 per cent of the lending shortfall of the target.

Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Godwin Emefiele had said that banks that fail to meet its directive on the 60 per cent LDR would be penalised at the expiration of the deadline.



"Failure to meet the above minimum LDR by the specified date shall result in levy or additional Cash Reserve Requirement equal to 50 per cent of the lending shortfall of the target," CBN Director, Banking Supervision, Ahmad Abdullahi, said in the July 3 circular.

The LDR policy is expected to push banks to increase lending to high risk-borrowers, with the potential of incurring heavy losses and higher non-performing loans.

To encourage SMEs, retail, mortgage and consumer lending, these sectors shall be assigned a weight of 150 per cent in computing LDR for this purpose.



Stanbic IBTC showcases new investment opportunities at 2019 West Africa Investors' Conference

Stanbic IBTC has just concluded the 10th edition of the Standard Bank West Africa Investors' Conference (WAIC). The three-day event which held recently in Lagos was themed: "Prism of Possibilities."

The conference provided a platform for bringing together foreign and local institutional investors, fund managers, regulators and policy makers, bankers, businessmen and captains of industry among others, to engage and explore growth potentials and opportunities in Nigeria.

Speaking during the conference, Chief Executive of Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc, Dr. Demola Sogunle, said: "This year's edition was geared towards deliberately showcasing

investment potentials in Nigeria. The West Africa Investors' Conference serves as a veritable platform to match investors to investment opportunities. The idea is to be able to showcase the potential investments inherent in Nigeria to individual and institutional investors, who are looking to invest in the different sectors in the Nigerian economy."

The highlight of the opening day of the conference was a panel discussion on advancing fintech frontiers in Nigeria. According to Sogunle, this year's edition of the conference dedicated its panel session to fintechs due to their significant role in Nigerian economy.

He added: "The Nigerian financial

system as we know it is being disrupted with the introduction of innovative products and services. There is also the need for fintech companies to see potential areas of alignment with financial institutions. We hosted this panel session to create a platform for them to interact with serious minded frontier-market focused fund managers for possible areas of engagement. We also carefully chose the panelists based on their professionalism and years of expertise.

Speakers at the panel session were Akeem Lawal, Divisional CEO, Switching and Processing, Interswitch; Olugbenga Agboola, Co-Founder, Flutterwave and Iniabasi Akpan, Country Manager, O'Pay.

MTN launches 5G Innovative technology in Nigeria's Market



Telecoms giant, MTN Nigeria has unveiled its latest 5th G Technology application through which the company says it plans to further its delivery of better and quality telecommunication services to its teeming consumers in the Nigerian market.

The official launch of the new telecoms technology that took place in Abujawas made possible by the collaborative efforts of the telecoms company working in junction with the Ministry of Communications Technology and Digital Economy, the Nigerian Communications Commission, Huawei, ZTE and Ericsson.

The 5 G technology application launched in Abuja is the latest innovative technological offering by the telecoms company and it is first of its kind to be launched across the entire West African sub region.

According to the Company, the formal demonstration of the latest technology which was kick started in Abuja would be replicated subsequently in two other Nigerian cities, namely Lagos and Calabar.

The Minister of Communications Technology and Digital Economy, Dr Isa Pantami who spoke during a tour of the exhibition booths in Abuja highlighted the potentials of the 5 G technology in advancing sustainable economic growth.

Stressing the importance of an enabling regulatory framework and protecting telecommunications infrastructure, Pantami stated that on the instruction of President Muhammadu Buhari, he has signed a draft Executive Order declaring telecommunications infrastructure 'a critical national infrastructure' which has been forwarded

to the Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation for review.

The Minister referred to the proposed Executive Order as a short-term measure, stressing that the President has instructed that a proper legislation be facilitated to deal conclusively with threats to telecommunications infrastructure.

Highlighting the importance of partnerships, Ferdi Moolman, the Chief Executive Officer, MTN Nigeria said "Pushing boundaries is easier when your aspirations are supported by likeminded people. We are here today because of the support and guidance of the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy and the Nigerian Communications Commission who provided the trial spectrum used for this. Today's success underlines the fact that we

are good together."

Also speaking via a post on LinkedIn digital platform, Chief Transformation Officer, MTN, Olubayo Adekanmbi noted "Awesome day as MTN Nigeria leads the first 5G trial in West Africa adding that "With 5G, you can be everywhere and do everything powered by its continuous connection, greater capacity and low latency".

He further stated "Very proud of MTN and its innovation leadership drive. With 5G, IOT and Artificial Intelligence in a tripartite combo, we can power a data-intensive, smart digital economy, disrupt underdevelopment and take our nation to the next level of growth".

Also commenting on the development, Mazen Mroue, Chief Operating Officer, MTN Nigeria stated that "In collaboration with our technical partners and the support of the Federal Government, we are proudly putting Nigeria on the 5G technology map.

As we continue to invest in technology solutions to meet the wide needs of our customers, MTN will continue to strengthen these partnerships as we move to build our 5G capacity in future, guided by the standards and spectrum set by the Nigerian Communications Commission."

MTN is Nigeria's most innovative telco

Information and Communications Technology company, MTN Nigeria, for the second year in a row has been recognised as the company with the Best Innovation for Enterprise Service at the third edition of the Nigeria Tech Innovation & Telecom Awards (NTITA), 2019, which held recently at the Oriental Hotel, Lagos.

The ICT company also won Social Impact Award while its Chairman, Dr. Ernest Ndukwe was inducted into the NTITA Hall of Fame.

Speaking on the awards, Chief Corporate Relations Officer, MTN Nigeria, Tobechukwu Okigbo, expressed the organisation's gratitude to the organisers and the independent judges.

"We do not take it for granted any time our work is being recognized with awards such as these. It is a testament to our commitment to produce excellent

results across all touchpoints. We will continue to put in our collective best to exceed the expectations placed on us, not just in the categories we won, but across board."

NTITA, organised by Instinct Wave and Association of Telecom Companies of Nigeria (ATCON) is a platform to celebrate the continued growth and success of the ICT marketplace and focus on the exceptional and innovative performers within the industry.

The President of ATCON, Olusola Teniola, explained, that the annual NTITA has, in a short period, become a notable forum where players in the highly competitive telecoms industry are commended for their outstanding contribution to the industry while also bringing government's attention to areas that require intervention.

Globacom, Anthony Joshua and the Nigerian fighting spirit

After suffering a devastating defeat to Andy Ruiz Jr at Madison Square Garden six months ago, Anthony Oluwafemi Joshua, who boasted an incredible record of 21 knockouts from 22 fights before the beating, has settled his score with the Mexican-American, and earned a fortune in doing so.

Challenged by his loss of the WBA, WBO, IBF Heavyweight Championships to Ruiz, the Brit, who has Nigerian biological roots, recently produced a boxing masterclass in Saudi Arabia to become heavyweight king once again.

What's more, Joshua did not only lose his brand equity in the ring six months ago, his defeat also robbed him of some ambassadorial positions in his portfolio of lucrative commercial endorsements. The former heavyweight champion had quickly become a profitable figure in his own right,

striking deals with notable brands such as JD, Lucozade Sport and many others.

Back home, Globacom, a leading telecom giant, in February 2019 unveiled its new communication direction with an uplifting endorsement by Joshua, and the contract was reported to have covered Nigeria and Ghana.

In a TV commercial shown during the event, Anthony Oluwafemi Joshua drew parallels between himself and Globacom, saying "we have the fastest speed, longest reach and the Nigerian fighting spirit as game changers. Glo, I hail o!" he concluded by giving the "wakanda" salute.

Interestingly, in line with the Nigerian fighting spirit, Globacom, which wholeheartedly supported the boxer has applauded his latest victory. On its Instagram page, @globacomlimited, the telecom giant uploaded a 59 second video that reinforces



the Nigerian philosophy of not staying down even after a setback.

"We don't stay down, we get up and fight! With the tenacity of the Nigerian fighting spirit, we are game changers. Glo with pride," reads Glo's pay-off.

Boxing analysts estimated Joshua could double his networth to more than £100m. He is currently estimated to be worth around £42m by Forbes. And his huge earnings will not be the biggest in boxing history, as Floyd Mayweather holds that record for his £250m fight against Manny Pacquiao in 2015.

Next up for Joshua is likely to be a fight against Kubrat Pulev, but the one everyone will be hoping gets made at some point will be against either Deontay Wilder or Tyson Fury, who fights in February for the WBC title.

eTranzact records 59% revenue growth

eTranzact International Plc, a multi-application and multi-channels electronic transaction switching and payment processing platform, grew its revenue by 59 per cent to N18.62 billion, in the financial year ended December 31, 2018, up from N11.68 billion in 2017.

The Chairman of the company, Wole Abegunde, who disclosed this at the company's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos, said the significant growth was undermined by a loss after tax of N3.1 billion compared with profit of N208 million in 2017.

According to him, the loss was majorly due to one-time financial loss suffered from the effect of a major third-party fraudulent transaction with one of the company's banking partners during the year under review.

Abegunde assured the shareholders that necessary strategy had been put in place to avoid a repeat of the incidence, adding that the company has been repositioned for better performance. He said the company had entered some strategic

alliances for business opportunities.

"As a company we fully understand the benefits of strategic alliances and the potential business opportunities these can create. We have fostered new relationships, enhanced and deepened existing ones and explored newer opportunities within our ongoing associations with existing partners. We are positive that our alliances will lead to improved performances in the years ahead," he said.

He added that in 2018, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) introduced the Shared Agent Network Expansion Facility (SANEF) initiative with the primary objective of accelerating financial inclusion, noting that eTranzact is an active stakeholder and would maximise the opportunities available.

"The SANEF project seeks to deepen financial inclusion in Nigeria through an integrated ecosystem with strong regulatory oversight, consumer protection and interoperable systems with limited concentration risk. It will create a platform for Nigerian owned financial services

companies to grow while empowering and creating jobs for Nigerians. eTranzact is an active stakeholder in the SANEF initiative and seeks to maximise the opportunities available from being part of the initiative," Abegunde said.

The Managing Director/CEO of eTranzact International Plc, Niyi Toluwalope, said the future of the company was bright, disclosing that the firm had gone through a significant management restructuring.

"We are completely a new management, driving the strategy of the company going forward. We have just concluded a restructuring and board reorganisation exercise that would enable it to focus on improved governance and proper structure. We have done a lot since the last one year; we have invested in our people, our infrastructure and our products. We have reviewed and streamlined our strategy so that it allies properly with our future focus in the role we want to place in fintech space and electronic payment generally in the future," he said.

TV content future will be shaped by OTT, says John Ugbe

Over the top television (OTT) has disrupted the way we experience content: visually, auditory and in several other ways, said John Ugbe, CEO of Multichoice Nigeria, speaking at Video Exchange Africa at AfricaCom recently in Cape Town.

Over the top (OTT) refers to film and television content provided via a high-speed internet connection rather than a cable or satellite provider.

Ugbe was delivering a keynote on the Opportunities, Challenges, Roadmap and Future of OTT in Africa, at Video Exchange Africa, a co-located conference within the mammoth AfricaCom annual series of conferences and events which takes over the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) in November every year, as Africa's biggest technology, media and telecoms event.

"I'm not really the OTT guy, I'm more of a paid-TV guy. But whether it's OTT, traditional, cable... at the end of the day you want consumers to pay for TV. So, it's all pay-TV at the end of the day," quipped Ugbe.

"In the not too distant past, audio visual content reached homes only through a television set. Audiences could view a limited number of channels at their scheduled time, as a family on a single TV. OTT has disrupted the way we experience content."

Looking at the African continent, Ugbe said it was important to highlight that while the United States was ahead, OTT in Africa was growing, with Showmax, Iroko TV, Hulu and Netflix already on the continent. The rise of OTT development in the African market is driven by a mix of international and local providers.

And because access for Africa is mostly through mobile and it is a large continent, the potential for growth in Africa is massive, he pointed out, comparing weekly smartphone usage to demonstrate the potential for growth on the continent for OTT content accessed via mobile.

Opportunities and challenges

These are the opportunities for broadcast



content in Africa, Ugbe outlined:

Africa has the third largest number of international users of OTT services: 39.8% penetration.

"Mobile broadband" or 3G or higher, is forecast to grow from 48% in 2018 to 95% in 2025.

Mobile is dominant and that will influence the deals you are trying to do. Fixed broadband penetration is not projected to grow as fast as mobile. There won't be massive development of fixed-line infrastructure, so any content strategy needs to be driven by what is available: mobile penetration. Mobile will affect business strategy and the type of content created.

South Africa will probably account for 40% of the region's revenue with 22% out of Nigeria. Penetration in the other big markets, such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania will be closely aligned with mobile penetration and fixed-line infrastructure.

Africa is very young and that is also driving trends, as younger people with a device in hand behave differently.

"Whatever your business, whether it is television or selling fruit, there are also challenges in Africa which will have an impact," Ugbe outlined.

These include infrastructure or the lack thereof; electricity provision; content curation – how local do you go?; broadband penetration and the high

costs of data; limited internet connectivity and quality; and billing across so many different markets with different economies and income disparity.

An OTT future

Ugbe was sure that the future of television content will be shaped by existing pay-TV providers who are gradually launching OTT services to tap into customers that are looking for an on-demand product.

Opportunities do also still exist for curated linear content in Africa, but the industry is moving to a "television everywhere" model that relies on partnerships with the telcos.

"OTT will continue to grow with the expansion of mobile and fixed data due to cheaper smartphones and increased accessibility. Cheaper data is coming. Discussions are happening between regulators and the telcos."

Ugbe's parting shot was to remind the AfricaCom audience that OTT is not only about distribution, but primarily about content: "When we talk OTT, don't forget that content drives OTT. We need to focus on local content. At the end of the day people want to watch content they can relate to. And as Africa's much-loved storyteller, we will continue to tell Africa's story."

Source: Bizcommunity ■

Shell seeks to re-orientate Nigerian undergraduates on innovation, use of emerging technologies



The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) has outlined re-orientating the thinking of undergraduates in Nigerian universities as one of the critical actions to challenge them on the use of emerging technologies to enable innovation and allow Nigeria to actualise the National Association of Petroleum Explorationists' (NAPE) 37th Annual International Conference and Exhibition's aspiration of expanding Nigeria's petroleum landscape through digitalisation, innovation and emerging technologies.

Country Chairman of Shell Companies in Nigeria, and Managing Director, SPDC, Osagie Okunbor, said: "Shell has collaborations with Nigeria's academia and now has two successful centres of excellence that promote the emergence of industry-ready graduates at university level."

Okunbor told the NAPE conference (which included the GMD, NNPC, Mallam Mele Kyari) in Lagos that the Centre of Excellence in Geosciences and Petroleum Engineering at the University of Benin established in 2012, the Rivers State University Centre of Excellence in

Marine and Offshore Engineering established in 2017, along with SPDC's six Professorial Chairs and the Sabbatical & Internship programmes in key areas, grow skills within Nigerian universities for the industry.

Okunbor (represented by Shell General Manager, Exploration, Dan Agbaire) added: "Every year, since 1980, 10 Nigerian professors and 25 research interns commence one-year research programmes in SPDC and share their findings with SPDC in fields such as biodiversity, petroleum engineering, geophysics, impact assessment, community health and oil and gas exploration, contributing to providing critical industry input into higher education in Nigeria."

He described these programmes as examples of necessary steps to enable the NAPE aspiration of expanding Nigeria's petroleum landscape through digitalisation, innovation and emerging technologies.

Okunbor called for the right investment climate, to enable the expansion of Nigeria's petroleum landscape and enable the increase of Nigeria's oil production from the current average of 2.3 million b/d to 3 million b/d and boost the

country's proven oil reserves to about 40 billion barrels through further exploration and appraisal.

He continued: "The right investment climate would also include strengthening our regulatory bodies, giving priorities to research and further enabling the industry's financials. I believe that where the investment climate is right, digitalisation and deployment of emerging technologies will enable incremental value creation over the coming years.

"I believe that if we appropriately apply the valuable information and lessons from this conference, our industry will experience a giant leap in transformation. It will support our aspiration of expanding Nigeria's petroleum landscape."

He also explained: "In Shell, digitalisation is more than technology. It is about people and ensuring more agile ways of working. We employ leading data scientists who unlock value from the vast amounts of data that Shell has access to in a responsible manner whilst maintaining customer trust.

"Across all our businesses, we look for opportunities where we can replicate and use this at any scale. We look to use applicable standard technologies (unless there is a competitive advantage to building proprietary solutions) to change the way we search for and produce oil and gas, design wells, provide energy, or buy goods and services."

Okunbor noted that the use of advanced infrastructure and partnership with some of the world's biggest cloud providers had always given the company the capacity for powerful data analytics.

In his words: "We are leaders in deploying artificial intelligence and are using it in areas ranging from seismic analysis to drilling and predictive maintenance. All of these we do because we know that digitalisation has a big role in delivering all our strategic goals.

"We can do more. The industry can do more. This future is more in our hands than we think." ■

Shell wins Nape conference's coveted awards, others awards



Shell Nigeria wins Best Exhibitor at 2019 National Association of Petroleum Explorationists annual international conference and exhibition, held in Lagos. Displaying the awards (from right) Shell General Manager, Exploration, Mr. Dan Agbaire (Represented the Country Chairman, Shell Companies in Nigeria, and Managing Director, The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, Mr. Osagie Okunbor); Geophysicist Lead, Mr. Magnus Kanu; newly inducted Fellow of NAPE and Shell General Manager, Development, Mr. Chibogwu Sam Ezugworie; and Operations Geophysicist, Mrs. Uche Aigbokhai.



Shell Companies in Nigeria won the Best Exhibitor Award at the 37th annual international conference and exhibition of the National Association of Petroleum Explorationists, NAPE. Newly installed NAPE President, Mr. Alex Nachi Tarka, FNAPE (right), present a certificate to Shell's Operations Geophysicist, Mrs. Uche Aigbokhai (left) and Shell's Creative Solution Adviser, Mrs. Bena Oyedele (centre).

Three Months after winning the coveted awards at the 2019 Society of Petroleum Engineers Conference, energy giant, Shell Companies in Nigeria have now won the most sought-after Best Exhibitor award at the National Association of Petroleum Exploration (NAPE) annual international conference and exhibition held in Lagos between November 19-22, 2019. Shell General Manager Development, Chibogwu Sam Ezugworie, was also honoured with the Fellowship of NAPE in a glittering ceremony that had industry top-notchers in attendance.

To crown off a successful conference for the energy organisation, a team of Shell staff, (Ovwigho Irifeta, Bart Tichelaar, Pratap Nair, David Obiga, Sunday Awe, Kunle Bakare, Magnus Kanu and Celestine Ugwu) also won the Award for Best Paper in the Technical Awards category, for "An Integrated Approach to managing narrow drilling margins of high pressure (HP) prospects, central Swamp depobelt, Niger Delta."

Winning the much-anticipated Best Exhibitor Award was a return to the top

spot for Shell. The company was the runner up for the 2018 edition after it had been a most consistent winner in previous conferences.

Country Chairman, Shell Companies in Nigeria, and Managing Director, The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC), Mr. Osagie Okunbor, said "It is encouraging to us at Shell to know that our drive for consistent excellence and diligence, as displayed by the hardworking staff of Shell in Nigeria at this conference, is appreciated by stakeholders and those who visited our booth."

Osagie, represented by Shell General Manager Exploration, Mr. Dan Agbaire, said, "This award, coming just a day after Nigerians again voted Shell as "The Best Company To Work For" in the Jobberman Top 100 Companies To Work For in Nigeria, makes us recognise that, being an industry leader puts on us enormous responsibility and we have to continue to rethink and reshape our strategies in a manner that brings optimal value to Nigeria, our partners and the local service industry."

He said that Shell companies would continue to invest in industry growth, new technologies and professional development and affiliation of its workforce.

Shell exhibition combined illustrative and educative posters with learning sessions for young and student engineers and free medical services for conference participants where hundreds of persons received medical checks and prescription drugs.

Earlier in the year, Shell companies in Nigeria emerged the "International Oil Company With The Most Impactful Local Content Initiatives In The Upstream Category" at the 2019 edition of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Opportunity Fair organised by the country's local content regulator, Nigeria Content Development and Monitoring Board. The companies were also named the "Local Content Operator of the Year" at the 2019 Annual Oil Industry Achievement Awards by the Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN). ■

Cars45 introduces entrepreneur programme to tackle unemployment



L-R: VP, Retail Services, Cars45, John Egwu; VP, Consumer-to-Business Services, Cars45, Dr. Mayokun Fadeyibi; Special Adviser to the President on the Ease of Doing Business, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole; CEO Cars45, Etop Ikpe and VP, Business-to-Business Services, Cars45, Mohammed Iyamu at the launch of the Cars45 Automotive Entrepreneur Empowerment initiative in Lagos.

Nigeria's leading automotive trading platform, Cars45 has launched an innovative empowerment initiative, Cars45 Automotive Entrepreneur Programme. The platform is designed as a framework for poverty alleviation and drive business growth and profitability for individuals irrespective of their social class.

The initiative provides Nigerians with the opportunity of making extra income by referring people to buy, swap or sell their cars or subscribe to the rich bouquet of services that Cars45 offers. These services include its Emergency Road Assistance, Premium Inspections, Concierge, Inspection and Valuation, Pre-Order, Annual Maintenance Contract amongst others.

Speaking on the initiative's reason for being, CEO, Cars45, Etop Ikpe, noted that the company's initiative was in tandem with the federal government's desire to drive economic growth, invest in human

capital and build a globally competitive economy while adding that the initiative would complement government's efforts to move millions out of the poverty bucket as a viable and sustainable income stream.

"We recognise that our platform helps to create lot of opportunities for people and Nigeria's biggest problem today is unemployment. We have a huge youth population that must be fully engaged. And so, at Cars45 we simply created a programme that enable people without any prior education or experience with the automotive retail to be engaged and make something for themselves. This Automotive Entrepreneurship programme has been re-designed to equip people with the right technology as well as enable participants increase their income levels by leveraging our services," he said.

In a keynote presentation at the launch event by Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, Special Adviser to the President on the Ease of

Doing Business and Secretary, Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC), she commended the giant strides made by entrepreneurial ventures like Cars45 in deepening economic growth.

"Companies like Cars45 represent the energy of this economy as entrepreneurial activities account for over 48 percent of GDP contributions and therefore are a demography that can't be ignored. We are not unaware of the challenges that businesses face and we are doing everything within our power to set the economy on the right path. It is important to see every challenge as an opportunity. I am happy that Cars45 is one of the forward thinking and visionary organizations in the automotive space and with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement AfCFTA, I am even more hopeful that deploying technology they would be able to scale and help grow the economy."

On the National Automotive Industry Development Plan (NAIDP) Bill, Oduwole noted that there are concerted efforts to ensure broad participation in framing the policy. "There is no economy in the world that has developed without having a vibrant auto assembly and production industry because of the catalytic amount of jobs that the sector can create. There is need for a policy that will take us to where we want to be. The auto industry is pivotal and critical to the growth of our economy and so we are taking our time to shape the automotive policy so that we are able to compete with other players on the continent and enable those who have invested resources derive maximal value. We need an auto policy that will be enduring; we don't want a policy that we will have and after few years, we will need to change it and that is why we are calling for more contributions," she said.

According to VP, Retail Services, Cars45, John Egwu, the programme is designed to accommodate as many youths that want to be part of the scheme.

"This is a programme that can

accommodate all citizens without asking for educational qualifications and very easy to access. We want to give all Nigerians another option of source of income. We are blessed as a country, so we want everyone to marshal their energy towards a new Nigerian economy model that can be self-sustaining for all," he said.

On how the program works, VP C2B Services, Cars45, Mayokun Fadeyibi, noted that individuals can get started by signing up at www.autopreneur.cars45.com to earn commissions and bonuses on a daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly basis when they

successfully refer people to buy and sell cars through the Cars45 network.

"You start as an agent today, grow to become a team leader where you manage about 20 downliners and as you consistently meet your targets, you can become a Cars45 franchise dealer partner. There is a clear and transparent growth path and using technology, people can conveniently track or monitor their progress in real time and online," she said.

The Cars45 Automotive Entrepreneur launch attracted key players within and outside the nation's auto industry that

included Executive Director, Allianz Nigeria Insurance Plc, Owolabi Salami; Head, Retail Distribution Channels, Allianz, Ashish Mishra; GM, Suzuki, CFAO Motors, Eric Fantodji; Head, Corporate Development, Enyo Retail & Supply, Olabanjo Alimi; CEO, HCS Autos, Kunle Kosile.

Known for bringing transparency to Nigeria's marketplace for used vehicles, Cars45 has become synonymous with creating delightful consumer experiences by offering people a fast and convenient way to buy, sell or swap their cars. ■

UBA Foundation commences 9th edition of National Essay Competition

UBA Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of the United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, has commenced the 2019 edition of its annual National Essay Competition in Nigeria with a call for entries.

Now in its ninth year, the essay competition, targeted at senior secondary school students in Nigeria is organised annually, as part of UBA Foundation's education initiative which is aimed at promoting the reading culture and encouraging healthy and intellectual competition amongst secondary school students in Nigeria and across Africa.

Speaking at a media launch on the call for entry held in Lagos yesterday, the Chief Executive Officer, UBA Foundation, Mrs. Bola Atta, said the essay competition provides an opportunity for students in secondary schools across the country to put in their entries and to win prizes in the form of educational grants to study in any university of their choice on the African continent.

Beginning from last year, the prize money increased significantly as UBA Foundation emphasises that education remains one of the foundation's key initiatives.

The first prize for the UBA National Essay Competition is a N2 million educational grant, while the second and third prizes are N1.5 million and N1million educational grants respectively.

Speaking to the students and participants at the event, Bola Atta said, "To us at

the Foundation, this is our drive to improve the quality of education across the continent. It is also our way of giving back to the society."

"The competition is a key aspect of our investment drive in human capital, as we seek to improve knowledge base, allow students to express themselves and write creatively.

"We will continue to sustain the initiative because education is very important to UBA and we are more than committed to providing the necessary support for students in Nigeria and across the African continent," she noted.

"We are driven by the mantra to do well and do good and we will not relent in our efforts to touch lives through our various projects, and initiatives," Bola Atta told the students.

Explaining the modalities for the

competition, she stated that entries received from students for the competition would be reviewed by a distinguished panel of judges made up of professors from reputable Nigerian Universities, who would then shortlist 12 best essays for further assessment.

Following this, a second round of the competition would involve the 12 finalists who would write a second supervised essay from which three best essays will be selected as the overall winners from the 12 finalists emerged from the first round of the competition.

Atta explained that the choice of essay for this year's competition was one that helps promote creative and analytical thinking in students and helps them to be problem solvers. This year, the topic is "What do you think the government should do to control fraud in Nigeria?" ■



Mercedes secures **2019 Constructors' Title**, their 6th in a row



Valtteri Bottas winning the Japanese Grand Prix and Lewis Hamilton coming third means Mercedes has now won their sixth straight record Formula 1 world championship. The race result at Suzuka (Japan) sealed the constructors' title for Mercedes. 2019 Japanese GP outcome confirms only Hamilton and Bottas contenders for this season's world championship; this is another win for Mercedes team. British motorsport superstar, Hamilton is leading Bottas with 64 points and he needs to be 78 clear of the Finn to win his sixth drivers' title in two weeks' time in Mexico (at the next race).

Mercedes has set a new record as the greatest in F1 history, breaking the former record set by Michael Schumacher and Ferrari from 2000 to 2004. Hamilton and Bottas praised the Mercedes team for winning their sixth title in six years in an interview.

Hamilton: "Congratulations to the team; so well deserved to win six years in a row. I just wanted to get the best points for the team today."

Bottas: "I'm very happy. I had a really nice start. The pace was super good. I could control the race. I'm really proud to be part of the team. A sixth title is really impressive. I'm very happy. Obviously it was a pretty close qualifying and starting third here is never easy. But there's no point giving up on anything and I knew opportunities were there today and I had a really nice start and Sebastian had an issue and I managed to get into the lead and then

the pace was super good. I could really control the race and I really enjoyed it. So I'm very happy."

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff dedicated their sixth successive F1 constructors' title to Niki Lauda (late non-executive chairman).

He (Toto Wolff) said: "We want to dedicate this to Niki because he has been such an important part from the beginning of the journey and his sheer presence was always so important in the mixture between support and pressure. He was just a very special person."

The Austrian added: "I miss him every day and I think about him every day...he was larger than life personality and I say to myself what would he say and would he think? But it doesn't compensate for the loss; he's simply not here anymore."

Toto Wolff also took his time to commend the team for hitting their targets.

"When we embarked on the journey six or seven years ago, we wanted to win races more regularly and then fight for championships and then six years later it's the sixth championship in a row. I feel so happy for everybody that was involved. Lots of hard work behind the scenes, lots of painful moments also, but the team was always able to pick themselves up. I think this team has become so strong because we have really been able to stand up when it didn't go well, like this morning (in qualifying). And that is something we need to continue to work on." ■



GSK elevates Mark Pfister

Leading multinational pharmaceutical company, GSK, has elevated Mark Pfister to GM of East and West Africa markets in a move aimed at repositioning market leadership.

Until his recent elevation in August this year, Pfister was General Manager of the West African business as well as project director, Africa and developing countries having served the multinational business as Commercial Director, Anglophone West Africa earlier.

With his new position, Pfister will lead GSK commercial operations to pharmaceuticals, consumer health, vaccines and HIV (VIIV) in Ghana and other Anglophone West Africa (Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone).

He has acquired multi-level skills and competencies within the group having served in different capacities long before now. As a team leader, Mark Pfister has been responsible for the sales to health professionals for a team of 4 medical representatives across key GSK disease areas – Asthma and Allergy, Anti-Infectives and smoking Cessation.

As head of Marketing, OTC, he was once responsible for the marketing activities for over the counter medicines (OTC) categories, including Pain Management, Respiratory Tract, Gastro Intestinal Tract. He has also been charged with developing

and implementing commercial excellence strategy for the group, engaging in capacity building programs and its roll-out. He was also once in charge of media vendor selection and performance management while a marketing excellence manager.

As Marketing Director, West Africa, he was responsible for marketing activities for all GSK consumer healthcare categories (Nutritional beverages, OTC, Oral Healthcare and Foods Beverages in Anglophone West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone including nutritional beverages for the French West Africa.

He has also led development of a single shared channel initiative, including the identification of a new sales and distribution model to drive improved reach, productivity and commercial propositions for pharmaceutical and Consumer Healthcare businesses. Lead joint (Pharma and Consumer) pharmacy channel sales team.

The GSK top notch has a B.Sc degree from Stellenbosh University and also Bachelor of Business Management and Administration with honours. He was formerly Marketing Manager, Ready to Drink Beverages, Tiger Brands (Cadbury sold Beverages to Tiger brands, where he was responsible for marketing activities for all Ready to Drink beverages. He is well travelled and highly cosmopolitan.

Change of baton at DDB Lagos as Tunde Dosekun becomes MD



One of Nigeria's leading advertising agencies DDB Lagos has appointed Tunde Dosekun as its new Managing Director. The former Business Development Director takes over from Ikechi Odigbo.

The leading agency announced the change on its social media handle, adding that "since joining the Agency 13 years ago, Tunde has been an integral part of our growth story having served with distinction in various capacities in account planning, account management and general management."

The statement continued: "In his previous capacity as Business Development Director, Tunde helped drive Agency growth through an impressive record of account pitch wins and, in addition, provided strong account management leadership of the Non-MTN clients' portfolio."

Alexander Goma takes over as CEO Grand Cereals, quits PZ

Alexander Goma, former Managing Director of PZ Cussons Consumer SBU and Executive Director PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc, has been appointed as the new MD Grand Cereals Limited, a subsidiary of UACN Plc.

Mr. Goma's resignation from PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc became public recently. The company confirmed his departure in a notification sent to the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE).

At the time of his resignation, it was reported that Goma took the decision in order to pursue other personal endeavours. But MARKETING EDGE has now confirmed that it was a move aimed at enabling him to take up the Grand Cereals Limited job.

Grand Cereals Limited (GCL) is an integrated foods company whose primary activity is the creation of superior value from local raw materials, with leading brands in the Cereals, Vegetable Oil and Animal Feed categories.

In 1997, UAC of Nigeria Plc acquired a major shareholding in Grand Cereals Limited, located on a 16-acre site at Kilometre 17, Zawan Roundabout, Bukuru, Jos South, Plateau State, Nigeria. The company which was incorporated in 1983 was originally designed to produce baking flour from imported

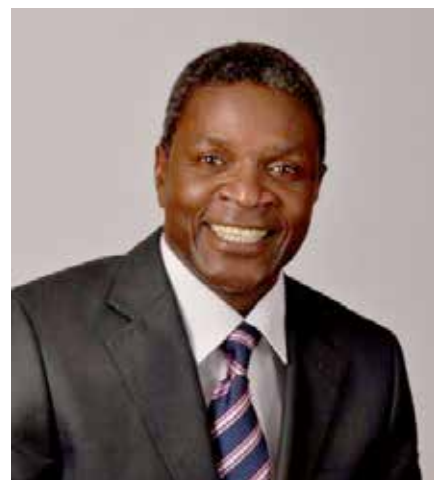
wheat. Following the ban placed on imported wheat, GCL modified its operation and production objectives, and today, this growing subsidiary of UACN Plc is steadfastly engaged in many value-added agricultural-based industrial activities.

The result of the acquisition is seen today in the current production and marketing focus of the company. GCL consistently delivers to consumers, high quality cereals, oils and feed, via the careful application of internationally acclaimed techniques to manufacture premium products.

Recall that in recent times, UAC which is one of the oldest conglomerates in Nigeria and top FMCG brand has been driving a repositioning effort to energise the brand and build more synergy between it and the consumers. This has led to several leadership changes, including the appointment of Mr. Folasope 'Fola' Babasola Aiyesimoju as the new Group Managing Director/CEO of UAC of Nigeria Plc.

Goma is an experienced business leader with over 20 years of experience in building people, customers and brands from P&G, British American Tobacco and Guinness.

Goma served as the Managing Director of PZ Cussons Consumer SBU



from September 2016. He also served as a Corporate Strategy and External Affairs Director in the company.

He holds a degree in Biochemistry from University of Port Harcourt (1989) and a Law degree from the University of London (2016). He is a faculty member of AGDC, an enterprise set of to prepare college graduates for employment or running their own company.

Goma started his career at Procter & Gamble in 1998 where he played the roles of Unit Sales Manager (North), District Manager and later Customer Service and Logistics Projects Manager of the company.

He then joined British American Tobacco where he held various positions of increasing responsibility within the organisation from 2003 till 2007 when he was employed at Guinness Nigeria Plc as Sales Director in 2007.

MTN Nigeria appoints Modupe Kadri as Executive Director and CFO

MTN Nigeria has announced the appointment of Modupe Kadri as its Executive Director (ED) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO). He replaces Adekunle Awobodu as CFO; whose intended departure was announced in July 2019.

In a release issued by the company, MTN Nigeria expressed its appreciation to Adekunle Awobodu, its erstwhile CFO, for his commitment and valued service

to the Company.

It further stated that Awobodu's dedication, extensive knowledge, financial expertise and experience across MTN Group earned him great respect.

Modupe Kadri, the new ED/CFO, is an alumnus of the University of Lagos with both Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Management and Economics, respectively. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria

(ICAN) and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

A seasoned executive, he re-joins MTN Nigeria from MTN Ghana where he served as CFO for five years. With a track record of financial expertise and operational leadership, he brings extensive experience to the role, having worked in the Financial Services and Telecommunications industry for three decades.

The company added that Kadri's appointment further demonstrates its commitment to building local talent and underscores the strength of its leadership development strategy.

Kadri, as the release details, began his professional career with PricewaterhouseCoopers, where he worked for 10 years. In 2002, he joined Allied Pickfords in London as the Group Reporting Manager following which he moved to Lafarge Nigeria where he took up the role of Internal Audit Manager in 2003. In 2005, he was appointed Finance Controller.

He joined MTN Nigeria in 2007, as the General Manager, Finance Operations; and in 2013, was appointed the General Manager, Financial Planning, following which he went on to serve as acting CFO of MTN Nigeria for three months in 2014, after which he assumed the role of CFO, MTN Ghana.

Modupe Kadri is accustomed to translating business objectives into powerful results and led several business-critical

projects as CFO in Ghana.

Recognised for his exceptional leadership, Kadri received the Ghana Telecoms CFO of the Year Award four times – in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019.

His appointment as Executive Director and CFO, MTN Nigeria Communications Plc will take effect from March 1, 2020.

The company added that in the interim Omolara Michael-Nwadu would serve as acting CFO. With over 19 years' work experience in banking and telecoms, Omolara who is currently the General Manager, Financial Planning joined MTN Nigeria in 2002 as a Management Accountant in the Finance Division. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from the University of Lagos and is a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) of the Association of international Chartered Professional Accountants (AICPA). Omolara is also an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN).

programmes on TV, Radio and Online showcasing content like Drama, Soap series, Entertainment/Musical programmes, Talk shows, Reality Shows, Sports Magazine programme, etc.

- In her acceptance speech, Mrs. Ologeh recognised and appreciated members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and other members of the association for their unwavering support and commitment towards the continuous growth and relevance of the union within the media space.

- In her words: "As content producers and creators, we wield incredible influence and power in shaping the moral fabric of the society through our unique content. There has to be a level of intentionality in the reporting of our narratives in this global age. African stories are dynamic, compelling and inspiring through our music, talk shows, drama series, movies, media broadcast and the diverse platforms entertainment is portrayed."

- She added that the new tenure of administration would work assiduously to ensure that EMCOAN plays a significant role in societal development by providing strategic leadership for members whilst deliberately creating business opportunities to enhance business growth and sustainability.

- While handling over the baton of leadership, Former President of the association while handing over enjoined the new leaders to be focused on directing the affairs of the EMCOAN.

- The new Executive Committee includes:

- (1) Mrs. Jibe Ologeh (President)
- (2) Mr. Olatunbosun Olaegbe (Vice President)
- (3) Mr. Alayande Stephen T. (General Secretary)
- (4) Mr. Wale Adenuga Jnr. (Treasurer);
- (5) Anita Agarry-Oke (Financial Secretary)
- (6) Mrs. Anuoluwapo Akinyemi (Public Relations Officer)
- (7) Miss. Olajumoke Akindeju (Welfare/Social Secretary)
- (8) Mrs. Beatrice Ojo (Chief Whip).

Jibe Ologe is the new President of EMCOAN



Jibe Ologe has emerged the 4th President of the Electronic Media Content Owners Association of

Nigeria (EMCOAN). EMCOAN is the umbrella body of CEOs of Content Owners in Nigeria, especially content/



TAMUNO KIRI

Consumer Marketing: “When Cultures Collide”, the Nigerian Example

Introduction

Richard D. Lewis, has recently released the 4th edition of his book, “When Cultures Collide”. The book provides truly global perspective and offers practical guide about how to navigate across cultures as businesses and institutions. He explains how individual and collective culture and language could affect the ways in which we organize our immediate world.

He went further to narrate the cultural challenges posed by emerging multipolar nations such Russia, China, and the Far East. He advised leaders, organizations and brands, to always look out for “what makes others thick”? In this case, the Nigerian consumer, is of particular interest for discussion.

The Nigerian Context

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country, with a population over 170 million, 52.54% are less than 19 years, according to the 2018 World Bank report. The country has 370 ethnic groups, 1,150 different dialects. It has an internet adoption rate of 53%, and a mobile subscription rate of 81%, adjudged to be the highest in Africa, (ThisDay, Nov. 5, 2019).

Under broad cultural definitions, the Northern part of Nigeria has a highcollective-context culture, due to religion (Islam), and a more general language called Hausa; while the South, has a high individualistic-context culture, due to divers ethnicity, embrace of western education, (Christianity), and the adoption English language as the lingual franca.

In the past few decades, there is an emerging cultural collision between the old “Nigerian” culture and a new “Naija” culture. The earlier, is known and propagated by consumer personas such as the Tricenarians (30-39), Quadragenarians (40-49), and the Quinquagenarians (50-60). The latter, is the digital-minded denarians (10-19 years), and

Vicenarians (20-29 years), who are always afraid not to miss out on any gist (FOMO), but deliberately classify anything of the earlier as “old school”.

Propagators of the “Naija” culture created their own music, language, fashion sense, and consumption patterns. They engage more of virtual merchandize, news consumption, and celebrity patronage. While the older generation, still pick up books to read, struggle to remain digital, stuck to their “old school stuff”, of music, art, fashion, movies, and the traditional lifestyle patterns.

Marketers and brand managers are always torn between these two cultural divides, not to appear “old school”, and not to appear “wholly millennial”. The dilemma is often reflected in the brand communication, and content exposure. Decades ago, when traditional marketing held ground, it was not too difficult to route messages through traditional channels to the defined target audience.

The role of Technology

Today, with technology, the rules have changed. The “Naija” culture drinks its water from social media apps, while the “Nigerian” culture struggles to catch up. Traditional media houses, and advertising agencies are not left out of the impact of this cultural collision, always struggling how to sell to the both cultures.

The impact of technology is adjudged to be the reason for the cultural collision. With the fourth industrial revolution in close sight, more changes are expected in society. Old cultural norms will face generational acceptance and adaptation. What is the way-forward for marketers and brand managers?

Content deployment

In this postmodern era of in-bound marketing, where the consumer holds sway, brands struggle to create attractive and interesting

content to win the consumer over. Content deployed through triggers of engagement that would elicit favourable consumer actions, through likes, shares, downloads and purchase decisions. In this consumer power era, the communication thrust is to establish a proper marketing funnel to engage the consumer towards achieving a life time value.

While brands seek to explore the consumer to establish that profitable life time engagement, the consumer is seeking to forge a life time relationship with the preferred brand to bond with. Brands exert cost and effort to occupy the minds of consumers, the later scans through every content to know what makes the brands thick, in other to appropriate it to self. Psychologists call this, the Interdependent Philosophy.

The theory explains that the nature of interdependence between two individuals depends on the manner in which each can influence the other during the course of social interactions, which is called “Outcome Interdependence”.

Today, this theory is developed into building national economies and blue-chip organizations. The theory inspires “inclusive learning”, “inclusive living”, “import knowledge”, “import learning”, “import development”, “import strategies of success”.

In the Nigerian example where the old culture clashes with the new, brand managers should deploy a more story telling approach in the communication content they provide. Such compelling stories will induce interest in both the older and younger generations. Brands should seek to become cultural arbiters to relate the relevance of yesterday, for today.

Summary

The postmodern Nigerian consumer, wants to see brands wear human face, for him to relate with. The consumer uses touch and feel gadgets, and would love to like, download, own, appropriate, personalize, humane messages that will make his life better, and help create a better world. This is a far cry from brand benefit hyping, which does not provide educative insight that consumers could co-own to improve their lives.

Compelling brand story-telling, that infuse slice-of-life of yester-years in music, art, fashion, and leisure, will always increase interest among the younger generation and the older ones. Brands should begin to educate, inform, enlighten on a broad national cultural context. National cultures depict norms, and enshrine life-styles that become legacies maintained over time. Championing such course, will be a laudable role for brands to play in the Nigerian society. Brands will be seen as cultural arbiters and custodians of the Nigerian cultural tapestry, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. ■

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