

GLOBAL ADVERTISING SPEND SET TO RISE BY 7.1% TO \$660BN IN 2020

MARKETING **EDGE**

Promoting the brand idea.

Issue 65, February/March 2020

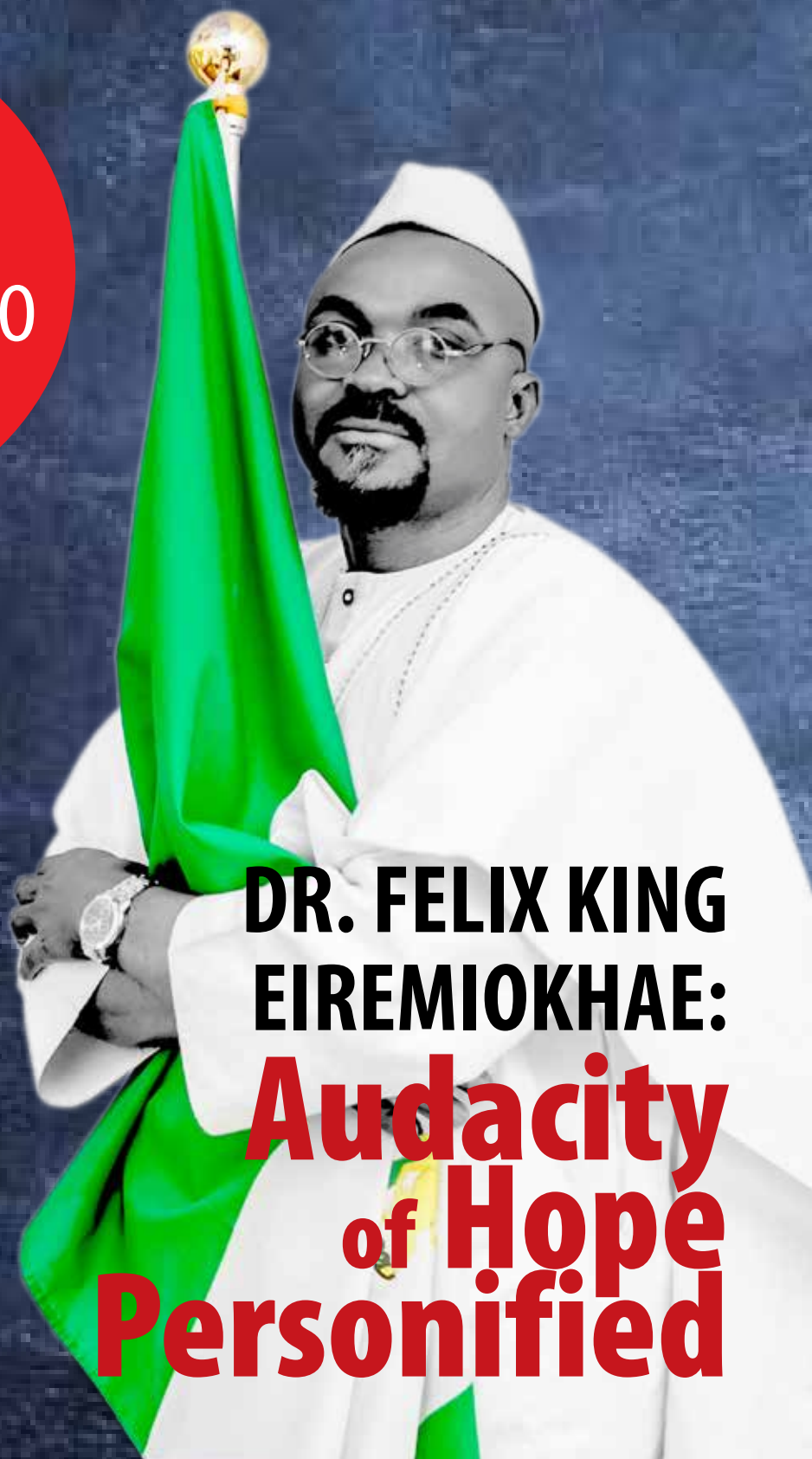
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**DR. FELIX KING
EIREMIOKHAE:**

**Audacity
of Hope
Personified**



The Cussons Baby Moments 6 winner is here! Baby Nathaniel Adeoye's Crowned Baby of the Year 2019!

It's official! We have our Baby of the Year at the Cussons Baby Moments 6! Baby Nathaniel Adeoye emerged as the winner of the competition at a glamorous grand finale event which held at the Radisson Blu, Ikeja, Lagos on Sunday, December 1st 2019.

Following tough deliberations by the independent panel of judges, comprising veteran Nollywood actress, Ufuoma McDermott; fast-rising Nollywood actor, Deyemi Okanlawon; and food and lifestyle blogger Yemisi Odusanya, popularly known as SisiYemmie, Baby Nathaniel Adeoye was crowned the Cussons Baby of the Year 2019, winning the grand prize of 1 million naira and a year's supply of Cussons Baby products.



The 1st runner-up was Baby Lewis Grant, who won a prize of N750, 000 and a year's supply of Cussons Baby products while the 2nd runner-up was Baby Einstein Durosinni, who won N500, 000 and a year's supply of Cussons Baby products. In the Special Categories, Oluwadarasimi Olaniyan won Best Concept and Composition; Louisa Fabiyi won the prize for Best Candid Shot, and Praise Nsed-Ogar went home with the prize for Best Toothly Smile. The special category winners each received N50, 000 and a 6-month supply of Cussons Baby products.



This year's edition of the much-anticipated Cussons Baby Moments 6 competition witnessed a number of changes to the mechanics of the competition in a bid to ease the stress on the participants. These changes included the introduction of a multiple entry system in which participants were entitled to enter for the competition multiple times. The event was well-attended and included members of the PZ Leadership team, as well as the brand team which included Human Resources Director (Africa), PZ Cussons, Joyce Coker; Dipu Dawodu, Finance Director, PZ Cussons Consumer SBU, PZ Cussons; Head of Marketing, PZ Cussons Consumer SBU, PZ Cussons, Charles Nnochiri; Group Brand Development and Activation Manager, Personal Care, Charity Ileybare-Adeniji; Brand Manager, Cussons Baby, Yosola Nwachukwu, amongst others.



Sharing her excitement on yet another successful edition of the Cussons Baby Moments Competition was Yosola Nwachukwu, Brand Manager, Cussons Baby, who congratulated all the winners and participants involved.

The brand's plans to revamp the competition to make it more engaging and rewarding following a year's break paid off as it recorded a record-breaking 10,308 participants enter the race to win the prestigious Baby of the Year award, during the course of 7 weeks. Over 400,000 votes were received during the voting stages, after which the Top 100 babies emerged and were subject to careful assessment by the celebrity judges who evaluated them based on set criteria to determine the Top 10 Finalists.



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Industry debts, payment policy as albatross to brand management

Big businesses and multinationals have effectively been using smaller businesses as a cheap form of finance by dragging their heels on payments. If you are a small business or contractor and you're still waiting to be paid for work you completed months ago, you are not alone.

As a business owner, the last thing you can afford or want is a client who doesn't pay you. Receiving late payments or no money at all, can push a business into bad debt or severely constrain its cash flow.

The failure of multinationals, governments and private sector operators to pay business owners on time is destroying small businesses all over the world. And some clients, especially the big ones, can be very bullish in paying their suppliers in 90 or 120 days as the case may be; and it is destroying a critical part of the business chain which is the SMEs.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria's advertising industry has come of age, having evolved through the years encountering different phases and epochs. From the early days of traditional advertising, to the era of specialisation and fragmentation in the discipline, and now to the present age of the digital revolution, advertising business has indeed gone full circle.

Notwithstanding the stages of growth and developments recorded in the sector over the decades, one of the major drawbacks in the industry's wheel of progress remains the nagging issue of debts and indebtedness amongst players across the various sectoral groupings.

Affected by this debacle are: the creative advertising agencies group under the umbrella of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), member companies of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), members of Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN), and the Media agencies group under the aegis of Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN).

Business operators in each of the sectoral groups have over the years been locked up in one form of debt controversy or the other and with no end in sight.

But at the centre of this entire debt controversy is the advertisers group, generally referred to as the client organisations or the paymasters. They comprise of several of the multinational companies who are the owners of brands and major producers of products in the market.

The advertisers, coming under the trade group of ADVAN are the major custodians of credit. They employ the services of marketing communications services providers. They are believed to be at the heart of the debt issue considering that they dictate the pace as far as credit is concerned across the industry.

It is often said that he who pays the piper also dictates the tune, and as such everything about the debt issue revolves around the fact that payments coming from the clients are expected to go to the different service providers.

The truth is that the debt issue in the industry has remained a recurring decimal with blame games flowing between the clients,

the agencies and, of course, the media. Often times, clients claim to have paid the agencies for works done on their behalf. Agencies on the other hand have often been blamed holding back on payments to vendors after they must have been paid by the clients. Agencies allegedly live in denial of having received payments as at when due and end up extending the debts to media owners who bear the brunt and coming last on the credit ladder.

But worst still in the debt controversies is the latest development of prolonged delays in payment settlements, a trend that is being championed by the client companies. From the industry wide approved payment terms of not exceeding 30 to 45 days of credit, most clients appear to be insisting on a new payment policy of 120 days thereby worsening the industry debt problems.

The long delays in payment have more or less brought business activities in the industry to a near halt giving the agencies even a justified ground to also hold on to payments to media owners as well as other vendors along the business value chain.

The debt and payment challenges in the industry have more or less become the industry's albatross as they have defied every known solution with the various players in the industry expressing helplessness and hopelessness about their current situation and circumstance. The helplessness has no doubt resulted in general business lull and a decline in the fortunes of the industry.

A major effort towards resolving the debt issue was the formation, several years back, of the Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups (HASG) a forum comprising the leadership of the various industry sectoral groups with the aim of charting a course on how to settle the debt imbroglio. Despite all engagements by the stakeholders on the subject, the HASG initiative was short lived as it failed to realise its objectives.

Several notable industry figures have expressed frustrations over the negative effect of the debt and payment policy problems on the business and their professions. Foremost amongst industry personalities who have commented on the subject is a former President of the AAAN, Mr. Rufai Ladipo, who has called for the resuscitation of the HASG machinery with a view to revisiting the issue. Also speaking on the subject, the Managing Director/CEO, Cosse Group, Mr. Funmi Onabolu has called for the development of an industry wide business model to redefine fresh terms of business relationships across the industry. In a similar vein, the Managing Director/CEO, Noah's Ark Communications Limited, Mr. Lanre Adisa has described as an "absurdity" the seeming domineering posture of the client companies and called for establishment of a unified trade body to address the debts and payment challenges rocking sector.

How to attain a lasting solution to the debt issue was the major part of deliberations at the just concluded maiden edition of the National Advertising Conference championed by the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), the apex regulatory body for advertising industry; and it is hoped that based on general engagements by the leadership of the various industry sectoral groups at that conference, a workable solution may soon be reached with a view to resolving the industry debt imbroglio.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Packaged in this special edition is our yearly review of Forces Behind the Brands and Brands to Watch 2020. It is the series 1 of a twin edition Publication.

In this edition, MARKETING EDGE intelligence unit/Brand Audit painstakingly carried out a clinical analyses of the entire Nigeria integrated marketing communications sector vis-à-vis market review of the entire Nigerian economy with a view to determining which players and gladiators in the Nigerian Corporate world and indeed in the entire marketing landscape would get more than a cursory look in the new year of a new decade. Our findings and reports are outstanding and unique in all aspects and ramifications. The publication is not only an exciting dossier and testimony about the Nigerian Corporate Community, it is an authoritative, credible and reliable memento for all industry operators and starts-ups. It is quintessentially in sync with MARKETING EDGE culture of editorial robustness, but complete on the best tradition of journalism excellence and professionalism. It is a collectors' item anytime any day.

Reading through the reports will no doubt enrich our readers knowledge.

Also packaged for this edition is a special pullout on an irrepressible maverick, an entrepreneur, a Wizkid an avant-garde entrepreneur, Mr. Felix King Eiremiokhae.

Felix, as popularly called and renowned in the Nigerian marketing and advertising space is a reporter's delight with his elephantine knowledge about local and global econometrics. The fashionable maverick, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Oracle Experience, a leading experience agency in Nigeria is a national pride as he holds Nigeria, his motherland so dearly to his heart.

Observing Felix King from afar would naturally evoke in you the picture of someone who had it all smooth sailing growing up. You could also be tempted to think that the MD/CEO of Oracle Experience is just one of those who made it just like that without a struggle.

He is certainly none of that. He is a self-made man. He is an enigma with grits and guts! He is someone who had seen the future long before now and he prepared very well ahead for it. The pull-out packaged on the budding aristocrat of the Nigeria entrepreneurial hemisphere is titled "The Audacity of Hope" The exposition captures most vividly Felix King Eiremiokhae's corporate sorjourn in the last few years and his rise to the pinnacle of his profession with foot prints in different economic spheres while not leaving out his formidable presence in charity and philanthropic endeavours. Over the years, the Chief Priest of an established Oracle has expended a large chunk of his annual profits on widows and the less privileged through his foundation. No wonder, God has continued to bless this icon as he has been a blessing to his generation and humanity. You cannot but get excited and delighted reading the special interview granted MARKETING EDGE by this restless and relentless high performer experiential Wizkid. It is a story of industry, patience, dedication, knowledge and above all self-discipline and development.

Not least on our editorial menu list for this special edition, we have packaged as usual top exclusive news, gists, and developments on happenings within and without the Nigerian marketing and advertising landscape. At MARKETING EDGE, we remain avant-garde, authoritative and innovative about the industry. In line with our self-appointed task, we remain the pace-setter in innovative brand journalism as our latest multi-level media channel platforms continue to create ripples in the industry.

We have unapologetically disrupted our industry with a view to creating a new paradigm shift which will be the new industry bench mark in the years ahead.

Consequently, we enjoin our readers, subscribers and teeming audience to get on our boat for a smooth cruise into a fulfilling future of increased profitability, bottom-line growth and return on investments. Our readers would not in anyway regret being part of our voyage as we welcome you into this tastefully rich and salacious edition written in lucid prose and elegant style!

Happy Reading!!!



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Media expert projects N47.2 billion billings for OOH advertising sector in Nigeria in 2020



An Out-of -Home advertising industry specialist, Ade Akinde has projected that overall billings in outdoor sector of Nigeria's Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) industry would hit the N47.2 billion mark by end of the business year 2020.

Akande, Chairman, Committee on OOH Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Panel disclosed also that the outdoor advertising sector alone accounted for about N45 billion of the total advertising industry billings in Nigeria estimated at N162 billion in 2019. The figure, representing conservatively 27.8 percent of the total advertising expenditure, excluded branding, marketing and promotional activities in the course of the period under review.

Addressing a forum of industry stakeholders during the official presentation of the SOP draft document, held at Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Lagos, the veteran practitioner observed that despite the near 100% advertising revenue accruing from the industry, the media owners lived with a mindset of not being part of the advertising industry.

According to him, the development owes to the fact that the media owners (TV, Cinema, Radio, Press, safe for the out-of-home segment of the media sector) were constantly at 'pains to differentiate' their advertising function from their editorial / program function which is to inform and entertain.

Making specific references to the PWC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) research report on Entertainment and Media in Nigeria, the media specialist highlighted the various positive contributions of OOH advertising sector to growth and development of the Nigerian economy, including among other

things, provision of employment opportunities running into thousands, with an average of five dependants per income earner.

Other contributions of the sector that he highlighted include the dependence and investment of the advertisers and the agencies' sectors on OOH offerings, added

value to the environment as well as the ultimate unquantifiable benefits to the general public who are the beneficiaries of the advertised products and services.

“As we all know, the advertising industry consists of three near-autonomous sectors: the advertisers’ sector, the ad agencies’ sector such as full creative firms, media independents, brand consultants, etc, and the media sector.

"Despite the near 100% advertising revenue from the industry, the media owners have a mindset of not being part of the advertising industry, because they are at 'pains to differentiate' their advertising function from their editorial/program

function, which is to inform and entertain," he said.

He continued: "Today, we are addressing the OOH segment of the media owners, which exclusively carries advertisements, and it is big and attractive for several reasons"

While commending the initiative of the industry regulator, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) for granting its support and endorsement for the SOP for OOH sector in Nigeria, Akinde called on stakeholders to show understanding and be supportive of the positive change in the manner of conducting the business of advertising in Nigeria.

“APCON in its regulatory role in the industry believes that the operations in this strategic segment of the Media sector of the Ad Industry should be supported and protected through a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

"Today marks a watershed in the practice of Out-of-Home media in Nigeria, and I want to appeal, as well as crave your indulgence that, as we listen to our presenters and contributions from stakeholder groups, we should seek to understand and support this improvement and positive change in the way we conduct the business of Advertising in Nigeria," he concluded. ■

AB InBev projects 10% decline in first-quarter profit as coronavirus hits harder

Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world's largest brewer, has projected a 10% decline in first-quarter profit after the coronavirus outbreak hit beer sales during the Chinese New Year, sending its shares skidding.

The beer behemoth said the virus had led to a significant decline in demand in China – both at bars and drinking at home, notably during the Chinese New Year.

According to the company, the outbreak, along with an expected weaker Brazilian market, could lead to a 10% drop



in first-quarter core profit on-year.

AB InBev said that it expected 2020 core profit growth of between 2% and 5%, with most expansion occurring in the second half.

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Insight celebrates @ 40th, stays true to perpetual transformation



Living up to its tagline, “The brand audacity built with disruption as major character”, Insight Communications, a member of the Publicis Groupe and of Insight Redefini, has formally announced its 40th Anniversary, while articulating the courageous vision that has sustained it over the years. The announcement was made at a media parley held at the company’s expansive office in G.R.A, Ikeja, Lagos.

The company, which clocked 40 on January 2, 2020, has over the years received national and international acclaim for exceptional work done with major brands such as Seven-Up Bottling Company (SBC), Pepsico, Nigerian Breweries, Dufil Prima, FrieslandCampina WAMCO, First City Monument Bank (FMCB), Nestle Nigeria, Visa, amongst others. It has also been associated with topmost creative thinking, launching some of the most viral campaigns such as Mirinda’s 3 Orange Men, Pepsi Long Throat Bottle, Nestle Milo’s Clap, Peak Milk’s Milk at its Peak, and Bank PHB’s Cars Will Walk on Water.

During the media chat, the Group Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ken Onyeali Ikpe, while taking journalists through the brave trajectory of the agency behemoth, enunciated the key attributes that made the journey possible, alluding to the Nigerian czar of advertising whose daring dream has become today’s reality.

In his words: “We are celebrating 40 years of the audacity of one man who took the decision to weave in the spirit of never-ending thinking and the character trait of disruption into the fabric of the organisation. We are celebrating determination, innovation, dynamic business modules and reward for tenacity”.

In a bid to provide clarity on its efforts to ensure relevance and sustained growth, Dr. Ikpe said that the strategy had always rested on four timeless pillars which seek to focus on product creation, quality delivery, speed to market and return on investment.

“Our transformational vision which has been in operation for 3 years now, is to de-emphasise downstream thinking and elevate midstream refinery and design thinking, which would further propel us to our long term plans to operate in the upstream, where decisions on major business trajectories are made.”

He went further to say that “it is very important to note that in this ever-evolving industry, a company that does not build or rebuild for the times will go extinct. This simple insight is what has driven us to consistently evaluate and transform our strategy every decade, and has indeed led to our exponential growth and sustained market share”.

Over the past four decades, Insight has led through various business climates and has so far birthed six other communications

companies which include All Seasons Zenith, Quadrant MSL, Starcom Media Perspectives, Leo Burnett, Optimum Exposures and The Creative Counsel.

To celebrate Insight at 40, a 360-campaign will be fully launched with the theme #StillFoolish – which is a celebration of the idea that every single groundbreaking invention was termed foolish when it was first pitched.

Explaining the concept, the Creative Director, Insight Communications, Chuka Obi gave different scenarios in history where then inventors and innovators who were termed foolish are now icons of pioneering a better way of life. In furtherance to this, Chuka confirmed that since Insight’s ever learning culture seeks to drive all actions, the goal to remain foolish, audacious and disruptive takes centre stage.

“40 years ago, our Chairman and Founder, Mr. Biodun Shobanjo, left his paid employment to start an advertising agency in Nigeria with 18 people and no money to pay salaries, a move that was labelled ‘foolish’ by many. Today, that vision is now and will still remain one of the leading communications companies, projecting the best of Nigeria to the world,” he said.

Brimming with optimism, he concluded: “As an organisation, we look forward to the next 40 years. We hope you all will be a part of this journey as we celebrate the next 40 years of foolish genius.” ■

▶▶ Continued from pg 10 **AB InBev projects 10% decline in first-quarter profit**

The Belgium-based company, which sells more Budweiser in China than in the lager’s key U.S. market, said the disease shaved up to \$285 million off its revenue in China in the first two months of this year, 2.3% of its first-quarter group revenue last year.

AB InBev is the most recent alcoholic beverage company to inform the public that the epidemic is taking a toll on business, following Diageo’s alert on recently that the

fast-spreading virus in greater China and the Asia Pacific region could knock up to \$260 million off its profit in 2020.

According to AB InBev CEO Carlos Brito, “Nightlife ground to a halt in China in the third quarter last year, with many bars and restaurants shutting down due to the virus.

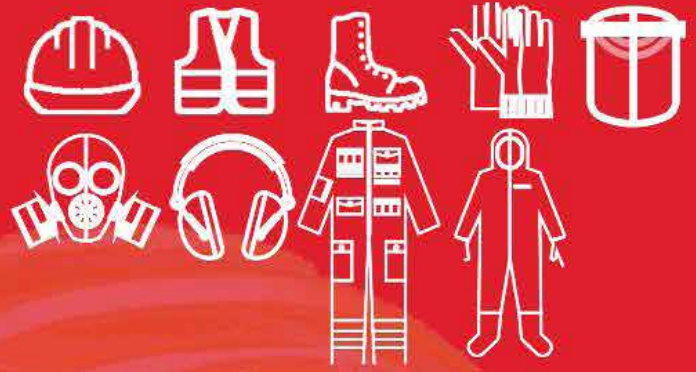
“Our performance in 2019 was below our expectations, and we are not satisfied with the results.

“More than half of the company’s 33 Chinese breweries have reopened with the exception of the one in the central Chinese city of Wuhan,” Brito said.

The company’s fourth-quarter core profit declined 5.5% to \$5.34 billion, worse than market expectations of a 1.9% drop.

The virus that can lead to pneumonia is believed to have originated in a market in Wuhan late last year. ■

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GDM celebrates @ 10, unveils new logo to reflect fresh core values

GDM, one of the leading experiential marketing agencies in Nigeria has unveiled its new logo to reflect the new core of its business. The unveiling ceremony also saw the company flag off the celebrations of its 10th anniversary, in addition to the commissioning of a CSR project which it did at the Gbagada Comprehensive Junior High School located directly opposite its head office in Gbagada, Lagos State.

As clearly and boldly indicated by the new logo, the company is moving from being a marketing operations company to a group of companies that focuses on marketing and innovation, primarily.

Explaining the motive behind the new logo, the founder and Group Chief Executive Officer of the company, Victor Afolabi, in an exclusive interview with *MARKETING EDGE*, said: “The unveiling is not just about logo; but it’s about the core of our business, our business DNA, for short.”

He further stated that the company, which was founded in 2010 as a Below the Line (BTL) experiential marketing agency, had, in 2015, evolved into a marketing operations company in line with the demands of its clients; a factor which he said was also responsible for its new evolution.

In his words: “This Company was founded in 2010 simply as a BTL experiential marketing agency. But between 2014-2015, the clients were asking for more. They were no longer interested in an agency that would just take the brief and run around directly marketing to people. They were looking for an agency which would offer a 360-degree



marketing operation; an agency that could look at the numbers and analyse the numbers, etc.

“And because of what they were asking for, the kind of people that we were recruiting, and the kind of services which we were offering needed to change. And you noticed that in the amount of money those clients were ready to spend around that sector.”

Speaking further, the group boss noted: “Clients wanted an adaptation of their creatives; they wanted you to understand the digital and to know where PR fits in. In short, clients did not want you to be just an ordinary experiential agency anymore. As such, by 2015, we became a marketing operations agency. The difference resides in the fact that marketing operations agencies take a lot into cognizance about Return on Investment (ROI) and a lot about the growth and the numbers. So, that became our focus and the very core of our business had to change.”

Giving his organisation’s reason for celebrating, Afolabi emphasised that the 10th anniversary was to reappraise the group’s performance and raise the bar, not just in terms of marketing communications but marketing in all its ramifications.

“We want to use the occasion of this celebration to reassess what marketing should be and what the total concept of innovation and agency business should be in the future. Being among

the top market leaders, we should be at the forefront of driving the change and the narratives about the future. We have raised the bar in the practice, in activation and in the offerings in the marketing space.

“The celebration is also to show that we have not taken for granted God’s grace which has been more than sufficient for us, including our clients who have trusted us so much. And some of our staff who have been with us since inception,” he said.

On hand to do the unveiling of the logo and the commissioning of the CSR project was Segun Fafore, the Executive Assistant to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State on New Media and Public Relations, who represented the Governor.

Fafore commended Afolabi and his team for seeing the future and bringing it forward. He submitted that the group’s CSR investment in education was very much in tandem with the vision and commitment of the Sanwo-Olu administration in Lagos State which had not only increased budget allocation to Education, but had also launched an initiative tagged *Eko Excel*, meaning Excellence in Child Education and Learning.

He congratulated the students who, he said were lucky to have technology-driven education which is giving them a better take-off in life than the older generations. ■

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AAAN business outlook seminar raises hope on Nigeria's economic growth

The year 2020 edition of the annual business outlook seminar of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) came to a grand close on a general optimistic note as various discussants and participants reasoned that Nigeria's economy was heading hopefully towards a positive turn-around in the foreseeable future.

For the team of discussants at the one-day seminar, their optimism on the economy was based on the recent emerging economic indices from the Federal Government, suggesting that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the country would grow by unprecedented 2.4 percent in the course of the current year.

The seminar which held at the prestigious Leola Hotels, Maryland in Lagos was well attended, drawing together a convergence of foremost practitioners in advertising, notably among whom were the Group Chairman of STB McCann, Sir Steve Omojafor, and erstwhile Managing Director of LTC Advertising, Mrs. Bola Thomas.

The roll call of attendees at the event included several heads of advertising agencies and other industry stakeholders cutting across Nigeria's marketing and marketing communications industry spheres.

The event, which had as its theme "Nigerian Business Environment in the year 2020: Implications for Advertising Agencies", was critically addressed by various distinguished marketing personalities drawn from across the sectoral groupings namely, the media, clients



organisations and management consultancy side.

The keynote Speaker, former Managing Director of Diamond Bank Plc and Senior Partner, Anderson Tax Consultants, Emeka Onwuka, took the audience through the latest available demography on economic development in Nigeria, expressing positive hope that based on currently emerging indices, "things were turning positively favorably for the Nigerian economy".

According to him, despite the generally perceived downturn in the economy as experienced in 2019, some sectors of the economy continued to record positive growth, especially with regards to agricultural and non-oil sector in general.

He observed that what was most cheering was the general indication that the economy would grow by 2.4 percent in the course of the current year, pointing out that the projected growth would be made possible judging by certain economic policies of government such as, among other things, early passage of the yearly budget, favorable oil prices and growing activities in the non-oil sectors of the economy, especially agriculture.

Speaking also at the event, Olu Akanmu, one of the panelists, and Executive Director at FCMB Plc, observed that irrespective of the emerging economic indices on the

economy, Nigeria still remained a very poor country with one out of every two Nigerians living below the poverty line.

He said that based on the current economic realities in the country, what agency business practitioners needed to do was to look within and address their business challenges by changing their business models, and embracing more of emerging digital technology experience for their business to thrive.

In his own remarks, the Publisher/CEO, Businessday Newspaper, Frank Aigbogun challenged agency practitioners as experts in the communication enterprise to improve upon their mode of monitoring changes in the marketplace, reshape their business model by improving their relevance to clients so they could be seen more as business partners rather than just service providers.

Earlier in his opening remarks, AAAN President, Ikechi Odigbo lamented the various challenges bedeviling the advertising agency business in Nigeria such as constantly shrinking budgets, business fragmentation and what he termed "the promiscuous attitude" of client organisations.

According to the Association boss, Nigeria had everything it takes to emerge as a great nation in terms of population, natural resources and the ecology, adding, however, that in spite of all these, the country continued to lag behind on its potentials while doing business remained a huge challenge in spite of efforts of government. ■

SBI Media wins 9Mobile media Account



Frontline media advertising agency, SBI Media Limited has emerged winner of the multi million naira 9Mobile media

advertising account.

Emerging Markets Telecommunication Services Ltd. (EMTS), trading as 9mobile, recently announced the appointment of the cutting-edge company as its official media

agency.

The agency emerged winner of the juicy account following a recently conducted pitch exercise in which it emerged tops based on several performance parameters which include, among other things, vibrancy, creativity, teamwork and resilience.

Following the appointment, SBI Media now takes responsibility for charting all media-related creatives, including planning, buying and other relevant activities for the telecoms company.

The Award-winning media agency is expected to deploy innovative strategies to

create, plan and execute exceptional media campaigns for 9mobile.

The appointment of SBI Media is a strategic fit for the vibrant mobile carrier given the agency's culture of innovation and doggedness.

It is noteworthy that the appointment of the agency is at a pivotal time for 9mobile as the innovation-driven mobile carrier makes a huge comeback into the Nigerian telecoms market.

Commenting recently on the agency's feat, the Managing Director /CEO, SBI Media Limited, Rotimi Bankole, expressed his delight on the appointment, stating that



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▶▶ he sees the appointment as an opportunity for his team to prove its mettle as the next-generation agency through deployment of innovativeness, vibrancy and dynamism.

In his words: "I have high respect for 9mobile; coming in at a time when other players were already operating, it gained its market shares and continues to grow its brand and create value for its various subscribers."

On his agency's plans for building the 9mobile brand, Rotimi said: "They came into the market to haunt for skill and competence and we operate on the culture of excellence and speed. We are therefore committed to drawing from our pool of talents and result-oriented network of individuals to support 9mobile for further growth in the telecommunication space."

The agency boss further said: "We also invite other successful and aspiring brands to join us as we are fast-growing our network of clients and partners, and there is no better time than now for us to partner together."

Reaffirming their commitment to serving their clients better, the Head Media and Planning at the agency, Alison Oyome said: "It was a thorough process that we are

proud to be part of. The fact that we won the keenly contested pitch is a humbling experience that we are all proud of as a team. We hope to use this learning as a challenge to give excellent and top-notch media strategy and planning services for the brand."

Also speaking, the Group's Head of Strategy and Data, Samuel Odusami noted: "I am pleased to be part of the team that made this win possible. It is a collective effort that is at the core of our culture over the years. We look forward to taking this as a learning point to achieve more success."

Continuing he added: "As a group, we hope to have the strongest, most-strategic, agile and committed team to deliver top-notch solutions for 9mobile, our broad clientele/partners base as well as future partners."

SBI Media Limited is the flagship brand of the SBI Media Group. Known as the next-generation media agency, the group is the West African strategic hub of Masscom Global (MCG), a global network of 30 agencies in emerging markets and Asia Pacific. The agency is committed to delivering client's expectations on creativity and excellence. ■

that first move advantage can come to you. Consumers are evolving and in like manner consumption pattern is also evolving," he explained.

The event attracted in attendance stakeholders from across major economic sectors of the country, including the manufacturing sector, Oil and gas, Banking, Insurance, marketing and marketing communications industry players.

Amongst the notable speakers and panelists at the summit included key industry personalities, namely; Chandana Fernando, Commercial Manager, Nestle Nigeria; Folake Ani-Mumuney, Global Head, Marketing and Marketing Communications, First Bank of Nigeria Plc; Adekanbi Olubayo, Chief Transformation Officer, MTN Nigeria and Adewale Arikawe, CDSM, Director, Friesland Campina Wamco Nigeria Plc. ■

Redwood economic summit emphasises on power of consumer data in business



Decision makers across public and private sector organisations in Nigeria's economy have been advised on the need to show greater understanding to the imperatives of data development as a vital tool to driving growth of their businesses.

Giving this advice in Lagos was Chairman of the National Economic Advisory Council, Dr Doyin Salami while delivering a keynote address during a one-day business development summit organised by Redwood Consulting, a frontline marketing solutions company.

Dwelling on the summit theme title 'Power of Consumer Data', Salami observed that one major challenge confronting most public and private organisations in the country was the apparent lack of interest and understanding of the data tool as a guide to the growth of businesses.

According to the frontline economist who also is CEO, Kainos Edge Consulting Limited, a lot of public and private sector organisations are striving hard to develop

data to be deployed in their businesses but often lack the required capabilities in putting the data to meaningful use as well as transforming them into useful decision making tools.

Stressing further on the importance of the use of data, he noted that many public and private organisations did not have proper understanding of what sort of data knowledge they required for their business.

He added that a major difference existing between the local indigenous firms and their multinational counterparts was in the capacity to use data meaningfully, stressing that what obtained more in the local setting was much of a guess work.

"Public and private organisations need to understand and appreciate data so as to be able to invest in them. One challenge that data poses in our economy is the fact that people don't know what data they need. Data does not transform into insight. You must understand and be able to analyse data for it to become insight.

"Data gives capacity to understand evolution. It gives opportunity to wait for things to evolve and come to you. It's absolutely important to be proactive so

Brands, policymakers, personalities shine at GAGE Digital Awards 2020



It was a night of style and glamour at the exclusive and cozy Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos. It was also a night of celebration of individuals and brands that have leveraged the power of digital to make life easier and better. Most importantly, it was a night of GAGE Awards, Nigeria's foremost digital awards, which took the centre stage recently.

In attendance on the night were dignitaries such as the Executive Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Communications

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Commission, Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta and the Executive Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu who was represented by the Honourable Commissioner for Science and Technology, Mr. Hakeem Popoola Fahm.

The event commenced with a blue carpet which was graced by digital stars, enthusiasts, nominees and policy shapers beautifully adorned in class and elegance.

About 12 awards were given out to deserving winners which include the Banking App of the Year 2019 won by GTBank and the Data Service Provider of the Year 2019, won by Airtel Nigeria.

In the keenly contested category of the Online Comedian of the Year, Taaoma came out tops, while Jumiafood won the award for the Breakout App of the Year 2019, and Segun Awosanya (aka Segalink) won the Online Personality of the Year.

One of the highpoints of the evening was the Special awards given to

Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission, Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta for his contributions to the growth of digital in Nigeria and also the Special Achievement Award which was conferred on Mrs. Nkemdilim Uwaje Begho for being a shining light to women in the digital space in the Year 2019.

What's more, it was a night of so much fun, excitement and a few tears as the soul singer, Johnny Drille performed with exceptional élan thrilling the audience.

It would be recalled that the GAGE Awards has been created to fill in a yawning gap in the digital space in Nigeria, with interesting ideas and innovations that will help create the much needed standard, facilitate growth and inspire new talents.

In the words of the convener, Mr. Johnson Anorh: "GAGE Awards coming to life is a dream come true because we have been behind the scene working on these award for over 3 years. This award is a

packaged gift to Africa for Africans. This is an award with a purpose not a PR peg.

"It's meant to help drive the pace of innovation already happening and inspire new talents coming up in the digital space. I want to use this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of GAGE AWARDS 2020.

He added: "I equally extend my gratitude to all our partners, sponsors and the team that worked tirelessly to make it a success. We believe the revolution in the digital space has started and by virtue of this award, more people will be inspired to do great stuffs."

The GAGE Awards celebrates excellence in 5 key areas: Innovation, Entertainment, Inspiration, Commerce and Information. It's positioned to become an annual award to reward the outstanding achievements of individuals and brands within a given year. ■

APCON, OAAN collaborate on Standard Operating Procedure for OOH advertising



The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) has entered into a joint collaborative arrangement with the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) towards developing a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to guide business engagements involving Out-of-Home advertising practice in Nigeria.

The basic objective behind the operating procedure, according to authorities of OAAN, its originators, is targeted at developing and maintaining a suitable standard for outdoor advertising practice in Nigeria and also to establish a definite protocol for controlling the practice of outdoor advertising with a view to achieving a desired standard of practice.

The formal presentation of the draft document on the new SOP held at the prestigious Lagos Sheraton Hotel and Towers and brought in attendance a convergence of various industry stakeholders cutting across the Integrated Marketing Communications sphere,

including representatives of the various sectoral organisations making up the industry.

The sectoral group representations at the event include member companies of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), member agencies of the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) and media companies among others.

Speaking during the formal presentation of the draft document, the Acting Registrar of APCON, Mrs. Ijedi Iyoha commended the initiative of the OAAN body for putting together the draft document which she said would go a long way to redefine the terms of business engagement between operators in the Out-of-Home sector and other business stakeholders of the industry, especially the advertisers.

Iyoha, represented at the occasion by Joe-Eugene Onuorah, Head of Monitoring Department at APCON, observed that the long evolution of Out-of-Home advertising in Nigeria had witnessed tremendous improvement in the structure of the platform as well as in the dynamics and processes of its value delivery.

She noted further that the emergence of digital technology had greatly expanded the value delivery of the OOH advertising media, bringing it in closer competition

with the broadcast and, to some extent, the social media platforms.

She said: "Out-of-Home advertising is a very crucial, perhaps indispensable, arm of the advertising industry. It used to be considered a support medium in the execution of marketing communications campaigns. Today, however, we have seen successful marketing communication campaigns in which the Out-of-Home platforms are either the major plank or the sole plank of the campaign."

Earlier in his opening remark, Chairman of the SOP committee, Ade Akinde, noted that the presentation event marked a watershed in the annals of the Out-of-Home advertising sectors in Nigeria, adding that the industry had made significant contributions to growth of Nigeria's GDP and also accounted for the employment of several thousands of Nigerians.

Further highlights of the objective of the new operational procedure include, providing a forum for dispute resolution among OAAN members, cooperating with other industry sectoral bodies and associations in furtherance of mutual interests as well as promoting responsible and ethical advertising practice, conscious of the wellbeing and sensibilities of consumers and other members of the society in all matters of commercial communication. ■

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Cars45 partners ENYO Service Station on delivery of autocare services



Frontline automotive industry player, Cars45, disclosed it has entered into a strategic business partnership with ENYO fuel service stations with a view to delivering quality after sales autocare services to its teeming consumers across Nigeria's automotive market.

The company said its decision to partner with ENYO stations arose out of its corporate objective to constantly collaborate with like-minded, ambitious and technology-driven brands in fueling and giving life to the car ownership dream of Nigerian consumers.

Making these disclosures recently was the Vice President, Cars45 Consumer Business Group, Dr. Mayokun Fadeyibi during an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE** in Lagos.

According to her, aside from autocare service offering that was launched recently,

the company was committed to the task of putting formal structures in place and ensuring that trust and transparency becomes permanent features with regards to international aspects of the automotive business ecosystem.

"For us, the ENYO partnership is literally a new breeder. What we are trying to do as a business is partner with like-minded brands. ENYO as a business is very much technology-driven, and then also they are very ambitious. You would have noticed that ENYO is scaling rapidly even within the industry, and on our part, cars45 is fueling and giving life to the car ownership dreams of consumers.

"ENYO itself is powering a fuel retail revolution. Their stations look very different from a lot of the other competitors and they are determined to stand out. For us, it's identifying the fact that these are like brands and they can sort of appreciate our appetite for growth. If we say that we want to walk your car journey with you, the consumer, we have to identify partners that we can walk with to provide everything in terms of servicing," she said.

She continued: "One of the services that we recently launched and we are providing for people again goes into our desire to provide trust and transparency to the international dimensions of auto trade.

"So if we are bringing transparency into the trade of used cars in Nigeria we realized that we couldn't just afford to leave it at

that. We also need to bring transparency into international trade as well. And so, if we are helping you with importing or bringing in cars you will know exactly what you are getting, we are able to work with partners abroad across different countries."

Highlighting on the various challenges in Nigeria's automotive business environment, the company boss observed that the challenges bordered on building the market structure and educating the industry players to understand and better appreciate the basis of the business.

"I will go back to my initial expression around being the market makers, and when you are a market maker you are literally building the industry from the ground up from a structural point of view. You are also doing a lot of education because many people might not even understand what you are trying to do. So, our brand is not just focused on commerce.

"It's about brand building and about educating all the players in the ecosystem and not only consumers. We are educating consumers and dealers among others from a regulatory perspective. We are doing a lot of work to help people to understand the broad base," she explained.

"One of the assurances that I would give to our consumers is that they can trust the Cars45 brand, and also the valuation and verification that we bring. They can trust our transparency within the ecosystem.

"We believe strongly in partnership. We did not come into the market to disrupt the dealers; we actually came into the market to build an ecosystem around the industry. So for us, even with other stakeholders, it is about continuously working together to build the automotive system in Nigeria," she concluded. ■

OAAN wades in to settle Abuja signage and outdoor advertising regulatory rift

It appears that the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) may have finally thrown in its corporate weight behind finding a lasting solution to the protracted controversies surrounding signage and outdoor advertising regulatory mechanism in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Giving answers exclusively to **MARKETING EDGE** enquiries on industry issues recently, OAAN President, Emmanuel Ajufo hinted that the association's leadership was currently having discussions with the Directorate in charge of Signage and Advertising Departments in the FCT.

According to the OAAN boss, an agreement that will see to the end of the regulatory controversy is soon to be entered into between concerned parties. He added that if both parties worked in accordance

with the agreements soon to be endorsed, it was certain that relative peace would return to the FCT regarding regulation in the industry.

"We have met with the Director in charge of Department in charge of Advertising in Abuja. If both parties work according to the agreements that we will sign shortly, then there will be relative peace in Abuja."

It would be recalled that the outdoor regulatory environment in the FCT had lately been enmeshed in controversies following the recent approval of a new outdoor advertising and signage system that emphasises upgrade of the vital sector in consonance with the rising profile of Abuja as a world class city.

The proposed policy had sent jitters among business and institutional operators in the city, including area councils and



satellite towns all of which have expressed concerns about its financial implications. The proposal had resulted in the establishment of the new Department of Outdoor Advertising and Signage (DOAS) in the FCT.

The department is envisaged to ensure sustainable implementation of the new outdoor advertising and signage system.

In line with the directive the new system would be implemented by the FCTA in collaboration with the six Area Councils of the FCT alongside a reputable advertising consultancy firm. The policy is to become effective in the entire 8,000 square-kilometre Federal Capital Territory. ■

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Global advertising spend set to rise by 7.1% to \$660bn in 2020, says report

WARC[^]Data

WARC's latest report, *Global Advertising Trends – The Adspend Outlook*, has found that global advertising spend is set to rise by 7.1% to \$660bn this year, buoyed by 13.2% growth in internet investment. But traditional media, combined, are expected to record 1.5% growth to \$324.2bn – the first rise since 2011.

The traditional media total is expected to be boosted by a return to growth for TV; here spend is set to rise 2.5% to \$192.6bn, helped in no small part by the US presidential election campaigns and the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo. But advertising revenue for the 'duopoly' (Alphabet and Facebook) is forecast to reach \$231.9bn in 2020, having topped the TV total for the first time in 2019.

Alphabet's ad income is forecast to rise by 10.5% to \$149.0bn worldwide, equivalent to 23 cents in every ad dollar. A full 72.4% – \$107.8bn – will come from Alphabet's core Google search platform – this gives Google a 77.0% share of the global search market. YouTube is expected to earn a further \$18.5bn for Alphabet in 2020, a 22.1% rise from 2019 and equivalent to 29.0% of all online video adspend worldwide.

Facebook's ad revenue is projected to rise by 19.0% to \$82.9bn; much of this growth is organic though the social network will benefit from the US presidential campaigns this year. Amazon's ad income is set to rise 21.4% to \$17.1bn, Twitter's 9.2% to \$3.3bn and Snap's 34.1% to \$2.3bn. All will contribute to an overall rise of 13.2% in internet ad investment this year, to a total of \$335.4bn – over half (50.9%) of the global total for the first time.

James McDonald, managing editor, WARC Data, and author of the research, said: Internet ad growth has been far stronger than the state of the global economy would suggest, rising seven times faster on average since 2015. But, regulation aside, online platforms are bound by the law of large numbers, and revenue growth is easing for key players like Alphabet and Facebook.

"We are yet to amend our forecasts in light of the Covid-19 situation, as we would expect – if the crisis is contained – displaced spend to be reallocated later in the year. Advertising's relationship with GDP is strong, but a slowdown in economic output as a result of the virus

will not necessarily translate into reduced advertising investment. If events such as the Tokyo Olympics and Uefa Euro 2020 tournament are postponed or cancelled, however, we would expect a notable impact."

All product categories are expected to see growth in 2020

Adspend is set to rise across all of the 19 product categories monitored by WARC. The financial services sector is expected to lead growth, with a forecast rise of 11.8% to \$53.4bn in 2020. A full 53.9% of spend is directed towards online formats; banks, in particular, are looking to build brand resonance with youth demographics (increasingly via social media).

At the other end of the scale, a rise of 2.6% in the retail sector is soft compared to the global rate of 7.1% but would still represent the strongest growth since 2013, lifting market value to \$65bn.

Consumer packaged goods (CPG) sectors such as soft drinks (+6.5% to \$17.3bn) and food (+4.9% to \$28.1bn) are expected to grow just behind the global rate this year, alcoholic drinks (+6.9% to \$9.7bn) and automotive (6.8% to \$57.2bn) are roughly par.

Trends by platform

Alphabet: Alphabet's advertising revenue – across Google Search, YouTube, and Google Network Members (third parties that host Google ads) – is forecast to rise 10.5% to \$149.0bn this year – 22.6% of global advertising spend (up from 21.9% in 2019). This is before the deduction of traffic acquisition costs (TAC), which amounted to \$30.1bn in 2019.

YouTube: Advertisers are forecast to spend \$18.5bn on YouTube this year, a rise of 22.1% from \$15.2bn in 2019. This gives YouTube a 29.0% share of all online video advertising spend, and a 2.8% share of total adspend.

Google: By far the largest service in Alphabet's portfolio, Google's ad income is expected to rise 9.9% to \$107.8bn this year – 77.0% of global search spend and 16.3% of all adspend.

Facebook: Advertisers are expected to spend \$82.9bn across Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram this year, a rise of 19.0% from 2019. This gives Facebook a 12.6% share of global advertising investment.

Amazon: Amazon is forecast to record double-digit ad revenue growth again this year, with income amounting to \$17.1bn, a 21.4% rise from 2019. This gives Amazon a

2.6% share of global advertising spend.

Snapchat: Ad investment in Snapchat is forecast to rise 34.1% to \$2.3bn in 2020, 2.2% of all social and messaging spend and just 0.3% of total adspend.

Twitter: Twitter's ad income is expected to ease into single digits, with a total of \$3.3bn representative of a 9.2% rise in 2020.

Trends by media and format

TV: Spend is forecast to rise 2.5% to \$192.6bn, 29.2% of all global spend this year. This only partially reverses a 4.4% dip in 2019. A third of the global TV total is transacted in the US – where, TV spend is set to rise by 4.0% to \$62.9bn. Just over \$4bn will come from presidential campaigns.

Out of home: Spend across billboards, transport and retail/point of sale (PoS) locations are forecast to rise 5.9% to \$43.5bn this year, the sixth consecutive year of growth. The sector is benefitting from the increasing penetration of digital sites in advanced markets.

Radio: Advertiser investment in radio is forecast to rise 1.8% to \$32.8bn, recouping losses from a 1.3% dip in 2019.

Print: Spend is set to fall by \$3.2bn, or 5.8% in 2020, but this is half the rate of decline recorded in 2019. Digital revenue now accounts for over a third of total ad income for publishers worldwide, though this share is closer to a half at the New York Times.

Social media: Spend is forecast rise 19.5% to \$102.4bn this year, 15.5% of global advertising spend. Facebook (including Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp) is expected to draw 80.9% of this investment, or \$82.9bn, though this share is down from 81.2% in 2019. Just over 42% – \$35bn – of Facebook's ad revenue will come from the US this year.

Online video: Spend is forecast to rise by 21.4% to \$63.7bn this year, equivalent to 9.7% of global advertising spend. YouTube is expected to account for three in ten cents.

Search: Spend is forecast to rise by 12.7% to \$140.1bn in 2020, 21.2% of global adspend. Google is set to draw 77.0% of the market, down from 79.0% in 2019.

Trends by region

North America: Total market growth forecast at 8.4% this year – to \$250.3bn – following a 4.5% rise in 2019. The US ad market is expected to grow 8.8% to \$238.2bn, while Canada is projected to grow 1.9% to \$12.2bn

Asia-Pacific: Advertising spend is expected to rise 7.5% to \$205.0bn in

Contd. on pg. 26

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Brand success: Kantar insight highlights the critical success for 2020 and beyond

According to the United Nations, Africa would grow by any measure you subject the continent to till the year 3000. The reasons for this optimism are not far-fetched. Africa is blessed with a very young population and immense mineral resources living on a very fertile agricultural friendly land, the future is indeed bright for Africa.

However, what the report did not say is the fact that growth would only happen to countries that understand the consumers and adequately respond to their needs and expectations.

While growth is slowing down in the rest of the world, Africa is just warming up for greatness. So, one wonders if Nigeria is amongst the countries that would dominate development in Africa in the next few years on the African continent.

Kantar insight highlights the critical success for 2020 and beyond

Firstly, a thorough understanding of the local culture, people and nuances matters. This would obviously allow for the products to match the expectations of the market. Cultural behaviour is not static and are ever changing, therefore staying in touch with the consumers is very important for success in Nigeria.

Secondly, ensuring your operations are managed by experienced locals who understand the internal dynamics of the local marketplace is very important for success. While global concepts and mentality may work in other markets in Africa, the expectation in Nigeria is that the more local content the better.

Thirdly, understanding the route to

market and depending on trusted and tested third party service providers works in Nigeria. However, an article on the US Embassy in Nigeria website, recently making the rounds, painted a poor image of public infrastructure, especially the transport system, describing it as unsafe throughout the country. According to the article, "public transportation vehicles such as trucks, buses and motorbikes are unsafe due to poor maintenance, high speed, overcrowding and over loading."

Despite the article's depressing portrayal, companies that collaborate with the right local players would navigate the rough terrain and still smile to the bank at the end of the day.

According to Charles Foster, CEO of Kantar Insight in Africa and Middle East, looking into the play book of successful brands in Nigeria like MTN, Unilever, Coca Cola, Olam and Shoprite is highly recommended.

Fourthly, you must be patient in Nigeria to eat the fruits of the land. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land in Nigeria but you must be strategic and much focused. Policies and decisions move very slowly in Nigeria but would eventually come around. So, corporate entities must learn to gauge the pulse of the government and the market for them to respond appropriately.

Fifthly, according to Eddington Danda, an innovation specialist at Kantar Nigeria, low priced, innovative consumer products and services work for the low and middle class in Nigeria. Airtel has gone this route and has been immensely successful with



various products and services that were developed specifically to meet consumers' need. For any Nigerian brands to remain relevant, they must be underpinned by local insight that motivates consumers here while delivering global standards.

Finally, Nigeria boasts of over 50 million generation alpha youths who are fast-paced in their thinking and are technology savvy. Understanding them is central to a healthy bottom line in 2020 and beyond. Welcome to the year and clime of understanding. Happy New Year!

Kindly share your thoughts with the writer – Michael.Umogun@kantar.com

- * Firstly, a thorough understanding of the local culture, people and nuances matters.
- * Secondly, ensuring your operations are managed by experienced locals who understand the internal dynamics of the local marketplace
- * Thirdly, understanding the route to market and depending on trusted and tested third party service providers works in Nigeria. ■

▶▶ Continued from pg 24 Global advertising spend set to rise

2020, with China (+9.7% to \$98.5bn), Japan (+3.2% to \$40.2bn), Australia (+2.4% to \$13.3%) and India (+15.6% to \$11.2bn) all set to record annual growth.

Europe: European adspend is forecast to rise 6.9% to \$158.7bn this year, with France leading key market growth at +10.0% (to \$18.2bn). The UK (+3.2% to \$31.3bn), Germany (+1.3% to \$24.9bn), Italy (+2.7% to \$10.5bn) and Russia (7.6% to \$10.5bn) will continue to see rising investment.

Latin America: The region is heavily susceptible to the strength of the US dollar, which resulted in a 1.1% decline in adspend last year. A further fall, of 2.5%, is forecast this year, with Brazil recording a 4.3% dip to \$14.3bn.

Middle East: Spend is expected to fall

1.7% to \$12.0bn in 2020, following on from a 3.7% fall in 2019.

Africa: Spend is expected to rise 5.6% to \$6.9bn this year, reversing a 1.5% dip in 2019.

Other new key media intelligence on Warc Data across regions – Global:

Consumers: Ad blocking rises to all-time high of 764m people

Brands & Advertisers: Food, drink and automotive brands see lowest email CTR

Media & Tech: E-sports investment to reach \$800m this year

Americas:

Consumers: One-quarter of Americans now own a smart speaker

Consumers: Netflix subscriptions in Latin America top 30 million

Media & Tech: NFL, NBA and MLB to draw \$4bn from sponsors in 2020

Asia Pacific:

Brands & Advertisers: Southeast Asian brands most active on WhatsApp

Media & Tech: OTT to halve APAC pay-TV growth by 2024

Media & Tech: Sponsorship investment for Tokyo Olympics to triple

Europe, Middle East and Africa:

Consumers: 26% of 18-24-year-olds use TikTok in the UK

Brands & Advertisers: Less than half of marketers use consumer data systematically

Consumers: Connected TV use in Portugal flatlines for the second year.

Source: Bizcommunity ■

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The evil omnipresence of advertising

GOOD OR EVIL Who Decides?

There are ads in airports and on aeroplane food trays; over highways and on the airways. There are ads in hospitals, grocery stores and sports stadiums. They adorn walls in video games, they are splashed across cinema screens and voyeuristically gawk at us in public restrooms. Not even our schools or the bottom of pools are safe from calls to action.

H.G. Wells, had such an aversion to advertising that he once passionately proclaimed, “Advertising is legalised lying!” And Wells has much support in this regard.

Kalle Lasn, a filmmaker, author, magazine editor and activist, called advertising, “the most prevalent and toxic of the mental pollutants”.

In turn, Hanno Rauterberg, a journalist for *Die Zeit* wrote about advertising: “[n]o dictatorship was as cheerful as this. So colourful and happy, so brightly lit. She doesn’t want anything bad for us, definitely not. She wants to seduce us, wants our great happiness. But as in any dictatorship, there is no escape from this, the dictatorship of advertising.”

But luckily, the antidote to the perceived toxicity could lie within one of the tools we use every day: good ideas.

Houston, we have a problem

At the heart of it, creatives are problem solvers. Day-to-day tasks for designers and art directors, strategists and copywriters, centre around solving clients’ problems (briefs along the lines of “please-make-my-bang-average-brand-break-through-the-clutter” or “help-me-reach-my-until-now-unreachable-audience”) by coming up with good ideas. And for the most, we (as an industry) are pretty good at using creativity to do it.

So why not go a step further and use our good ideas for good?

Why not work towards identifying local, societal, national, or even global issues and work with our clients, and the tools at our disposal, to solve them?

Problem solved

The creative industry is uniquely equipped to come up with innovative and thought-provoking solutions thanks to the way we are trained to think, by tackling every problem with a two-pronged approach.

To create a successful campaign, we use two types of thinking; divergent and convergent.

Firstly, with our divergent caps on, we look at a problem with fresh eyes and come up with numerous original ideas (solutions)

that look at the problem from every angle, without judgement or thorough analysis. This type of thinking allows for free-association and blue-sky thinking.

After that, we use convergent thinking to evaluate the ideas. This is to avoid what Arthur Cropley terms ‘pseudo-creativity’ or creativity for the sake of creativity. Convergent thinking looks at ideas and solutions generated during the divergent phase and massages them into concepts that are adaptable to reality while retaining their novelty.

By applying this approach to creative, and working with our clients to achieve a common goal of making a tangible difference, we were able to use our client’s product – chicken breasts – as a catalyst for women to check their own breasts for cancer more frequently and in the correct way.

With this ability to solve problems with good ideas and the fact that advertising is everywhere, let us use its well-established omnipresence for good. We can, and should, use our good ideas to do work that ‘does good’.

Source: *Bizcommunity* ■



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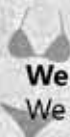


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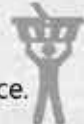
We service different clients.

We are drug pushers

Check out the pharmaceutical brands in our system.

We are street hawkers

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We are "money doublers"

Just ask our clients whose income has been doubled for running our ideas.



We are gold diggers

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We are "gossipers"

We never stop talking about you.



We are mind-benders

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Unilever adopts new marketing and advertising principles for children



Foremost Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) giant, Unilever, has said that it would be adopting new sets of principles in the marketing and advertising of foods and beverage products that are targeted at children.

Specifically, the company said, in line with the new laid out principles which will take effect by end of year 2020, it would henceforth put a stop to marketing and advertising foods and beverages to children under the age of 12 in the traditional media, and under the age of 13 via the social media channels.

The company explained that its new marketing advertising strategy was designed to help parents and caregivers select foods, drinks and ice creams that are developed for children, pointing out that its decision is based on a latest World Health Organisation information record which named childhood obesity as one of the most serious public health issues of the

21st century.

According to the manufacturer, the move is with the objective to help parents, caregivers and kids make informed choices about the foods and drinks that they buy, and to address the rise of social media and the vast increase in principles on sales.

Furthermore, the company added it would be limiting the use of cartoon characters under the new marketing initiative, stressing that while some of the cartoon characters would still be seen on some of its point-of-sale materials, they will only be used for products with a specific nutritional profile.

It further disclosed that in implementing the new marketing principle, its flagship Wall's ice cream brand would be used as lead platform for experimenting the initiative, using the 'Responsibly Made for Kids' campaign promise.

The promise is based on three basic pillars that are designed to help parents and caregivers when choosing products for their children. The pillars are, namely; Responsibly Communicated, Responsibly Sold and Responsibly Developed.

The company said further that, in line with the campaign promise, Wall's kids' ice creams will be Responsibly Communicated, by which it means, shifting advertising focus to speak to parents and caregivers, the people who should be the decision-makers when it comes to their children having a

treat.

Additionally, Wall's kids' ice creams will be Responsibly Sold, and using this pillar, the company explained that since it is believed that children under 12 will inevitably be exposed to its products, it would introduce a "Responsibly Made for Kids" logo on its point of sales communications, such as products packs and price card as this will indicate to parents and caregivers which product are for children, and they can make informed choices when buying the products.

The ice creams in Wall's global kids' portfolio are Responsibly Developed. By reason of this promise, the company informed that by the end of 2020, every ice cream in the kids' range will have no more than 110 calories and a maximum of 12g of sugar per portion and it would be continuously working to further improve upon this.

Speaking on the new initiative, Matt Close, Executive Vice President, Global Ice Cream Category said: "We at Wall's believe that everyone deserves a little joyous treat from time to time and we strive to offer something for everyone. Our promise is a genuine commitment to making and marketing products to children responsibly. It is the promise of better ice cream and healthier, happier children, both now and in the future." ■

Dubai Lynx Festival of Creativity postponed due to coronavirus concerns

Dubai Lynx will now take place from 6-9 September 2020

The Dubai Lynx Festival of Creativity has announced that the festival will be postponed due to recent global developments surrounding the COVID-19 virus. The Dubai Lynx Festival will now take place from 6-9 September 2020.

Ian Fairservice, Vice Chairman of Dubai Lynx, commented: "In light of recent developments in respect to COVID-19 we have taken the decision to postpone the Dubai Lynx Festival. Our priority is clearly the health and safety of our attendees, delegates and team. We will reschedule the festival from 8-11 March to 6-9 September

2020 at Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai. All entries will be valid for the new Dubai Lynx dates, along with all passes and awards seats purchased. Further information and updates on the September programme will be made shortly."

Dubai Lynx is the leading festival of creativity in the MENA region. The Dubai Lynx community of delegates, speakers and jurors attend from across the MENA region, and around the world, each year. The festival programme and Lynx Awards will now take place from 6-9 September 2020. All entries, festival passes and seats for the Awards Show will be transferred to the new festival dates. ■



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Cannes Lions confirms first sessions for 2020 Festival

This year's Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity will feature sessions from some of the world's fastest-growing brands, including Netflix, Amazon, Burger King and Microsoft. Along with creative legends that include David Droga and Rob Reilly, they will share how they have used creativity to unlock brand growth and marketing effectiveness.

At last year's Festival, Burger King won both the Titanium Grand Prix and the very first Creative Brand of the Year award. In their 2020 session, Fernando Machado, Global Chief Marketing Officer, Burger King, will call out to the industry: "Don't F*ck It Up," as he explains how they ensure brand activism starts with brand accountability.

"Burger King is a brand that has invested in long-term brand building and seen business growth as a result. Fernando Machado references creativity as a key factor in driving their results, and when Burger King picked up the Cannes Lions Creative Brand of the Year award, they also happened to be experiencing double digit growth. This is a brand that has identified the conditions for success and it's something our community wants to hear more about," said Simon Cook, Managing Director, Cannes Lions.

For the first time, the world's leading streaming entertainment service, Netflix, will come to Cannes Lions. Ranked as the number one fastest-growing US brand in 2019, Netflix will share the story of how it has built a global business on world-class storytelling.

Jean Tanis, Global Marketing Creative Lead, Netflix, who will speak on stage said: "Our mission is to create stories viewers love. Part of that, is finding different ways to connect them and allow them to share in

those stories, so creating anticipation plays



a massive role. We don't want to sell them a story. We want them to become part of it." Jean will be joined by Chris Breen, Chief Creative Officer, Chemistry, who added: "Any agency can make an ad. What we do is make our clients famous by finding new ways to tap into their unique cultures. That's what we live for and that's what we'll bring to life during this session with Netflix."

In another first, multinational technology company, Amazon, will make its debut stage appearance at Cannes Lions. Claudine Cheever, Head of Global Brand and Advertising, Amazon, will share how it continues to build a sustainable and authentic brand by focusing on creating the best customer experience in every communication, being self-aware but not self-obsessed, and staying humble.

The Cannes Lions content agenda will also provide the platform for some inspiring agency-brand relationships to deliver learnings and wisdom on creativity's fundamental role in enabling brand brilliance. Reflecting on the now iconic, "The Truth is Worth It" campaign, David Droga, Founder and Creative Chairman, Droga5, and David Rubin, Chief Marketing Officer, The New York Times, will reflect on this Grand Prix winning campaign and the process that brought the brand's mission to life in 2019; the same year that The New

York Times Company reported record digital growth.

Spotlighting another hugely successful creative partnership, Rob Reilly, Global Creative Chairman McCann Worldgroup, and Kathleen Hall, Corporate Vice President of Brand, Advertising and Research, Microsoft, will be onstage to divulge how creativity has turned Microsoft, once a brand associated with uninspiring advertising, into an award-winning, purposeful and people-focused brand that has seen consecutive growth in recent years.

Charlotte Williams, Vice President of Content, Cannes Lions, said: "We're working to build a high-value content programme and we've included these global, high-growth brands and creative legends on the roster to provide clear conditions for success, along with best-practice learning for our diverse community. We've had more than 1,000 content submissions and from these we've selected the proposals that best deliver what our audience has asked for."

"This year's programme will align with eight content themes. We carried out research with more than 1500 industry individuals and held detailed interviews with over 100 industry-leading creative and brand C-suites to help us determine the themes which are the most business-critical for our global community."

The 2020 content themes are: Creativity is the Business Growth Engine, Creative Disruption in Commerce, Post-Purpose: Brand Accountability and Activism

Your Brand is my Experience, Looking to 2030: Making your Business Future-fit, Applied Creativity: When Data, Tech and Ideas Collide; Storytelling at Scale, Let's Get Back to Brand.

Content will span the five days of the Festival offering unbeatable learning to inspire creativity as a driver for business, for change and for good. Cannes Lions runs from 22-26 June 2020. Further information on the speakers and schedule can be found at www.canneslions.com. ■

Google cracks down on offensive ads, removes 600 apps



Google, the global tech giant, is getting tough on apps on its Play Store with the most unpleasant ads. The tech behemoth has announced it had

removed 'nearly 600' apps from the Play Store, proscribing them for their disruptive advertisements, and from monetizing ads, too.

In clear terms, Google describes disruptive ads as those that are displayed to users in unexpected ways. Meanwhile, difficult developers are always finding new ways to disguise disturbing ads, but Google says it's developed new technologies to help discover such deception. The tech giant explained that a new machine-learning approach to detect when ads

are shown out of context is what led to today's enforcement. Moreover, it's only the beginning, according to Google.

Many experts believe that though 'nearly 600' is but a tiny portion of the roughly 3 million apps on the Google Play Store, the crackdown is a reassuring bit of enforcement by Google. Compared to Apple's App Store, the Google Play Store is often seen as less secure; its app review process is less stringent than Apple's, which is known to frequently deny new apps and updates. ■

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Budweiser tackles 'typical American' stereotypes in Super Bowl TVC



Budweiser has released its Super Bowl ad titled "Typical American" challenging consumers to look beyond labels.

According to Budweiser, the ad is meant to remind viewers that "the American spirit is alive through the extraordinary actions of ordinary people."

The commercial includes the World Series champion Nationals, World Cup-winning United States women's national

soccer team, Ken Nwadike of the Free Hugs Project and other inspirational people.

'Typical American' is a phrase commonly used abroad and not always with the best intentions. But Anheuser-Busch is looking to change that in 60 seconds during the biggest night in TV this year.

Here's the full rundown of what is said and what is seen in the TVC:

"They call us typical Americans, maybe because we live typical American lives."

"Like this typical American, showing off his strength. So typical"

A firefighter carries a fire hose, silhouetted buy a large, glowing orange fire that's behind him.

"Look at him, touching other people's things."

A man pushes a car stuck in the snow.

"Always so competitive."

A woman with a disability finishes a race and ends at the finish line in tears.

"Typical Americans, showing up uninvited."

A U.S. Army Reserve veteran surprises a

doctor at his office. The two end in a tearful hug.

"Removing their clothes in public."

Cell phone video shows a man literally taking the shirt off his back and putting it on a man in need on a subway train.

"Yelling and being loud."

Protesters take to the streets, marching for change.

"Just look at them."

A man stands in front of a line of police officers who are holding shields. He's wearing a 'Free Hugs' shirt and giving the peace sign with his hands.

"Thinking they can save the world."

The man and one of the officers hug.

"Typical Americans, always celebrating with their typical American beer."

The U.S. Women's Team celebrates winning the World Cup and the Washington Nationals celebrate their first World Series win—both spraying bottles of Budweiser.

"So, next time someone labels you typical, show them what typical can do."

For its Super Bowl commercial in 2017, Budweiser took a similarly emotional and historic approach, highlighting the immigration story of its co-founder, Adolphus Busch, as he made the journey from Germany to America to start one of the biggest brands of all time.

This year's Super Bowl commercial will air during the fourth quarter of the game. ■

UK adspend rose 5.6% in Q3 2019, marked 25th consecutive quarter of market growth

UK adspend rose 5.6% year-on-year to reach £5.97bn in Q3 2019, marking the UK advertising industry's 25th consecutive quarter of market growth. The figures are contained within today's Advertising Association/WARC Expenditure Report, which is unique in its collection of advertising spend data from across the entire media landscape.

The figures have been published on the day that the Advertising Association's LEAD summit for the UK's ad industry has taken place at the QEII Conference Centre in Central London.

The latest data reveal that growth in the third quarter of 2019 was 0.8 percentage points ahead of forecast. Looking ahead to the full-year figures for 2019, UK adspend is forecast to reach £24.8bn, meaning growth of 5.2%. This is expected to rise a further 5.2% in 2020 to reach £26.1bn.

Overall market growth is being driven by increased spend on online advertising, which saw percentage increases across every format. This was led by digital out of home which rose by 17.1%, TV broadcaster VOD which saw a rise of 16.7% and national

online newsbrands which saw growth of 6.5%. The report also demonstrates particularly strong growth in Q3 2019 compared to the same quarter in 2018 in cinema advertising, which saw a very impressive rise of 46.5%.

The impressive online figures reflect the Advertising Pays 7: UK Advertising's Digital Revolution report from industry's think tank, Credos. The report, which was published last year, revealed that Britain is the largest online advertising marketplace in Europe and that the country has the highest per capita online retail spend in the G20.

Stephen Woodford, Chief Executive, Advertising Association commented:

"UK media spend has continued to perform strongly in Q3 2019, now on the twenty-fifth straight quarter of growth. The figures show adspend increases across a range of media with digital formats and sectors continuing to drive growth. These media spend figures are particularly impressive given this was a period of Brexit and political uncertainty and very low overall economic growth. As the Credos

report on UK digital advertising showed, this is in part fuelled by the exceptional growth in SME spend in digital, as well as larger advertisers continuing to move budgets into digital formats in most media sectors. The projected growth for 2020 shows these trends continuing. With Brexit now a certainty, industry's focus now turns to the future relationship with the EU and the importance of this to the overall health of the economy, which underpins this media spend growth."

James McDonald, Data Editor at WARC commented: "The UK's ad market has sustained a 25-quarter period of expansion, but underlying data show that this growth is asymmetric – excluding online advertising, the UK's ad market has contracted each quarter for the last four years. Online formats account for three in five pounds spent on advertising in the UK, and we expect this to rise to two in three by mid-2021, fueling total market growth in tow."

Source: WARC ■

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How new regulations on data will change the landscape for marketers in 2020

Data privacy is both a trend in regulation, and a growing consumer demand. As such, it is one of the most important global themes for marketers in 2020.

Lawmakers in many markets across the globe are implementing stronger data protection rights which will have significant implications for marketers. Specifically, in the US, the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) comes into force this month.

Like the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the CCPA limits how companies can collect, store, use and share customer data and gives consumers more control over their personal information. While the new regulations change the data landscape, there are opportunities for brands to present themselves as 'privacy first' to consumers wary of how their data is being used.

More than half of respondents to the Marketer's Toolkit 2020 survey (52%) believe they need to strengthen their data policies. Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents in Asia have no form of data protection in place compared with 14% globally.

Dave Grimaldi, executive vice president, Public Policy, Interactive Advertising Bureau, cautions: "The misuse of consumer data under this new CCPA regime could be the death knell for a company. We hope it won't be, but this is why marketers must act now."

In China, meanwhile, the Personal Information Security Specification proposes an "unbundling" of data protection consents, which will affect the ability to use consumers' personal data for marketing purposes. Marketers can expect greater scrutiny, particularly on data that are deployed for personalised marketing, such as transaction data, location and device data, and behavioural data.

Consent management and 'small data' are top priorities for 2020

Consent, permissions and transparency will be the new normal for marketers in 2020. The Warc survey finds 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are "readdressing consent management practices in light of privacy regulation".

Some are investing in consent



management platforms (CMPs) which collect and store customers' consent data, enabling marketers to keep track of peoples' privacy preferences and permissions.

Marketers are also prioritising first-party data, with 58% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have a strategy for actively collecting first-party data from customers. Not only is first-party data compliant with regulations, but it also gives brands the opportunity to identify and engage with opt-in customers who actually want to hear from them.

Like Europe's GDPR before it, CCPA encourages companies to have a data minimisation strategy i.e. companies should not keep data they do not need. In this environment, marketers may pivot from big data, to smaller, smarter, more secure data, enabling marketers to nurture relationships with lots of smaller, niche communities of opt-in consumers.

Jill Baskin, chief marketing officer, The Hershey Company, says: "For us, a big part of it is whether we agree with how our partners are using data. We just want to get a lot more transparency from our partners... How are they keeping [data]? We want to have not just what's the legal thing, but what we ethically think is right."

Ivan Pollard, chief marketing officer, General Mills, comments: "We're going to keep making sure we're doing the right thing with data. I don't think it's enough to do a 'click here and accept our terms and conditions,' knowing that 90% of people never read them. We've got to be clear about what we're asking for and what we're going to do with it. That's number one."

Regulation of big tech is welcomed by marketers as well as consumers

Big tech firms are under increased scrutiny by consumers and lawmakers. Facebook, in particular, has been embroiled in a series of privacy scandals.

GroupM's Rob Norman, senior advisor and Brian Wieser, global president, Business Intelligence, note: "The issue of privacy and exploitation of data is among the most complex of our time. Even if consumer privacy is not being unjustifiably violated, the monetisation of data by major platforms has become a social, political and regulatory lightning rod."

A study by YouGov found that just over half of global consumers want to see more regulation of tech and social media companies. This attitude is shared by marketers: 86% of Warc's survey respondents think big tech companies should be subject to greater regulation.

Consumers will take more control over their data and their digital identities

Several surveys have found that consumers are being much choosier about where and how they share information.

Research by Dentsu Aegis revealed that 44% of global consumers have taken steps to reduce the amount of data they share online. The Advertising Research Foundation found that US consumers have become less willing to share various aspects of personal data.

Recent research by Fudan University and Publicis Media China showed Chinese consumers are most likely to share basic demographic or behavioural information, but they are most concerned about sharing highly-sensitive biometric/healthcare or legal/financial data. And a recent study by consulting firm Accenture found consumers are suspicious of emerging technologies that promise to make their lives easier while collecting more data about them.

Brands recognise this shift. 66% of respondents to the Warc Marketer's Toolkit survey agreed or strongly agreed that consumers will take greater control of their data in 2020.

New tech has driven fresh concerns. Connected devices such as Google's Nest thermostat, Amazon's Alexa and Facebook's Portal TV are capable of gathering rich consumer data and are increasingly common in private spaces such as peoples' homes or cars. Marketers engaging in emerging tech should review how they are using consumer data, and ensure they are compliant with data privacy laws.

Warc's Marketer's Toolkit 2020 is based on a survey of almost 800 client and agency-side practitioners around the world, combined with insights from a series of interviews with chief marketing officers, backed by evidence from Warc Data, case studies and expert opinion.

Source: Bizcommunity ■

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Why has beer advertising lost its bottle?

It used to be said that people didn't drink the beer, "they drank the advertising". Despite it being one of the biggest parity markets out there, beer brands used to use creativity and communications to break out of fridges and bars into mainstream culture – but something has gone a little flat in recent years.

My earliest advertising memories were beer ads. Sitting with my parents watching Coronation Street and being hypnotised and entertained in equal measure by ads like 'Gertcha' (Courage Best) and Arkright & Tonto (John Smith's). This continued with fantastic work for Fosters, XXXX and Carling in the 80's. The thing that sticks with me the most was that these ads were genuinely part of culture. They were referenced in the street, work cafeterias, and parodied on TV comedy sketch shows.

I, and my creative partner Mick Mahoney, have always told clients that the aim of what we do is to 'generate or join a conversation bigger than the advertising'. Beer ads used to do this, in spades.

When I came into the industry in the 90s beer accounts were still the ones everyone wanted to work on. Later on, I was lucky enough to run planning on Carlsberg at Saatchi's when we did things like 'Old Lions' (that mainstream telly and the tabloids ran free editorial praising), and at the same time Paul Silburn (rest in peace) was banging out belter after belter for John Smiths at TBWA.

Beer accounts were the ticket to adland stardom and agency fame. Dave Roberts in his excellent book, "Sad Men" talked about how the best teams in the best agencies always wanted to be the "beer men" (more on the 'men' thing later).

So, what happened?

I genuinely can't remember the last good beer ad I saw, regardless of medium. I can't think of anything in advertising, experiential or social that has had any sort of impact outside of the awards scene echo chamber.

I had to wrack my brains while writing this to come up with anything, without resorting to Google. I finally managed to think of that Carlsberg drinkable outdoor ad and Brewdog getting some faux outrage by sticking a swear-word on a poster. I liked that Amstel's 'smallest bar' thing that Adam&EveDDB did – but I suspect no one who doesn't work in advertising saw it. Stella did consistently good stuff but they haven't for a while now. I also thought of that Dilly Dilly thing that took off in the States but that seemed to disappear without a trace here.

Why has the fizz gone out of beer advertising?

Here are five theories on it from someone who genuinely loves good beer work and can't wait for it to get its mojo back.

Regulation? It is, obviously, right and proper that there are sensible and considered rules about advertising alcohol – especially to minors. But is it a coincidence that the more restrictive codes from the ASA came in just when the good advertising seemed to dry up? A lot of the more famous beer ads might have fallen seriously foul of Clearcast nowadays but I think this is too simple an argument to be the only reason. Many of the great beer ads that entered popular culture in the 80s wouldn't have failed current regulations – and everything we did at Saatchi's on Carlsberg passed them (including 'Nightclubs', although I'm still amazed it did.)

Could it be age?

A recent UCL study showed that 29% of 18-24-year olds don't drink alcohol – and that number has doubled in a decade. Couple this with the fact that the average age of an IPA member is 33. Perhaps the young creative teams just aren't (literally) soaked in beer culture like their predecessors. You write about what you know, as the old adage goes, and perhaps the young teams just aren't that into it. It's a credible theory but I'm not sure I buy it. After all, you don't have to be a cow to sell milk and most creatives I know still spend a lot of time in the pub.

It could be culture.

27 pubs close a week in the UK. Back when 'Gertcha' was being written there were 69,000 pubs in the UK, now there are less than 50,000.

The pub is no longer the centre of British life. Maybe beer just isn't such a huge part of the social fabric of the UK. Maybe there is simply less of a conversation to generate or join. It's a theory. And I think it's definitely part of the issue.

Maybe it's budget?

I noticed that most of the great beer advertising seemed to get killed by the 10" tag. Good beer ads tended to be telly ads, stories, narratives (Wardrobe Monster? Top Bombing? It's Floating?). We know from Thinkbox that this would still be the quickest, best way to reach a mass audience. Most of the most recent beer briefs I've seen have had budgets would have a struggle to buy a decent TV let alone cover the cost of the media to advertise on one.

Consolidation?

There has been a huge consolidation in the beer market over the last 10 years. Most of the great historical work people remember came from independent creative businesses doing work for local clients. It wasn't done by big conservative holding company teams, terrified to take risks, on massive conservative global corporations. I know from experience and talking to clients that this globalisation has massively limited creative ambition.

Perhaps it has happened, I wondered because agencies now have wonderfully diverse creative departments as an antidote to the beer-swilling, bloke infested departments of the 1980s? The data soon disavowed me of that theory.

I don't really know the answer, if I'm honest. But I do know that beer accounts used to be the best ones in the agency to work on and are now amongst the worst. Ok, yes, there are restrictions to creativity but there are in a lot of sectors. Yes, there are budget challenges but show me a client who doesn't have them. Yes, we have to get beyond traditional advertising and into a more experiential, digitally-led world. But, again, isn't that the challenge that faces everyone?

So, my appeal to beer advertisers, and the agencies who work with them, get ambitious and aspire to break back into mainstream culture again. Do work that people want to talk to the sales team about, not vice versa (it's cheaper that way). The best thing any marketer can do for their sales team is to create a cultural phenomenon that gets people talking about your brand. You'll reap what you sow. If 90% of decisions are made at the bar then it's best to get in people's heads before they get there, right?

Look beyond a 'key visual' and a few lines for the sales pack. Do work that gets talked about. Do work that comedians want to base a sketch on. Do work that people love.

I've got a few theories on how we do it. Buy me a beer and I'll tell you all about them.



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THE MAKING OF “EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE” THEMATIC CAMPAIGN

Quickteller, Nigeria's leading payment services platform from the stable of Interswitch, recently launched a new television thematic campaign through which the company aims to connect with teeming product consumers in Nigeria's market. The television campaign which went with the pay - off “Everything Is Possible” has continued to generate high level of curiosity amongst consumers who have wondered on the true intent of the campaign message and the communication it seeks to carry across to them.

What is particularly interesting is the creative idea behind the campaign which is expressed via two separate story lines sub titled “The Big Idea” and “Possibilities.” One common denominator to the two thematic campaign is the fact that they both tend to push the ideas of presenting Quickteller as one platform that is strictly synonymous to payments.

An interesting feature of the new campaign concept is that it uses the platform of a humorous meeting whereby a group of comedians or social media acts enacted a sort of ‘pitch discussion’ where a series of ‘big ideas’ were suggested, portraying the fact that it's possible to do absolutely everything using the Quickteller platform.

The commercial features well known and loved celebrities amongst whom are Bovi, a leading Nigerian Comedian, Ini Dima Okojie, a well respected Nollywood actress and Eric Omondi a Kenya based Comedian who is acknowledged to be one of the best Comedians in Africa.

The notion conveyed through the campaign act was such that the celebrities tried to outdo each other through the scale of their imaginations and that buttresses the fact that Quickteller could help you pay for anything

Quickteller, Nigeria's leading payment services platform on the stable of Interswitch recently launched a new television thematic campaign through which the company aims to connect through to teeming product consumers in Nigeria's market. The television campaign which went with the pay - off “Everything Is Possible” has continued to generate high level of curiosity amongst market consumers who have wondered on the true intent of the campaign message and the communication it seeks to carry across to consumers.

you can imagine; the humour comes from the craziness of their ideas.

The latest campaign efforts simply put, is a re-enforcement of Quickteller's earlier campaign which emphasizes the basic fact that consumers on the Quickteller platform need nothing to worry about given that Quickteller was out to address the details that pertain to their payment needs.

Prior to the making of the latest campaign, users on Quickteller platform had associated the platform with making only basic payments. To the consumers, it was largely unknown that other forms of payment solutions could be made possible using the Quickteller platform.

It is in this regard that the new TV campaign comes handy in that it goes a long way to enlighten consumers that by using Quickteller, “Everything Is Possible” to the extent that the platform provides for all forms of other payment solutions.

The campaign goes further to educate the consumer on the fact that beyond the usual payment service offerings that Quickteller is known for, they stand to also benefit from a wider range of other service options through Quickteller such, as among other things, payment of toll fees as well as other payment from state governments.

The campaign emphasizes the fact that using Quickteller platforms, consumers could, right from the comfort of their bedrooms, purchase airtime, send money through to family and friends, book flight tickets ahead of their travel schedules.

Other offerings made possible through the Quickteller platform include payments of bills for Cable TV, payment of electricity bills, shopping from over 100 global stores, availability of quick loan services, and purchase of event tickets and everything in between.



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Beware, illegal marketers on the prowl!

The case was succinctly made recently by the President of National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, NIMN, Mr. Tony Agenmomen, when he said that the marketing institute under his leadership will soon begin to prosecute “illegal” marketers in the Country. While some may want to gloss over this assertion and a threat as one of those things, the tendency to do that appears too risky. The fact that the President of NIMN went on the roof top to make this threat connotes the fact that something is fundamentally wrong with the marketing practice and process in the country. For the fact that the Nigerian Marketing space allows room for illegal practitioners is an indication that all is not well.

According to the NIMN enabling Law promulgated in 2003 through the Act of Parliament, only registered practitioners by the institute can practice marketing in Nigeria. But since 2003 when this promulgation came into being, not up to 30% percent of those presently engaged in marketing practice have registered with the national marketing body. While some have been making genuine efforts to register, majority of players and gladiators are yet unbothered.

Sequel to this development, the institute has said that “it has gone ahead to establish legal proceedings against erring marketing professionals who have failed to comply with provisions of the marketing institute’s Act.

Tony Agenmomen had said while inducting new set of fellows of the institute that the first set of erring marketers would soon be having their dates formally in Court” as charges against them were said to have been filed. It is amazing that Nigerian Companies find it convenient and palatable to hire unregistered marketers! Not only hire, they keep them in their employ as if the act setting up the national marketing body does not count. Beside the fact that some of these “illegal marketers” may have acquired marketing certificates and credentials, do they know what the NIMN act says about the ethics of the profession? Do they know about good marketing? What about issues that touch on the sensibility of the

consumers? Perhaps, there is a sense in which it can be argued that the failure of these illegal marketers have been largely responsible for the preponderance of products failures in the Nigerian market. How many Chief Executive Officers of Corporations have tried to find out why the incidents of products failure are on the rise?

Also observed as the bane of marketing in the country is the fact that most of these “illegal marketers don’t know the rules of the game. A player who goes into the field of play without an understanding of the rules would always run foul of the game. It is no wonder then that marketing efforts in most companies have been falling flat on their faces”. There are so many gaps in the marketing practice which only those who are properly certified and registered can galvanise.

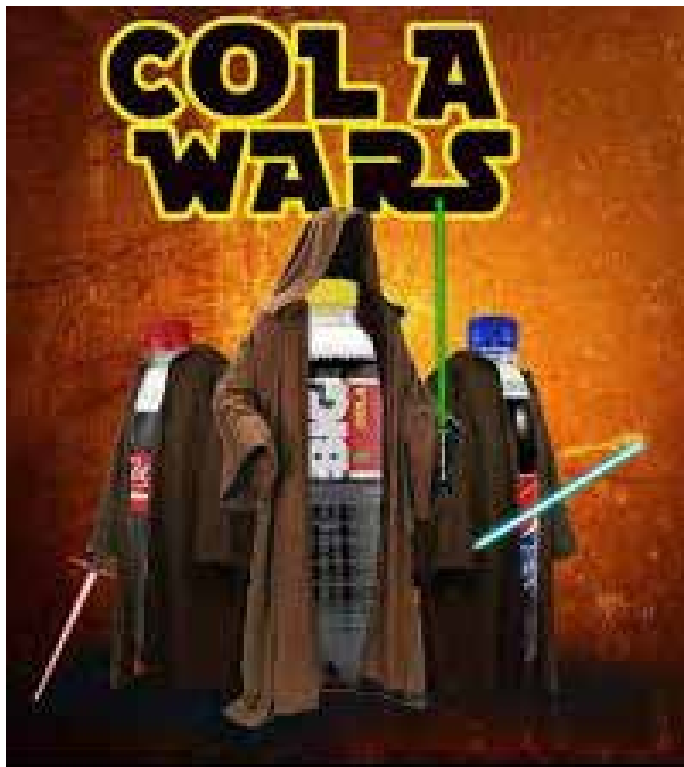
When Pepsi & Bigi fight dirty, something goes Sour

The longtime rival soft drinks producers, the Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo have long engaged mutually targeted marketing Campaigns for direct competition between each company’s products lines, especially their Flagship Colas, Coca-Cola and Pepsi. Beginning in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, the intensity of these Campaigns has led them and the competition in general, into what is being known as the Cola Wars.

It will amount to saying the obvious, if it is observed here that these wars have remained phenomenally fierce and excruciating on all fronts over the years.

However, the Cola Wars frontiers expanded in scope and





pedigree recently as the latest arrival, Bigi, a premium Cola brand on the stable of Rites Food Ltd joined the fray. Since it entered into competitive Nigerian Cola market, twelve years ago, Bigi has left no one in doubt about its vengeful and aggressive posture in being part of the participants rather than a spectator. More specifically noteworthy was the brand's audacious move in product packaging which comes in bigger content and at very reduced and affordable prices. Bigi has a lot of things going for it which could ordinarily make rivals to be uneasy. It is a carbonated drink with the popular Cola Signature. This drink has a sure refreshing taste like none other. It is also a brand with local heritage and pedigree and inheritance as it is owned by a Nigerian Multi- millionaire business mogul, Chief Adebola Adegunwa, former Chairman of Sterling Bank Plc. It is not always common for a 12 year old beverage brand like Bigi Cola to frontally and favourably compete or practically engage industry Big Wigs like Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola in their hitherto presumed conquered territories.

However, the Bigi arrival and its unrelenting domineering aggression and appetite for consumer attention in Lagos perennial "holdups" and traffic jams seem to have sent wrong signals to local overlords. This incursion appears to be one too many as ever before now, no Cola had demonstrated this type of audacity neither has any Cola brand being able to match the distribution capacity and strength of the duo. In years past, AfriCola which was owned by Akure, Ondo State based Benka Beverages Ltd, promoted by Ben Kayode Faloye, made spirited efforts at sharing the market space but could not sustain its reach due to the domineering influence of the established brands. It is thus what AfriCola failed to achieve that the Bigi Cola bottled by Big Bottling Company, formerly Ajeast Nigeria Limited in Agbara area of Ogun State by breaking the

duopoly in the Cola market by offering its extra size Bigi Cola to the ever-welcoming acceptance of consumers who have hungered for something new to feel. Having demystified the big-wigs, it is not unexpected that a fight back would be inevitable.

Good enough, the Senate of the Federal republic of Nigeria has waded into the alleged "simmering dispute between Pepsi and Rites Foods Ltd.

The Senate, in its wisdom has advised the two warring Cola brands to seek Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as a way of resolving their dispute. The solution was said to have been arrived at on the heels of a closed-door meeting with the Senate panel led by Senator Ayo Akinyelure, following a petition by the lawyers to the Rites food Ltd, against the 7-Up Bottling Company in Abuja. According to Akinyelure "both parties have been asked to return in two weeks after their peace meeting.

In his word: "There are three dominant players in the soft drink industry. We have the Coca-Cola, Seven Up and Rites Foods Nigeria Limited, makers of Bigi soft drink.

We appreciate as senior citizens of this country that Rites Foods Limited is a wholly owned indigenous company that should be encouraged in all ramifications.

"They have only one plant and they have been able to do the magic through the dedicated team of management staff. Within four years, they were able to compete favourably with Coca-Cola and Seven Up and by market rating they have the market rating."

"When we heard from the Seven-Up management, they appreciated the competitiveness of Rites Foods Nigeria Limited the makers of Bigi drinks and also they are developing strategies on how to compete favourably in the market.

"We have been able to sit the management together because we believe that the issue is a matter that can be resolved amicably through the instrument of alternative conflict resolution that will bring more results to the country.

"I decided to hold a closed-door meeting in my office with both parties and the meeting was attended by senior members of the Senate."

He continued: "For a company that engages 2,000 Nigerians with the other having 5,000 in her employment, it is our wish to see them progress and add more value to the country.

"We resolved in the committee and gave them two weeks to resolve the matter together, let them be friends. Let them go and come back with resolutions that would be adopted by both parties and then we will make our report to the Senate to ensure that they go out to go and compete and also develop strategies that would employ more Nigerians."

With the proposal by the Senate Panel, it is hoped that Pepsi and Bigi would sheathe their swords.

Expanding enemy frontier would never do either of the two Cola brands any good. Rather, it will continue to breed acrimony or inadvertently leave a sour taste in the palate of the consumers. With the ever increasing and growing number of Cola brands in the market, the Nigerian consumers are now truly the 'Kings' as they have several choices to make from. As long as each player in the Cola segment plays by the rules without circumventing them, the sweetness of Cola will endure on their palates, but should the opposite become the case, something will surely turn sour.

Is **APCON** set to bite on Standard Operating Procedure for OOH in Nigeria?



Feelers emanating from the Nigerian Advertising industry have revealed that the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON has concluded plans to organize a joint stakeholders meeting on Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Out-of-Home Advertising in Nigeria. Indeed the new development, which is coming against the back drop of the multiplicity of challenges facing the Out-of-Home advertising sector is said to be long over-due.

It is equally not an over-statement to add at this juncture that the OOH sector which used to be the cynosure of all eyes in the integrated marketing communications sector in Nigeria has become a caricature of some sorts, having lost its glamour and essence before the advertisers. Though a primary medium, the sector has suffered terribly from both internal and external manipulation and machinations. Worse of all is the ever hostile, avalanche of regulations, counter and multiple regulations by different agencies of government at different tiers of government.

The sector has in the last one decade found itself at its wits end while the supposed regulators have suddenly become operators. Yet, there continues to evolve the preponderance of quacks and hawks that go into practice uncontrolled.

In the past, APCON used to be a listening foster 'Father' to the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), the umbrella body of all registered Out-of-Home practitioners, but the advent of Lagos State Advertisement Signage Agency (LASSA) put a wedge between APCON and OAAN.

Like the proverbial hunger bitten father, APCON sold OAAN to the formidable LASAA when it lost its voice on regulation affront the moment APCON came with registering and certifying almost all the entire work force of LASAA overnight under the then controversial **"Window of Opportunity"**. Having been practically emboldened through the controversial Certification that caught industry practitioners with mouth agape, LASAA went on the streets of Lagos erecting its own billboards indiscriminately. It was an anathema as a regulator turned to a practitioner and a very formidable competitor by all standards. This act left many OAAN agencies gasping for breath as their strategic billboard locations were taken over by fiat by the "Almighty" LASAA overlords while regulatory impunity became the rule rather than exemption. This painful and awkward incursion led to several outdoor companies closing shops as LASAA reeled out high tariffs impossible to remit, by the weak agencies ostensibly to send them packing from Lagos State. Indeed, the logic worked, even though it was warped!

Today, the exercise has left a bitter taste in the mouth of most players. However, LASAA over reached itself under the "tyrannical regime" of its former managing director Mr. Mobolaji Sanusi who

went all out in a duel with APCON by trying to limit the areas and influence of advertising control of APCON in Lagos metropolis.

The unexpected aggression by the LASAA helmsman angered the former Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of APCON, Alhaji Bello Garba Kankarofi. Being a gifted and highly influential Northerner, Alhaji Kankarofi did not hesitate to throw his hat into the rings with Mobolaji Sanusi over his agency's morbid attempt to checkmate the advertising regulatory agency of the Federal government. At the end of the day, APCON under Kankarofi was able to wrestle Sanusi to the ground when it hit the debonair Civil Servant, Lawyer and newspaper Columnist below the belt. What APCON did was to tell the whole world that Mobolaji Sanusi lacked the requisite skills and competence to be the head at LASAA having being unregistered and uncertified to practice advertising by APCON.

Being a political appointee and a stooge, Sanusi quickly beat a retreat as it dawned on him that he was standing on a weak pedestal to fight while several other competent and capable Lagosians were waiting in the wings to take his plum job. With that quick retreat, came a relative interregnum of peace between APCON and LASAA. Ever since, it has been a case of keep your head while I keep mine between APCON and LASAA until Sanusi was given the boot by the Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu government.

However, the current effort by APCON to hold joint stakeholders meet between OAAN and other Sectorial groups is a welcome development. It is also a big achievement for the new OAAN exco whose past leadership had made several unsuccessful attempts to arrive at Standard Operating Procedure through a joint Memorandum of Understanding that has proved tough. Not only did OAAN try unsuccessfully to come into workable business agreement with the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) it also failed to get the buying in of Media Independents Association of Nigeria (MIPAN). Between MIPAN and ADVAN members reigns a regime of huge and self induced indebtedness to OAAN members.

To worsen the relationship, OAAN members who are the media owners have been reduced to mere underdogs who are being dictated to on how they should price their products!

The situation has never been this bad. At the end of the meeting slated for the last week of February, there are high expectations that the industry will know relative peace if all stakeholders, could listen to one another in one accord through an industry accepted conversation mid-wifed by APCON. And if at the end of the day any sector still fails to play by the agreed terms, APCON should be willing and ready to wield the Big Stick. You cannot be an industry regulator who can only bark and cannot bite. Whether APCON Council is in place or not, the APCON Act of Parliament is not on leave of absence or Sabbatical, the current APCON leadership should exercise its regulatory powers. ■

DR. FELIX KING EIREMIOKHAE:

Audacity of Hope Personified

By AMOS OLADELE



No great man ever complains of want of opportunity – Ralph Waldo Emerson

I

n July 2004, Barak Obama, then an African American Senator who eventually became the 44th President of the United States of America, at his party's national convention, delivered an address which spoke to all Americans across the political spectrum in which he amplified Americans' dogged optimism in the future. Putting this differently, Obama called that optimism "the audacity of hope." It was his call for a different brand of politics—a politics divorced of bitter partisanship and alienation which he



worsened by the fact that as a people we are still faced, like Americans, by concrete problems like growing economic insecurity, tribal and religious challenges as well as national and transnational threats.

Seeing himself as a product of hope who also has been audacious, both in his exploration and exploitation of hope; and in his advocacy of hope, just like Barak Obama has been in his personal odyssey in life; and like America and Americans have been across the centuries of the nation's existence.

Both covertly and overtly, Felix King, both in words and in deeds, recognizes, appreciates and exemplifies the ruggedness and doggedness of the Nigerian Spirit. He is a living proof of what any Nigerian can be, regardless of background and personal cum family circumstances; and what Nigeria can be – if we all will see, embrace, activate, preach and perpetuate hope.

And, like Obama elucidates in his aforementioned book, Felix is a man of faith who, at the same time audaciously draws the line between when faith alone will work; when it has to combine with work; and when it has to almost be only work – hard work!

This entrepreneur and philanthropist of note, Felix King Eiremiokhae is from a very humble background. He was born into the family of Mr. & Mrs. David Erago Eiremiokhae in Afuda, a small village located in Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.

A family of 29 children, consisting of four (4) blood sisters, four (4) blood brothers, and twenty-two (22) half brothers and sisters, his father was a foreman who worked with the Ministry of Works & Housing, while his mother, Alice, was a petty trader.

He is a graduate of Business Administration whose life has been a true definition of the power of hope and faith. He grew up in a community where children went to school without shoes on their feet; and feeding once a day was the normal, rather than an exception. Through faith and hope, Dr. King worked his way through every obstacle which life threw at him in the quest to become successful in life.

For this experiential marketing prodigy, becoming an entrepreneur was just a natural evolution as he conceived the idea of owning his own businesses early in life.

In August, 2004, he incorporated Oracle Experience Limited, a multiple award winning Advertising and Marketing Agency that provides Events, Marketing, Planning and Sponsorship services to several local and Multi-National companies with satellite operations in Nigerian cities. The company has an operational branch in Accra, Ghana, West Africa.

In 2014, he also incorporated Mayor Biscuits Company Limited (MABISCO), confectionaries

And, like Obama elucidates in his aforementioned book, Felix is a man of faith who, at the same time audaciously draws the line between when faith alone will work; when it has to combine with work; and when it has to almost be only work – hard work!

considered to be wearying. That expression has since become the title of a book (The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream) authored by the globally respected American President, in whom the whole of Africa and Africans take pride.

As essayists have said, Barak Obama, in the book, essentially espouses his thoughts on how Americans can move beyond varying divisions to tackle such concrete problems as growing economic insecurity, racial and religious tensions the transnational threats from terrorism to pandemic on the international front. He also ventilates his views on the role which faith plays even in a democracy, drawing the line between where faith is vital and where it must never intrude.

At the heart of Obama's stories in the book is one major nexus – the search for a radically hopeful political consensus.

Here, in Nigeria, one man whose life and professional cum entrepreneurial trajectory brightly reflects the audacity of hope is Felix King Eiremiokhae, an iconic experiential marketing professional, visionary entrepreneur and quintessential philanthropist.

Felix King's philosophical mindset, like the proverbial Oracle of Faith, encapsulates and symbolizes the famous quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American essayist and philosopher of the 19th century when he said, No great man ever complains of want of opportunity. For Felix King, he believes passionately in the abundance of opportunities that the Nigerian nation state has been naturally endowed with. He is an ardent believer in what he calls "the Nigerian Dream", which, according to him, still lays as a hidden treasure to many;

and Foods Company that produces, markets and distributes freshly baked biscuits across Nigeria. The company has concluded plans to export its products to other African countries before the end of 2020.

In a country where unemployment rate is very high and alarming, Dr. King, through his business concerns and by dint of hard work, perseverance, dedication and drive, has been able to provide employment opportunities to over one thousand (1,000) individuals (both Nigerians and expatriates) with steady and regular income for themselves and their families. So many youths are being gainfully engaged on a regular basis, thereby reducing the crime rate in Nigeria and beyond.

Dr. King is also a philanthropist extraordinaire and due to his unalloyed love for the less privileged, he with, the support of his wife, started the Felix King Charity Foundation (the Foundation), in 2015, with the key objective of giving hope to poor and vulnerable widows and their children in communities across Nigeria. This initiative will be expanded to other parts of Africa in due course.

Through his charity works, over five thousand (5,000) vulnerable women and children have seen their lives transformed from despair to hope through different aid programs like: The Market Moni for widows and rural women, women farm aid programs, free food distribution and medical aids. Full scholarships have also been awarded to indigent children who were hitherto out of school.

Felix has indeed offered succor to the hopeless and lent a voice to the voiceless. On the 21st of June 2017, the Felix King Foundation presented a private "Bill for the protection of widows, orphans, disadvantaged women from maltreatment and other allied matters arising" to Edo State House of Assembly, Nigeria; and he remains very hopeful that this bill will be passed into law before the end of 2020.

At the fall of 2018, the foundation launched GOAL 36,000 WOMEN BY 2029 which is a projected goal to reach and empower 36,000 women in Africa in a 10-year window.

In 2019, Dr. King, through a world press conference, announced the expansion of the works of the Foundation with – THE START-UPS AFRICA. The start-ups Africa is a hub that supports African female start-up entrepreneurs with seed funding of up to \$10,000. The Foundation will also be providing mentorship and training opportunities with support from the Trinity International University of Ambassadors (TIUA) School of Business, Georgia, USA.

He draws his inspirations from the happenings in his environment where it has become a norm for children to go to bed without food in their stomachs, the aged poor and vulnerable women without shelter over their heads and the huge challenges women face in an African environment

with high prejudices.

The activities of the Foundation, till date, have been funded 100% by Dr. Felix King and his wife. Comprehensive details of the works of the Foundation, till date, could be accessed on www.felixkingfoundation.com, IG @felixkingfoundation.

For his selfless service to the course of the downtrodden across communities in Africa, Dr. King has received several recognitions and awards amongst which are:

- * *The President's Life Time Achievement Awards – conferred by the President of the United States of America, President Donald Trump.*
- * *Honorary Citizen of the State of Georgia- conferred by the State of Georgia, United states of America*
- * *Humanitarian Award by Trinity International University, Atlanta Georgia, USA.*
- * *Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy – Humane Letters, Trinity International University, U.S.A.*
- * *West African Patriotic Leadership Award- for fighting the course of women across Nigeria.*
- * *Icon of Humanitarian Services Award-for his uncommon uprightness, astuteness, sagacity, courage and tremendous contribution to the course of humanity and exemplary leadership.*
- * *Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Leadership Award as the outstanding Philanthropist of the year, 2017 in Nigeria.*
- * *Award for outstanding Female Centric Foundation – WIMCA , 2018*
- * *Pan African International Awards 2019 recipient*

Apart from his businesses and charity work, Dr. King is also a devoted family man who is loved by many and happily married to Aderonke Eiremiokhae and they are blessed with children. He is a devoted Christian, an avid lover of good music; and is widely travelled.

Dr.

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Defined by an environment that inspires

Throughout the whole world and in all of human history, one sphere over which man has tremendous impact and which also impacts on him tremendously is the environment. In fact, much as man has the capacity to define his environment, so does the environment actually define a man, any man.

To be sure, the environment is an integrated phenomenon with such components as natural, socio-economic, political/governmental, as well as the built and spiritual.

In this particular piece; and as it relates to the man under focus, it is the natural environment and, particularly, his office environment that is being reflected upon.

Nesting in a compound of two buildings (a storey, each) in a very serene environment, off Allen Avenue, in a highbrow area of Ikeja, Lagos, is the expansive premises which houses Oracle Experience, Nigeria's leading experiential marketing agency and the flagship business of Dr. Felix King Eiremiokhae.

Jolly Star Close, Off Adeleke Street, Off Allen Avenue, has less than ten buildings in all (on both sides); but each of the buildings speaks of prestige and peace. You won't ever be sure whether most of them are occupied for residential or business purposes.

But for the premises numbered 4, there can be no mistake about its status as the corporate headquarters of a very expansive and hugely thriving business. Not with the number and class of the auto brands that dot the whole length of the fence of the compound on its front gate side at any time of the day. These classy cars are aside others, all of which are even of higher grades, that grace your sight and make you want to throw some salute at wealth as you enter through the expansive gate into the exquisite compound. The buildings, themselves, both in design and aesthetics, reek of taste, immaculateness, sophistication and opulence.

However, the "oracular" stance of the agency may be misconstrued by any non-initiate to branding and symbols. This is because, as you enter through the gate, you are greeted by the logo of the company which gigantically hangs on the wall and facing the gate, directly. Ordinarily, it looks like two sickles standing in opposite direction and interweaving with each other, both in deep red colour; and standing in a very big circle which is also in deep red colour!

To a non-initiate, this would immediately look like a traditional oracular symbol whereas, a closer look would clearly show that it is just one question mark, duplicated and placed in reverse order against each other, an indication of the fact that Oracle Experience does its business by asking questions upon questions; probing deeply and more deeply, to find solutions to both simple and complex brand and or business problems.

This would strike you, more pungently, when you go upstairs and find out that the very next office to the GMD's office is the company's Ideation Theatre which Felix King himself describes as the "Shrine", where "oracular consultations" hold; problems get dissected and necessary "surgeries" take place!

Intriguingly, any regular visitor to the Oracle head office could not but be awestruck by the fact that in spite of the numerous offices situated in the two buildings and the hundreds of personnel manning the offices, there is always a pin drop silence on the premises which jells perfectly with the general situation in the entire area; and accentuates the serenity of the ambience of the place. This, for an office of its magnitude communicates one very strong message – that at Oracle Experience, intellectualism and business-mindedness are the norm and not an exception.

The choice and combination of colours, both in the exterior and the interior of the

offices radiate a refreshing beauty; while the arrangement of furniture and other facilities and equipment speak of a perfect harmony. The dominance of the white colour, especially in and around the office of Felix King, and his personal preference of spotting white attires, all the time, drives home, very symbolically, his "Chief Priest" status; and this cannot be lost on anybody who goes into his office. In actual fact, the all-white appearance of his personal office – with everything in pure white and very bright colour emits a feel that is paradisiacal when you eventually get in there!

Apart from the symbolism of purity which the white colour connotes, it also very loudly speaks to a man who is given to cleanliness which, both John Wesley and Mahatma Gandhi described as being "next to godliness".

Meanwhile, the richness and the connection of Felix King's mind to other great minds in history and around the world is boldly reflected by the photographs of legendary figures in virtually all spheres of human endeavour – advertising, politics, religion, entrepreneurship, sports, etc – which are conspicuously etched on all the walls around the office of this experiential marketing icon and entrepreneurial colossus on the first floor of the main building. There are not less than a hundred of such pictures – of individual legends in history and across the world – in different fields.

And, as you ascend the staircase, you must be turning your head, right and left, not only to catch a glimpse of the well framed giant photos hanging on the walls, in an ascending order – just like the stairs. Each of the photos delivers three things – an award won, sometime in the past by the agency; a quote from one historical figure (like Nelson Mandela, Thomas Edison, etc) with a photo of that particular person; and a sentence about one aspect of what Oracle Experience does in the entire gamut of the business of brand management and the management of brand business. You will just want to soak in the message and get all the symbolism implied!

All of the above cannot but remind one of the eternal words of Rene Dubois (February 20, 1901 – February 20, 1982), an American microbiologist, experimental pathologist, and environmentalist, that "Man shapes himself through decisions that shape his environment". And the artistry which has been put into everything about the Oracle Experience office reminds one of what David Herbert Lawrence (11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930), an English writer and poet said, that "The business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his environment".

For Felix King Eiremiokhae, one can safely say that he is defined by an office environment that inspires. Little wonder that he is a man of steaming and result-oriented ideas any time and at any point.

I am a symbol of the Nigerian Dream

– FELIX KING EIREMIOKHAE

(In an exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE's AMOS OLADELE and ANIETIE UDOH)

Perhaps we should start by asking who your role models were, when you were growing up. Were there such people that you were looking up to?

Yes. While growing up my role models were my parents. My mum, for instance, did everything to make me to believe that everything is possible; she made me to believe that “a stitch in time saves nine”. In fact, that used to be our popular saying, meaning that anything you want to do you must do it now. Whatever mark you are going to make in life is in your hands; nobody will tell your story for you, you are to tell your story yourself. As such, what our parents did for us was to give us the necessary foundation for us to say okay life is like this.

My parents opened my eyes to reality and opportunities that were out there; but for you to be able to get there you need to work hard. My parents were Christians; so they used to sit down to tell us the story of Abraham to who God said, “...as long as your eyes can see it you can achieve it”.

And my dad, he taught me something: that your life is not about you, but that it is about the community. He used to tell me that when you wake up in the morning and you have food to eat; if it is only you that can afford to go to school and do all those stuffs and others in the entire community lack those basic things which you have access to, then you are a very poor person. He taught me that your community is your family, not your siblings. To him, if you live your life all for yourself and you think about yourself alone you are a poor person.

Those are the two values I took while I was growing up and they have continuously influenced the things I do up till now. That explains why my role models have always been my dad and my mum.

We learnt that you were into music at some point in your life; how did it come about, did you learn it, so much so that you even had a band and doing records?

It was purely passion. When you allow your passion to drive you then you will always be on the right path. In my growing up years, music was a passion. I thank God for the opportunity to venture into music, because if not for that I don't think I would have come to Lagos. It was music that brought me to Lagos.



What are you doing with music as we speak?

Right now, what I do with music is use it to praise God; that is what I do with music. This explains why here we do a lot of praise and worship. Between you and me, the only person that is worthy of my voice is God; nobody else.

Coming to marketing, would you avail us some details about a South African company that you once worked with; how far did you go with them and how did you evolve into setting up your own company?

The company was called DMC Direct Marketing Communications which later evolved into what is known today as EXP. I had my encounter with them and the company in 1998. I started that

company in Nigeria because when the South African guy came he did not know what to do, how to get people, etc. They came into Nigeria with just \$10,000 with no accounts. We took it up and to the glory of God I was able to help them recruit all the people. I used my vehicle to help them get the business on its feet.

Later, it became EXP which, until about four years ago, was the first experiential marketing in Nigeria. Until about 6 years ago they were the best. I was there, I rose up to the position of General Manager; and you know that for every good thing there is always an end. In 2006, I decided to leave.

I am sure that you know that South Africans have this apartheid mentality; because South Africa was a country that was rooted in the apartheid system and racism, when they came into Nigeria, it got to a point that they were struggling to free themselves from that mentality of apartheid and looking at people with the eyes of colour, or racism.

Like I said, earlier, we parted ways in 2006; and that gave birth to Oracle Experience and, again, the rest is also history now. With God's guidance, prayers and having the right people we were able to grow the company from just being an upcoming marketing agency to what it has become today in being one of the largest experiential marketing agencies in Nigeria, today.

Now, Oracle Experience, what exactly were you trying to communicate with that name?

Basically, the name was inspired by the industry. We are in the industry of questions and answers; that is how the industry is because when a client comes to you, it wants to reach out to its consumers through you. Thus, Oracle Experience is a true definition of how this industry is supposed to work.

In short, I see myself as the "high priest" at Oracle Experience. I look at the issue; come up with solutions, go out there and activate it. Naming who you are is sometimes important; so people today see us as the Oracle of the industry.

Does your "Oracular" stand have anything to do with your love for white colour?

No! Actually, I started wearing white just about two years ago. I am somebody who gets inspired by the people I identify with. We have spoken about the role models in the course of this interview. So like I said, my role models are my parents. I also have a spiritual role model who is Bishop David Oyedepo whose church I attend. I get inspired by the things he says and things I see him do. When you see Papa (Oyedepo) and look at him all you need to do for your story to turn around is tap into his anointing; when you do that and proclaim it, whatever you proclaim the anointing follows you. I saw something into the white and white he puts on and I tapped into it. That is how I started putting on white and white.

If you are to break your personal self-evolution in life into phases, what will you say the phases and stages are?

I try to relate my life's stages to the life stages of a human being; what do I mean by this? A human being's life is in cycles. When you birth a child, the child will learn how to sit, from there to crawling, standing, walking, talking, running, etc. My life is actually that same way, trying to take it step by step.

What I have discovered in life is that everything that happens (or can happen) to any human being is stated in the bible. It is just for us to look at the bible, see what the bible says about this

Basically, the name was inspired by the industry. We are in the industry of questions and answers; that is how the industry is because when a client comes to you, it wants to reach out to its consumers through you. Thus, Oracle Experience is a true definition of how this industry is supposed to work.

For instance, you just don't go and say oh this is Oral-B, just go to the market and get it. It doesn't work that way. The first thing for me is to take a brief and create an experience. I need to find out the issues, what issues you have, what issues you want to address, etc. It is just like a patient going to see a doctor; you just don't go and meet a doctor and request for Panadol because you have head ache. How do we know you have head ache? Or, you tell a doctor, oh, I have malaria give me Choloroquine. When you go to see the doctor you first explain; the doctor will examine you and come up with a prescription and say this is it. That, exactly, is how our industry is. You go to the Oracle and you meet the "chief priest" or "high priest" as the case may be.

In traditional societies, you go to a high priest to say this is a new year, help me see what will happen tomorrow. The chief priest would do the consultation and come to tell you the solution; that is the role we play. The client comes to us and tells us the issue they are having; we go into the brain storming session which is the "shrine" and we come up with solutions and tell them the solutions and recommendations.

particular stuff. For me, to take the next leap in life, I always undergo a lot struggles, ups and down, discomfort, and hardship. I have come to realize that God always brings that hardship to my life to be able to move me to the next level.

Recall that I said earlier that while coming to Lagos I spent two days on a journey of 8 hours then, it was tough; again, I got into music and in June, 1993, things became so tough such that I used my car for 'kabukabu' every the night. That also became very tough, but that was what brought me into experiential marketing industry.

I moved into experiential industry, nice business with good money coming in; yet, in 2006, I had issues and I had to leave. At some point, even life at EXP became so difficult; and that was at a time I just had my baby. You know what it is for you to live two, three months with no income.

Meanwhile, I left EXP with just #80,000 in my account. Life became so difficult to the extent that I could not afford to pay rent, or buy pampers, or baby food. I'm sure you know that kind of situation where you buy on credit here, today, and for one week you will avoid passing that street; and you keep changing routes.



At a point, I was asking myself if I was sure that I did not take the wrong decision to quit EXP; I wondered if I wouldn't have to go back to my former bosses to apologize. It actually got to a point when my wife said I must go back there; but I said no, I wouldn't.

Sometimes, in your difficulty that is when you will realise that in life you are all by yourself. That is the way it is; you will see friends you go out with, drink with, etc, all of a sudden there is no one you can call for assistance; and no one picks your call again. You try to understand how human beings act. It was really tough, not being able to pay house rent and my landlord was taking me to court!

I used to have a bag of what is called Ijebu garri; we would eat garri and groundnuts all day. You know that kind of situation where if you have #100 for your transport; you trek half the journey just to safe #30. That was the picture of my life at that time.

But then, like Robert Schuler was reputed to have said, "Tough times never last; but tough people do". That is why the difference between success and failure is how tough you are; how much you can withstand what the enemy is going to throw at you.

I had a friend who could not cope, he had to run away. Most of my friends ran away from the country; but today they are all struggling because they could not stand the heat. So, for you to succeed you must, first of all, be willing to sacrifice. There is nobody today that will tell you I have made success without sacrifice; it will be a lie. It goes with a lot of sacrifice.

I am sure that you know that I had this experience when my daughter was very sick and she needed to go to the hospital; we actually went there and the bill was only #6,000 which I didn't have. They refused to treat her and my little daughter was dying; but you see God never abandons His people; and suddenly God showed

up and I was able to get #2,000 and I deposited that for them to commence treatment. The next day I was able to complete the full payment. All that was in 2006.

So, starting Oracle Experience was a huge sacrifice with a lot of challenges. Starting a business when I could not feed my family, fuel my car, afford medical treatment, it was the most memorable period of my entire life; but that period also showed me how God works. If you take time to listen to God, He will always talk to you.

What then turned things around for us here at Oracle was that moment I said okay, God has a reason why I have to follow this journey; and one day God spoke to me and said, "This company which I have given to you will dominate in the industry where it operates; but you cannot achieve this through half praise". He told me directly; and you know that when God speaks to you, you have to go look for the interpretation because God will not give you the interpretation. I had to go look for the interpretation of what God meant by half praise and I came up with a deep understanding that what that means is that everything we do here must be to His glory; and that was how I declared 3 days of fasting every month in the company and the quarterly praise and worship programme which we do every year.

For the past 14 years now we never miss it. Every month, we all come together to fast for 3 days, every Monday we hold prayers; quarterly we do our quarterly praise; and at the end of the year we do mega praise. We don't do parties like most companies will do; we bring gospel artistes, play music and dance for the Lord. That is how we started and gradually clients started coming.

We started with Nestle, we went to P&G and they came on board, Nigerian Breweries, Samsung, DSTV, Coca-Cola, FrieslandCampina WAMCO, Visa Card, etc. So, it's been good news

and we have every cause to thank God. That, I would say, was the second phase.

For the third phase, we looked at it and said okay there are challenges in Nigeria. I see a lot of people complaining in and about this country which is also biblical. When you complain you will never get what you are looking for in the land you are complaining about. Recall that when the Israelites were murmuring and complaining, God said none of them would go into the Promised Land. It is the same thing, here in Nigeria, we are complaining; but if you check it out, in this same land that some people are complaining about, foreigners come here, make money and take it back to their countries while all we (nationals) do is complain. So, I told myself, I will never complain. I believe in this country and there is so much we can get in this country.

That is why I label this country a land of hidden treasure; and so, as part of searching for that treasure, we decided to expand into the manufacturing sector. That was what gave birth to "Mabisco" biscuits which started three years ago. This is our fourth year in that line of business and I am glad we have been able to provide employment in this country such that every month we have at least about a thousand people that are feeding from the efforts that we are making to help ourselves and help the community in which we find ourselves.

On Oracle, let's look at some game changing campaigns that God has used you to make Oracle to run.

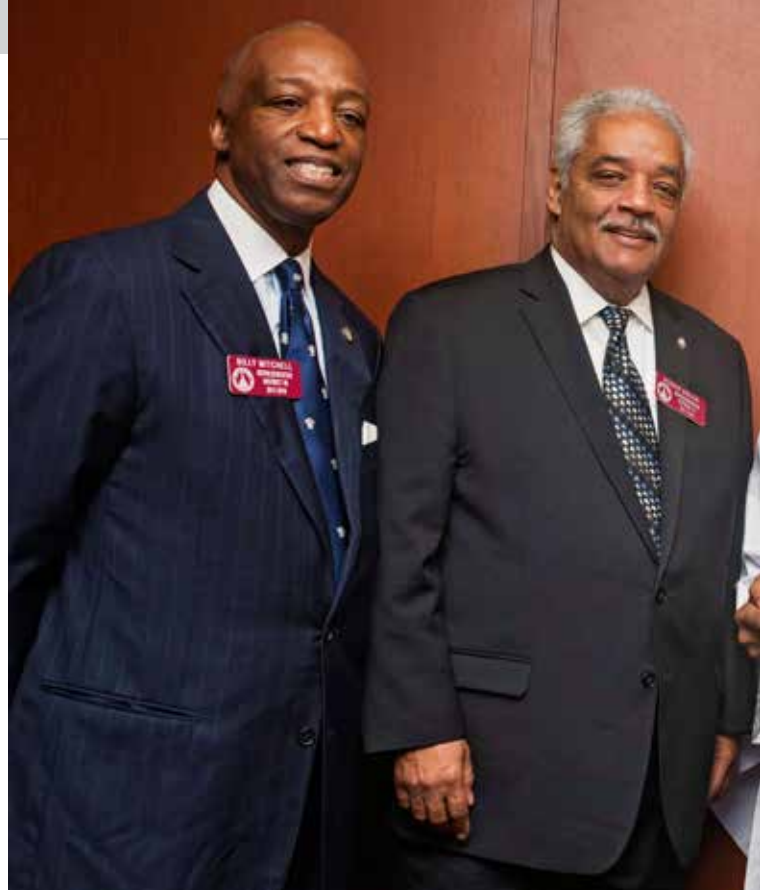
The last 14 years have been momentous for us. We have done quite a lot of stuffs that have truly impacted the businesses of our clients and also changed the lives of the consumers. We have done a lot, running for 14 years and still being relevant and getting more and more relevant as the day goes by. I think it is something we all need to be proud of. The bottom line is that when someone keeps doing business with you for 14 long years it can only mean that you are actually touching the heart and the soul of that person's business.

So, you have some clients you have been working with for 14 years?

Yes; we have been working with P&G for 14 years, which is unbelievable; we have been working for Nigerian Breweries for 12 years, FrieslandCampina WAMCO 13 years; and the secret is simple, don't take short cuts and don't be greedy, greedy in the sense that if a client gives you money for X work and you are supposed to pay people #15,000 and you are taking short cut paying them #7,000 they are going to mess you up. This happens when you are thinking about just yourself. That would be like what people say that the first money which a small child gets, he will use to buy chewing gum; but an adult will not do that.

Here, we do a lot of massive investment. Our investment in this industry alone is more than #500 million in equipment. In fact, at Oracle Experience we have been able to push ourselves to that level that people find it difficult to compete with us in terms of man power, logistics, and equipment in this industry. We own everything in-house. We are the only agency that is spread across the entire country.

Mind you, some agencies came up with strategies to be relevant in Africa, operating across the African space; but we decided not to do that. Rather, we decided to have our strong hold in Nigeria itself whereby our footprints are all over the country. So, if you are talking about other African countries I say no I am in Nigeria and I have Nigeria under my grip.



If I have your brief, all it takes is just 48 hours within which I can activate throughout the entire country at a single stretch without blinking. We have the man power across the country; we have the finances to drive that, an operation fund of #1 billion that sits down there every day which we use in driving our operation. With our massive equipment, we can run seven mega events simultaneously! And, of course, we have some of the most passionate people you can ever think of in the industry. That explains why we have people who have been here for all of our 14 years of corporate existence and they are still here. This, I dare say, is rare to come by in the industry.

This is the only place where you don't see people looking for job somewhere else because I always believe life must be win-win for all; as you are winning for the client you are winning for the consumer, winning for the company, you also must win for the people who are doing the work. I think those things set us apart from the rest.

However, leadership always has a prize to pay. For instance, when people feel they cannot compete with you in terms of your presentation, your delivery, and in all the things you do, then they resort to blackmailing you. That is life, in general, for you. But I keep telling people, in as much as you have that belief in your mind that your source comes from God alone, people can do whatever they want to do, write whatever they want to write; they may even plot evil against you, don't pay them back with evil; rather, you pray for them for God to forgive them, see them through, open their ways, their eyes to see that their enemy is not the person they think is doing well, but that they are their own enemy.

If, for instance, an agency refuses to invest, chooses not to treat its staff well, fails to train her staff and all is about himself as the "boss"; and the clients don't feel the need to work with that agency, its case is a very simple thing. That agency man will need to seriously and sincerely look inward and ask himself why are the clients not happy with me, what are the other people doing that I am not doing well, do I now have to start doing xyz?

All of the companies with us at Oracle Experience know that we work with our clients as partners. But I keep telling them that my model of operation is what works for me, so you also look for yours. I believe that in as much as you are serving a client, you must turn that relationship into a partnership. As such, if I have a client



working with me for the past 12/13 years then I don't see them as my client, again; rather, I see them as my partners such that their interest must be my interest, their objectives must be my objectives. It is a mere relationship when you want to eat and eat once; it doesn't work that way.

I give room for flexibility because you must be able to look at it and look at your client if they have money for a programme maybe today they want to do something of #10million and they come to meet you and after that they acknowledge what you did for #10 million; but now they want to do something but don't have enough and they ask if you can do it for #9 million, but because you are partners you have to find a way of doing it, all the same. That is what I call win-win, sticking together in all situations; protecting each other's interests profitably at all times.

When we launched our platform of win-win it was inspired by one of our clients – FrieslandCampina WAMCO. I told them that I loved it. It simply means I will ensure you win and I win so at the end of the day nobody will lose. If, for instance, I decide to give you 20% discount you win something; if you decide to increase my billing from #10,000,000 to #15,000,000 because I have given you a 20% discount, I also win. If everybody has this type of mentality then the industry will be better because that is how business is done. But sometimes people think, why must I see clients as partners?

Honestly, that is one major basis for my choice of being my own man in the experiential marketing industry; standing and walking alone, most of the time, in an industry that is replete with different shades of character and different shapes of characteristics.

Can you name some campaigns which you did that wowed people and the industry?

There are quite a lot that we have done. Like I said, I don't want to go too much into this, because there is going to be another interview about Oracle Experience itself; but when you talk about the things we have done, they are very iconic. We have done a lot of iconic events such that today when you go on the internet to Google, all those things pop up. For instance, we came up with one idea and we told the client something very germane – that activation is about the experience; we tell them how much we make people to feel and what memories people can take from the

programme we did and we said how do we start to use your assets and turn your assets into a memorable experience.

Believe me; we have successfully done that very well. We use our clients' assets, Nigerian Breweries for example, when we had to convert their bottles into a massive Christmas tree. In fact, that programme was so impactful that CCTV, China's national broadcasting network, did a special story on that magic of combining STAR lager bottles and using them to create one of the tallest Christmas trees ever. What was done before then, in China, was 1000 bottles; but we used 8000 bottles to create that massive Christmas tree. It was amazing! Till tomorrow, people still talk about it.

We have also used crates, to create "Eyo" masquerade, which is symbolic to the people of Lagos State. It was about 70ft tall. People still talk about it, till date. We have created experiences where we had to build a man-made ship boat where people can come and party inside. Gulder lager beer, also from the stable of Nigerian Breweries Plc, wanted to do a party and we thought, okay if the brand is positioned as the ultimate in beer, promoting and projecting the ultimate man at the time, and if you take it back in history, an ultimate man does party in a special way and that was how we came up with the boat.

Again, if you remember The Titanic, you will recall that it was only the bourgeoisie that went on that ship. As such, in those days if the prince and princess wanted to party they would go to the boat and do a cruise. We then said Gulder lager beer is an ultimate brand; how could we create that ultimate experience for the brand? We then resolved to build our own man made ship which we took round to three major cities – Lagos, Port Harcourt and Enugu.

Now, one mystery which surrounded that activation and which still remains so till today was that that activation, in particular, ended up being spiritual, because even in dry season each time that boat birthed in any of the cities, heaven kissed the earth, rain must fall! In the three locations, Lagos, Port Harcourt and Enugu, there was no place, in a dry season that the boat birthed and rain did not fall. Till tomorrow, it is magical.

Whenever we go for presentation and we show some of those slides people say oh, oh it's you guys that did that show; wow, we were there and we were amazed. Now, in terms of showing strength, I don't think any agency has been able to match that.

Last year, we did 15 locations for the Eastern Carnival; 15 concerts simultaneously running across the country unbelievably for three days running back to back. People couldn't believe it was possible. In Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Calabar, Abeokuta, Makurdi, Benin, Abuja, Jos, etc, simultaneously a concert running for three days non-stop; that is strength; that is capacity.

Moreover, we run about 2,000 activations on a daily basis across the country. That is not a small feat. For us, therefore, it is about the strength, and capacity.

Next week ((after this interview), we are launching almost about 1500 activations, starting back to back across different cities. Our strength is our capacity and ability to turn things around within a short period of time which is not easy to achieve.

Let's talk a bit about Mabisco and, in particular, the new factory; we were wondering what made you go into manufacturing at such a time like this in our clime; that is courageous.

Yes, it is very courageous. Mabisco project is my wife's vision. Sometimes, you never can tell. She came up with the concept of Mabisco; she was the one God showed the vision to. I have to admit that we started it blindly; but, notably, from designs to building, I did everything myself; I am the designer, engineer, architect,

everything. So, we started the business out of ignorance. But, when I say ignorance I mean not understanding the industry very well; but we just had to start because some of the time, I like challenges and doing something new. Moreover, I noticed that I was getting bored; and being a restless person that I am, I needed something new and challenging.

Then, she came up with that concept and we started it.

Like every business you go into without much experience, in the first two years we actually struggled, not really understanding the basic rudiments of how to move. At a point, I almost told myself am I on the right track? Should I have done this? But, to cut the long story short, I am very happy that we actually went in then because in our lives that is actually the future. Now, the company has stabilized; and I can see the big future.

Today, at Mabisco alone we have close to 500 people working there every single day; that brings fulfillment.

In fact, we had the executives from Zenith Bank coming to visit us, just two days before ago and one of the directors sat down and he said are all these people that I am seeing, here, earning salaries from this place? When I said yes, the man said thank you very much. If you have many companies doing what you are doing here Nigeria will be a totally different story.

Note that Mabisco has two main objectives and we have met one of the objectives, which is being able to provide employment to support the Nigerian dream. We have been able to do that to some people and making their lives good from that place.

inability to meet the demands of our consumers. All this while, we did everything by ourselves; it's 100% financed by us and now we have built it to a level that investors are coming, people wanting to buy shares into the company; somebody even came to offer us \$50million to own majority of the shares in the company and I turned it down. We told him that we had not gotten there yet. What this means is that there is something he is seeing. But as an investor, you mustn't get carried away by things of the flesh.

The day he came and had this conversation, it rekindled my hope and my interest in Mabisco as a company in the sense that if somebody could come and say I see something great here and I want to put my money there, it means I am on the right path.

Things are looking good; and I feel very proud when, for instance, I see the local flights in Nigeria snacking people with our products.

You can imagine somebody, like yours truly, coming from the village, where you ate rice only at Christmas and Easter; where you had no Television to watch and, over time, you find yourself in a situation where all the local flights serve your products and people are consuming them. It gives me joy and fulfillment. When you see yourself coming from that kind of background and finding yourself in places you never could have imagined. It is not just how much money you have in your bank account, money in my account doesn't give me fulfillment. In actual fact, some of the time, it gives me sleepless night. It doesn't give me peace of mind. What gives me peace of mind is when you look around your community and you see the effort you are making and how the effort is impacting the

When I sit back and look at where I am coming from to where I am now it shows me just one thing, that God never lies. So, when you look at this man who in the village would have to look through somebody's else's window to watch a black and white television to see what was happening; this man who has passed through all that he has told you about himself, being recognized by global bodies, going to the Capitol in the U.S to be recognized for the little work he is doing and by which he is impacting his environment; for me, nothing can be more rewarding than that.

The second passion is about leaving a legacy; that part is what we are building as the equity of the business is getting far better, we are still expanding.

In April, we will be launching the new line that is just coming; that is progress, because if you are not making progress you will not be thinking about expansion.

Like I have been stressing, the opportunities in this country are unbelievable. Right now, our challenge at Mabisco is our

lives of other people; that gives me joy.

When I go to Mabisco and I see the number of people who are working there, when I receive a lot of text messages from people praying for me it gives me joy, when I see the progress of my staff at Oracle Experience, almost all the managers here have their houses, my staff are buying cars, buying lands, travelling abroad for vacation; all that gives me joy. This is because there are some companies where people don't make progress; there are

some companies where if you buy car you will park it far from the company so as to give false impression about yourself. Just yesterday (the day before this interview), one of my junior boys came and said come and pray for me I just bought a car! I said oh that is great, I immediately promised to replace all the tyres of the car. To me, when you run a progressive system, everybody will progress, the company will progress, and even your personal and corporate peace will progress.

Tell us about Felix King Foundation

The foundation was inspired by two different things. First, my dad who, while growing up, made me to understand that a life you live for the community is much better than a life you live for yourself alone.

However, the foundation was born out of an experience which I already told you about my child who was in the hospital and for just #6,000 they refused to treat her. Mind you, that was my wife and I.

That story is not just my story; it is a Nigerian story, a human story, where you have people losing lives because they cannot afford medical fees. But, you know what? To people who might be on the other side (of life), they might think that that is not possible; they will ask, how can you say somebody did not have #500 and, because of that, they sent the child out of school. Yet, this is the everyday life which about 70% of Nigerians go through.

What happens to us, some of the time, when God has helped us and we have been able to move away from position A to position D, we, all of a sudden, think that position A does not exist! That is the reality; we forget that we have been there before and so we think because we have moved that whole segment doesn't exist anymore; but the reality is that it does exist. There are some people squatting in one room with two wives, six children; that situation still exists, despite that we have moved away from that position to the other position.

When I was going through that experience, I told God that if He showed up and I was able to overcome the challenge which I was having then, I would take up the responsibility to see, within what I have, that I am able to impact as many as I can. That was how the foundation was founded; and my focus was on widows in the sense that I was telling myself: if my wife and I were struggling to raise #6,000, we have situations where it will be only the woman (widow); you can imagine what the woman will go through; and you know how Nigeria is, it is very tough for women. I have seen how women struggle all by themselves to raise their children, how they go to the farm, stream, etc, because a man can decide not to care whether the child goes to school or not but for the woman will not do that. A man in the village does not care if a child goes to school or not; but the woman will do everything to make sure that the child goes, because she believes that the child is her future. That is why I decided to focus on women.

Now, the Felix King Foundation stands on a three Pillar premise: when women thrive in the workforce, succeed as entrepreneurs, and fully participate in the economy, entire communities enjoy greater prosperity and peace.

We started with a programme which has metamorphosed into the market money programme. How that works is that we try to help these women because every Nigerian woman is very industrious; there is no woman that is lazy; the only challenge they have is the means to be able to start a journey. We encourage them to start a cooperative system through which we help them with money for them to start and then they can help themselves. This falls under the traditional village meeting system that these women use to run, back in the days; and I think till date we have been able to impact over 5200 women as at December, 2019. They are grouped into different categories; we have scholarships which we give to some of them; we have not less than 10 children

that are on our scholarship platform in Lagos; there is a food programme through which we support them with food; we do medicals for them; and now we are zeroing in on business. By this, we are helping them to evolve into market women groups while we support them with funds to do that.

In 2019, a lot of people were coming to us complaining that we should know that widows have too many issues; but to us, the reason for that situation is because the women did not free themselves while they were growing up and or while their husbands were still alive; they did not empower themselves because there are lots of women who don't do anything just because their husband will not allow them. Such women just rely on men.

Other people also came up with this idea that we should liberate our system to include all women so that if a woman is doing well for herself and she decided to marry and widowhood comes thereafter she is not going to feel it much. Because of that in November, 2019, we came up with a platform called Start-up Africa which is focusing on women entrepreneurs. On this platform, women who are interested in doing their business but are looking for how to get that business done will be trained by us; we'll give them lectures, access to mentorship programmes; and then have a pitch session where each of them will pitch their ideas.

To this end, we have investors and a board to which people can pitch their ideas. If your idea is good enough then somebody, who is willing to finance the idea, in as much as your idea will provide employment for at least another human being, will take it up.

Let me emphasize, here, that the forthcoming Startups Africa 2020 conference is a place anything can happen; a place where any woman can rise, and dreams come true. Like I have always said, some people find God in church; some people find God in nature; some people find God in love. I assure you that some people will find God at the Startups Africa 2020 conference hub; this is because lots of women are going to be relieved from their sufferings.

It has been such a journey for the foundation. And, please, note that the foundation is 100% funded by Oracle Experience; it is part of our pledge and commitment to God.

What demand do the trio of Oracle Experience, Mabisco and Felix King Foundation make on your time?

It has been demanding and tough because of the system I am running. I have been able to push the business to a certain level whereby I have been able to give them legs to run.

Now, I play more of the role of a thinker than a doer; I have been able to take the businesses to that level, which means that Oracle Experience right now can run without my physical presence. You know that many people build companies around themselves alone; but I have been able to build this company around the people collectively; it is not just about me.

That has enabled me to do quite a lot of stuffs. I sit down and think, coming up with strategies and ideas, while the people are on ground doing the work. It is about empowering the people to do what they can do while you sit back and give them the direction.

What is the future like for these three organisations?

Only God knows the future; and like the bible says, "the thought I have for you are thoughts of good and not evil"; so I believe that is the plan of God towards us. What I can say is that for sure, the future for these three companies which I call a "trinity" is very bright. We are on the right track.

For Mabisco, we have set a target that in the next three years it must be among the top 3 biscuits manufacturing companies in Nigeria. We are going to achieve it by the grace of God.



For the foundation, we have also set a target. Recall that last year, we launched what we call the “Goal 36 by 29. The “Goal 36 by 29 “ is a self set target to reach and impact 36,000 women by year 2029, which is a 10-year window plan. We have set that target for ourselves and by the grace of God we are going to meet it.

For Oracle Experience, our target has always been the same: to be the most sought after experiential marketing firm; to remain the largest and as relevant as we can.

As you can see, therefore, every one of the “trinity” has a target. Remember, when you set a target for yourself you must always look back so that you can know if you are on the right track or not. The issue most people always have, as the bible says, “My people perish for lack of knowledge”. Lacking knowledge, in this context is that you are not setting target for yourself.

I am confident that Mabisco is going to be one of the actualisation of the Nigerian dream story that is going to be told in the next 2/3 years. That is how I look at it because it is a story that is going to show what it means to believe, to have hope, to look diligently for the treasure; and act accordingly.

Let's talk about your awards, recognitions, affirmations, and celebrations of what God has done through you.

When I sit back and look at where I am coming from to where I am now it shows me just one thing, that God never lies. So, when you look at this man who in the village would have to look through somebody's else's window to watch a black and white television to see what was happening; this man who has passed through all that he has told you about himself, being recognized by global bodies, going to the Capitol in the U.S to be recognized for the little work he is doing and by which he is in impacting his environment; for me, nothing can be more rewarding than that. And sometimes people can sit back and say why are you talking about things you are doing and somebody will say the bible says that “your left hand must not know what is on your right hand” and I said no, that is not the context we are doing that. We talk about such things so that other people can be inspired to do the same.

Like I used to say in a post, back then, any time we gave out food stuffs I would say (in my posts) that we are doing this; you don't need to do this but I am sure in your kitchen if you take out one derica of rice and give to your neighbour who doesn't have, it goes a long way; and I have seen people coming to me and say oh thank you so much for that post, I gave somebody one derica and that person was crying! As such, when you look at it from that context you will see that it is not because of what people are doing.

When some people learn a secret they will want to keep it to themselves; that, to me, is selfishness. I have come to discover that you gain more by giving. This is something which people don't understand. If you give somebody #1million to solve people's

problem with the #1million tomorrow you are not poorer by #1million, because you will discover that you are actually richer by #10million. This is the secret but people don't understand those things; it is truth.

If giving makes people poor, by now I would be very poor, because the money we have given out here to support this foundation, I am not joking, is about #150 million; and I am not poorer! People that don't give are not happier than me, you can even have money and sickness will take it away from you.

Like my mother used to tell us, a curse, even though, it is not effective it is annoying to the ear, same thing with prayer, even if prayer doesn't work it is melodious to our ears and hearts. So, being recognized, locally and internationally, is a testament that there is really no boundaries; you can achieve whatever it is that you want to achieve; don't allow your background to be an impediment to what could be possible because sometimes we mentally and psychologically create barriers for ourselves. Possibility lies in our thought, our mind; that is the way I look at life.

For me, the one that really encouraged me the most was the one we all went to Georgia, US, for. We went to the state house and all the senators were there. I sat down with my in-laws and friends and they did a citation and when they were done with the citation and I saw everybody, including the whole senate standing up; and the applause was deafening, I was pinching myself and saying to myself am I the one; and by the time they called me I was supposed to stand up but I was sitting down, because I was asking myself am I the one they are talking about? By the time they were done and the senator said I hereby present to you Felix King and the whole hall, white people in the state house, senators and everybody clapping, I was like wow; how I wish my dad is here! For me, it was an emotional stuff.

There is also the recognition that came from the White House signed by President Trump. We went to Washington DC where the ceremony was held and we were given that recognition certificate. That, to me, was an honour. I took the stage with people like our former honourable minister for petroleum, Dr. Ibe Kachukwu, and Mike Ozekhome, SAN.

You agree with me that sharing the same platform with such great people to receive a doctorate degree would be exciting to anybody. So, it gives me much joy. Again, this is because, I, one small boy coming from one rusty community where eating rice was once a year, it just makes me to sit back and wish my parents were here to see that those seeds they were sowing actually germinated and bore fruits that they could be very proud of.

One thing which my father taught me and which I have taken and practiced very religiously is how to pray for your children. Back then, all that my dad would do was to pray and prophesy into your life. He taught me that, and that is why sometimes when I see some parents cursing their children, I will say how I wish this person can see the negative vibes which the curse is generating and negative impact which it may cause tomorrow. I am, therefore, really grateful to my parents for their prophecies.

Unfortunately, they are not here; but I know that wherever they are they will be very proud of me.

Outside of marketing, manufacturing, what else do you do?

Truth is that those three things are time demanding and time consuming. Nevertheless, my spare time is spent much with my family; I am very close to my kids, they are my best friends; so I try to spend time with them. But, as you would expect, running these three things takes 23 hours of my day, almost every day!

How will you describe Felix King

Eiremiokhae – as a professional, an entrepreneur, business man, family man and all?

Sometimes, it is always difficult to describe yourself; it is easier for people to describe you and that is what I think. Oftentimes, I try not to describe myself because in doing so, some people will think that you are arrogant; but I see myself as somebody who is working in line with the scripts God has given him; that is how I see myself – a man that is following God's script. And under God, I am a symbol of the Nigerian dream!

Do you have any message for the industry, and the nation, especially the youths, at this time?

My message will be that people should have faith and believe in God; discover your purpose. When you discover your purpose, follow it with prayers, hard work and believe that it is possible;

surround yourself with positives and stay away from negativity because you cannot be nursing negative feelings around you, around your environment, around your family, your community and you expect positive seeds to germinate; it is not possible.

Therefore, my message is, turn your mind from negative to positive, believe in God and match it up with prayers, love your neighbour, treat your neighbour with respect and dignity and look at your neighbour as a good person. Live for people in your community, your environment. When you do this you will discover that your life is peaceful and sweet as God has made it to be. God did not create us to live a life filled with troubles or challenges; we attract all that to ourselves. God has created life for us to be peaceful and enjoyable.

The question is, is it possible to live a positive and progressive life? My answer is yes, it is 100% possible! But we need to have that mind of positivity and treat people with respect and dignity all the time.

Straight From The Heart: Some Quotable Quotes From **Felix King**

"Opportunity knocks but once. Even if it knocks more than once, you have to be ready for it."

"Go for the Extraordinary. Don't settle for the ordinary."

"Some people find God in church. Some people find God in nature. Some people find God in love. I find God in suffering. I have known for some time what my life's work is, using my hands as tools to relieve suffering" – Felix King, quoting Kayla

"Optimism is a moral choice. Our motivation in life comes from the belief that tomorrow can be better than today, and that our future will be better, more equitable, and more sustainable than our past. Some people would say that being optimistic is naïve. As a parent, I feel that being optimistic is my responsibility to my children because I so deeply want the world in which their generation grows up to be radically different in many ways from the world we're living in right now. And for people who want that to be true, I believe we all need to play a part and do this together."

"Our faith is not optimism, positive thinking or delusional thinking. Our hope is based on the sure evidence of what God has done in the past."

"The Felix King Foundation stands on a three-pillar premise: When women thrive in the workplace, succeed as entrepreneurs, and fully participate in the economy, entire communities enjoy greater prosperity and peace."

"With Startups Africa, we want to unleash the power of African female entrepreneurs."

"The field is level when it is woman to woman. The Startups Africa 2020 is 100 per cent woman-centric."

"Trials are sent in your life to reward you with all the God has for you in your life." James 1:12

FORCES BEHIND THE BRANDS: A PROLOGUE



Brand management guru and a reputable scholar, *Jack Trout* will remain eternally a legend. Reason? He, it was who first introduced the positioning theory into contemporary brand management Lexicon in 1969. Ever since then, the meaning and impact of this theory have never been lost to generations of brand management experts, rookies and gurus. Both the meaning and impact have indeed evolved. In the *Journal of international studies*, Vol 5, no 1. 2012, “the term positioning was first used originally in the Context of the multitude of market information targeted at the audience. Too much market information triggered off a trend to omit or delete information which fails to forge instant and powerful associations. In the decoding process, this information was deemed unimportant. In this context, the concept of positioning referred primarily to the combat for the consumer’s mind (Ries, Trout 1981)

and assuming a unique position in the audience’s minds related to a very specific and differentiating set of associations. Therefore, positioning is the way a company wants customers to perceive, think and feel about its brand versus competitors. In today’s integrated marketing communications sector and services, there are quite avalanche of information and narratives about the players and gladiators. Almost all agencies involved in the business of brand management and the management of brand business are conscious of the fact that both the clients and the brands are quite in need of competitive skills and competencies to help them navigate the confounding market situation at the nation’s current economic situation. Consequently, they make efforts to sell their services to the brand owners. Despite this most still fall far short of making an appeal to the brand owners. While this failure may not be entirely blamed on the brand owners, you cannot exonerate the marketing communications consultants who had failed to position their businesses rightly before the target audience. The major concern of this narrative is to explore the world of

integrated marketing communications with a view to bringing out the key communications messages which could help professionals in the consultancy sector appeal to the clients and their brands.

Foremost amongst the issues at stake in being on the top of the mind of the client is when an agency shows a clear understanding of their business and industry. Industry knowledge, the popular maxim is sine qua non, to winning the hearts of clients. Part of understanding the Clients’ business is also understanding their business model. As industry operators embark on a new regime of business chase and pursuit in the new year of a new decade, it is apposite and instructive to remind integrated marketing communications services providers to apprise themselves of some fundamental realities that have been time tested and proven inimitable.

What Clients want from their Agencies.

Got a rocky relationship with a client? It probably comes down to communication. And to communicate better, you need to know what clients really want.

Working for an agency sounds so simple at first: You take on the marketing tasks for other companies; you're basically their marketing department for hire. And yet, it's not an easy thing at all.

For starters, **clients don't always know what they want.** They often don't really understand how marketing or advertising works. Sometimes, they can't even articulate what their core value proposition is.

Despite all those challenges, you still have to get their marketing to work. Because if what you do doesn't work, **your agency gets fired** (Heck... agencies get fired even when they do make it work). What goes wrong between agencies and clients is rarely a budget problem. It's not a technology problem. It's not even a staffing problem...

It's a communication problem.

Fortunately, that's exactly what agencies are good at. At its core, marketing is communication. You and your team are, at the most basic level, communicators. And not only that – you're professional communicators. You just need to channel some of those awesome communication skills into communicating with your clients.

Clients crave communication

Sometimes we get so focused on campaigns and deadlines and pitches that we forget that half of our work as agencies is to communicate with the clients. In fact, **that's one of the things** clients want most from their agencies.

Get your communication right, and the expectations fall to a realistic level. **Your relationship** will be strong enough to whether even a few failed campaigns. If you're lucky, your clients might even stop scanning every element of your work and thinking to themselves "can we bring this in-house yet?"

Communication 101

Quick quiz: Where do you start when you want to communicate with a person or an audience? What's the first thing you do?

Answer: You understand them.

Before you ever plan a media buy, write any copy, mock-up any landing page, you aim to understand your audience. To "get inside their heads."

A core part of understanding an audience is to know what they want. Get that, and everything else you do will be twice as effective.

So step back from day-to-day client management for a moment. Think about how you communicate with your clients,



and consider what we know about what clients want from agencies.

What clients want

1. Your clients want you to understand their business – and their industry.

When the *Agency Management Institute* asked Chief Marketing Officers, business owners and Directors of Marketing what they wanted from their agencies, this was the **#1 response: "Industry knowledge"**.

It's smart for clients to want this. If you don't know their industry, you're going to make mistakes and misjudgments. Will that edgy new creative work? Only if it's a fit for industry. Does giving samples out make sense? Again – only if you've got the right industry.

Part of understanding their business is also understanding their business model. Without that, your strategy suggestions may not work. You may end up being focused on the wrong things.

Dave Fleet, Senior Vice President of Digital at Edelman puts it this way: **"Take the time to get to know them and what they're worried about, what they're trying to get out there, and their aspirations. That will help you be much more effective in the programs you bring forward."**

2. Media strategy.

There is a marked **difference** between what clients value most and what agencies value most about the services they provide.

It's **media strategy**. 23.5% of clients in a Forbes survey said media strategy was the most important area their agencies provided them with.

Compare that with what the agencies they surveyed said: Only 10% of them felt that media strategy was the most important area

This makes a lot of sense. Anyone can buy an ad, but building a **full-fledged media strategy** (much less executing one) requires experience and skill.

There are any one of a dozen tricks of the trade that can either make the whole strategy work or not. And that can mean tens of thousands of dollars (even hundreds of thousands of dollars) lost to the client... or a campaign that's so successful it puts the business on a new footing.

This is exactly the sort of specialized skill that makes hiring an agency a smart move. Clients are right to value it, and agencies might want to be more vocal about explaining how their media strategy skills can help their clients.

3. Creativity.

This comes up in study after **study**. It's no surprise that clients go to agencies for their creative expertise. But we'd be wrong to not mention how important truly creative, standout work is to clients.

As clients' industries get more competitive, it becomes harder and harder to get a message out. And so clients rely on their agencies to come up with the big idea that transcends bulk media buys and broadcast-style advertising.

In other words, they don't want you to help them be the loudest voice in the room.

They want you to help them be a unique voice in the room.

4. More consumer insights.

This point often gets overlooked by agencies, but **clients would like to see far more consumer insights from their agency partners.**

23% of clients in a Forbes survey mentioned this as their top priority, yet only 10% of agencies say they want increased involvement in consumer insights.

Perhaps if agencies knew how important this was to their clients, they'd be more motivated to offer it.

5. Communicate what you're best at.

This point is more for the beginning of the client relationship, but it's very clear that **"clients want a website to quickly show them what the agency is best at"**. In a 2017 survey of UK agency clients, 90% of the respondents mentioned this. It's a big deal.

But there's another real zinger to this: **Clients believe most agency websites fail to communicate this difference.**

6. Get more results with less budget.

You already knew clients want this. Everybody knows clients want this. And though it's brain-dead obvious that our clients want us to keep costs low while we still get even better results, it still needs to be said.

So there. We're saying it. But there's a whole other level to this that might not be immediately obvious.

Just saying "get more results" is kinda squishy. What kind of results? More sales? More leads? More website traffic, a share of voice?

You need to know all that. You and your client need to be in 100% agreement on it, too.

"100% agreement" would mean you've defined specific, measurable metrics to track. And those metrics will need to be tied into their business model.

So actually, "get more results" implies that you understand your clients' businesses. It means you know what their business goals are. And it dictates that all the work you do on your agency's side is tied to those business goals.

That's a totally different mindset than "We need some new ads". Or "we need an email campaign." But you need to get specific and find out what their business goals really are.

Without this, your agency could be chasing meaningless metrics for your client. When that happens, even if you "succeed" with the superficial metrics, you can still get fired because the actual business results weren't there.

So once again, **communication is key.** Your agency needs the fullest picture possible of what your client really means when they say they need "results".

7. Show them quantifiable results.

This is basically the second phase of the prior point. Once you know what your client really considers to be "results", you need to work with them or to guide them to tie some concrete, **trackable metrics** to those goals.

And then you need to track those goals.

So when the quarterly meeting comes around and your client says "What have you done for me lately?", you'll be able to point to hard numbers and say "we moved this metric from here to here" and have it be a positive, meaningful business result. **A result worth the money they're paying you.**

One of the best ways to do this, of course, is through reporting. Reliable, easy-to-understand reporting.

Don't underestimate the "easy to understand" part, either. If your reports are confusing, clients may not tell you.... They'll just tune out the reports. That means they're tuning out the proof of the results you're working very hard to get.

Not a good scenario.

But if those reports are clear, it's a totally different story. **Ethan Martin, Company Director at Lab Rat Creative** upgraded their reporting system to produce simple, **automated reports** that clients could understand easily. And because the reports were automated, the client saved several hours of work every week.

The end result? **Less work, reports that were far easier to understand, and a way to communicate progress to their client.**

Good reporting is a critical channel for good communication.

Final Thoughts

These tips will help you get started. But every client is different and every employee on your client's team is different. To really understand them, you need a trick from the old classic book, "How to Win Friends and Influence People".

It's a simple trick, really: Just imagine yourself in their shoes.

Try – try really hard – to see your agency as they see your agency.

If you need more information to do that, ask them. They'd probably be happy to tell you. They want you to be great, after all. Nobody wants to have to spend the time

and effort to find a new agency. They want to like you. So help them like you: Do your best to understand and then deliver what they want.

PPC Management for Agencies

Stepping into the world of Pay Per Click for the first time can be intimidating. The metrics, the PPC slangs, and the time-intensive nature PPC management for agencies can be scary. If you're starting from scratch, it is easy to wonder if there is an easier way.

Basic Principles of Marketing

An excellent Marketing strategy is a vital part of any successful business; it focuses on what you want to achieve for your business. Marketing is giving people information and showing them the reasons to choose your product and services.

Top 10 Essential Marketing Skills

Marketing plays a vital part in the success of any campaign or business. It includes understanding your audience, creating and promoting your products and services by reaching out to your prospective customers.

Ecommerce Metrics for Business Owners

The best e-commerce entrepreneurs are obsessed with metrics. It's this obsession with measuring and optimizing that allowed their firms, companies, and stores to grow so fast. However, they don't usually measure every single metric available.

Ecommerce Analytics for Marketers

The eCommerce industry is growing at an exponential rate. A lot of new online businesses have evolved up in a short time along with so many old businesses going online to have a pie of revenue through eCommerce. The financial worth of businesses such as Amazon, eBay, Flipkart, etc. very well proves the importance of eCommerce in this new era of technology.

Top 10 Ecommerce Agencies for Business Needs

Ecommerce is a very booming industry with a lot of big businesses turning online to find another way to reach to the customers. Starting an eCommerce business is really easy and requires very low investment. As easier it is starting an online business, harder it is to market it and generate sales through the website. ■

LIMELIGHT MEDIA, THE GROUND FOR BRAND BUILDING

TAIWO KAREEM

Mr. Taiwo Kareem is the Managing Director/CEO at Limelight Media, an emerging media independent agency in Nigeria. A seasoned and top-notch media professional with an extensive knowledge in the development and execution of media engagement, his wealth of experience in media cuts across managing and planning activities for an assortment of various communication vehicles for clients in Nigeria and across West Africa. He spoke exclusively to **MARKETING EDGE** on the agency and the industry, recently. Below are excerpts:

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an you tell us about yourself sir?

My name is Taiwo Kareem. I am the team lead of Limelight Media Limited; its Managing Director/CEO. I have worked with Stirling Health (Now GSK), TBWA, Noah's Ark communications and Media Mast to mention a few.

How will you describe Limelight Media?

Limelight is a team of envisioned and passionate guys who think they need to do things differently, infuse creativity into media and to make media not to be too scientific; as all of us will say, everything is rating.

We believe that media will do more with the infusion of art into it. Our belief is in media art. And we believe that as important as science is, Art plays a lot of roles in advertising. In fact, if you get the art right, you are going to achieve better results than what can be measured scientifically. To us, if science can give you arithmetic growth, art can give a geometric growth. Infuse art into science; you will get a better result. That is what we are aiming for.

How would you assess Limelight Media?

We are doing pretty well, though things are tough in the



country, as everybody knows the economy is slow as of now. Anybody that can actually survive in our economy, anyone who can start an agency and nurture it to growth, should be commended. Like they say, any company in this climate that can survive its trying time, within its first five years of operation, deserves some kudos. So, we hold the view that anybody that survives this trying time will be able to perform miracles in the coming years.

Against that background, I think that we have been pretty good, we are doing very well. We have even gotten couples of recognitions. We are a team of people who are experienced and are working together to put this vision to light; and we are both happy and excited that the agency is gradually coming to limelight – in keeping with its name.

We believe that the Creative industry is an industry that is somehow undermined and we are of the opinion that brand owners and governments should look at the sector much more differently because the creative is the core of the brand. Whatever the creative does is what the brands will live on, even after the creator (of the brand) has left. We believe the creative industry is an industry that should be given better opportunities to be involved in the idealization of certain brands.

How will you position the agency?

Positioning Limelight Media has always been our mantra. Being a relatively young and budding agency, our brand positioning is mostly about our turnaround time. For example, the fact that we are young, we are hungry, we are very vibrant our time around time is one of the best in the industry, regardless of what your business or brand trajectory it is; regardless of the timeline

that you have set out for the brand, we are looking at helping your brand grow instantly with whatever challenge you might face. We are positioning Limelight Media as a young, vibrant, hungry agency that is ready to go the extra mile for our brand owners.

How would you assess the Nigerian creative business?

It has been such that a lot of clients now feel like creative and media agencies should be collapsed into one. Before that, creative and media somehow have important roles to play. Creative idea is what drives the brand. If you get a creative material for a certain brand, that creative material can live with that brand for 20 to 40 years.

We believe that the Creative industry is

an industry that is somehow undermined and we are of the opinion that brand owners and governments should look at the sector much more differently because the creative is the core of the brand. Whatever the creative does is what the brands will live on, even after the creator (of the brand) has left. We believe the creative industry is an industry that should be given better opportunities to be involved in the idealization of certain brands.

How will you describe the current payment delays being experienced by media owners and vendors resulting from jobs done for brand owners?

It is not very good now. The kind of comments that we hear from our media partners on the subject of payment, are not funny at all. But, then, a lot of things actually suggest what the economic is like. If something is competitive, it allows for you to actually challenge the status quo. We have seen a couple of media partners who say no payment no exposure; but how many people can do that? If the market is steadily hungry, it is better you expose something and someone is owing you for months or even a whole year, than you not exposing anything.

As you know, media is like the consumables; it is something that doesn't stay there; it's intangible, it is something that goes with time, it is either you use it now or you lose it. Take a newspaper, for example, advert or no advert, you will still print a particular number of pages per edition. You will definitely not say that if you don't see an advert, you won't publish when your production deadline comes; Yet, if an advert is there, once you expose it, it is gone. The same thing is applicable to all media channels, be it radio, TV, or even outdoor. If your board is standing out there and there is no material on it, it does not mean that you don't incur some costs. If the demand is high, you have the opportunity of choices; but if it is low, the reverse will be the case.

For me, I sympathize with media owners more, even though they also need to wake up to the challenges of our time. Our time has become more scientific, it has become more open, and you can't get advert just on man-knows-man alone; you can get advert based on past recognition, the rating is there, it is on the goal. If you are popular and you deliver the target audience(s), clients will come to and desire what you offer. There is nothing an agency can do about that.

I have been in a situation where because of terms of payment, a client insisted that a particular media partner should not be used. And I used my own experience scientific mode to put other stations together to say this is better for this brand because of my own personal relationship with them. But, my personal way of looking at it became very expensive for what the brand needed to use. Alas, when I got back to the client, he said no, despite that he initially accepted my calculation and my opinion. But he looked at it and said this is what everybody says. This now taught me that no matter how much you want to

change the opinion of clients to a particular station, if you don't have enough proof to justify it, it is just a matter of time.

Today, everybody says this is the most popular station in Nigeria; by the time you sample people's opinion there is nothing you can do. At that point you can't owe such agencies, you can't owe such media partners, even if you want to owe, it can't be like you owing people for one year or that kind of time.

The only thing is that the industry is not buoyant enough to support the economy; you can understand how people are, now we are running on generator, you pay your rent, you pay your staffs, you don't have a enough clients base, so you are bound to owe if you are not very careful. All these things are actually tied to the economy; it is not put the blame to a particular party; the two of them have their own share of the blame and share of praise as it were. But the truth is that the law of demand and supply will continue to survive till the end of time.

If you want to be relevant, you have to up your game; once you do this, they can't treat you like others. Truth is that while some stations are suffering to get their money back, some others are collecting money as they are completing their campaigns because there is no shaking; they (clients) can't run away from them.

I will only advise that each of us has to up our game because being a debtor is not a good reputation for an agency; and this (not owing media partners) is one of the qualities that we try to build. One of the credentials that parade, here, is the fact that we do not owe. We would rather do whatever we can do within the time, having an agreement on how to pay; but I will not carry over debts of years.

Mind you, I know that we are talking about business; and I am not saying that we are perfect; but we try our very best to make sure that we maintain some high level of integrity to a level that we can call any of our partners to say we want to do this and it can happen tomorrow without money.

What is your advice to other agencies that are yet to discover their creative feat?

Like I said, we are young. There are a lot of Dons in the industry who can give better pieces of advice; but the truth is starting an agency is like every other business; it is always very challenging at the beginning; that is why if you are lucky to have loyal and dynamic hands, dedicated staff, that is, you don't know the grace that has fallen on your laps simply because that is the real challenge. Now, there is a lot of this that comes with it, particularly funding, and the mind that assists your vision. If you can get

those two things together, all of us can be working from home; office is secondary, car is secondary; virtually all other things are secondary, but the funds to do things, mandatory stuff. That is why, somehow, you need to gather people together, people of like mind so as to make sure that your dream comes to reality; otherwise, your dream dies.

It is equally true that if you have funds but you don't have a dynamic hands who see your vision, who agree with you, who know that to start is always a challenge, then you are likely to misuse your funds because there is no body that can put funds together for five to six, ten years without getting returns and will still be happy with you, not in this continent, and definitely not in Nigeria.

Those are the major challenges that are facing in business in Nigeria. People do not invest for a long time, and if you don't invest for a long time you can't really have gains. That is why many don't know how much Indomie Noodles has invested before reaping their gains; you don't know how much MTN, Coca-Cola, etc invested before they began to reap their gains. Interestingly, once they break even, it looks like a normal business.

Ask the owners of 7-Up, ask the owners

of Coca-Cola, you will find out that they paid their dues; but in this country if somebody puts money down for you for three years, or five years you are very lucky.

I would therefore advocate that we need to understand the peculiarity of our environment, ensuring that you do not waste your funds. You also need to be mindful of your hard times; sometimes even without money people do things, because we are working in a creative industry, a lot of things come from the heart, and from the society. That is why a banker can't be a multi-millionaire over night? We can legitimately be. Tomorrow you can come to this office and they will say this guy has moved to Banana Island. They won't say I stole money; the only question you ask is, has he won another major account or has the agency provided innovative ideas and solutions (Values) to clients for better brand positioning in their target market? In essence, you can become recognized in the marketing communications industry because of the value you provide.

In conclusion, the agency need to continue to instill the attitude in their DNA, ensuring that as we are working for money we are also working for ideas to help increase the Share of Voice (SOV) and bottom-line of our esteemed clients. ■



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Mr. Akachi Ngwu is the Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer with Luzo Digital Network & Media Limited, a corporate champion of the creative convergence of traditional and digital media and emerging channels in Nigeria. He spoke exclusively to MARKETING EDGE's CLIFFORD AMUZUO.

The readers out there would like to know, who LUZO Media is, and what is the philosophy behind the creation of the agency?

A little correction, our name is Luzo Digital Network and Media Limited, a company borne out of the need to offer marketing communications solutions across various industrial sectors. We have a world view perspective to our business practices with the understanding to continuously deliver international best practices in our service offerings. Our business interest covers both traditional out-of-home and digital out-of-home advertising; we are at the final stage of bringing our online television services into the market.

What Mission and Vision are you pursuing as a business entity? To what extent have you been able to realize the vision?

The founders and directors of our company have a clearly defined road map that encapsulates the mission and vision of what we do as a corporate organization as stated thus:

OUR VISION: "To be the foremost media hotspot of ideas and talents in Nigeria respected across Africa".

OUR MISSION: "To be at the forefront in championing the creative convergence of traditional and digital media and emerging channels in delivering clients media needs".

To deliver on our mission and vision, we have a commitment to a lifestyle of leadership and excellence in all that we do as a corporate organization.

What is it that stands your organization out amongst the league

LUZO DIGITAL NETWORK AND MEDIA LIMITED IS SET TO LAUNCH DIGITAL SMART POSTER INTO THE NIGERIAN MARKET

- AKACHI NGWU



of players in the outdoor sector? What competitive edge do you have above other agencies?

Firstly, as an organization we are very mindful of globalization and its impact across economies and the business environment; with that in mind, we strive

to bring to the market international best practices in our service delivery to our clients.

Secondly, we are a team of professionals, driven on passionate likeness for our kind of business. We are relentless in the pursuit of professionalism, creativity, result



THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IS DRIVEN ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS THAT MOST TIMES THROW UP CHALLENGES THAT MAY SEEM INIMICAL AT A GLANCE.

I MUST QUICKLY ADD, HERE, THAT, THE CRITICAL CHALLENGE IS THE DEARTH OF HUMAN CAPITAL TO SUPPORT THE BUSINESS. THE WORK ETHICS AND ATTITUDES OF THE NEW GENERATION WORKFORCE ARE FAR FROM BEEN COMMENDABLE. POOR ATTITUDE TO LEARNING WHERE CRITICAL SKILLS GAP IS IDENTIFIED IS WORRISOME.

orientation, and integrity in all that we do as a corporate entity. Our competitive advantage is the positive feedback and recommendations we regularly receive from our clients.

What is your company's strategic positioning in the industry? What is your general perspective on the brand building enterprise?

We play in a large industry encompassing other sectoral groups; but specifically to out-of-home advertising segment, our strategic playbook is driven on the one oasis strategy. By that I mean that our out-of-home advertising solutions are designed in such a way that our clients receive visibility and penetration either through our traditional offerings (billboards, gantries, roof tops, mobile advertising, truck, and wall drapes) or through our recently introduced digital smart posters.

Our digital smart poster is a novelty we are bringing to the market to provide our clients with location driven advertising campaign opportunities in an exciting

and impactful way. With our digital smart posters we are creating a paradigm shift in the way outdoor advertising is consumed.

As a practitioner in the supply side of the brand building value chain, I must commend the evolutionary trends, particularly in the area of using design thinking and storytelling in the branding process, even though more needs to be done as the impact of technology has become prevalent in the way media is consumed.

What is your general assessment of Nigeria's outdoor advertising industry? What is the size of the industry compared to other countries in the sub-region, in Africa and, of course, globally?

The outdoor advertising industry has come a long way and has continuously made steady progress despite the huge challenges in the business environment. We have seen progression in the product offerings with big investment outlay by practitioners signaling trust and interest in that sector.

A drive through the commercial city of Lagos will bring to the fore the investment outlay as demonstrated in various digital advertising towers dotting the city skyline.

It may also be good to highlight the key markets driving outdoor advertising in Nigeria – Lagos, Onitsha, Kano, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Benin, Aba and Abuja.

For me, size is relative but when you consider it from these variables; people, traffic and billboard, Nigeria is ahead in the sub region and Africa. But, then, other key markets in Africa like Kenya and South Africa equally have well established out-of-home advertising industry.

As such, rather than country-wide comparison, I would prefer to look at city specifics outdoor advertising competitiveness across key Africa markets; say Nairobi, Johannesburg, Lagos, Cairo, Kigali, etc.

How much would you say the industry has contributed to the growth of Nigeria's GDP?

You know we are a supply side industry, by that I mean that our services are dependent on the productive and manufacturing sectors of the economy. The elasticity of our competitiveness is driven by how the economic agents we offer our services are growing both in revenue and profit.

In other words, the buoyancy of the economy is a key determinant of how we add to the nation's gross domestic product. Nevertheless, the activities of our sector are grouped under the services category of the gross domestic product indicators.

Would you say the industry has a future, considering the present economic state of the country?

It is said that adversity is the precursor of prosperity. Adversity teaches one to be very resilient and, in that state of resilience, seeds of growth are planted. The downturn in economic activities is not peculiar to Nigeria, but rather a globally induced one.

The picture is not as bad it looks as out-of-home advertising has been performing reasonably well across other traditional media. In developed economies, the internet is the medium driving media consumption and spends; but the reverse seems to be the case in Nigeria as the data published and released in October 2019 by Statista.com reveals.

According to the data covering 2018 to 2020, out-of-home advertising spend is thus: USD118M, USD125M and USD131M, respectively. Television and video are the only traditional media that surpassed out-of-home advertising spend as revealed in the data.

The growing urbanization, infrastructural renewal projects, rising entrepreneurial drive, upsurge in technology related businesses and so many others are beaming signposts that out of home advertising has a future in Nigeria, Africa and globally.

As a business player, what do you consider as the basic challenges of the business?

The business environment is driven by internal and external factors that most times throw up challenges that may seem inimical at a glance.

I must quickly add, here, that, the critical challenge is the dearth of human capital to support the business. The work ethics and attitudes of the new generation workforce are far from been commendable. Poor attitude to learning where critical skills gap is identified is worrisome.

The downturn in the economy has also impacted on patronage from the clients to support our business.

What would you proffer as solutions to these challenges?

Addressing the challenges would require more training and mentoring programs by practitioners.

If you were to make a projection of the industry say in the next ten years, what kind of industry do you envisage?

Our industry is in a continuous state of evolution and it will continue into the future; one thing I can say is that it would become more professionalized than it is

now. Some key elements that would drive the future of out-of-home advertising in Nigeria include:

Consolidation – recently, two practitioners consolidated their business operations. More of such would happen going forward.

Specialization – resource constraints would drive practitioners into specialization so as to have more concentration of resources into areas of core strength.

Sector-specific practitioners – sector-specific practitioners would begin to emerge as competition deepens and resource availability shrinks.

Technology and data – technology would continue to impact on the operations of our business. Data and insights would be the derivable outcome in the use of technology by practitioners. Advertisers would begin to request for result-driven out-of-home advertising campaigns so as to support their marketing budget.

Emergence of regional players – we would begin to see a growing list of regional practitioners as a result of increasing regulatory environment. Practitioners would migrate to less stringent regulatory environments.

What is your impression, considering the regulatory environment of the outdoor sector? How best would you want the industry to be regulated?

I personally see regulation as a catalyst and an enabler for industry growth and prosperity. I recall that as a young practitioner in the industry I was privileged to attend workshops and conferences by the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, AAAN during the presidency of Enyi Odigbo, one of his calls to practitioners was self-regulation.

Regulation in itself is not bad for any industry; society or family could not function properly without an element of control and discipline.

Engagement between practitioners and the regulators are needed to for the mutual survival of all.

What is your view concerning the establishment of signage and outdoor advertising regulatory agencies by State governments in the country?

As I said earlier, no society, family or industry could function very well without an element of control and discipline.

It is the prerogative of the state governments to decide and determine how they want economic agents in their jurisdictions to function. Out-of-home advertising properties help to beautify and add value to the environment; so it



IT IS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS TO DECIDE AND DETERMINE HOW THEY WANT ECONOMIC AGENTS IN THEIR JURISDICTIONS TO FUNCTION. OUT-OF-HOME ADVERTISING PROPERTIES HELP TO BEAUTIFY AND ADD VALUE TO THE ENVIRONMENT; SO IT BEHOOVES ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE ON THE RELATIONSHIP. ENGAGEMENT REMAINS THE BEST WAY TO DRIVE THE RELATIONSHIP.

behooves on the government to decide on the relationship. Engagement remains the best way to drive the relationship.

Looking at the global outdoor advertising practice, how well have we benchmarked in terms of technology? Which areas do you think we need to improve upon?

Globally and across the developed economies, the use of internet (social and digital media) is driving media consumption and utilization. The internet is an outcome of technological advancement and as such has given rise to more consumer power and information.

The global outdoor advertising industry does not operate in isolation of market variables; so the shift in media spending to social and digital media by advertisers in the developed economies has also impacted on them. It is projected that media spending on the internet would surpass television

advertising by the end of the decade.

Surprisingly, as reported by Statista.com in a report that was released in October 2019, spending on out-of-home advertising in Nigeria surpasses that of the internet (social and digital media).

When driving through our highways the impact and imprint of technology is well noted across most outdoor advertising towers; through our billboards one is able to get traffic direction and report, weather forecast, time, real-time news feed, and even birthday and valentine shout-out messages.

The integration of out-of-home advertising campaign messages with social media handles is also an outcome of technology on outdoor advertising.

We are doing very well in adapting technology to our business and industry as demonstrated by my answer.

As a company what are your business goals and aspirations for the year 2020?

Our goal is to build and develop the skills of our employees for high performance. We plan to do this through regular in-house and external training opportunities. We believe that well trained human capital is the foundation for a high performing organization.

Secondly, we would formally launch our new novelty and innovation, the digital smart poster into the advertising market. Be sure that the medium would add value to advertisers as well as deepen the product offerings in the industry.

Tell us a bit more about Mr. Akachi Ngwu.

Akachi Ngwu is an author, columnist, mentor and entrepreneur. My career spans out-of-home advertising, electronic broadcast and print media.

In 2018, my debut book with the title; Connecting with Consumers: Insights Engagement Conversation was published and released into the market. I have been a mentor with Tony Elumelu Foundation since 2017; successfully mentored a mentee in 2018 to win the seed grant of USD5,000.00 from the foundation.

In 2014, I received the Top Ten Business Plan Competition Award in the inaugural edition of the Islamic Development Bank Business Plan competition for start-up and growing business entrepreneurs in Sub Saharan Africa countries at Casablanca, Morocco.

I am presently, the Executive Director/ Chief Operating Officer with Luzo Digital Network & Media Limited; happily married with two children. ■

At Afrinolly Creative Hub, we make a hospitable space for creativity, talent and ambition to bloom

– Jane Maduegbuna



Mrs. Jane Maduegbuna is a co-founder and the Executive Director at Afrinolly Creative Hub, the first Creator's Space in Nigeria opened for filmmakers, screenwriters, mobile technology developers, animators, artists and other creatives. It was for the provision of creative platforms and economic opportunities for emerging and established content creators. In an exclusive chat with **MARKETING EDGE**, the lawyer cum company executive talks about her company, the industry and the larger Nigerian economy.

What do you consider as basic challenges of the Nigerian business environment?

Well... If I had to say what I feel are challenges, I definitely have to go with a lack of regulation, order, structure and what I prefer to term an unconducive environment for SMEs to grow and thrive.

What is Afrinolly Creative Hub all about? How would you describe the present state of the organization?

Afrinolly Creative Hub is about the people and ecosystem, we believe in making a hospitable space for creativity, talent and ambition to bloom and flourish; thereby, becoming its best self, enriching the people and the nation as a whole.

As for your second question on how I would describe the state of the organization in the present, I have two words “God blessed.” Naturally, we do nothing without the Lord and honestly, with what is to come, it can only be said that it’s nothing but Him. (Chuckles)

What exactly are your business interests? What are your offerings to your target markets?

Our business interests can easily be understood as “T.I.T,” like tit for tat. “T” stands for “Turn-key production,” we do pre all the way to post production. The “I” for “Incubation,” we act as a petri dish of creativity and skills. And the last “T” for “Trainings,” here we basically render services, talks and lessons that allow individuals to grow or discover new skills.

As for our offering to our target market, I believe our greatest stronghold to render is, of course, our trust, consistency, dedication and work climate. We, for some reasons, find ourselves to be very good at fostering and maintaining good faith; or at least that’s what I’ve heard. This gives us good communication and proper comprehension of our client’s demands and needs. With this, we are able to optimize and maximize the utility and satisfaction found in our deliverables.

Who are your target markets, what is the size of the market and how much of the market do you control?

Our target market is people in the entertainment sector with money. Just kidding! You see, our clientele are usually multinationals; so this makes people think we are opting out of the Nigerian market but the truth is we are in fact interested in the entirety of the creative sector. We however do lean towards the film, fashion and music industry; as we believe these three are heavily intertwined and dependent on each other.

As for the size of the market, we can safely say that as long as humans exist, there’ll always be a need for entertainment. And as for our “control,” well, you can never truly tell. It would be highly presumptuous and assumptive of me to estimate or even guess-timate our “control.” But it doesn’t even matter because like I said before, we’re here for the ecosystem, not “world domination” (more laughter).

What are your business goals and objectives? Where do you want to see the business say in the next 10 years?

Basically, it’s the upliftment and betterment of the creative sector of Nigeria as a whole and hopefully, in the next ten years, we wish to play a key part in that movement and galvanizing that across Africa.

What relationships do you have with operators in the Nollywood industry?

A good one. At least, that’s what we hope (laughs).

What collaborations do you have with other operators in your industry outside Nigeria, especially West Africa and Africa.

Oh, we have many partners and recently, we’ve been forging many strong African relationships. It’s really been a good time. There’s also our production with MTN but there’s no way I’m leaking details of that (chuckles).

How much do you think your industry has contributed to growth of the Nigerian economy?

Well, I believe that the National Bureau of Statistics of the nation is better at divulging this information than I am (smiles).

What are your immediate plans for now and for the future as a business organisation?

Like I stated earlier, we have our production with MTN; but as for the future, well... You’ll have to wait and see.

Who is Mrs. Jane Maduegbuna?

A human, a mother, a Lawyer and right now, an Executive Director. It’s very funny how life conditions you to answer differently at various points in time; but yes, right now I am safely and happily those three



What inspired your choice of entrepreneurship?
A love for the youth demography and our decision to reach them through their passion point.

things.

What informed your career choice?

My husband. I was happily a homemaker; so he basically pushed me into this, helped me discover more about myself and unlock my potential. I quit many times so I can gladly say I would still be a happy homemaker, if not for his decision. However, I am extremely grateful and happy being and working as an Executive Director for this organization.

Was it deliberately planned or a happenstance?

Well, my previous statement tells it all.

What inspired your choice of entrepreneurship?

A love for the youth demography and our decision to reach them through their passion point. ■



MTN launches Turn It Up, set to transform Nigerians



In its commitment to remaining a leading technology company that plays a key role in the transformation of Nigeria and Nigerians, MTN Nigeria has introduced a new thematic campaign tagged Turn It Up. The campaign is designed to positively turn the lives of its consumers around by meeting them at

their unique passion points through technology.

According to MTN Nigeria, Turn It Up is committed to revving up the indomitable and can-do spirit among Nigerians, especially the youths, and making them be the best they can be without necessarily travelling out of the country.

Speaking at the campaign launch, the Chief Marketing Officer, Rahul De, said MTN would continue to be part of Nigeria's journey to greatness by contributing to the transformation of the country.

"Turn It Up is not just a campaign but a tool to maintain a continuous conversation with Nigeria and Nigerians. We will continue to positively engage our customers by introducing initiatives that add value to their lives," he said.

Also speaking, Richard Iweanoge, General Manager, Brand and Communications, MTN Nigeria, said the company was committed to turning things around for its teeming consumers by offering every necessary tool needed to take them to the next level.

"63 percent of Nigerians are below the age of 23 and are more tech savvy than the previous generation. To this young generation who has access to technology and the Internet, the solution to their challenges is to migrate. But we at MTN do not think that the solution is too far from us, hence the decision to launch this new campaign designed to provide them with the necessary tools that will enable them unleash their potentials," he said.

He added: "Nigeria has a cultural truth that we can't deny, and that is the truth of 'hustling' and especially hustling outside the nation's shores. But if we think deeply inward, we would find out that Nigerians don't really have to travel too far to become successful. Turn It Up is therefore designed to bring the best out of Nigerians at all level without necessarily leaving their immediate physical environment."

ZENITH BANK PLC:

A promise of performance

A promise is implicit in a brand from the combination of corporate message and experience, we believe that we will receive a certain experience from a brand". **Nicholas Ind.**

Above stated quote by Nicholas Ind, a renowned author and Professor at the Oslo School of Management Captures vividly the vision of Zenith Bank founder, Mr. Jim Ovia, a debonaire, self – effacing multi-billion naira business man. When in May 1990, Jim Ovia assembled his team together to float the Zenith Bank shop with the pay off line-“In your best interest” little did they know that they were sowing the mustard seed that would soon grow into an Oak tree.

Today, the world knows better indeed, the Nigerian banking sector and the general public know better that Jim Ovia and his group of restless and determined workers truly had their eyes and minds primed at the Zenith of their industry and the Peak of their profession.

In their visioning then, the Zenith Bank pathfinders had unknowingly tapped into the immortal philosophy of Nicholas Ind on branding.

According to the marketing marvenic, “Ind had in his work”. “Living the Brands” counselled on branding when he adopted the advertising planner, Paul Feld wick approach who says, “At its simplest, a brand is a recognizable and trust worthy badge of origin and also a promise of performance”.

With the brand name Zenith Bank-In your best interest, there could be no mistaking the identity and the essence of the bank by its target audience right from that day one. This can be posited within the context of Nicholas Ind. Theory when he said, “organizations spend large sums of money generating names, developing visual identities and designing packaging, all of which can be a valuable means of signifying what to expect from the organization”.

And looking back in time with the giant strides that Zenith Bank have recorded in the last three decades of its existence, the brand name, Zenith Bank has no doubt become the promise of performance. Notwithstanding the fierce competition in the Nigerian banking sub-sector of the Nigerian economy, Zenith Bank has become like Trojan horse and a colossus bestriding the Nigerian corporate world with ease and candour, leaving on its trails foot-prints of successes and remarkable growth that are not only admirable but immensely inspiring about the dawn of a new era in



Africa.

There is also a sense in which it can be argued that Zenith Bank's meteoric rise in the Nigeria banking sector finds perfect expression and interpretation in the words of the legendary marketing professional, Phillip Khottler. In his famed book, “Khottler on Marketing” how to Create, win, and Dominate Market, Khottler in Chapter 1, Building Profitable Businesses through World class Marketing” observed that “There are three kinds of Companies”, those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who, wonder what's happened. Although quoting an anonymous, Khottler made it known that what is key in the world of business is not only change but the rate at which change is taking place. He posited that the economics landscape will be shaped by two powerful forces-technology and globalization. What else can be added?

If truth must be told, there would be no gain-saying the fact that Zenith Bank is amongst the companies who make things happen.

This is best illustrated by its recent feat when it emerged as the Best Digital Bank in Nigeria in the 2019 Consumer Digital Banking Satisfaction Index Report released by Augusto and Co.

The Consumer Digital Banking Satisfaction Index report highlights customer's preferences and attitude towards digital banking platforms provided by banks in the country. The objective of the Index is to create an independent appraisal of the ease of using digital banking platforms by the Nigerian populace following increased competition by banks on digital platforms as well as the

growing quest for financial inclusion using digital means.

Agusto & Co., a foremost research and credit rating agency in Nigeria, explained in the report that the Index, which is in its second year, was the result of an extensive online and offline consumer survey carried out across various geopolitical zones in Nigeria, and was designed to give insight into the behavioural patterns of the respondents, drawn from both the formal and the informal sector. The output of the Index is based on information provided by respondents on the top eight banks in Nigeria by total assets as of December 31, 2018.

In the survey, two banks were assigned a '4 Star' rating for Consumer Digital Banking Satisfaction, with Zenith Bank scoring the highest and emerging the 'Best Digital Bank in Nigeria'. The report further noted that the '4 Star' rating assigned to Zenith Bank reflects transaction success rates, ease of use, perceived security and good troubleshooting & IT resolution on its different digital platforms.

The report also revealed that Zenith Bank has the highest transaction success rates on digital banking platforms such as mobile app, USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) or web, the bank's respondents experienced the most ease in navigating through the digital platforms, and the bank has one of the highest numbers of customers who felt it has an excellent rating on IT issue resolution.

Zenith Bank Plc is recognized as one of the most innovative financial institutions in Nigeria and was voted the most customer-focused bank in Nigeria for the Retail and SME segments in the 2018 KPMG Annual Banking Industry Customer Satisfaction Survey (BICSS). Most recently, the bank won the Best Bank in Retail Banking and the Bank of the Year at the 2019 BusinessDay Banks and Other Financial Institutions (BOFI) Awards.

The bank's commitment to world-class service standards, products and solutions has also ensured its market dominance, as attested to by the growth in fees from electronic/digital products, which doubled to N35.3 billion in Q3 2019 from the N17.6 billion recorded in Q3 2018.

Clearly, the fact that the bank's digital platforms and channels have been the main enablers of the massive growth in its non-interest income reflects the ease of adoption of the digital platforms by its teeming customers, and demonstrates the giant strides being made by the bank in the retail segment of the market.

In a clear show of its resilience and market leadership, Zenith Bank recently announced an impressive result for the year ended December 31, 2019, with profit after tax (PAT) of N208.8 billion, achieving the feat as the first Nigerian Bank to cross the N200 billion mark.

According to the bank's audited financial results for the 2019 financial year, profit after tax rose by 8% to N208.8 billion from the N193 billion recorded in the previous year.

The Group also recorded a growth in gross earnings of 5% rising to N662.3 billion from N630.3 billion reported in the previous year. This growth was driven by the 29% increase in non-interest income from N179.9 billion in 2018 to N231.1 billion in 2019. Fees on electronic products continues to grow significantly with a 108% Year on Year (YoY) growth from N20.4 billion in 2018 to N42.5 billion in the current year. This is a validation of the bank's retail transformation strategy which continues to deliver impressive results.

Profit before tax also increased by 5% growing from N232 billion to N243 billion in the current year, arising from topline growth and continued focus on cost optimisation strategies. Cost-to-income ratio moderated from 49.3% to 48.8%.

The drive for cheaper retail deposits coupled with the low

interest yield environment helped the bank reduce the cost of funding from 3.1% to 3.0%. However this also affected net interest margin which reduced from 8.9% to 8.2% in the current year due to re-pricing of interest bearing assets. Although returns on equity and assets held steady YoY at 23.8% and 3.4% respectively, the Group still delivered an improved Earnings per Share (EPS) which grew 8% from N6.15 to N6.65 in the current year.

The Group increased its share of the market as it secured increased customer deposits across the corporate and retail space as deposits grew by 15% to close at N4.26 trillion. Total assets also increased by 7% from N5.96 trillion to N6.35 trillion. The Group created new viable risk assets as gross loans grew by 22% from N2.016 trillion to N2.462 trillion. This was executed prudently at a low cost of risk of 1.1% and a significant reduction in the non-performing loan ratio from 4.98% to 4.30%. Prudential ratios such as liquidity and capital adequacy ratios also remained above regulatory thresholds at 57.3% and 22.0% respectively.

In demonstration of its commitment to its shareholders, the bank announced a proposed final dividend pay-out of N2.50 per share, bringing the total dividend to N2.80 per share.

In 2020, the Group remains strategically positioned to capture the opportunities in the corporate and retail segments, while efficiently managing costs and expanding further its retail franchise employing digital assets and innovation.

Consistent with this superlative performance and in recognition of its track record of excellent performance, Zenith Bank was voted as the Best Commercial Bank in Nigeria in 2019 by the World Finance and the Most Valuable Banking Brand in Nigeria 2019 by The Banker. The Bank was also recognized as Bank of the Year and Best Bank in Retail Banking at the 2019 BusinessDay Banks and Other Financial Institutions (BOFI) Awards. Most recently, the Bank emerged as the Bank of the Decade (People's Choice) at the ThisDay Awards 2020.

In view of its peak performance, Zenith Bank has become a hope and an inspiration to the Nigerian banking public. It is one bank that many would want to do business with.

Yet, it remains focused, dogged and ubiquitously innovative, driving its operations with the latest technology that is available in any developed economics of the world.



Ebenezer Onyeagwu, Zenith Bank's GMD/CEO

Agencies



Jude Odia

STARCOM MEDIA PERSPECTIVES

Starcom Media Perspectives, Nigeria's leading media communications agency commenced operations in 2005 with a vision to consistently provide best-in-class global service quality to clients and drive thought leadership in the practice of marketing communications with local relevance. Starcom Global Network owns 25% equity of our business which means that Media Perspectives Limited is the local Starcom Global office in Nigeria, not an affiliation as most other agencies have. We have evolved over the years into a digital-first media solutions company with our corporate philosophy anchored on three main pillars; People, Processes and Human Experience based solutions.

People: We are deliberate about grooming our talents to be digital-first in their skill set while ensuring that they are client-focused and passionate about what they do. Our talent recruitment and management process ensures that we groom from bottom up to inculcate a culture of excellence and the Starcom Global DNA, which is human-centric.

Processes: Our processes are automated to ensure ease of client access and have been built to offer transparency in line with our corporate governance policy being driven by our global head office in Chicago, USA. We guarantee high performance as our processes are adaptable to integrate with numerous and varying clients processes for the best outputs.

Human Experience: With the consumer being at the heart of our operations, we are focused on advancing the alchemy of people and technology to create experiences people love and actions brands need.

Our business is segmented into 4 distinct yet interrelated divisions: Mainstream Media, Digital & Tech, Content & Platforms and Business Consulting

a). **Mainstream Media:** We are set up to deliver strong capabilities in insight-based media strategy, data driven planning and efficient buying & sponsorship management in traditional media advertising in Nigeria. Our buying and negotiation dexterity ensures we deliver best-in-market efficiency gains based on our collective market clout. We are passionate about execution excellence and have gone the extra length in investing in a dedicated electronic media content monitoring studio to ensure full compliance to our set campaign objectives. Starcom global tools and systems have been operationalized locally to deliver award-winning results over the years.

b). **Digital & Tech:** Being a future-forward company with a focus on delivering results with our service offerings to clients businesses, we have made significant investments to enhance our digital operations especially to solve data analytics challenges and provide tech platforms that will deepen consumer experience across touchpoints.

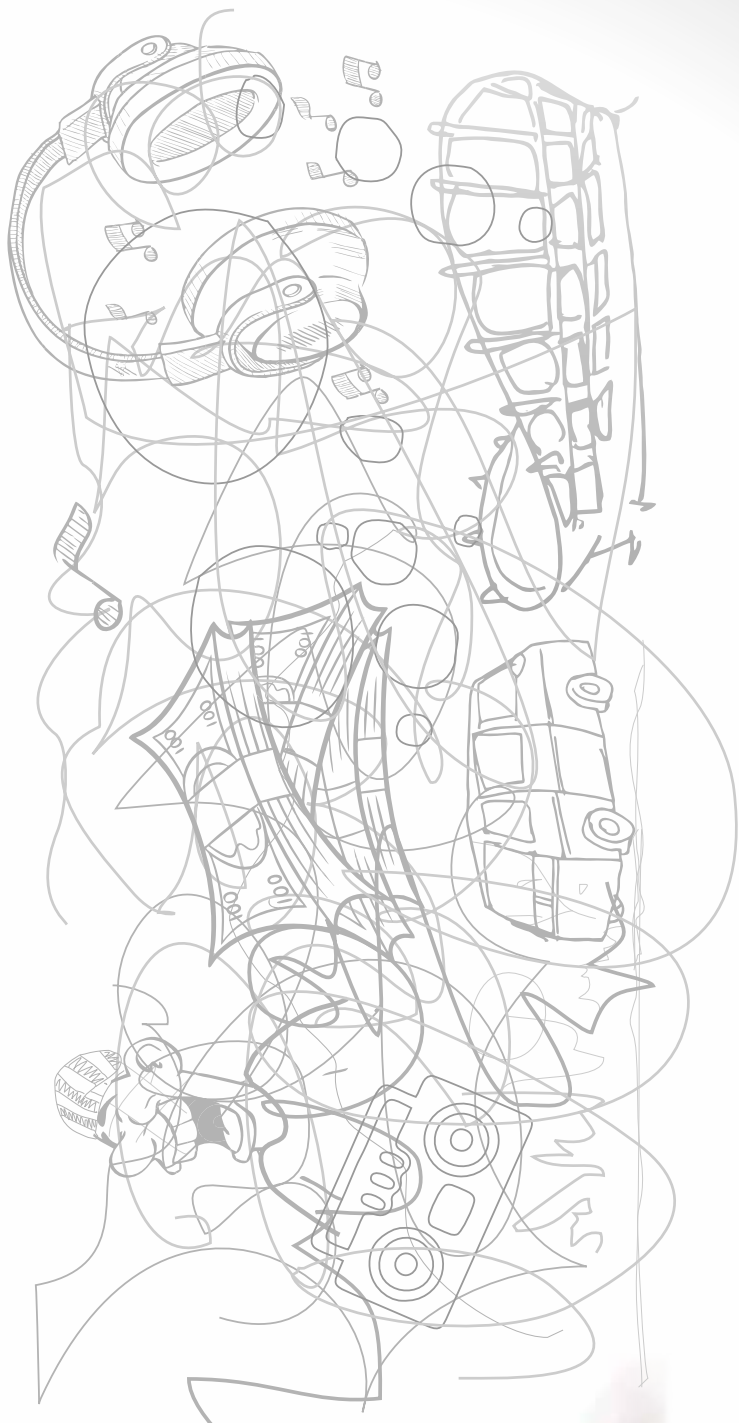
We provide fullstack digital marketing solutions that spans strategy, social media, search, display and video advertising, email marketing and website/mobile app optimization.

We also house a team of designers and developers that provide bespoke, innovative web & mobile solutions that deliver business value. We help bridge the gap between the digital and physical worlds, creating unique human-centred experiences powered by technology, data and innovation. We deliver the right tech solutions to help businesses drive profitable growth and achieve their objectives.

c). **Content & Platforms:** With the knowledge of consumer evolution and the rising demand for content solutions amongst our clients, we have developed a fit-for-purpose production unit that commissions, curates and produces content for and on behalf of clients that will help achieve communication effectiveness with the right target audience.

d). **Business Consulting:** This is a new specialist service borne out of our continuous improvement in strategy development fostered by collaborations with our clients has spurred us on to create this service and we have offered this over the years to discerning clients. Our approach to dimensioning business challenges has resulted in solutions beyond marketing communications across multiple clients. We have worked for various clients ranging from FMCGs to financial services to content creation and broadcasting.

Our Starcom network is present in 78 markets across the world with 129 offices with billings in excess of USD39.2billion and our head office is in Chicago USA. Sub-Saharan Africa has 3 regional hubs in South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. Nigeria is responsible for coordinating the West Africa region.



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STB McCANN's MD,
Paul Ugoagwu

STB McCANN:

STRATEGY DRIVEN APPROACH THAT KEEPS PAYING OFF

You would wonder why STB McCann has had a hand in most big brands in Nigeria. From telecoms to breweries, from the big multinationals to mammoth financial institutions, this foremost marketing communications agency has had a say in the growth and development of the big whales.

Paul Ugoagwu, MD/CEO of STB McCann, says it all comes down to their unwavering commitment to strategy driven work. In his words, "When you are strategy driven, you are invariably market driven, data driven and customer driven. Our two major wins last year proved that we are doing something right. When we asked our clients what impressed them the most besides our creativity, they all pointed at our strategy. 'You guys nailed it! That's what they say.'"

A member of the McCann WorldGroup, the agency still stands tall in competitive marketing communication. Last year, they brushed aside strong rivals to win the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) pitch.

Bankers Warehouse followed soon after. Again, it was a competitive pitch.

"Strategy is everything. What we do for clients we do for ourselves", says Paul Ugoagwu.

"To successfully position a brand, to help it navigate the difficult terrain of communicating its values to an increasingly changing and dynamic market, to elevate these brand values above the noise and to stand the brand apart from its competitors is a skill that is fast disappearing in our industry. And this is where we are strongest."

STB McCann has continued to re-invent itself, leveraging its strong international affiliation and extensive local experience and strength. They continue to be a big impact player in the comity of marketing communications agencies.

"In an industry where everyone lays claim to creativity, a strong strategy culture tilts the scale. Differentiation is the name of the game. Our brand of marketing communication is built on in-depth knowledge of the market and the advertising ecosystem, our ability to innovate and our belief in the triumph of creativity and ideas based a strong strategy tradition. Recall the saying that if you are not a brand, you are a commodity. Ours is an enduring brand. That's why we are still here, and we will still be here in the future by God's grace. We will continually upscale our offerings across the whole value chain, consistently add value to our clients and their brands. We consider ourselves an extension of our clients' marketing and sales department. We enjoy brand building. We take pride in looking at the big brands with the satisfaction that we've had a hand in their successes."

The advertising guru also commented on the disruptive impact of technology on the practice of marketing communication. He says technology has come to stay, although not all the African markets will be impacted the same way. "Even in Nigeria, there are levels of impact. The high cost of data, internet access, infrastructural pace, education and modernization will slow down or hasten certain markets and how they embrace technology. Religion and culture will also play a role. The Nigerian market is one big mini Africa. The youths in Lagos are not the same as the youths in Sokoto. Our job is to help brands play in the most viable segments, using the most appropriate channels to deliver bespoke brand messages. This is why research is vital and strategy is key."

He explained that technology has big impact on the cost of doing business, the speed of response, consumer behavior, media planning, production and execution. It will have consequences on how we do business. The modern-day consumer is smart. Today's client must be smart. Today's agency must be smarter.

Paul Ugoagwu, STB McCann's humorous CEO, attributes the high industry mortality rate to a lack of depth of agencies, inability to adapt and innovate, and global economic meltdown. "Sometimes, agency business is likened to the parable of the sower where some seeds fell on rocky soil. The thin layer of soil on the rock surface helps the seed to sprout quickly, but it soon dies for its lack of deep roots. There are other agencies which, like the seed among thorns, do well early but the changes in the ecosystem, the breathtaking speed of technology, the adverse business climate make it difficult for them to continue to compete."

A McCann man to the core, Paul Ugoagwu was trained in McCann South Africa and has moved round virtually all the key departments of marketing communication. He was at a time head of new business, head of strategy and creative lead. He now leads STB McCann's team of young, exciting and hungry-for-success team.

"Although I am what you call a veteran of the profession, having amassed about 30 years of experience across agencies and countries, our agency is a hybrid of experience and youth. I have an energetic and brilliant deputy in the person of Oluwayemisi Omojafor. Finance department is manned by Tobi Latinwo. We have a vibrant HR department. But, by far, our depth of strength is in our core areas of creativity, strategy and business development.

"Good governance is key to any business. Integrity. Professionalism. Discipline. These are our core values which we hold very dear and which have kept us alive and kicking. Our clients trust us to deliver what we promised no matter what."

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Rotimi Bankole

SBI Media Group

SBI Media Group, a next-generation media agency was founded in 2013 as a strategic media strategy and buying agency. Built on a culture of bravery, thought leadership, creativity and innovation, the agency provides end-to-end media solutions to all its ever-increasing clientele which cut across FMCGs, Aviation, Telecoms, financial services, Technology, Startups, and Political brands. SBI Media is a member of the Masscom Global Network, a group over 40 agencies across Asia, Middle East and Asia Pacific region. It is the West African strategic hub for the global network. With a credo of putting the client first; and achieving top class result all the time, it describes itself as a next-generation media agency built on a culture of bravery, Thought leadership, creativity and innovation. As the West Africa strategic partner of Masscom Global, SBI Media has expanded into event and activations with Streams Communications and Media Network as well as Octageo Energy, and oil and gas marketing and sales company. As an agency group, SBI Media is among the top 7 largest media agencies in Nigeria with billions of Naira in annual billings. And, as a globally-focused group, the agency has built a strategic consortium of management partners across Canada, Turkey, Europe and Asia to cooperate beyond borders. The agency dares to be different via its speed; its being client-focused; and innovativeness. It believes in leading and not stopping with far effective and cost-effective strategies. It has become the toast of the mobile phone, startup, technology and financial services industry clinching more than 51% of market share in the mobile technology category. Founded by Mr. Rotimi Bankole, a media and marketing communications expert with over 15 years experience that cuts across media, creative and content development, public relations, events management and brand activation. In the Bankole team are other eggheads in the management team including Alison Oyome, he heads media investment and planning, Samuel Odusami who is the group head, strategy and research; Oludare Ajao, the Group CFO and Kayode Olowoyeye, Group BTL head. SBI Media is poised to build a next-generation, sustainable marketing communication.

STREAMS MEDIA

Streams is one agency in Nigeria that sees itself as being more than an agency. In fact, it sees itself as an innovation powerhouse; deservedly so. With a vision to be the most sought after brand innovation company in Africa and a mission to support brands with best-in-class ideas, innovation and thoughts to make businesses more profitable and sustainable, the agency always

aims to create world-class brand innovation for brands and businesses. A bold, daring and no-limit thinker agency, Streams believes that: everything is possible; a good idea must be simple; a good idea must have a single person in mind; it must be measurable; build the brand; be affordable; and make its clients profitable. Characteristically, Streams as an agency does not wait for brief; but rather creates it. It tackles any brief it creates or gets through a four-phase strategy viz: Thinking, Research, Innovation Generation and Exposure Phases. Its service offerings include Branding, Brand Strategy, Brand Messaging, Brand Activations, Digital Design; and Social Media. Among its great works, in recent times, are Phantom 9 TV commercial, TECNO Spark 3 Radio commercial, as well as numerous print adverts for TECNO, Infinix, Sterling Bank Plc, Peak Milk, Ibex, Nordica Fertility Center; and several digital adverts and online activations and engagements for several of the above-mentioned clients, among others. As should be expected, some of the adverts have landed Streams some awards at the Lagos Advertising and Ideas Festival, LAIF; and Marketing World Awards.





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Yomi Benson

CULTURE COMMUNICATIONS

Established in January 2010, Culture Communications Limited is a marketing communications organisation that is poised to create contemporary and culturally relevant communication while leveraging key consumer insights to deliver value to its clients.

The agency is highly celebrated in the Integrated Marketing Communications Industry (IMC) for its ground-breaking creative marketing communications solutions for some of Nigeria's leading brands.

Some of the offerings and arms of Culture Communications include: Culture Comms, Culture Digital, Culture Activ8, Culture Mobile, Culture Prints and Culture Media.

The agency prides itself on offering cutting-edge services to its numerous clients in the IMC industry cutting across advertising, media, and digital thereby giving 360 degrees services to its clients.

For instance, Culture Comms handles full-service advertising services with strengths in brand strategy, planning and integrated campaigns, while Culture Digital crafts awesome marketing and digital products to grow businesses and build enduring relationships between brands and consumers.

On the same hand, Culture Activ8 focuses on driving consumer action through brand activation campaigns and experiential events and Culture Media helps brand owners to get all media exposures, from quick consultations, to full service productions.

Also, Culture Mobile is tailored mobile solutions for a wide range of industry. It helps brands stay ahead of the curve with a strategic approach that puts mobile at the forefront of their service while Culture Prints offers a full range of print services to a wide variety of clients. The company is a one-stop shop for all printing requirements.

Some of its clients includes: Royal Air Maroc, SA Mill, British American Tobacco, KFC, Heinz and Total.

Culture Communications Limited is owned and managed by Yomi Benson.

A graduate of the humanities, Mr. Benson holds a PGD in Advertising and a Masters in Business Administration. As a Full Member of APCON with over 18 years rounded experience in advertising, brand management and sales, YB, as he's known to his friends, is no stranger to the world of brand management.



PLURAL MEDIA

Established in July 2006, Plural Media came into Nigeria's advertising industry with a clear perspective of challenging the 'status-quo' in the delivery of OOH media communications. After deployment of her first Digital OOH platform in Nigeria's oil rich garden city – Port-Harcourt – the company quickly extended its tentacles to the centre of excellence – Lagos – and since then has not rested on its oars in delivering communication value to her teeming clients, pan- Nigeria.

The agency is registered with the Lagos State Signage & Advertisement Agency (LASAA), Oyo State Signage & Advertisement Agency (OYSAA) and is an active member company of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN). Furthermore, Plural Media has been registered with South African National Signage Association (SANSA) since 2008.

With a mission to "enhance visibility and deliver measurable out-of-home communication value to our customers through the provision and management of strategic media apertures", and a vision "to be the leading provider of innovative advertising media platforms that meet the yearnings of our customers in Africa", Plural Media is not just another provider of display media for advertising and communication but an end-to-end solution provider.

To its credit, the agency continuously challenges the status quo in the OOH advertising space by offering its clients innovative, targeted, and high impact advertising media that guarantees value-for-money to its teeming clientele.



CMC CONNECT

CMC Connect BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe) is the flagship business of the CMC Connect Group with specialty in reputation management and strategic communications.

With an affiliation to Burson, Cohn & Wolfe, the world's 3rd Largest PR Network and a unit of the WPP, the world's leading communication network spread across 110 countries in six continents. Our superiority is based on ground-breaking strategy formulation, quality service delivery and a strong focus on results that make a contribution to the bottom-line for its clients.

The agency's practice areas include Reputation Management, Brands & Corporate Communications, Crisis & Issues Management, Financial communications, Youth Communication, Media Management and Trainings.

The Group, CMC Connect Ltd. Itself is one of the leading perception management consulting firms in Nigeria with over 26 years practice experience.

Over those years, the Group has served the Positioning and Marketing Communication needs of organizations in sectors such as Mobile Telephony, Strategic Consulting, Steel & Mines, Banking, FMCG and Government.

With high proficiency in offering insightful strategies and ideas that impact positively and greatly on its client's business goals, it strongly focuses on quality and satisfactory client experiences.

With a vision, "To be the most sought after Perception Management Consulting Firm on the West Coast of Africa; the Group has given itself a mission, "To deliver cutting-edge, strategy-driven perception solutions that add intrinsic value to our client's business; utilising the best talents and resources, in the best traditions of work excellence and creativity".

In highlighting the factors which define it and which set it apart from the crowd, CMC Connect is always proud to reel out: Strategic insight; the Strength of its global and local (GLOCAL) experience; the creative solutions which it proffers; and its strong financial base. All of these have given it the edge which it has always had and propelled to the Olympian height at which it has consistently operated.

The visionary behind the CMC Connect dream and evolution is Yomi Badejo-Okusanya, a consummate public relations practitioner who started his career in marketing communications in 1988 with CT & A, a Lagos based advertising agency and where he rose to become a Director in 1991.

He founded CMC Connect Limited in 1992.

Yomi, as he is simply called, has extensive experience in the areas of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs, Perception Management, Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations & Crisis Communications.

He has worked on various accounts for both private and public sector clients including multinational companies handling various Corporate Communication activities, Issues, Advocacy & Crisis briefs, Government and Legislative Relations; and other public affairs management for high profile clients that include, the JAGAL Group, Airtel Nigeria, International Monetary Funds (IMF), British American Tobacco Nigeria, Transcorp, Renaissance Group, Federal Inland Revenue Service, Peugeot Nig Ltd, Shell, Virgin Nigeria.

A Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and a past Chairman of NIPR, Lagos State Chapter, he is the President of African Public Relations Association (APRA); and he is on the board of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) and many other blue chip companies in Nigeria.



ORACLE EXPERIENCE

Oracle Experience Limited, one of the leading experiential agencies in Nigeria was incorporated in 2004.

The agency prides itself in giving life to brands through event marketing, promotional marketing, sponsorship marketing, employee engagement and digital. It believes that brands need extraordinary ideas that create emotional connections, fuel conversations and deliver business results.

The agency recently won the Leadership Award in Experiential Marketing in Nigeria at the 6th Edition of the MARKETING EDGE Brands & Advertising Awards of Excellence held at Balmoral Hall, Lagos.

Its major tenets of operations include creating experiences that strengthen the relationship between brands and the people that matter most to them as well as deploying a back-to-basics approach to storytelling with a stronger understanding of how all the touchpoints in the broader brands story fit together.



CreativeXone

CreativeXone is one creative agency in Nigeria that sees itself as new kind of agency in that it fuses an understanding of integrated marketing communications with brand values, putting brands at the heart of conversations while commanding good returns on communication investments.

Setting out to make a difference, the agency chose to be a passionate breed; and to be “Unusual in a Good Way”.

With a credo of Clever Thinking which it regards as the process that helps it to produce works that astound without setting out to do so, the agency has, right from its inception, distinguished itself in services which include Brands Management; Strategy/Planning; Creative; Media; New Business Development; and Support Services, among others.

Expatiating about Clever Thinking as a process, CreativeXone explains that through the right fusion of effective marketing communications and an understanding of the brand’s core values, it fosters ground breaking ideas that grow and define the performance of the brands which it builds.

Describing itself as Brand Management Consultants; Advertising Practitioners, and brand builders rolled up in one, the agency states very clearly that it thrive on ideas that generate business and, in turn, generate income.

In its words, “we help our clients’ brands flourish by offering value through strategy, corporate identity and positioning as well as interactive social media development and PR for effective marketing communications”.

Guided by a philosophy of operating a simple ideology that governs its works; a Do it Right Strategy, being at the heart of everything it does; a Do it Better Creativity that runs through every fibre of its operations; and a Do it Now approach, it never matters to CreativeXone whether it is below the line, via the line, down the line or on the line, simply because it really doesn’t see a line! What it sees are moments to identify with consumers, transform their behaviours and propel brand objectives.

Parading a solid network of professionals, the agency provides all the outlooks needed to solve business communication problems, using its strategic proprietary tools which include, in its words, The Customer Xone, which involves combining the mood of the market with a deep understanding of consumer motives and behavior; The Client Xone, which is its technique to work in partnership with clients to establish a firm strategic plan and then employ creativity across the board to deploy the approach best suited to achieve results; The Competition Xone by which it studies the competition’s activities to differentiate its brand offering and procure a sustainable solution to client’s challenges; and the The Creativexone, which it describes as the solution xone and by which it makes use of all the above strengths concurrently to identify business problems and generate ideas for relevant solutions.

Leading CreativeXone’s team of formidable professionals is Doyin Adewumi, its Managing Director, an erstwhile Managing Director of Centrespread FCB, who, with over 25 years industry experience, has birthed successful, award winning marketing communications campaigns across the industry including Skye Bank’s “Yes!” campaign, FCMB’s My Bank and I, and several others.



GDM GROUP

GDM DGROU a leading direct marketing and online services agency in Nigeria. It offers commercial, strategy and business solutions.

With a vision “To be the leading retail solutions company controlling entire value chain operations for brands in West Africa within five years.”

GDM GROUP is committed to delivering service in precise, professional and efficient manner; thus saving its clients’ time and money while helping them attain higher human and corporate effectiveness.

With such core values as integrity, team work, passion, discipline and excellence, GDM GROUP has remained an indisputable partner to all the brands which it has had in its portfolio to date.

To underscore this point, one of the agency’s clients has been credited with declaring matter-of-factly that “GDM GROUP’s professional intervention rescued our product and revitalized our brand in Africa markets”

GMD GROUP t put up a brilliant performance at the just concluded MARKETING EDGE Brands & Advertising Awards of Excellence when it won the Innovative Experiential Agency of the Year Award.



Elev8

The introduction of digital media into Out-of-Home advertising practice in Nigeria has undoubtedly transformed the outdoor business from one where carpenters and welders hold sway to one where creativity, capacity and capital are the defining factors for success.

Although the process started in 2008 when the Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA) embarked on an exercise to sanitise the state's outdoor environment which resulted in many billboards being pulled down by the agency, the widespread adoption of digital media by outdoor advertising agencies is still recent.

Fully realising the tremendous opportunity that the new outdoor regime in Lagos presented for forward looking entrepreneurs, Elev8 quickly carved a niche for itself by deploying the Elev8 Transit TV to give brands a broader reach within the Lagos metropolis.

Given the metropolitan nature of Lagos and the massive number of people on the roads in the state, the deployment of Elev8 Transit TV, an innovative advertising platform, was indeed a masterstroke. With Elev8 Transit TV, clients have a chance to customise their marketing strategies to target a geographic area which is more cost-effective. And with 70 per cent of the 21 million people in Lagos State relying on public transportation for their movement around the city, exposure on Elev8 Transit TV delivered a massive mileage to brands.

For maximum effect, Elev8 Transit TV partnered with LAGBUS Asset Management Company, T&M Nigeria Limited, Soundcity Music Channel and 1music entertainment to deliver fresh entertainment content to its audience. The implication of this partnership could not be lost on commuters in Lagos because LAGBUS buses on the Bus Rapid Transit routes in the state represented the single largest mover of people across the state today. The buses travel along the busiest routes and business-centric hubs of Lagos.

In February 2016, Elev8Media rebranded as Elev8media Advertising Ltd with the aim to provide audience and technology driven effective solutions in the advertising sector.

As a value driven company, Elev8media Advertising provides other bespoke products for outdoor advertising campaigns. The company is reputed for building the most energy efficient billboard in Lagos called "The Grid" which is located opposite King's College on Lagos Island. The Grid, a backlit energy efficient billboard, serves well as an integral part of a fully integrated marketing campaign, delivering the same brand messages directly to target audience for just a fraction of the advertising budget.

According to the Managing Director of Elev8media Advertising, Funmilade Alalade, "If we do not help our clients to succeed, then we cannot succeed. Each and every campaign is treated with utmost consideration, whether it is a one-day run or a multi-month, multi-stage campaign. Our job is to help your business."

Elev8 has also played pioneering role in the Mobile Billboards category. The digital billboards which are mounted on trucks have been a major feature on Lagos roads.

As competition among practitioners in the Out-of-Home advertising business intensifies, it is certain that those that will survive and thrive in the emerging digital age are the ones who can be creative and develop capacity to meet the demands of the marketplace creatively. It is therefore safe to expect to see Elev8 growing in leaps in the years ahead. With leading brands in all sectors of the economy already in the roll call of clients of the agency, Elev8 can only grow bigger and bigger. And with a dynamic management that is on top of their game, it is certain that the sky is the limit for Elev8.



FPL Media

FPL Media is a leading outdoor advertising agency in Nigeria.

The agency offers such services as Branding; Indoor and outdoor advertising boards; Exhibition Displays; Media audience audit and measurement; as well as Strategic Media Buying and Planning.

Parading key staff who are already registered with relevant professional bodies in the industry, FPL Media prides both itself and its staff in continuous professional development thus guaranteeing effective, efficient and professional service delivery to all clients and at all times.

The company's management is passionate about the growth and development of the advertising industry in Nigeria by constantly engaging in research and development that will lead to industry disrupting innovations and services for its clientele.

EAGLESERVE CONSULTANTS LIMITED



EAGLESERVE's duo of Alhaji Kabir Bello & Prince Shola Rotimi

Eagleserve Consultants Limited is an Abuja based leading integrated marketing communications agency. It prides itself as being the first agency in Abuja and the entire North of Nigeria to be certified by the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) to practice the business of advertising and marketing communications in the country.

The top flight agency provides holistic services for faster and better results for clients at greater value. Being research centered, it works with a deep insight of the clientele target audience's perception and attitudes, which makes it easier to influence and change them positively.

A data based integrated marketing communications creative agency, Eagleserve is configured to diagnose and prescribe reliable solutions that would be displayed on graphical dash boards, with quantifiable and measureable results for its clients.

The agency's unique selling proposition (USP) lies in its intriguing insight (eagle eye) as a research centered branding outfit with proficiency in discerning the imperceptible factors that constitute every brand's equity; and distilling marketing information through the prism of deep perception. Like an eagle, the agency is positioned as the medium through which individuals' and corporate organisations' voices could easily be heard from afar, through adequate brand relationship management.

A brand architectural agency that it is, Eagleserve Consultants designs and develops brands through digging into piles of data to unveil undiscovered innovations, which provides clients with branding insights to drive effective communication platforms; and creatively driven with its analytical skills to produce branding experience to the target audience; its wealth of experience, professional personnel, communication research measures and creative tools used in retrieving information on campaign themes, appeals, media selection, target audience, brand positioning, all of which give it an edge when it comes to influencing public choice and buying decisions.

For every campaign it handles Eagleserve uses great analytical skills to determine the best media mix for the product's target audience. And, to make emotional connection between the brand and the consumer, its media planners build platforms around consumer insights to separate its brands from the competition by providing consumers with brand experience that allows consumers to touch and feel the brand in a way that truly captivates them.

The agency also orchestrates a two-way dialogue with clients and audience on its Interactive Market System (IMS); while its Experiential Marketing brings brands' personalities to life and adds value to the target audience's experience.

Characteristically, Eagleserve Consultants identifies unique story angles and media opportunities to find the right media outlets to reach target audiences laced with extensive experience in planning and managing special events as well as create the most innovative and effective communication solutions.

The agency's clientele includes, but is not limited to: MDAs like Ministry of Petroleum, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Aviation, NNPC, Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Standard Organization of Nigeria; and state governments like Kebbi State Government, Yobe State Government, Nasarawa State Government, as well as Bank of Agriculture, Jaiz Bank Plc, 212 Bureau de change, among others.

Apart from its ever growing clientele, the agency also partners with other advertising agencies (AAAN members) based in Lagos to convert their advert copies to Hausa (and some local dialects if necessary) and place such in the best fitted media (TV, Radio, billboards and Newspaper) in the North.

Eagleserve Consultants has a sister agency, Dabira Outdoor Media Ltd, a full-fledged outdoor agency which came on board mid last year, 2019. Dabira, like its mother agency, is strategically focused on Northern Nigeria.

Leading the agency as its Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer is Prince Shola Rotimi, a marketing strategist and corporate communications expert. A graduate of Statistics from University of Ilorin and a master's degree holder in Marketing with bias in Marketing Research, Rotimi is a member of Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Nigerian Statisticians Association and full member of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON.

Partnering with Rotimi to drive Eagleserve to greater heights is Kabir Bello, a result oriented Advertising and Media Relations practitioner with over a decade experience in Advertising, Media and Public Relations, Brand Management, Printing and TV Production.

Bello holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Advertising and Public Relations from International Institute of Journalism, Abuja and has participated in different training programmes in advertising, business development, media and marketing communications. He is an associate member of Advertising Practitioner Council of Nigeria (APCON), Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), as well as member of Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM).



**IMC TROOPS' MD,
ADEMOLA ADEDOYIN**

IMC TROOPS

IMC TROOPS is a campaign planning and execution agency, renowned for constantly and consistently using an INTEGRATED approach to planning and executing creative brand activations; and deploying best-fit Marketing Communication tools at all times.

The agency's goal, in keeping with its pay-off line, "Activate Growth", is to strengthen the frontline of marketing coordination in the battle for superior patronage and growth; it fosters trial, patronage, and loyalty through quality targeting and engagement of target audience to deliver on client objective, on time and in full, for Consumer, Trade and Cause Marketing,

Reputable for Brand Activations (Launch, Re-launch, Trade & Consumer Campaigns); Relationship / Cause marketing Experiential, both Live and Digital; Event and Sponsorship; as well as Nollywood Branding; Troops, the diamond formation agency harnesses all its resources, both human and material, to bring the senses into marketing at all times.

With clarity on objectives and critical channels, be it consumer or retail challenge, the frontline agency goes to implementation with the right contact and content, and in the right context at the critical touch-point.

Characteristically, it takes its client's activation to towns; supports active reach with media amplification combining traditional and digital skills to deliver optimal engagement and reach to guarantee optimal results for the client's investment. In so doing, the agency guarantees that every client's campaign, in its words, "does not pass like an elephant at night".

Troops demonstrate its corporate versatility by combining terrestrial skills with optimal digital leverage to deliver in line with differences in territories, habits, and attitudes. What this implies is that the agency combines a good blend of skills for optimal targeting, coverage and reach with quality interaction and engagement.

Furthermore, by taking good interest in planned and environmental details at the critical Touch-Points for brilliant implementations, Troops executes across a robust blend of traditional and non-traditional Channels/ Platforms to deliver planned strategy input at execution (output); using Contact, Content, and Context in the right IMC mix to help a client create the desired outcome.

Moreover, it digs deep into insights into solutions with designs that deliver innovative, efficient and effective campaigns ethically. This is simply because it holds the view that a client's brief is a conception that requires quality co-parenting for successful delivery. And, seeing itself as a foster mother, the agency prioritizes implementation because the brand requires professional nurturing/grooming that helps to establish and maintain a positive emotional connection with the target public.

Leading the "warriors" at Troops is Demola Adedoyin, its Chief Executive Officer and lead brand Activation Agent. He is in charge of the strategy/planning of the agency's services delivery apparatus.

An alumnus of Unilever Marketing Academy, he had his early career grooming in the local affiliates of Leo Burnett and Saatchi & Saatchi where he handled brands such as Pampers, Ariel, Guinness, PZ, Dunlop, UAC, Bournvita amongst other, after tutelage at Novitas.

Demola, as he is simply called, was later recruited into the Unilever Central Africa business where he held managerial positions in brand Support, heading the communication channel management function with core responsibility for Brand Marketing Planning, Investment Negotiations, Communications Channel Management, and Third-Party Services Delivery Coordination.

A staunch industry champion, he served on the leadership team of the Advertiser's Association of Nigeria, ADVAN, for three terms. He was also a member of APCON's special committee on media debt issues.

A graduate of Mass Communication, with an MBA in Marketing Management from Lagos State University, this iconic professional cum entrepreneur has attended several Ivy League Specialized training programmes. He also has experience in the public sector; and he attended the Policy, Strategy and Leadership Course (PSLC 20) at the National Institute of Policies and Strategic Studies (NIPPS) Kuru, Jos, amongst others.



LIMELIGHT MEDIA

LimeLight Media, an emerging media independent agency in Nigeria, provides strategic media planning solutions backed up with thorough media research for its client's businesses and equally ensures a steady Return on Investment (ROI) on any approved media spend.

The agency's proficiency over the years has made it an extension of its clients' marketing communications unit because of our understanding of the market drivers, the consumers and their media consumption pattern.

As such, numerous clients have employed its services to remarkably make huge differences on their businesses and to reach the desired target audience professionally and effectively.

LimeLight Media's competencies include, but are not limited to:

Media Planning – Leveraging innovation, it connects brands with the right audience at optimal costing; deploying right message, at the right time, within the vehicle while targeting the right audience for various brands category.

Media Strategy – It recommends data-driven media strategy that puts a client brand ahead of competition and helps it to stay relevant in today's competitive environment

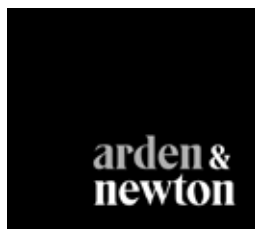
Digital Marketing – It is digitally inclined with trend-spotting and generating buzz that will engage and connect a brand with the right audience.

Media Management – With many years of providing insightful, Analytical, Post campaign Analysis, Accurate media buying measured with justifiable eye balls to many clients in various categories, a client's media management and marketing communications project gets well handled LimeLight Media's team with utmost transparency.

Radio Jingles and production – With specialization in musical radio jingles for broadcasters, the internet and individuals it produces commercial jingles for advertisers and ad agencies, promo and thematic music for TV, and custom music for corporate clients.

Printing – Being a full-service, commercial, sheet printer that specializes in offset printing, It also has the experience to cover any of its clients' commercial printing needs, with capacity to make displays and print on various formats and materials, such as canvas, fabrics, and vinyl.

Among its client, at present, are Society for Family Health (SFH) , Creative Associates International Inc, Luminous Inverter, Nigerite Limited, Aircomfort Chairs and VDT Communications Limited.



ARDEN AND NEWTON

Brave, ambitious and daring are some of the words used to describe this young agency that opened its doors in Lagos only three years ago.

Within the first two years of setting up, Arden and Newton which has as its core service, brand strategy and branding, quickly evolved into a 360 degrees marketing communications solutions expression with clients across all verticals, a step the company says it took in response to the changing nature of the industry and also as an intentional strategy to attract some international projects and clients.

The company says it doesn't only see itself as a Nigerian company but a Pan African focused agency and ideas powerhouse with focus also on driving thought leadership on the continent. This thinking of being more than a creative agency has driven the agency within only three years to expand its visibility deeply across regions of the continent, from Egypt to Nairobi, Rwanda, etc, partnering and hosting major international conferences that bring together executives across diverse industries.

The agency's thought leadership platform building drive was recently given a global reckoning when it got supported majorly by Coca-Cola Africa & Old Mutual South Africa to kickstart GAFCOMM, the Global Africa Forum on Communications, a storytelling platform for brands operating in Africa, bringing companies to the forefront of a new narrative for Africa. The launch edition was hosted in Rwanda, bringing participants from over 20 countries to the capital city, Kigali.

Back home in Nigeria, the agency which says it lives out the meaning of its name by being development focused and transformational in approach than just another creative agency touts an impressive portfolio of clientele, some of which include Kian Smith, the company behind Nigeria's first Gold Refinery, Eczellon Capital, CFA Institute and Forte Oil Plc and others. It is interesting to note that Arden & Newton is the agency currently responsible for the ongoing change and rebranding of Forte Oil after the controlling shares of the company were sold by Nigerian billionaire, Femi Otedola in 2019, a project which the Nigerian media is highly anticipating.

Arden & Newton recently announced a new service offering it calls Reputation Craft, a platform to help African CEOs and executives build thought leadership and transform into brands themselves. Within a few months of launch, the project already has a list of Executives in Nigeria & South Africa signing up as clients.

The agency is founded by Perez Tigidam, a multitalented brand strategist and creative icon.



AsterIML:

Results-Oriented Experiential Marketing Support

An Integrated marketing communications agency set to disrupt the industry with its creative innovations, AsterIML has come to stay and position itself as a game changer in the Nigerian competitive IMC industry.

Aster Integrated Marketing Limited (AIML) is a full-service experiential marketing, Public Relations and events agency that offers tailor-made solutions to clients for the actualization of marketing goals through innovative, creative, exciting and most of all valueactivities. AsterIML's commitment to its clients' success as well as its standards set it apart as a world-class professional services agency.

Aster Integrated Marketing Limited (A.I.M.L) was born out of the need to do something different and this invariably has enabled the agency to build on its passion by listening to clients' ideas, thinking through challenges and coming up with innovative, creative and exciting solutions whilst also keeping it simple.

The name ASTER is a curious sounding one which is bound to arouse the interest of anyone coming into contact with the company for the first time. ASTER simply means one - A-Star (a team of professionals hopefully delivering A's always, not in a prideful manner but knowing and understanding that they have something to offer and in offering, would always ensure A star quality) and two - it's a specie of flower which is known as a symbol of patience.

AsterIML, being a comprehensive experiential marketing, PR and events agency was established in Nigeria, with footfalls Pan Africa. The team at Aster is efficient and reliable, achieved by staying focused, brainstorming and constantly innovating to help grow her client's business. Interestingly, the agency is blessed with young professionals who are highly motivated to deliver top-notch project execution within the shortest time possible.

The vision at AsterIML is to provide the clients with results-oriented experiential experiences, public relations, and total marketing support. Their methodology revolves round listening, thinking, designing, refining and implementing.

"Our success can be attributed to our clients, for believing in us and the team, their professionalism, dedication and passion to making sure we ensure professionally executed outings always. Within this short period, we have had the fortune of getting some new clients as well as being retained by an old client (hopefully reaffirming their belief in what we have to offer as well as our capacity)."

A constant key word for AsterIML is that 'you are only as good as your last outing', thus the impetus to constantly reinventing the team as well as its offerings but never deviating from the essence of the business—Passionate Experiential Marketing professionals with Integrity.

AsterIML considers the agency as innovative and forward thinking, always in search of every opportunity to ensure the clients succeed. Interestingly, as her contribution to the society and in-line with SDG goals 5, 10, 17, AsterIML launched The Nuture2Nature initiative March 2019 with the aim of hopefully 'catching the young', an initiative directed at young ones to hopefully get them to think and develop as human beings without gender bias or conceptions. According to Mandela, 'It's in our hands to create a better world for all who live in it' and that's the mission. The Project as indicated by the title is an opportunity to nurture young ones and assist them to develop a nature that serves them for the future, developing human beings for a great life, not male, not female but human beings who care for and understand one another. There are currently 12 schools signed-on, it's still a new project BUT a project that looks to be expanding over the years.



TVC COMMUNICATIONS

TVC Communications is a leading media organization established in 2007, with its headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria. Since its establishment, TVC Communications, which encompasses TVC News, TVC Entertainment, Max FM and Adaba FM, has succeeded in reshaping the social and public perception of Africans on news, entertainment and broadcasting across the country.

Last year (2017) will go down in the annals of the history of this highly rated media company as an epoch given the fact that that year its management was overhauled and its business model re-jigged.

These developments saw the coming on board of Andrew Hanlon as the company's Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer with Ronan Redmond joining later as Commercial Director. Very crucial decisions were also taken which, among other things, included resting TVC News Africa and Radio Continental with the latter metamorphosing into MAX 102.5 FM.

In less than 15 months after these developments, an amazing turnaround has taken place at TVC Communications with impacts that are self-evident and results that are stunning.



Nitro 121

Founded in 2005 and thus marking its 15th year of operation in the year 2020, Nitro 121, formerly known as '141 Worldwide' is a leading Brand-Building company that provides brand strategy and marketing communication solutions within Nigeria and internationally.

The Agency is known for creating cutting edge and engaging experiences across touchpoints for people thereby influencing positive behaviour towards brands in the portfolio, and consequently helping to deliver profitable growth.

Nitro 121 has a strong team of highly skilled personnel with several years of experience across different industries and markets led by Mr. Lampe Omoeye, a well-respected marketing and advertising professional. The Agency offers a full bouquet of through-the-line marketing communication, which includes planning and strategy, creative development, brand management, digital services, media planning and buying, radio/TV production and experiential.

Nitro 121 works with clients and brands such as British-American Tobacco (BAT), Multichoice (GOtv), Bajaj, Honeywell, First Bank, FBN Insurance, Total, British Council, Cadbury and Bayer amongst others. It is noted as the agency that helped launch Etisalat (now 9mobile) into Nigeria and worked on the brand uninterrupted for ten years.

The elements of the Agency's brand identity are: connecting, unfettered, enterprising, high performing and youthful. 'Nitro' denotes the energy, high-performance, speed, vibrancy which the Agency brings to its management of brands in the marketplace, whilst '121' (pronounced, 'one to one') speaks to connecting, engaging, moving from insights to communication that resonates with the target market, connecting brands with consumers, people with people, working seamlessly within teams and with all stakeholders.

The Nitro 121 logo reflects the brand identity. The logo speaks of unending mobility.

The blue speaks to creativity unleashed. Blue sky thinking, strategic, unfettered.

The Yellow-Orange denotes vibrancy, verve. The stylish N of Nitro speaks to movement, dynamism, adaptability.

Nitro 121 has a heritage of excellence and integrity and operates with strong values which the Company calls actRIGHT: Responsibility, Integrity, Gusto, Harmony and Transparency.

Nitro 121 is a pit-stop for creative brand building and marketing communication solutions. Every brand that 'drives through' the pit stop revs to higher performance.



**BRANDLIFE'S JULIUS
AGENMONMEN**

BRANDLIFE LIMITED

Brandlife Limited, a full marketing services agency, was incorporated in 2008; and it started operations same year.

In January 2009, the agency was signed on by two major clients; HP and Nigerian Breweries Plc, both of which remain with it till date. Needless to add, here, that many more clients have since joined Brandlife's portfolio.

With a mission to deliver experiences that make life easier for its clients and more enjoyable for consumers in Africa; and a vision "To be the foremost marketing services company delivering cutting edge marketing solutions by adding value with measurable results", the agency has, since then been providing integrated marketing solutions across Africa.

With a commitment to delivering every service on time and on target, backed by creativity, flexibility, integrity and excellence, BrandLife has distinguished itself in all its services which include: Brand Activation; Events Management; Field Marketing Services; Digital Marketing Services; Channel marketing; and Sales Force Management.

Headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, Brandlife has, since, extended its footprints across Africa with offices in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Angola, and Ghana.

Characteristically speaking, Brandlife is committed to bringing brands to life! It brings an unparalleled expertise to provide marketing strategies and solutions to match every client's needs exactly. And by combining creative and innovative strategies, it gets every brand in its portfolio to connect to consumers and sustain value.

The agency's projects have the track record and results that its clients value for their business.

One of its most recently planned and executed campaigns, was the launch of the HP Dragon Fly Laptop in Nigeria in conjunction with HP Nigeria. The campaign was focused on the brand's desire to continue driving innovation in the technology space.

Brands



**MILARY NIGERIA LTD. MD,
ABAYOMI MULERO**

MILARY Nigeria Ltd.

MILARY Nigeria Ltd. is an independent Nigerian Company. Headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, the company has branches in Ibadan, Ghana, and in the US. It is into Hygienic Cleaning Equipment, Safety Equipments (PPE ITEMS) and specializes in the Fire System Design & Engineering, Supply, Installation of Extinguishing System and Servicing & Refilling of Fire Extinguisher as well as maintenance and calibration of gas detector/explosimeter

The company's activities span major areas such as: Hygienic Cleaning Equipments (Vikan Products); Safety Equipment; Personal Protective Items (PPE); Automatic Fire Alarm & Extinguishing (FM200, Inergen & CO2); Automatic Water Sprinkler System; Training; Gas Detector; Sales, Servicing and Refilling Of Fire Extinguishers; Calibration and Services Of Gas Detector / Explosimeters; Calibration of Tank; Valves and Safety Valve; Electrical Materials/Installation; and Mechanical Spares

In its over 16 years of existence, the company has gained an outstanding reputation for innovation, reliability and service excellence as its Staff and Engineers provide quality service and configure modular systems that focus on what the client wants to achieve – cost-effective risk management at all times.

Over the years, too, MILARY Nigeria Limited has acquired technical expertise from world leaders in the manufacture of high quality safety, electrical and fire electronic systems. This, coupled with its strong support and maintenance culture, has enabled it to establish very good relationships with all its clients. And, with engineers operating in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt, the company ensures a minimal response time to any supply and installation or maintenance requirements.

On its clientele are Local and Municipal Authorities, Government Parastatals and International Organizations, including Commercial and Industrial Companies

MILARY Nigeria Limited is the sole distributor/representative of various Safety brands over the world in Nigeria/Ghana respectively. These include: Bova Safety Footwear – (Safety Boots/Shoes); Delta Plus (France)-PPE items; Climax (Spain); Rahman Safety Group (India); HSE Solution (Honeywell); Vikan Hygiene System (Denmark) - Cleaning Tools Product; Hochiki Europe (U.K)- Ltd (England) – Fire Detection; Atlas GmbH (Germany)- Safety Boots; Mapa Professional (France); Uvex (Germany); Tiger Grip; DM Reflective Vest; FAROOQ Workwears; Dromex CC (Germany); Kentech -Fire Panel; Fire Trace UK Ltd; Greeham UK Ltd; Arco UK Limited; Kiddes UK Ltd (Angus); Honeywell – Gas Detector; Naffco Fire - Fire Equipment; JSP –UK; Red G Distributor; Total Care Medical (U.K)-Medical Equipment's; Cofem, s.a -Fire Alarm System; Jogger Safety –China; LIFECO-Fire Sprinkler System & Firefighting Equipment, among many others.

With a corporate philosophy that is hinged on the credo "Life is continuous", the company is committed to sustaining the efficiency of all its systems in recognition of the responsibility for life that every contract places in its hands.

Consequently, MILARY has developed a unique service product offering, which provides an after-sales service that is perfectly positioned to work within any long-term framework agreement. It has also invested in the latest technology which ensures that planned visits and contracted response times are guaranteed.

The company's maintenance is Prescient in nature in that it carries out trouble shooting exercises to predetermine and prevent possible faults in the systems before the fault ever registers, thereby saving cost and time in system operation.

At the company's helm of affairs is Mr. Abayomi Mulero, a Transport/Logistics and management graduate, as its Managing Director/CEO.

Mulero is involved in the provision of safety, fire detection and extinguishing system. He received professional trainings within Nigeria and factory trainings in South Africa; he has extensive knowledge and experience in the safety and fire with design,

Installation of Fire Detection & Extinguishing systems, Gas Detector and has been involved in a wide array of projects all over Nigeria.

He is supported by other directors, including Mrs. Racheal Mulero.



APCON

The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON, an Agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria, established by an Act of Parliament no. 55 of 1988 as amended by Act no. 93 of 1992 and Act no. 116 of 1993. (Now encapsulated as Act A7, LFN 2014), regulates the practice and business of advertising in Nigeria. This, the agency does, to safeguard the interests of the public and protect targets of advertising communication from misinformation, deception, and abuse of exploitation.

With a Vision "To promote responsible and ethical advertising practice, acting as the conscience of society and watchdog for consumers; while managing the needs and interests of stakeholders in Nigeria's Advertising Industry", APCON's responsibilities include:

- Determining who advertising practitioners are;
- Determining what standards of knowledge and skills are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as members of the advertising profession and reviewing those standards from time to time;
- Securing in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the establishment and maintenance of a register of persons entitled to practice as advertising practitioners and the publication, from time to time, of lists of those persons;
- Regulating and controlling the practice of advertising in all aspects and ramifications subject to the approval of the Minister of Health, where the advertisement relates to matters of foods, cosmetics, beverages and drugs (1992 no. 116);
- Conducting examinations in the profession and awarding certificates or diplomas to successful candidates as and when appropriate.
- Performing other functions conferred on it by this Act.

It discharges these responsibilities through a governing Council as well as statutory committees and professional staff who are public servants in the employment of the Federal Government.

APCON's regulatory functions are performed through a three-pronged procedure namely:

- Registration of Practitioners/Licensing of firms to practice/engage in Advertising. (Ensuring that only prequalified and registered persons and firms engage in the practice of Advertising).
- Enactment and enforcement of a Code of professional practice involving a pre-exposure clearance of advertisements. (Ensuring that advertisements are wholesome and responsible in both content and exposure).
- Operation of organs of enforcement of professional discipline among registered practitioners/licensed firms. (Ensuring a lawful and disciplined practice environment).

The regulatory mandate of APCON is given effect through the operations of the Council's Statutory Committees namely:

- The Advertising Standards Panel (ASP), which considers and gives approval to advertisements prior to exposure;
- The Advertising Practitioners Investigating Panel (APIP), which investigates complaints of professional misconduct and
- The Advertising Practitioners Disciplinary Committee (APDC), which adjudicates cases of professional misconduct referred to it by the APIP and sanctions erring practitioners.

APCON collaborates with recognized self-regulatory associations in regulating the practice of advertising. These are the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria, (MIPAN), the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) and other such associations whose work relate to advertising practice.

The agency's Services/Procedures include: Registration of Practitioners; Professional Diploma/Courses; Professional Training Programs; and Vetting of Advertisements.

APCON's day to day operations are performed by a bureaucracy of public servants appointed by the Council. The head of bureaucracy and chief executive officer is the Registrar. The operations of APCON are organised into four directorates, namely: Registration, Career Development Matters and Corporate Licensing; Regulation, Monitoring and Enforcement; Planning, Research and Strategy; and Human Resource Management.

Leading the APCON Management Team is Mrs. Ijedi Iyoha, rpa, its Acting Registrar/Chief Executive.

Under her leadership, APCON has continued to actively interact with all the stakeholders; and has moved several notches higher in the discharge of its statutory duties, despite several some prevailing challenges, the biggest of which is the non constitution of its Council for some years now.

Dignitaries @ LAIF Event



PHOTO SPEAK



L-R: Jumia Nigeria Chairwoman and Head of Institutional Affairs, Jumia Group, Mrs. Juliet Anammah; Professor Salahu Junaid of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Executive Vice Chairman, Nigerian Communications Commission, Professor Umar Garba Danbatta; Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami); DG, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Mr. Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi; and MD/CEO Nigerian Communications Satellite (NigComSAT), Dr. Abimbola Alale at the inauguration of the committee for the expert review of the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy in Abuja recently



BUSINESS INNOVATION: (L-R) Regional Programmes Coordinator, The Leadership Project, Piboere Okukulabe; Regional Coordinator, West and Central Africa, Global Leadership Network; Francis Olubambi; Convener, The Leadership Project, Godman Akinlabi; Client Service Manager, Zenera Consulting, Idongesit Edet and General Manager, Sales, The Leadership Project, Olusola Oyawale at a press conference announcing the maiden edition of The West African Business Leaders' Summit themed "Leadership. Innovation. Profitability" organised by The Leadership Project in partnership with Zenera Consulting.



R-L: Group Chairman, United Bank for Africa (UBA) and Founder, Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), Mr. Tony Elumelu; Country Director, Empretec Nigeria Foundation, Mrs. Owanari Duke; Head, Division of Enterprise, United Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Ms. Tatiana Krylova; and CEO, TEF, Ifeyinwa Ugochukwu, at the launch of UNCTAD's Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and Implementation Guidance, held during the EMPRETEC Regional Roundtable on Entrepreneurship in Lagos recently.



Managing Director, Perfect Estate Developers Limited, Arc. Dayo Babatunde; Minister of Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola; Representative of the Minister of FCT, Mr. Tony Odigie; Chairman, Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN), Dr. Adewale Adeyemo and Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer FMBN, Arc. Ahmed Musa Dangiwa, during the commissioning of Woodhill Estate under the FMBN Cooperative Housing Development, in Kuje Area Council Abuja recently.



L - R: Wumi Iledare, African Region Director, Society for Petroleum Engineers; Olayemi Anyanechi, Founder/Managing Partner, Sefton Fross; Bank Anthony Okoroafor, Chairman, Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN) & Bitrus Nabasu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources during the panel session on In-Country Value at the Nigeria International Petroleum Summit (NIPS) held in Abuja recently.



L-R: Managing Director, Family Homes Fund, Femi Adewole, Managing Director, Nigeria Mortgage Refinance Company Plc, Kehinde Ogundimu, Managing Director, Eximia Realty Company Ltd, Hakeem Ogunniran, President, Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria, Surveyor Ugochukwu Chime and Managing Director, Innovative Risk and Investment Solutions Limited, Prof Charles Inyangete at the official unveiling of The Mews, an estate built by Eximia Realty Co. Limited in Katampe Extension, Abuja.

We provide a pipeline of structured support for auto consumers

– Mayokun Fadeyibi



Dr. Mayokun Fadeyibi is Vice-President, Consumer Business Group at Cars45; Nigeria's largest digital automotive trading platform. A well-respected and highly sought-after business leader because of her antecedents as a high performing and result-oriented professional with proven performance across eCommerce operations, business advisory, data and analytics and start-ups. At Cars45, she is responsible for providing strategic direction and management of the Cars45 retail footprint and consumer-focused products and services.

Three and a half years into your operations, you already stand out as a leading force in Nigeria's automotive market. How did you come to achieve this feat in a very short time?

Our entry into this market was marked by a strong determination and resolve to drive trust and transparency. In facilitating automotive transactions, we've had to ensure that it is done in a way that leverages technology and at scale.

As such, we went to work in bringing structure to the market - providing supply for dealers, facilitating trade between consumers and dealers and generally building out an ecosystem that works for everyone.

If I ask you today, how much is your car worth? Typically, people would give all kinds of responses without any formal or structured way to find out. In a

developed market like the US, you have the KellyBlueBook, which any one can consult to provide information about how much their car is valued and worth.

Our work in the market has helped us to begin to develop the data that can provide these kinds of information. People can now utilize our services in many ways - some would request that we help inspect their car or find out about the condition of their car, or how much their fleet is worth. As we make and build the market, we will continue to provide innovative solutions.

Also, in the short time that you have been around, it is largely believed that Cars45 has literally disrupted the automotive market in Nigeria. Would it be safe to say that you are the leaders in the Sales and auction segment of this market?

Rather than say we are leaders, we'd like to see ourselves as market makers. The market we met was very fragmented,



Technology drives what we do daily. From a customer's first interaction with us - going to the Cars45 website, where they can value their car and then decide to visit any of our retail experience centers, the interaction with us is woven around technology. For every single car that comes through our system, we carry out a 200-point inspection. In doing this, we utilize our proprietary inspection and valuation algorithm to help us inspect every single car and also ensure the consumer gets a fair pricing for their car.

Technology guides our operations across over 70 inspections centers that we have around the country. All our retail experience centres are carrying out inspections and valuations as well as facilitating automotive trade transactions using technology and we are all in sync with no unit operating in silos.

unstructured, and fraught with challenges around data. In the last three and a half years, we have successfully solved some of the challenges however it will be very presumptuous of us to say that we are the leader when there is so much left to build, to own, and to grow. The idea for us is that the journey has just begun, and there is so much more that we still need to do.

In your dealings with customers and your clients, how much of technology have you been able to adopt and how has been the impact on your business?

Technology drives what we do daily. From a customer's first interaction with us - going to the Cars45 website, where they can value their car and then decide to visit any of our retail experience centers, the interaction with us is woven around technology. For every single car that comes through our system, we carry out a 200-point inspection. In doing this, we utilize our proprietary inspection and valuation algorithm to help us inspect every single car and also ensure the consumer gets a fair pricing for their car.

Technology guides our operations across over 70 inspections centers that we have around the country. All our retail experience centres are carrying out inspections and valuations as well as facilitating automotive trade transactions using technology and we are all in sync with no unit operating in silos. Think about it, if we didn't have technology, we would only probably just have one center, but the fact that we can scale across the continent, operating in Kenya and Ghana, it's technology that facilitates this.

For sellers and buyers of Nigerian used cars, do you have any plans to put in place a kind of creative infrastructure on commerce to enable them to exchange value?

As we continue to evolve and learn, we are determined to create a robust industry and infrastructure around facilitating automotive trade in Nigeria and across the continent. This intentionality explains why we have recently launched the Cars45 Marketplace, where we are facilitating consumer-to-consumer, C2C transactions.

Because of the brand value and recognition that we have built, people trust us to inspect their cars, and trust the condition of those cars as explicated in the inspection report that we provide to consumers. Having enjoyed delightful consumer experiences, sellers now come to Cars45, get their cars inspected, graded and listed on our marketplace. Potential buyers in tandem come to our website to

view those cars and trusting in the Cars45 stamp of quality, they are sufficiently empowered to make an informed purchase decision. We are facilitating not just consumer-to-business trade but also consumer-to-consumer trade. At Cars45, we will continue to solve more problems. Our philosophy is to always learn, and as we work, we identify new opportunities to provide value for the consumer.

So how would you want to describe Nigeria's automotive market as it stands presently. Do you see a future in this market?

The future and growth potentials for the market are very bright. When talking about Africa, it's important to remember that it's not necessarily the same market across all African countries. We don't want to make the same mistake that many people make when you automatically label everything Africa as a monolithic entity. We see the potentials of the continent on a country by country basis, and the potential to not just facilitate auto trade, but all things automotive.

As we facilitate automotive transactions, there are other opportunities that open up after the buying or selling process. Our mission is to provide a pipeline of structured support for consumers such that we can help them with all their needs and that Cars45 brand can be trusted to provide value and transparency. It's not just about trade but about the entire life cycle of the consumer's car journey and the whole automotive ecosystem.

As a player in this industry can you conveniently say that Cars45 has effectively covered the auto market in Nigeria?

Absolutely not. We are looking to continuously and aggressively expand across the country. We are an ambitious business, and even with all the cities that we are in presently, there are so many other places that we can be. I can proudly tell you that even in this month of February we have launched in Ilorin, Owerri, Kaduna and I hope to continue to share a few other city launches that are in the pipeline with you.

Our objective is to facilitate auto trade not just for Lagos, or Abuja but for Nigeria and not just for Nigeria but for Africa, for Kenya, for Ghana and any other nation where we can create and deliver value.

Where do you see Cars45 in the next 5 years? Projecting ahead into the future what do you envisage.

We are on a journey towards empowering mobility across Africa. We are not just a Nigerian company; we want to be known

as an African company. The future for us is to continue to deliver best-in-class solutions across the automotive sector in Africa. In the next five to ten years, we want the narrative to be - Cars45, the African company that drives mobility.

This is definitely a new decade and a new year 2020, what are Nigerians and car lovers generally to expect from the Cars45 brand?

Nigerians can expect value creation across the automotive ecosystem. We are able to provide value from an easier way to sell your vehicle; a trusted and transparent way to also buy a new vehicle; or swap your old car for another one. Furthermore, you can always trust that the car you are getting from us has been verified, and that even after you've bought that car, you can trust Cars45 to walk the whole journey with you - in terms of providing automotive care and value-added services. Cars45 would be there to meet consumers at every point of their car needs.

What are the other plans you have towards expanding beyond the Nigerian market and to enter the sub regional and regional markets of Africa. What exactly are you working at?

We announced our launch into Ghana and Kenya towards the end of last year, and there are plans in place to expand further. We are looking at the market potential of each country and currently working on being able to move into those countries, do what I would call soft launches, and then we announce to the world that, we are open for business in those climes.

You recently launched your Autopreneur initiative, what entails in this project and how far would you say it has been productive?

The Autopreneur initiative arose from the need to empower a large category of individuals. Typically, a lot of people who participate in auto trade do so informally. The initiative was initially called the Cars45 Merchant Academy. Having ran the Academy for a while, we observed that people were growing - individuals who started from referring people to buy and sell cars with us began to perform creditably well, and based on their performance, they grew their transaction volumes and morphed into becoming big time dealers. They began to own their car lots, hired more young people and we are further able to provide them with more vehicles.

The potentials for the Autopreneur program isn't an earn-as-you-go model, but it is built around empowering people

to build and own their businesses and in turn improve their lives and those within their network. Our ambition is to have a Cars45 Autopreneur on every street.

You also ventured into the autocare space where you partnered with Enyo Service stations. What does this partnership entail?

The Enyo partnership is literally a no-brainer because we are partnering with a like-minded brand. Enyo as a business is very much technology driven, and they are also very ambitious. As you would have also noticed, Enyo is scaling rapidly. Cars45 is fuelling and giving life to the car ownership dreams of consumers, while Enyo is powering a fuel retail revolution is evidence of the like-minded relationship that we are in. As we walk the entire car journey with the consumer, we need to identify partners that we can work with to provide everything in terms of the servicing and after sales support.

As such, when you walk into our Enyo Ojolonto retail experience centre and purchase a car, immediately Enyo can service for you. By coming together in the same location, we are better positioned to meet your car needs and the consumer doesn't need to break a sweat.

What has necessitated your foray into the international trading of cars?

One of the services that we recently launched and ties in with our desire to provide trust and transparency is the Cars45 EasyShipDirect service.

Having brought transparency to the trade of Nigeria-used cars, we realized that we couldn't just afford to leave it at that. There was need to extend this transparency into international trade such that when importing or bringing in cars you will know exactly what you are getting and we are able to work with partners abroad to manage the process end-to-end. Being able to leverage the power of our brand to bring good comfort to Nigerians when it comes to international trade has been enriching.

What business challenges do you encounter as player in this industry and what are you doing to address them?

As a market maker, you have some heavy lifting to do. A lot of our brand is focused on not just e-commerce but about brand building, about educating all the players in the ecosystem - consumers, dealers, and stakeholders from a regulatory perspective. We'll continue to evangelize and help everyone understand that the industry can only grow by putting in the right structures

and partnerships.

Lastly what would be your advice to consumers and to other players in the industry so as to make things work?

Consumers can be assured that with Cars45, they have a trusted partner who will go all the way with them. They can trust the valuation, verification, as well as other services and products that we bring. They can trust that more than ever, we are committed to driving transparency and convenience in the ecosystem as a whole.

We strongly believe in partnerships and are actively always seeking out partners with similar values and ideals. We came to build and deepen the ecosystem around the industry and we will continuously work with other stakeholders to build the automotive system in Nigeria. ■



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CLIENTS' INCREASING DEMANDS KEEP INSPIRING OUR CONTINUING EVOLUTION

VICTOR GBENGA AFOLABI, GDM GROUP'S GCEO

GDM Group, a leading marketing innovation agency in Nigeria recently turned 10. In its decade of existence, the company has evolved from being an award winning marketing agency to a marketing and innovation conglomerate. Founded in 2010 as a Below the Line (BTL) experiential marketing agency, it evolved into a marketing operations company in 2015, in line with the demands of its clients.

As the company's founder, Mr. Victor Gbenga Afolabi explained, "Between 2014 and 2015, the clients were asking for more. They were no longer interested in an agency that would just take the brief and run around directly marketing to people. They were looking for an agency that would offer a 360-degree marketing operation; an agency that could look at the numbers and analyse the numbers, etc."

*Mr. Victor Gbenga Afolabi, GDM Group's Chief Executive Officer, in an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE** trio of **AMOS OLADELE**, **OGECHI ODIGBO** and **KEHINDE OLOGUNJA**, reflects on the growth trajectory of the forward marching IMC Group, sheds very bright light on its current evolution; and peeps into the future which the Company has already brought forward.*



H

ow does it feel, as an entrepreneur, to have your company clock ten, especially in a clime like ours; and in your personal experience?

I think I feel a bit excited. Until you are 10,

you begin to ask yourself some questions; you know there are a lot of statistics about the failure rate of businesses. It is a fact that while setting out you would have asked the question: will this business make it? And, a lot more of such questions. All of us know that there is a lot of uncertainty about running business especially in this environment. What makes it worse is the fact that when you are running a business in an industry that's a red ocean, where differentiation is tough, where there is very low barrier of entry, where competition is stiff and then you survive for this number

of years. Quite naturally, you would pause to do two things; first is to appreciate your clients who have stuck with you through thick and thin, they have believed in you, risked with you and given you grace. These people have kept you in business, so, you should stop and appreciate them.

The other set of people you should appreciate is the team that has stayed committed. Out of our ten years of corporate existence, we have quite a number of our staff that have been here for nine years. These are the people that built (and are building) the company.

Was the GDM Group venture an instant hit?

There have been ups and downs. We've had our own share of the turbulent times and we've had challenges but we have great clients; we have people who believed in us. It has also taken a lot of hard work.

Please, recall that when we came out, we were not the typical industry people; we were like outsiders who came in and pushed till we got to the very top. We thank God and the people who believe in us. We are not taking it for granted. We are very very grateful for the people who have trusted in and how we have come this far. We are still there; we are still trying to push.

One more reason why we are celebrating is that we think it's time to reassess and raise the bar. By this, we mean raising the bar to what marketing should look like in the future, what the concepts of innovation and the concept of agency business should look like in the future. And, quite naturally, we think that being one of the top market leaders in our industry, we should be the one that is at the forefront of driving the changes and the narratives around the things we do in the marketing space.

So, this is not just about marketing communications, rather, we are talking about marketing in its total ramifications and that's what we want to take, like a bull, by its horns. We are able to raise the bar in the practice, execution and offerings in the marketing eco system.

If we got you right, the company has evolved across three distinct phases. Would you shed some light on that, and also explain what informed those various evolutions?

It's all been driven by client's needs; it's what our clients are asking for.

In 2010, we started as BTL experiential agency and we started driving that spiritedly. By 2014, 2015, our clients became restless. Clients didn't want an agency that would just take brief and run around to do direct marketing; they wanted something around 360°, sometimes, about marketing operations.

They wanted us to be able to look at the numbers, and analyse the numbers, and much more. Because the clients were asking for more, the kind of people we were recruiting and the kind of services we were offering needed to also change.

Anyone that is conversant with our (IMC) industry will notice the demands and the direction of the pendulum in the amount of money which clients are beginning to spend around that sector.

Clients wanted adaptation of the



creatives; they wanted you to understand the digital; they wanted you to understand how PR fits in, in many cases, and the BTL (Below the Line) was given the lead in campaigns and campaign spend. Many campaigns were even totally BTL led.

At that point, clients did not want us to just be ordinary experiential agency again; they wanted more and so we became a marketing operations agency.

Now, what differentiates between a BTL agency and a marketing operations agency is the fact that marketing operations take cognizance a lot about ROI, and a lot about the growth and the numbers; and that became our focus.

It changed the kind of people we were recruiting, and the very core of our business had to change. We were recruiting people that were more cerebral, that could add more value that could have result and ROI as their mindset. We became critical about the people we were recruiting from 2015 till now.

However, while we are here, clients are already talking about innovation.

This is because as a nation and a market, we are still at a stage where still a lot of new products development failed across board. Quite a number of people are having record failure around new product development and innovations. For organisations, brands and companies, this was becoming a challenge.

Even globally, we are seeing that that part of the mega trend is redefining how

we engage consumers. It is no longer the traditional way; you need to find out where these consumers are. Therefore, we found out as we researched that transforming into a marketing and innovation company is the way to go because innovation is critical to be able to bring the future forward. No doubt, the world is changing, and everything now revolves around data.

I feel both proud and humbled by the fact that ours is the first and only agency that has a full fledge analytics and data department. This has allowed us to deal with projects where we are dealing with data involving two to four million entries. These, you would agree, are massive amounts of data to crunch. In some cases, we had to deal with such data and process them in just seven months!

This can only mean that we are beginning to see what the characteristics and what is expected of a marketing firm in the future. It's going to be around Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Data and Data Analytics. And, because we know that's the future, we are bringing the future forward. We are beginning to position for what the landscape is likely to look like in the future.

Believe you me; the next decade will not be like the previous decade. Innovation will disrupt a lot of things. As such, before we get disrupted, we are getting ready to disrupt.

What are some of the game changing campaigns that GDM

Group has handled?

We've done quite a lot of campaigns that I'm excited and proud about, as I look back. We have attempted the Guinness World Record campaign in 2013 for Milo Crunchy Cereal. We did some exciting launches for Nestlé Nigeria PLC, one of our favourite clients, and their brands are doing so well.

We've done stuff across board. We've seen ourselves work with state governments where we came up, to a large extent, to give marketing creative direction. For instance, to the Lagos State campaign that brought in the current governor of the state, we worked closely with the communications team and came up with the strategy of how the election was going to be, especially communication around the election.

And, of course, we did a campaign where we worked with the federal government and the Bank of Industry (BOI) on a social investment program. In it, we enumerated and obtained up to 4 million people and disbursed loans in 744 local governments, including IDPs, nationwide, in a record period of seven to eight months.

There was another situation where we had about four thousand people and crunched entries and data of about 600,000 within two to three weeks.

As such, we've seen ourselves handling some phenomenal campaigns over the years and these campaigns, to a large extent, have etched our name in gold in the sand of time on the landscape.

As should be expected, all of that comes with its own challenges but we are excited with the opportunity.

Also, we have done significantly well in Ghana which we moved into in 2014. We've worked in Ghana with 4 or 5 companies, and about 5 to 6 brands.

In Ivory Coast and Kenya, we have done some interesting campaigns where we had to integrate 14 cities across West and Central Africa together in 2018. We were running quarterly campaigns and those campaigns were integrating 14 cities across West and Central Africa.

We have taken our learning around those places. We are confident that we have contributed remarkably to what's happening around this place. And, we are not stopping; we are raising the bar until we see ourselves having our footprints coming out in more places. In this regard, we are looking at Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cameroon and The Gambia, for now.

Let's talk a bit about the three new products that are coming from this stable in the next few days (after this interview)?

Let me quickly state, here, that when we say that we are moving from being a

marketing operations agency to a marketing innovation firm, it's not just in name, it's not just in logo; it's in the services and the offerings which we are putting on the table. So, we will be having our first B2B e-commerce platform which will bring improvement to the value chain and help companies get their products faster to the last miles.

So, what we are unveiling on Friday (a few days after this interview) is a B2B e-commerce platform where we will be working with thousands of retail outlets. The company is actually called *Retailar*, where people will be able to bypass the challenges and bottlenecks of the value chain and distribution to get their products to themselves.

This is extremely beneficial to the clients because it's the shorter and faster way to get their products to the last mile. It solves the problem of product failure because many of the product failures are because of the value chain members who are not excited about the product you are launching, who think they don't have enough margins, do not carry the product and therefore, you are not able to get to the consumers. In such a situation, no matter how much marketing you are doing at the last mile, if your product is not there, you are only creating demand for an invisible product.

We are launching *Retailar* because we intend to solve that and that's basically helping you leapfrog from the manufacturer to the last mile. And rather than a push strategy in demand, for the *Retailar* platform, clients and consumers have their app where they order their products and we deliver to them within 24 hours based on distance. Loan facility is also made available to them. It's basically creating a lot of opportunities around the last mile which basically is what we think may make a company's product to either fail or survive. By this means, we are trying to demystify the last mile.

The second thing is that we feel that as we move towards innovation, data is key; and we begin to gather a lot of it around the retail space, especially the last miles. Therefore, we are looking at launching a product; a platform called *Retailscope* which will be giving out free information to companies and brands whether we partner with them or not. Research and information about the last mile, product prices, competitive activities, dynamics, share of the market, distribution and everything around the last mile will be supplied free.

Mind you, there is so much international research retail audit but this focuses on the last mile and, to a large extent, it gives an indication of the

dynamics that happened at the last mile to a company, so that the company can plan and complement the research that many of the brands and company already subscribe to.

We have the structure, we have the number of people and we are rolling that out. It is technology driven and we have boots on ground everywhere. We can also be able to help clients customize, like, say, what's happening to my product; I'm having issues around the North East; there is a particular state where there is a problem, can you guys help me look at it? And, we shall be doing all these for free as value added services. This, we feel, is not too much for people that have trusted us for 10 years; we should give back to the eco system.

The last one is called *Alpha Geek*. It's a subscription based platform because quite a number of companies, especially smaller companies, do not have that robust purse to be able to have their own SFA (Sales Field Form Automation platform); many of them do not have any platform to monitor their merchandising, organogram compliance, etc. We have, therefore, built a very robust platform that looks at the indices that you want to know from a trade marketing to sales as well as managing events. And we are pushing it out to the ecosystem, to companies who do not have a proprietary platform to evaluate, to track, to monitor, to check at a very affordable licensing, month to month.

It's based in the cloud; we provide all the technical support for them and then, they can be able to leverage on the technology that the big firms have to gain market advantage at a very small fee and also be able to reposition themselves.

These three products signify part of our offerings as we transform from an ordinary agency to a marketing solutions provider.

We have benefitted from the ecosystem and we are giving back to it. That is why the second product is free. The only way we can survive and thrive is to build the eco system together because if we refuse to, the eco system will begin to shrink and shrink, and we all will get suffocated.

Where do you see GDM Group in the next 10 years?

We see ourselves being around strongly; providing market leadership. We are sure that the law of disruption would have happened in this decade. We have positioned ourselves for this disruption and we are sure that in the next 10 years, we would have raised the bar quite high and we would have seen ourselves not only playing locally but becoming a force to reckon with globally as we become an international reference point. ■



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GDM Group's 10th Anniversary Events in Pics





EXP Nigeria, Creating ideas that create demand



Mrs. Rosemary Akpo

EXP Nigeria is one leading experiential agency that has the singular honour of having the history of nearly all other experiential agencies in the country tied to it. Being the first agency to start up the business of experiential marketing in this clime, it has, over the years become, more or less, a learning ground for experiential marketing and has continued to remain relevant, till date. Interestingly, it keeps reinventing itself and tries to remain at the cutting-edge with investments in technology, people and resources – as the benchmark for what experiential marketing is.

Positioned as a results driven strategic partner that empowers brands through what it calls Innovative Live Brand Experience, EXP Nigeria has given a very good account of itself in all that it does, to wit, Brand Activation; Event Marketing; Sponsorship; Social Marketing; Digital Strategies; PR; Sales Promotion; Branding & Logistics

With a clientele of over 42 companies and brands in its portfolio which cut across the communications, banking, technology and FMCG sectors as well as, alcoholic and soft drinks product segments, among others, EXP has the advantage of pulling several people in its leadership team from the client side. This has enabled the agency to create offerings that are perfect for brands at all times, having been in their shoes.

EXP has developed a Strategic Approach which is rooted in what it describes as the Sixth Sense; explaining this to mean an internal process to assist the agency in being smart about the business and the Brand at hand. By being smart, it does define the business opportunity better, from which it develops and executes ideas that activate demand for its clients.

Its Sixth Sense consists of a set of tools that assist it in unearthing and formalizing information that will lead to better management in the delivery of the business objectives, bearing in mind that the more time it has and the more discipline it

has in the use of the tools it uses in the development of the ideas, the closer the idea will be to what is really required.

Strongly believing that it takes teamwork, creativity, and expertise combined with a focused planning process to ensure thought leadership and ideas that have real impact in today's world, EXP, through consistent and universal application of its Sixth Sense Marketing, defines and communicates its competitive advantage and activates demand. This way, EXP develops ideas that create demand!

Thus, for every of its campaign, EXP develops Live+ events for people to personally experience a Brand and it then puts the tools in place to leverage these Live experiences – amplifying reach (of the real and relevant experiences people have with a Brand) to a wider audience, thus making it a campaign as opposed to a one off activation or event.

At the helm of affairs in EXP Nigeria as the Managing Director is Rosemary Akpo, an Amazon in the integrated marketing communications milieu in Nigeria. She has, since she got in the saddle in November, 2018, raised the bar of EXP Nigeria's thought leadership credentials, in addition to upping the ante in terms of the entire gamut of the agency's business and operations.

In fact, she offered a window to her mind as the chief driver of the EXP Nigeria enterprise when she said, in an exclusive interview which she granted this medium recently, "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 costs because we can execute and budget more efficiently". ■



Mrs. Tolulope Medebem is the Chief Operating Officer/Lead Strategist at Aster Integrated Marketing Limited, 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) Tolu, in this interview, speaks to **MARKETING EDGE's Clifford Amuzuo about her career, her business, professionalism and entrepreneurship, among other things.**

NO PROFESSIONAL SHOULD CONSIDER HIMSELF ACCOMPLISHED

Tolulope Medebem



Who is Mrs. Tolu 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 it that we become a company. We discussed it and that time Experiential Marketing was still pretty new in Nigeria, so to say. So, the journey started for me in 2000 and from there we formed Marathon Events in collaboration with Octagon8, a South

African company. We were affiliated to them and started initially with MTN, Super Sports and Face of Africa. We did Oluchi and then we launched Super Sports 3. We also did Strongman in Africa for MultiChioce.

In those days, Marathon Events then probably would have been one of the biggest events companies around but for egos, human elements and things like that the company obviously didn't last long and so I moved on to Miss Common Wealth. We did Common Wealth pageant for two years or so and then from there I moved 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.

Like I said, we were affiliated to a South African company. We did a lot of international trainings going to and fro. We kept on going to South Africa for trainings and all of that. Insight Communications was also another training school. I am sure that you are aware of that because almost all the

practitioners in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) passed through Insight, and I think I benefitted from working with the group. It was a beneficial and symbiotic relationship. We were giving and we were getting and all the time I gave it all for Mr. Biodun Shobanjo, and Mr. Jimi Awosika. They were and still are probably the greatest in the industry.

From there, I moved on to Dangote Group, Dansa to specific. I was the marketing manager for Dansa Group then. I didn't stay too long there because it was too far being around Trade Fair then. That was just the only reason I left. For me, yes you want to make money, you want to do a lot of things and at that point my children were very young. I needed comfort for myself and for them and I needed to be a mother to my children.

Honestly, irrespective of anything I am today, my children and my family come first. At that point I got an option to go to Union Bank and the bank was also rebranding at the time. There was another option as well at BrandFootprint Communications which was in Ikeja GRA where my children's school also was.

What informed your choice of career?

I studied Dramatic Arts. I went into school to study Law. I didn't get it at Law and so I went in for Dramatic Arts. The first year came and everybody started to change over; but I said I wasn't changing over. I stayed in Dramatic Arts and then I majored in Broadcasting. I served in Studios and thought I was going to be on the commercial side, but over the years I discovered the IMC industry. I started having an understanding of almost everything. That is why I can confidently say I have done the client's side and I have also done the agency's side. But for me, IMC 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. If we say our company is an experiential agency, we also have a sister company that does advertising. But with this client we find ourselves having to foray into a wider sphere of experiential marketing. So, I should say yes, I stumbled on it (IMC) and so far I have stayed.

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 said 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?' But I got in there and it wasn't a sham. I saw everyone and every other person was there. 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 Cross River State Governor. There were over 100 people there and indeed they were not small men and women. I think, for me, that was one of the greatest achievements of my life because I was like 'wow, so I am also 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 and so I don't know who an accomplished professional is. I believe that professionals are constantly evolving and learning and getting better because like I often say to my people here in the office, 'you are always as good as your last activity. A new activity means you have to be better than what you did before.'



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 and so I don't know who an accomplished professional is. I believe that professionals are constantly evolving and learning and getting better because like I often say to my people here in the office, 'you are always 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 said before, from BrandFootprint, I ran a company – Event Plus – with a friend for ten years. I remember some of the things which people said to me last year when I said to him, 'guy let's go and explore now. I realized that for me, 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 Event Plus seems 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 and you will rise. We talk about Disney and the like; if he didn't take the risk, he wouldn't have been anywhere. Remember that he has not always been like he is now. He has had his failures. In like manner, 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 our company vision which is to strive to be the best in everything I do – as a wife, an entrepreneur, and a leader to my people. 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. ■

Nigeria's outdoor advertising industry is regulated - Ify Onukwuba

How will you assess outdoor advertising in Nigeria?

Outdoor advertising in Nigeria has really matured and you can compare outdoor advertising practice here with the way it's practiced anywhere in the world. It has come of age. We have the latest technologies that can be found anywhere on the globe. I can say, therefore, that we are doing very well. We are okay as it is.

What will you say are the challenges facing the industry?

First and foremost, we have been overtaxed on all sides. Over regulation is another one. We are being over regulated; and, honestly, you do not run an industry that way. By over regulation, you are killing the business. The fact remains that if you go out now, you will see many vacant boards that are just there; they are just there wasting away. These boards should have campaigns on them because, economically speaking, when there is recession that is when actually, our medium is of use to everybody – the manufacturers, the clients and even the consumers. Unfortunately, it is the other way round, here. And, the cause is our regulation.

It is so bad that it is as if we are working for the regulators because virtually everything we earn, we give to them just to keep our boards standing. As a result, it is difficult for us to plow back into maintaining the structures. This simply means that if our boards start falling or collapsing, we should not be blamed.

Imagine paying half of what you are earning to a regulator. What do you need to do? You still need more than half of that money to service your boards; pay your workers, and, of course, your taxes. When you look at this kind of scenario, you just find out that it is as if we are being driven by slave masters and we are slaves just working for our upkeep.

Again, infrastructure deficiency is there. Take, for instance, power supply. Sadly speaking, all our LEDs are working on generators. Even, there are LED sites having two generators each; one working for about six hours and the other one, another six hours, interchangeably. All of these contribute to the running of the boards, and of the industry, by extension. That explains why our rates are a little bit high.

Then, there are area boys to contend with; you cannot work anywhere without settling area boys. That, too, is part of your expenditure. At the end of the day, we're left with nothing. Honestly, they are very serious issues.



How can some of the challenges mentioned above be tackled?

For the regulators, I think they need to understand the business. They have to understand what they are regulating. They also have to constantly be in touch with us; and communicate with us. They have to feel what we are feeling because if they do not, then it will be very difficult to understand us.

How would you assess your company, Nigeria Advertising Service, NAS?

We have come a very long way. My father, Chief Megafu, founded it in 1958 even before I was born. Over the years, we have had our challenges; but we have learnt to overcome them. Right now, we are not doing badly. We are still afloat and we are still counting. It has been about 62 years, since its inception. And, my prayer is that the company lives on, even after me.

What are the challenges facing NAS?

All the things that I have told you about the outdoor industry are what we are facing. We are a part of the industry. Therefore, we are being overregulated and it is difficult meeting up. To me, it is going to be a win-win situation if our regulators can come down on their rates; we, too, can come down on our rates so that our clients can enjoy our medium more; because right now we are pushing them away with high costs.

Well, it is not our fault. We need to maintain all these structures. Therefore, they need to be more understanding. If you have about 10 sites in Lagos and you only have three that are carrying campaigns, remember these three would have to pay for all the empty boards. You have to service your boards. You have to pay salaries, and, at the end of the day, you just find out that you cannot cope. The very big challenge of over

taxation cum over regulation should really be looked into.

How is NAS positioned in the industry?

I think that it is the people that should assess us and tell us how well or otherwise we are doing. But, internally, I know we're not doing badly. We are quite okay. For us to still be here after 62 years and counting, it can only mean that there is something that we are doing right.

Your competitive advantage?

Our services. We are very prompt on service delivery; and this has been well attested to by the reports that we have been having from our clients. More often than not, you hear them saying, NAS, they deliver! That, for me, is a big plus for us. For your client to tell you categorically that you are doing well, that when it comes to NAS, they do not play with services. I am always happy and excited about that one.

Your projections for 2020?

In 2020, we are coming out with something very great, very soon. I will not want to elaborate on this until it happens. I will ensure that you will be the first to know.

Who is Mrs. Ify Onukwuba?

Ify Onukwuba, is a struggling woman; I am still struggling. However, the most important thing is that I have faith in God. I love the work that I am doing because I was born into it. Truth is I really do not know any other kind of business. I was born into outdoor, I have lived in outdoor, I have dreamt of outdoor. Therefore, my own prayer is to do better, to keep the name and make it continue, long after I am gone. That would be something I would really cherish very much. Secondly, I like sports; I am a member of Ikoyi Club where I play golf actively. I won laurels. Apart from that, I also walk out a lot.

What inspires you?

I love challenges. I get inspiration from challenges. My father used to inspire me so much and I really miss him. Unfortunately, I took a lot of the things he advised me, long before he died, for granted; and now they are happening. So, when I look back, sometimes I would just say, okay, let me try to do this; let me try to do that. I must confess that if only I had done all that my father advised, I would have been years ahead of who I am now. But, then, I also believe in the saying that anytime you wake up is your own morning. Let me add, here, that I also get inspiration from workshops, from listening to other people. ■

FirstBank's CEO Adeduntan receives Cranfield Alumnus 2020 Award



Dr Adesola Adeduntan, CEO, FirstBank being presented the Cranfield School of Management Distinguished Alumnus Award 2020 by Professor Sir Peter Gregson FEng MRSA, DSc, Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor, Cranfield University.

Following the announcement made earlier in the year, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, the Chief Executive

Officer of First Bank of Nigeria Limited has been presented with the coveted and renowned Cranfield School of Management

Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award 2020.

Recall that Dr. Adeduntan had been honoured with the sought-after Cranfield School of Management Distinguished Alumnus of the year Award 2020. Interestingly, the recognition which was celebrated across Nigeria – the highpoint being the commendation by the country's President, Muhammadu Buhari – was recently presented to the FirstBank boss by Professor Sir Peter Gregson, FEng, MRSA, DSc, Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor, Cranfield University at The Royal Society, London.

With the saying, behind every successful man there is a strong woman; an elated Mrs. Adenike Adeduntan – wife of Dr. Adesola Adeduntan – was at the presentation to support him through the ceremony.

Also in attendance were Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney, Group Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications, FirstBank and Mr. Samuel Aiyere, CEO, FBN Bank UK, amongst others. ■

Zedcrest unveils Digital Wealth Management Subsidiary

New-age financial solutions powerhouse, Zedcrest Capital Limited has announced the launch of a wholly owned subsidiary and new Investment/Asset Management firm aimed at digitally 'democratising' investment in Africa.

The new company, Zedcrest Investment Managers ("ZIMVEST") will introduce digital private wealth and investment management; help clients grow wealth by beating inflation and currency risks through multicurrency investments, through best in class paperless processes.

According to the Founder & Group CEO of the Zedcrest Group, Saheed Adedayo Amzat, "ZIMVEST's differentiating factor will come from the



renowned expertise of the Zedcrest group in the global financial markets. This is evidenced by the leadership position of its global markets business, Zedcap Partners which bagged the 2019 best brokerage service award of FMDQ OTC. The Group also has a wide distribution experience garnered from setting up another subsidiary, Zedvance, a top-three consumer lender in Nigeria.

Commenting on the unveiling, the Chairman of Zedcrest Group and former

managing partner of Ernst & Young, Adebisi Sanda said: "The launch of the Asset Management business ties in nicely with our plan to dominate every important vertical of Financial services: our four pillars of global markets, investment management, lending and payments.

"Despite some growth in the last decade, capital formation in Nigeria is still relatively low compared to our frontier/emerging market peers. The total AUM of the contributory pension scheme,

▶▶ at 10 trillion is just under 10% of GDP compared to South Africa at 63% of GDP. The non-pension AUM at about 1.2 trillion is very low and represents a clear growth opportunity, one which we are going after.”

Gbenga Adigun, the newly hired head of Asset Management who left his posh job at one of the country's top three asset management firm, believes ZIMVEST would leverage on the Group's remarkable capacities and capabilities to launch the firm into the top five players in 5 years.

“I am delighted at the focus and vision I met on ground at Zedcrest Group and excited at the unique opportunity we have to create tremendous impact. In the coming months, we will be unveiling new well-thought-through products to meet the investment needs of the public. We would have propositions for the salaried employees, entrepreneurs, HNIs, corporates, governments and family offices,” Adigun said.

He also showered glowing praises on the Management of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), for the support in granting the operational license in record time.

With the current thrust of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to drive inclusive growth in the economy, returns have fallen tremendously as fund managers have been locked out of the Juicy Open Market Operation market, in favour of foreign investors who bring the much needed foreign currency inflows. Most fund managers are expected to have negative real returns in 2020, a situation Zedcrest attributes to the unusual dependence on risk-free government securities investments.

A recent guideline from the CBN elongates the available CBN futures yield curve to 5 years from 12 months. The management of Zimvest believes this is to encourage foreign direct investment in critical sectors of the real economy and would significantly give Nigeria a growth lifeline.

“The Nigerian rising narrative is about to be rekindled and we believe this is the best time for us to be setting up. We have a clear opportunity to bring alternative investments products to the market, and reduce the focus on government securities. We would be creating products for underlying investments in infrastructure and the agricultural value chain,” noted Stella Duru, another Zedcrest Director. ■

Fidelity Bank comes out tops in KPMG SME survey; bags Best SME Supporting Bank Award



Fidelity Bank Plc has remained a leading financial institution among Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for deposit transaction, credit facilities and overall customer service experience, recording significant improvements in a recent survey. The bank which has grown its reputation for supporting small businesses moved up four (4) places to reach second on the 2019 Nigeria Banking Industry Customer Experience Survey, recently published by the renowned audit and consultancy firm, KPMG.

This remarkable achievement was followed by the award of ‘Best SME-Supporting Bank of the Year’ by African Newspapers of Nigeria; Publishers of Tribune Newspapers in recognition of “its efforts to stimulate economic growth by empowering small and medium-sized businesses, which are the engine of economic growth of any nation”.

The award was bestowed on the bank at the 70th anniversary of the newspaper, which was founded by the late Nigerian sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

Speaking on both developments,

Fidelity Bank CEO, Nnamdi Okonkwo, said the MSME sub-sector is a niche area of focus for the bank.

“As critical agents for economic development, we will continue to deploy resources to support the sector, from structured financing to advisory, capacity building and market access.

“Our unique approach to serving the market segment is multi-faceted which includes robust business advisory, practical handholding and guidance of aspiring and existing entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses. We are encouraged by the survey results as well as the recognition by Tribune to do more for individuals and businesses in this area,” he stated.

Fidelity Bank is a full-fledged commercial bank operating in Nigeria with over 5 million customers that are serviced across its 250 business offices and various digital banking channels. The bank focuses on select niche corporate banking sectors as well as Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and it's currently driving its retail banking businesses through its robust digital banking channels. ■



FirstBank
Since 1894

FirstBank wins *Best Mobile Banking App* and *Fastest Growing Retail Bank* Awards

First Bank of Nigeria Limited has been named 2019 “Best Mobile Banking App” and “Fastest Growing Retail Bank” winner by Global Business Outlook. The Global Business Outlook Award recognises and rewards excellence in business in companies across the world, both in the public and private sectors. The award rewards innovation, creativity and the drive to create value.

FirstBank earned the Fastest Growing Retail Bank recognition because of its leading role in promoting financial inclusion in the country, a drive which has resulted in its 44,000 Agent Banking network designed to complement the provision of bespoke financial services at its over 750 branches nationwide.

It also won the Best Mobile Banking App award thanks to its Firstmobile banking app's capability at performing a wide range of financial transactions in a safe, adaptable, futuristic and efficient manner.

The user friendly app is widely renowned for its ease of navigation and state of the art security features to mitigate risk against fraud.

In the course of 2019, FirstBank bagged numerous awards across various areas of its business operations. The awards comprise Women Empowerment Category – Sustainable Banking Awards by CBN Bankers Committee, Best Private Bank in Nigeria 2019 by Global Finance Magazine and World Finance Magazine respectively; Best Process Automation Initiative, Application or Programme by Asian Banker International Excellence in Retail Financial Services; Best Banking Brand Nigeria 2019 by Global Brands Magazine; Best Retail Bank in Nigeria by Global Banking and Finance Review and Asian Banker International Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards respectively; Cashless Driver: Highest Volume in Bill Payments and Highest Transaction Volume

in Real-Time Payments by CBN Electronic Payments Incentive Scheme (EPIS) – Efficiency Awards; Long Service Corporate Award by Nigerian Economic Summit Group; Best Financial Inclusion Program – Nigeria 2019 and Bank of The Year – Nigeria 2019 by International Investor, amongst many others.

Speaking on the awards, Folake Ani-Mumuney, the Bank's Group Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications said: “We appreciate the recognition of these awards by the respective awarding bodies. The awards are dedicated to all our customers across the globe as their continued patronage of our services is appreciated. We remain steadfast and would not rest on our laurels at rendering bespoke financial services tailored to meet the financial needs of our valued customers, irrespective of where they may be.”

Agusto & Co. ranks **Zenith bank** as best digital bank in Nigeria 2019

Zenith Bank Plc, Nigeria's leading financial institution, has emerged as the Best Digital Bank in Nigeria in the 2019 Consumer Digital Banking Satisfaction Index Report released by Agusto and Co.

The Consumer Digital Banking Satisfaction Index report highlights customer's preferences and attitude towards digital banking platforms provided by banks in the country. The objective of the Index is to create an independent appraisal of the ease of using digital banking platforms by the Nigerian populace following increased competition by banks on digital platforms as well as the growing quest for financial inclusion using digital means.

Agusto & Co., a foremost research and credit rating agency in Nigeria, explained in the report that the Index, which is in its second year, was the result of an extensive online and offline consumer survey carried out across various geopolitical zones in Nigeria, and was designed to give insight into

the behavioural patterns of the respondents, drawn from both the formal and the informal sector. The output of the Index is based on information provided by respondents on the top eight banks in Nigeria by total assets as of December 31, 2018.

In the survey, two banks were assigned a ‘4 Star’ rating for Consumer Digital Banking Satisfaction, with Zenith Bank scoring the highest and emerging the ‘Best Digital Bank in Nigeria’. The report further noted that the ‘4 Star’ rating assigned to Zenith Bank reflects transaction success rates, ease of use, perceived security and good troubleshooting & IT resolution on its different digital platforms.

The report also revealed that Zenith Bank has the highest transaction success rates on digital banking platforms such as mobile app, USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) or web, the bank's respondents experienced the most ease in navigating through the digital platforms, and the bank

has one of the highest numbers of customers who felt it has an excellent rating on IT issue resolution.

Zenith Bank Plc is recognized as one of the most innovative financial institutions in Nigeria and was voted the most customer-focused bank in Nigeria for the Retail and SME segments in the 2018 KPMG Annual Banking Industry Customer Satisfaction Survey (BICSS). Most recently, the bank won the Best Bank in Retail Banking and the Bank of the Year at the 2019 BusinessDay Banks and Other Financial Institutions (BOFI) Awards.

The bank's commitment to world-class service standards, products and solutions has also ensured its market dominance, as attested to by the growth in fees from electronic/digital products, which doubled to N35.3 billion in Q3 2019 from the N17.6 billion recorded in Q3 2018.

Clearly, the fact that the bank's digital platforms and channels have been the main enablers of the massive growth in its non-interest income reflects the ease of adoption of the digital platforms by its teeming customers, and demonstrates the giant strides being made by the bank in the retail segment of the market.

MTN launches new thematic campaign



Officer, MTN Nigeria, Rahul De said: “We want Nigerians to excel and attain their dreams and aspirations. This campaign is about changing and improving the quality of lives, encouraging Nigerians to rethink and embrace a new approach that reflects the changing dynamics of the world around us. This is what drives us to continue investing and exploring opportunities for Nigerians.

“For us at MTN, our promise is to be that brand that will stand with every Nigerian in their quest to turn things up and live their best. This philosophy will guide everything we do as a brand this New Year.”

The ICT Company also unveiled a two minutes mini documentary for “Turn it Up” during the official launch. The television commercial confirms MTN Nigeria as a firm committed to creating the right channels and ecosystem to enable Nigerians use their boundless creative energies with the rest of the world. ■

MTN Nigeria has launched Turn it Up, an initiative to spur Nigerians to look within their environment to improve their lives.

With Turn It Up, Nigerians are encouraged to ‘turn up’ their creative,

imaginative and innovative energies while MTN serves as an enabler. The company seeks to continue empowering Nigerians with the tools and connectivity for the right opportunities.

Speaking at the launch, Chief Marketing

FinTechNGR set to hold a webinar on data protection regulation

FinTech Association of Nigeria is set to hold a webinar tagged FintechNGR 2.0 Webinar. The theme of the webinar is Understanding the Nigerian Data Protection Regulation, and would-be participants are advised to register in advance. The webinar which is geared towards FinTechNGR’s vision to make Nigeria one of the world’s leading markets for FinTech innovation and investment is scheduled to hold January 24, 2020 at 01:00 PM West Central Africa.

Speaking about the webinar via its official twitter handle, FinTechNGR said the webinar was designed to help participants understand the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) that requires their organisations stay compliant with the storage and management of personal data of Nigerian citizens and residents.

“FintechNGR’s choice of making it a webinar is borne out of our conviction to bridge constraints and restrictions that may arise from location. It does not matter where you are or where your company is located.

“This webinar will help you evaluate what to expect from the regulation, how prepared (or not prepared) your organisation is right now, what you need to do to navigate the upcoming changes and the best ways to stay secure,” the statement noted.

The webinar will be facilitated by Simisola Eyisanmi, Senior Associate, Chris Ogunbanjo LP.

Simisola has over six years of legal experience and has gained experience in the litigation unit, intellectual property

unit, and company secretarial unit, before committing to the corporate & commercial unit of Chris Ogunbanjo & Co. She is industrious, intelligent and has advised a plethora of multi-national and local organisations on various assignments, including regulatory compliance, legal opinions, implementation of transaction/project structures, reorganisation and business restructuring. Her core practice areas include Mergers and Acquisitions, Project and Asset Finance, Banking, Foreign Investment & Divestments and Insurance. Simisola holds Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Law from the prestigious University of Ilorin and Master of Laws (LLM) University of Lagos.

FintechNGR is a self-regulatory, not-for-profit and non-political organisation incorporated in Nigeria and a member of Global Fintech Hubs Federation. ■



FinTechNGR partners Opay to enhance ecosystem

FinTech Association of Nigeria has partnered with Opay, a one-stop mobile-based platform for payment and other services. The partnership, according to the association, will enhance acceleration and innovation, membership and other support to the ecosystem.

FinTechNGR made the announcement on its official Instagram page, following an engagement with the management of Opay in Lagos recently.

Present at the meeting, according to FinTech Nigeria, were “Damilola Ishie (Engagement Manager) Leo Hao (Senior Director, Opay), @obrimah (Chief Operating Officer, FintechNGR), Seun Folorunso (Resource Manager) and Seun Alley, (Director, Partnership), Oride.

FintechNGR is a self-regulatory,

not-for-profit and non-political organisation incorporated in Nigeria and a member of Global Fintech Hubs Federation. The Association was established to serve as a platform for the development of the financial technology industry in Nigeria and to be a forum for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of information by and between various stakeholders in the Nigerian financial technology services industry.

Opay, on the other hand, is more than a payment company. Its platform is available for transportation, food & grocery delivery, and other important services in the day-to-day activity of people. Millions of users rely on OPay everyday to send and receive money, pay bills, and order food and groceries.



The e-hailing company believes user should be able to enjoy financial and social inclusion regardless of physical borders, boundaries, or even social status.■

Quickteller expands product offering, unveils new TV campaign

Foremost electronic payment and digital commerce solutions platform, Quickteller, has disclosed it has embarked on a fresh strategic product expansion initiative with the aim to go beyond its traditional service offerings to consumers in the Nigerian market.

The Interswitch subsidiary company widely known for provision of e-payment services said it would henceforth extend its product offerings beyond the much familiar traditional spheres of e-payments to now be a predominantly technology service company that will be providing wider range of products and services to consumers.

And in practical demonstration of its current brand positioning, the company has unveiled a new television commercial targeting consumers of the flagship payment platform.

The television commercial which comes in two title variants, namely: “Big Idea” and “Possibilities” aims at positioning Quickteller as a brand that is capable of causing wider range of possibilities in the life of consumers.

The commercial which runs with the pay off ‘Everyday Payment Made Easy’ portrays Quickteller as one payment platform that enables consumers to derive a lot more possibilities of e-payment options.

The campaign themed “Everything is possible” demonstrates the ubiquitous nature of the Quickteller platform. The commercial features popular comedians and celebrities such as Bovi, Ini Dima Okojie, Nollywood actress and Eric

Omondi, Kenya based comedian who is considered to be one of the best in Africa.

Both versions of the commercial which are currently running a major TV screens are in furtherance of the previous Quickteller campaign – “One less thing to worry about”, and reiterate the ease and universality of the Quickteller platform. The commercials deploy the use of humour and creativity to subtly drive in the point that on Quickteller, a user can pay for almost anything they can imagine.

Both commercials are a body of great creative thinking and drive home the overarching message that everything is possible on the Quickteller Platform. The commercials both depict the importance of a platform that makes payment possible irrespective of person, location and needs. Quickteller enables everyone to make transactions on the go, with just a few clicks.

Addressing journalists at the formal campaign launch that took place inside the boardroom of Interswitch corporate office complex in Victoria Island, Lagos, Product Marketing Manager, Quickteller, Adedeji Layade, explained that the company was focused and committed to expanding further its product offering far beyond what it is presently known for.

Highlighting the importance of transacting on a platform that provides a vast number of services in the digital payment space, Layade said: “It’s amazing to know that you can pay for almost anything on Quickteller. At Quickteller, we are committed to making all payments



possible. This is why we are continuously expanding the services available on our platform.”

He continued: “From just a platform where you could transfer money, customers can now perform more transactions that speak to their lifestyle, businesses, passion and even their careers.

“This campaign illustrates the compelling point that Quickteller makes almost anything possible. Both versions of the campaign are a natural flow from the previous campaign and consistent with our messaging that payments are easier and most convenient on the Quickteller platform. It is simply a visual metaphor for everyday payments made easy by Quickteller.”

Services available on the platform include payment of toll fees, state government payments, purchase of airtime, flight tickets, funds transfer, payment of cable bills (TV), quick loans, event tickets, online shopping from over 100 global stores, JAMB ePins and every other thing you can think of.

Quickteller is great for internet-savvy users who are already used to making payments online. It works like a shop or supermarket where customers can make online payments for various products and services.

Interswitch is an Africa-focused integrated digital payments and commerce company that facilitates the electronic circulation of money as well as the exchange of value between individuals and organisations on a timely and consistent basis.■

Partner Mobile launches EV1 into Nigerian market, partners Ntel to avail users 4G LTE

Partner Mobile, a 'proudly Nigerian' leading mobile phone brand, has unveiled one of its most-anticipated smartphones, EV1 (Evolution 1), into the Nigerian market.

The sleek new device was unveiled to Journalists at a media launch held in Lagos recently.

Speaking during the product launch, Olusola Akintola, Chief Technology Officer, Partner Mobile expressed confidence in the new smartphone, stating that it will delight users, considering its stylish design, AI Triple camera, quality and pricing.

He added that the device runs on Android 9 pie operating system and comes with face and fingerprint sensors, water resistant features, ground-breaking innovations in display, camera and performance.

"Among other wonderful features, the phone comes with a triple camera and a flash square design. The overall appearance exhibits a wonderful relationship between geometry and aesthetics incisively and vividly from the proportion of segmentation, geometric curves and other aspects. It shows the geometric aesthetics, and the whole architecture is romantic, classy and absolutely fashionable," he said.

He also noted: "The 5MP front camera and the background blur effect will no longer make you afraid of all kinds of scene-stealing. The beauty algorithms support specific beautify details of face, skin and eyes, designed to diminish appearance of blemishes."

Similarly, Ifeoluwa Molokwu, Chief Operation Officer, Partner Mobile said:

"The launch of EV1 into the market today signifies our unrelenting efforts to introduce to the market value-for-money products in order to satisfy our customers. EV1 is a reliable phone that will surely satisfy the customers who have been looking for a phone that will suit all purposes."

She added that the new smartphone was distinctively manufactured to meet today's smartphone market and at an affordable price, so consumers could do more of what they love with their smartphones.

Speaking on the expansion plan of the company, Ife explained: "We are committed to offering our teeming Nigerian customers only the best mobile devices at affordable prices. This is why we will be launching new mobile phones into the market every other quarter."

"As we grow our brand, aimed to be established throughout the African continent, we will equally be trading in continents, including the Middle East, Europe and the United States of America, taking our customers and you, our media partners on the journey."

In the same vein, in furtherance of its commitment to making quality smartphones and boosting smartphone penetration in the country, Partner Mobile also announced its partnership with Ntel, one of Nigeria's telecommunication providers, on providing data bundle of more than four Gigabytes for free to buyers of EV 1.

While commenting on the partnership, the Managing Director/CEO of Ntel, Hon. Babatunde Omotoba said that Ntel has



been working assiduously with Partner Mobile for some time to introduce a budget-friendly smartphone targeted at the consumer market.

He noted: "Following months of compatibility tests, we are delighted to announce that the Ntel network is now compatible with the EV 1 smartphone. This means that anyone who owns this smartphone can now call and browse at a superfast speed. In fact, that is the fastest speed you will see in the Nigerian market."

"Our network supports crystal clear high definition voice calling as well as PLT advanced features which combine to enable downlink speed of up to 150megabits per second on our network."

He continued: "To demonstrate our commitment to this partnership in driving internet penetration in the country, which is in line with the National Broadband Plan, Ntel will be offering end users 4.5 gig data upon purchase of the EV 1 in our stores."

He added that the collaboration with Partner Mobile signals a new dawn in the evolution of Nigerian 4G LTE segment which has been impacted by the concern that most people don't have phones that can work on 4G LTE. "But now we have EV 1 which everyone can afford and be on the 4G LTE," he concluded. ■



MTN set to fortify its Nigerian investment with \$1.6bn, drives strategic network expansion

To further expand and consolidate its portfolio in Africa's largest economy, South African multinational mobile telecommunications company, MTN, has said it would be making a capital investment of \$1.6 billion over the next three years to strengthen and expand its network and operations in Nigeria.

MTN made the announcement recently after its group chairman Mcebisi Jonas, MTN Nigeria chairman Dr. Ernest Ndokwe, group CEO Rob Shuter and MTN Nigeria CEO Ferdi Moolman met Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and key government officials.

"We are steadfast about our investments

in Nigeria, particularly over the next three years as we aim to strengthen and expand our network and systems," Jonas said.

"We are fully aligned with the strategic agenda of the Nigerian government and are committed to strengthening the digital economy of the country," the statement said.

On his part, President Buhari said his government was committed to providing an enabling environment for businesses to succeed and also looking at ways to increase security across critical national infrastructure.

He applauded MTN's support of Nigeria's digital inclusion programmes and its commitment to growing the

telecommunications industry across the region.

Commenting on the development, MTN's Shuter said: "Financial inclusion and access to funding and digital services all become easier when our continent is powered by connectivity."

"The benefits of a connected continent are far reaching, making a positive impact across Africa. We cannot achieve this goal on our own, and are working on strengthening relationships with our key partners to extend access to comprehensive and affordable solutions to all."

MTN operates in 17 African countries, with more than 200 million customers. ■

NNPC Retail unveils new range of engine oil, set to join global lubricants market



The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has taken another giant step through one of its subsidiaries, NNPC Retail Limited, to join the global Lubricants market with the introduction of its lubricants into the Nigerian market.

The NNPC Lubricants range, which was unveiled at the Abuja International

Conference Centre at the recently include Nitro Diamond, Nitro Gold, Nitro Super 40 and Nitro 2T engine oils. They are offered for various types of petrol engines, while Rhino X and Rhino HD engine oils are specially formulated for diesel engines.

Commenting on the new products, the managing director of NNPC Retail Limited, Sir Billy Okoye said: "The NNPC Lubricants are formulated using carefully selected world-class base oils and performance additives to give all-year-round excellent performance in normal and arduous engine working conditions.

"We are proud to introduce the latest addition to its family of petroleum products, "NNPC Lubricants," which have been released into the global market of Lubricants."

Sir Okoye, who spoke on the impact the lubricants introduction will play in the society added: "The entry of NNPC

into the lubricants market ensures that the Corporation continues to touch lives in many positive ways. This also creates new areas of employment opportunities for Nigerians who may wish to become distributors, dealers and retailers, while strengthening the indigenous lubricants industry."

Also commenting, Mr. Haruna Abdurrahman, Manager Lubricants NNPC Retail NNPC said the company has brought to bear its wealth of experience in birthing the Nitro and Rhino ranges; hence the connection with the slogan, "Na My Papa Born Me" truly Nigerian, truly National, truly World Class".

NNPC Retail Ltd, owned by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), was incorporated in 2002, to take the Corporation into the retail petroleum product marketing thereby joining world-class Energy Companies in rendering of energy products for everyday use.

The company has a history of reliable, available and accessible petroleum products guarantees customers' satisfaction on her range of lubricants which are available in all NNPC Retail Service Stations and other accredited outlets nationwide for consumers' household, vehicular and industrial use. ■

FirstBank bags 2019 Oil & Gas Banker Award

First Bank of Nigeria Limited was recently presented with the Oil and Gas Banker of the Year 2019 award at the Patrons' Dinner and Industry Awards of the Nigeria International Petroleum Summit held recently at Transcorp Hilton, Abuja.

The four-day event, comprising conference and award dinner, is acclaimed to be Nigeria's Government official platform for the petroleum industry gathering which has evolved to become Africa's premier business and technology conference for not just oil and gas but for other industries in the economy, notably maritime, automobile, banking and finance, power (electricity), pipelines, LNG, infrastructure, engineering and construction amongst others.

Speaking on the award, the Bank's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan said: "We take pride in this recognition, as it represents the nation's identification with our leading role in promoting the growth of the oil and gas industry. We remain steadfast on being the financial partner of first choice to Nigerians and, indeed across Africa as we collectively strive towards the continued growth of the economy at large."

The event had in attendance dignitaries such as Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, CEO, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, represented by Mrs. Bashirat Odunewu, the Bank's Group Executive, Energy & Infrastructure as a panelist to deliberate the topic "What

are the key challenges when it comes to managing risk and generate sustainable long-term in-country value development environment". Other speakers in the panel were Mrs. Olayemi Anyanechi, Managing Director, Partners Sefton Fross; Bank Anthony Okoroafor, Chairman, Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN); Mr. Bitrus Bako Nabasu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources; and Patrick Olinma, Executive Director, Oil & Gas Commercial, Total E&P Nigeria Ltd.

Over 5000 individuals and Corporate bodies from across 43 countries, including Dr. Sun Xiansheng, Secretary, General, International Energy Forum (IEF); Jean-Marc Thystère Tchicaya, Minister of Hydrocarbons, Republic of the Congo; Dr. Omar Farouk Ibrahim, OPEC Governor for Nigeria; Jens Frolich Holte, State Secretary, (International Development) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; Carri Lockhart, SVP Portfolio and Partner Operated Development and Production International Equinor; Gabriel Mbaga Obiong Lima, Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons Republic of Equatorial Guinea and Magda Chambriand, Former CEO, National Agency of Petroleum Natural Gas and Biofuels Government of Brazil amongst others, participated in the event.

FirstBank has over the years supported public and private players in the oil and gas



Marno de Jong, Vice President, Shell Nigeria (middle) presenting the Oil and Gas Banker of the Year 2019 award won by First Bank of Nigeria Limited to the Bank's Group Executive, Energy & Infrastructure, CBG, Bashirat Odunewu (right) accompanied by Group Head, Corporate Banking Group (Energy), FirstBank, Oluwatoyin Aina (left), at the Patrons' Dinner and Industry Awards of the Nigeria International Petroleum Summit held in Abuja.

industry which has been the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, post-independence. With its "Oil and Gas Contract Finance products", the Bank finances the Oil & Gas value-chain by providing Advisory/Agency services, Acquisition Finance/Reserve based lending to indigenous oil producing companies, trade Finance for crude oil export and refined product import and contract finance for oil service companies ranging from simple hospitality to complex turnkey Engineering, Procurement and Construction, amongst other tailor-made treasury and cash management solutions. ■



Shell disburses N155m support to 140 Niger Delta youth

One hundred and forty young and talented people from eight states of the Niger Delta have graduated from the specialised Shell LiveWIRE Nigeria entrepreneurial training programme, which provides business and financial support to enable them to establish small and medium scale businesses.

Drawn from Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, Imo, and Rivers states, the beneficiaries, 20 of whom are under the Oporoma Specialised LiveWIRE Nigeria category in Bayelsa State, got N155 million grants from The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) Joint Venture at the graduation ceremony in Port Harcourt, recently.

SPDC's General Manager External Relations, Igo Weli, said: "These beneficiaries have now become part of the 7,212 Niger Delta young entrepreneurs who have graduated from the LiveWIRE

Nigeria programme since Shell launched this flagship youth enterprise development programme in 2003."

Represented at the graduation ceremony by SPDC Manager for Social Performance and Social Investment, Gloria Udoh, Weli noted: "In this period, LiveWIRE Nigeria has produced young entrepreneurs, most of whom are now employers of labour. Some of the beneficiaries are also given the opportunity to play in SPDC's supply chain as vendors and are provided with access to growth capital."

In his remarks, the traditional head of Oporoma, Andy Zighadina, applauded SPDC for initiating such a laudable programme to benefit the youths of the community. The visibly excited monarch also offered cash rewards to the top five beneficiaries from Oporoma to make appreciable success in first three months after the graduation.

Previous beneficiaries of the Shell LiveWIRE Nigeria programme were also at the ceremony to share their success stories. Managing Director of FarmToJuice Limited, Esther Bolouebi Ekiotenne, a 2019 winner of the Shell Group Global Top 10 Innovator award, and Solar Energy entrepreneur, Henry Chikodi, told the new beneficiaries

that passion, hard work and discipline were necessary requirements for business success.

The Shell LiveWIRE Nigeria programme is part of the global Shell LiveWIRE social investment programme, which enables young people to start their own businesses and create employment. It provides young entrepreneurs with access to essential business knowledge and customised support they need to transform their enterprising ideas into viable and sustainable businesses.

In 17 years of its implementation in Nigeria, the Shell LiveWIRE Nigeria has received local and international recognitions, including the 2011 African Leadership Magazine Award for Youth Development, a year after it won the Social Enterprise and Reports Award in 2010.

The LiveWIRE programme is targeted at SPDC Joint Venture host communities to inspire, encourage and support youths to start their own businesses or expand existing ones by providing them the requisite training and start-up finance in the hope that, with legitimate alternative means of livelihood, young men and women will turn their backs on vices. ■

MTN Foundation donates to orphanage

In line with its Orphanage Support Initiative and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), MTN Foundation has donated food and household items to orphanage homes across Nigeria.

"This is an initiative that the MTNF embarks on annually in collaboration with key stakeholders," MTN wrote on its official Instagram page.

MTN, the telecommunications giant disclosed further that 20 orphanages across the country, benefited from the initiative. Among the orphanages visited were Bab-Es-Salam Home and Little Saints Orphanage in Lagos, Nigeria.

Aside improving the life of vulnerable orphans across the country, the initiative also touches the lives of Nigerians in the area of health, education and economic empowerment on a sustainable basis.

MTN Foundation was incorporated in 2004 to drive MTNN's various CSR initiatives commissioned in May 2005. It was funded by up to 1% Profit After Tax from MTNN for projects and over N18bn has been committed to MTNF projects to date.

Having partnered government and multilateral agencies, the Foundation has over 550 project sites in 36 States, including the FCT.



MTN foundation

Airtel Touching Lives empowers more Nigerians with Season 5



To demonstrate that it can place equal weight on societal issues and business issues, foremost telecommunications services provider, Airtel Nigeria has rewarded the winners of its Airtel Touching Lives Season 5. Airtel Touching Lives is part of the brand's annual inspiring Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, dedicated to empowering communities and underprivileged Nigerians by creating opportunities that will drive positive impact across the various locations where it operates.

This year's premiere was held at the prestigious Eko Hotel & suites, Victoria Island, Lagos and a good number of distinguished public figures were in attendance, including Professor Yemi Osinbajo, Nigeria's Vice President, Isa Ali Pantami, Minister of Communication and Digital Economy and Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, among many others.

Speaking during the event, Segun Ogunsanya, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Airtel Nigeria, restated

the telco's consistency in its commitment to empowering more underprivileged people as well as encouraging other corporate organisations to support the poor, adding that each individual or corporate entity could touch lives meaningfully in their own ways.

"We have been consistent since the first launch of Airtel Touching Lives initiative five years ago. Even during the recession, we still did our utmost to keep hope alive for despaired individuals and families and saved many from needles death.

"We all need to do something. Whether it's five hundred thousand or twenty million naira, it still doesn't matter because the needs are many. Not all of us can do big things, but we can do small things; and I can tell you that those small things occupy the biggest parts of the hearts of those who are touched. At Airtel, we are touching lives," he said.

The Airtel boss enjoined all present at the well-attended event not to turn their back on pressing societal needs and issues, emphasising that for Airtel, there was no

turning back.

"Your Excellencies, Guests and everybody here tonight, don't look away; we are not looking away, and we will not look away," he promised.

In his remarks, VP Osinbajo applauded Airtel for being steadfast in its societal purpose to the lives of ordinary Nigerians, adding that the government could not do it alone. He therefore urged other corporate bodies and individuals to be part of the little drops that would make the mighty ocean.

Also speaking at the event, Governor Sanwo-Olu commended Airtel for touching the lives of the needy and underprivileged members of various communities in Nigeria, pledging Lagos State's support for the telco in its relentless quest to drive business through the greater purpose of serving humanity.

The recent premiere was the season 5 of Airtel Touching Lives and has further strengthened the brand's commitment to promoting the spirit of giving, self-sacrifice and love among Nigerians. ■



Leo Burnett Chicago appoints Kaylin Goldstein as Executive Vice President, Strategy Director

Leo Burnett Chicago has announced the addition of Kaylin Goldstein to the agency's strategy team. Goldstein will serve as an Executive Vice President, Strategy Director for Coors Light.

Goldstein brings a combined Ph.D. in Anthropology and extensive agency experience to her new role. Over 12 years at Crispin Porter + Bogusky, she helped create some of the most talked about campaigns of the past decade, including American Express' "Small Business Saturday" and Kraft Mac & Cheese's "World's Largest Blind Taste Test"—as well as brand work for Volkswagen, Hershey's, Charles Schwab, American Heart Association and American Airlines.

"With a wealth of experience, mentorship and plannercraft and big-impact initiatives to her name, Kaylin is a true force for our strategic bench," said Aki Spicer, Leo Burnett Chicago Chief Strategy Officer. "Her understanding of human behavior and ability to tap into the cultural pulse makes her an incredible and energetic addition to our agency."

Goldstein's work has been recognised with Cannes Lion, Effies, Clios and Jay Chiat Planning Awards. Her expertise has earned her seats on the juries of the Effie Awards, Ad Age/Creativity Awards and Jay Chiat Awards, and in 2017, AdAge named her Strategic Planner of the Year.

"I've had the good fortune to work on some iconic brands in my career, and I'm excited to join an agency that's a global icon in its own right with a roster of big, powerful brands," said Goldstein. "At the core, Leo Burnett is all about connecting on a real, human level and using everything they've got — smarts, ingenuity, data, empathy, curiosity, creativity, technology — to break through and engage people in a meaningful way."

Victor Oritedi exits Flour Mills as Sales Head



Victor Oritedi, Head of Sales at Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc, has announced his exit from the organisation after a near three years meritorious service to the organisation.

Oritedi whose service foray in the company began in October 2018 when he signed on as Head of Sales (Agri-Inputs) was saddled with the responsibility of developing the backward integration strategy of the FMN Group using the Contract Farming and Extension Services business models as well as developing a business model that will enable direct purchase from farmers and farmer markets at a minimum of 10% less Merchant prices.

Announcing his exit via a LinkedIn post, Oritedi stated that his decision was informed by the desire to move on and advance to next stage of challenges in his chosen career.

The statement reads: "It's time for me to move to the next challenge. I look back to the almost 3 years spent at The FMN Group and I feel proud. I hold dear the relationship and friendship I've built within the period. I have made great friends, met with good people and ultimately made giant strides towards the growth of my career.

"I want to thank my team members and other cross-functional units/departments I worked with. I wish you all the best in your endeavours. As I look forward to the next phase of my career, I will take the learning from Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc with me and hope it makes me a better person and manager."

While working in the organisation, Oritedi was responsible for Sales of agricultural inputs, including fertilizers, seeds and CCPs (Center for Chemical

Process Safety) into the Nigerian market, deploying the B2B (Business to Business) and B2C sales market routes.

Part of his portfolio included among other things, strengthening the existing sales and distribution channels, managing sales activities of 8 Area Sales Managers across the country and positioning FMN and other partnership brands as inputs of choice to all stakeholders in the industry.

Additionally, his service portfolio included expanding the company's market share through enforcing sound relationship management with existing and potential business partners, and to facilitate increase in market share by tapping into the wallet of competitors.

Also, he was involved in the planning and implementing sales, marketing and product development programs, both short and long range, targeted toward existing and new markets.

An alumnus of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where he bagged a Master Degree in International Relations and Affairs, Oritedi also holds an MBA Degree (Business Administration and Management, General) from the University of Wolverhampton as well as the Westford University College Diploma in International Business.

He is a member of several professional bodies, including the Institute of Information and Strategic Management (IISM), Chartered Institute of Management and Leadership, CIML, USA, and the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN).

NBC appoints Matthieu Seguin as new Managing Director

Nigerian Bottling Company Limited (NBC) has appointed Matthieu Seguin as the company's new Managing Director. Seguin succeeds George Polymenakos who was appointed in August 2016. Until his appointment, he was the General Manager for Coca-Cola HBC Ireland & Northern Ireland for almost 4 years.

According to the company's Public Affairs and Communications Director, Ekuma Eze, Seguin will lead the organisation and it's over 2,700 employees



Carl Cruz is the new Managing Director of Unilever Nigeria



to deliver growth, business optimisation and profitability for Coca-Cola Hellenic Business in Nigeria.

He described Seguin as a thoroughbred professional with multi-industry experience and a remarkable track record to turn the business around, adding that he also has a strong passion and commitment for people development, having served in different capacities in top management positions.

Eze further disclosed that Seguin was not new to the company or the Nigerian business environment, having previously worked in Nigerian Bottling Company as the Commercial Director between 2011 and 2016.

Seguin joined Coca-Cola HBC in December 2009 as Group International Customer Director. In May 2011, he was appointed the Country Commercial Director for Nigerian Bottling Company. Before this, he had worked with Procter and Gamble for almost 18 years in different commercial roles across Europe, Middle East & Africa.

During his time as General Manager for Coca-Cola HBC Ireland and Northern Ireland, Seguin led the organization through a period of considerable success, delivering profitable growth through focus on prioritization, simplification and team development.

Matthieu Seguin is an alumnus of the INSEAD School of Business, IMD Business School and Ecole de Management de Normandie. He has served on various boards including as Member of Board of Repak Ireland; Member of the IBEC National Council and Chairman of Food Drink, Ireland's Prepared Consumer Foods Council.

Contrary to earlier media report, the Board of Unilever Nigeria Plc has appointed Carl Cruz as its new Managing Director. Mr. Cruz took over the management and leadership of the company effective 1st February 2020. He comes with extensive career in Unilever D & E Markets in Asia (Philippines, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka).

Until this appointment, Mr. Cruz served as Chairman, Unilever Sri Lanka. He has over 26 years' experience working in customer development and in marketing roles across Home Care, Beauty & Personal Care and Foods. As Chairman of Unilever Sri Lanka, he successfully steered the business to a sustainable and competitive growth trajectory. The new Unilever Nigeria boss holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from De La Salle University, Philippines.

Speaking about the business, Mr. Cruz said: "Nigeria is an important market with exciting opportunities. Unilever Nigeria has a great team and our ambition is to satisfy consumers' needs and make sustainable living commonplace."

The new leadership reflects Unilever's focus on strengthening its operational effectiveness and reinforces the company's commitment to contributing to the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Over the years, the company has contributed to Nigeria's socio-economic development by building a large employment footprint in its ecosystem of suppliers, distributors and merchandisers as well as through skills development, investing in local manufacturing operations, building local capacity for regional export and ensuring full compliance with fiscal regulatory requirements.

Unilever Nigeria brands aim to improve social conditions, health and

well-being while the company reduces its environmental footprint and works to increase the local content used in its goods wherever it can.

YouTube names Alex Okosi as MD of emerging markets, EMEA



YouTube announced the appointment of Alex Okosi as managing director of emerging markets for YouTube in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA).

Okosi will be responsible for running YouTube's business and partnership teams across emerging markets in EMEA, including Russia, the Middle East, North and sub-Saharan Africa. He will report to the head of YouTube EMEA, Cécile Frot-Coutaz. Based in the London office, Okosi will start in April 2020.

Commenting on the new appointment, Okosi said: "YouTube is a game-changing platform that plays an increasingly important role in our lives today through the dynamic content and innovation that it delivers. I am very excited to be joining Cécile's leadership team to continue empowering creators and elevating value for viewers and partners across the region."

Commenting on the hire, Frot-Coutaz, head of YouTube EMEA, said: "I look forward to welcoming Alex to our YouTube EMEA leadership team. He brings a wealth of experience in the content industries and has a track record for building businesses and audiences in established and new markets. Alex will be leading our existing teams in Russia, sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa to drive further expansion in these key markets."



TAMUNO KIRI

BRANDS: THRIVING AT DEFINING MOMENTS

Brands are invaluable. They are gold-mine, and define the global economy. Brands breed enterprise, and improve the quality of lives among the human race. Without brands, life will be bare, thin, and impoverished. Brands are life, and have life in them. They could be nurtured, watered to blossom, and could also be bruised, battered into oblivion.

Nothing could push brands to the wall more than crisis, which questions their integrity, and nothing brings the best out of brands more than the questioning of their integrity. Crisis could come during growth management, bad investments, new government regulations, faulty products, bad customer service, poor corporate governance, ethics, and cross-cultural misdemeanours. While some brands have emerged bigger, stronger, and better during crisis, others have been blown under the sea, unable to swim against the tide. Under such strong currents during crisis, stronger brands continue to reinvent themselves to survive through time, whereas some are on life-support, waiting for death, or to be bought over and sustained.

Hard questions on integrity reveal the true nature of brands, as the case of the FBI brand. Under a new regime that turned the table, the brand was forced to dig deep into its soul to bring out one of its core tenets, "The search for Truth", to reassure its purpose and essence. To do this effectively, the brand resorted into amplifying one of the nuggets of truth from an individual brand, whose demise it facilitated... "The time is always right to do what is right" (MLK). It etched it in stone at its Academy's reflection garden in Quantico. A re-invigorating, reinforcing, rejuvenating statement that helped the brand into self re-discovery.

A very major and influential consumer called out the main stream media, such as CNN, for what he sees as biased coverage, and tagged it "Fake News". The media outfit relied on its telling the truth, and reporting the facts, to answer these challenges. It went further to launch an advertising campaign to do it, tagged "Facts First". The advert states that "While distraction might grab your attention, but it will never change the fact". The brand maintained its integrity by appealing to

consumer reasoning, which worked to retain loyalty.

A decade ago, BA embarked upon its biggest and best project, T5. The project represented an enormous investment in buildings, system, technology, and human processes. It cost BA, and BAA, tax Payers money £4.3bn, (\$8.5bn). The work involved 180 IT supplies, 163 IT systems installed, 546 Interfaces, more than 9,000 Connected Devices, 2,100 PCs, and enough cable to lay from Istanbul and back. It contained 175 Lofts, 131 Escalators, and 18KM of Conveyor belts for baggage handling, as stated by (Computerworld UK).

The (CIO UK) reports that "T5's technical complexity matches its physical size. It took 400,000 man-hours of software engineering just to develop the complex system and coding work is set to continue even after initial installation begins". Above all these, with the attendant grand opening and media blitz, full-blown system failure, stranded customers, delayed opening of checking, clogged conveyor belts, led to a catastrophe. Both visitors and staff had trouble locating car parks. First passengers who arrived early had to wait over an hour for their baggages.

But, with strong leadership and administrative capability, BA, looked inwards, and bounced back to rescue the situation. The brand came out stronger and better. Today, T5 represents a massive business transformation success story. Five years after, the Oxford Economics, Nov. 2014 report, states that: "The aviation sector contributes £52 billion (3.4%) to UK GDP. This total comprises: £22.3 billion contributed through the output of the aviation sector (airlines, airports and ground services, aerospace); £16.7 billion indirectly contributed through the aviation sector's procurement from its domestic supply chain. £12.9 billion contributed through the wage-financed spending by the employees of the aviation sector and its direct supply chain".

The report further states that the industry became a major employer of labour. "The aviation sector supports 961,000 jobs in the UK. This total comprises: 341,000 jobs within the aviation sector. 350,000 jobs indirectly supported through the aviation sector's purchase of inputs from UK suppliers; and 269,000 jobs supported through its payment of wages

which stimulates consumer spending". No wonder France has decided to replicate this effort, by expanding the Charles De Gaul Airport, to be the biggest in the world, thanks to the huge success of T5.

In late 2018, D&G, had big cross-cultural problem in China, after an advert caused outrage over accusations on racism, that the advert showed Chinese women struggling to eat pizza and other Italian foods with chopsticks. The situation became worse by offensive comments allegedly sent from Co-founder Stefano Gabbani's personal Instagram account. The video comments spread rapidly on Chinese social media, which drew the anger of the Chinese consumers and dealers in D&G. Thousands of D&G goods disappeared from platforms run by companies like Alibaba (BABA), and JD.com (JD).

Top e-commerce sites and celebrities dumped the brand. The furore forced D&G to cancel a high-profile fashion show in Shanghai hours before it was due to start.

It took the two founders, Domenico & Stefano to apologize to the Chinese people. With deep remorse, they dug deep into their family roots of respect for other peoples' cultures, "Our families taught us to respect all cultures of the world. We hope to receive your forgiveness for our cultural misunderstanding". With better management of corporate information, the brand swam through the hurricane that would have shattered its business interests in the Chinese markets.

Two decades ago, two banks dominated the financial firmament of Nigeria, First Bank of Nigeria Plc, and Union Bank Plc. These banks dictated the pace for others. They flexed muscles through their annual balance sheets. Their combined financial portfolios nested over 20% of the GDP. But things changed when a new Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), regulation of N25bn recapitalization sprang up in 2004, and was perfected in 2006. This new N25bn hurricane swept an avalanche of banks into oblivion, including Union Bank Plc.

While its major competitor, First Bank Plc, with a more nimble structural enablement, was able to beat the CBN deadline for the recapitalization, Union Bank could not, and the bank is still struggling to recover from the impact of that hurricane. The rest of the Nigerian banking industry has left Union Bank behind. The bank has been doing fruitless rebranding activities, which have refused to improve its lot, perhaps waiting to be bought over.

Brands have life, but fragile. They can be bruised, battered, and buried, just by a single crisis, and should be handled with care. Brands need enabling structures, stable environment, and expert management. The consumer is the most important part of a brand, but must not be toyed with. No brand should be reckless with the consumers; else you get a dirge written about your brand. The famous David Ogilvy once said, "Think of your customer as a woman, she wants all the information you should give her". Do not provoke, irritate, and undermine consumers, else you stitch fig leaves as clothes to cover your nakedness, like in the garden of Eden after the fall. ■

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