

MARKETING EDGE

Promoting the brand idea.

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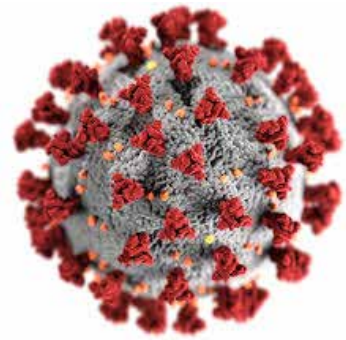
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Brand marketing at a time like this

The last few months have witnessed seismic shifts threatening the foundation of the world as known to humankind on all fronts. The outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, codenamed Covid-19, has significantly changed brand marketing as we know it.

The unprecedented disruption caused by the pandemic has necessitated global lockdown measures, which, in turn, impacted global advertising spend and made brand purpose and value more important than ever.

According to the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), 21% of the world's biggest advertisers significantly reduced their marketing budgets at the height of the crisis in April.

As lockdown measures were slammed on regional and global economies, regional brands such as airlines, hotels, restaurants, retail and automotive adjusted their marketing and communications budgets by the greatest degree. In contrast, Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) brands giants like Unilever and Procter & Gamble, among others, ramped up their marketing budgets amid increased demands.

In the same April, Unilever reviewed all its discretionary marketing spend, but maintained its level of brand and marketing investment, which it said was working harder than before.

In the same vein, Procter & Gamble increased its ad spend, stating that it needed to put its brands in the faces of consumers in a time when their physical availability may be lacking. Recently, P&G reported an annual revenue of \$71bn with a profit of \$13bn, ascribing the boost to increased demand for cleaning products during the coronavirus crisis, coupled with its ramped up marketing strategy. The global multi-brand conglomerate noted that the rise in Covid-19 demand increased its profit by 234%. This strategy was in contrast to the likes of Coca-Cola, which paused all marketing spend as it experienced a 25% fall in sales volumes during the period in review.

The global pandemic has equally seen creativity in brand storytelling. Meanwhile, marketers pushed their companies to do even more. Apart from a few brands that increased marketing spend, majority of brands at the local level played a more meaningful role in consumers' lives at the height of the pandemic. A consumer brand like Promasidor Nigeria Ltd was useful to the communities it serves, and the pandemic provided an opportunity for it to combine purpose and value. With the contribution of over N280 million, Promasidor joined forces with other critical stakeholders in the fight to contain further spread of the virus in Lagos and Ekiti States, respectively.

From a brand and communications perspective, the pandemic has presented brands with a key responsibility to play a more purposeful role. There has also been a reprioritization of messaging among brands. While

Unilever is focusing on brands that have a role to play in providing solutions to consumers, Guinness has been trying to bring people together as they stay safely apart.

In support of the bar closures and restrictions on social gatherings worldwide, Guinness responded with a message of resilience and assurance. By piecing together existing footage in a matter of days, Guinness shared that it had endured the test of time by "sticking together".

"As a 260 year-old brand that has survived two World Wars, the Great Famine, and so much more, we felt compelled to share a message of resilience to reassure consumers that we will all march again if we stand together," explained Joey Converse, a senior brand manager at Guinness. To show their solidarity, the company committed \$1 million to the Guinness Gives Back Fund, supporting their extended community and hospitality workers.

At the moment, the world is seeing some of the stringent lockdown measures relaxed. But the easing of the measures has not equated to an automatic return to pre-pandemic normality. The global economy and market are still shrouded in recessionary conditions. As Covid-19 lingers, a greater level of damage is being inflicted on brands and the ecosystem that supports them. While brand marketers are re-aligning strategy and operations, consumer habits and priorities have shifted during the transition. Some of these behaviour changes may be temporary, but many may be more permanent. As people move beyond the current mode of survival, the momentum behind digital-experience adoption is unlikely to reverse as people are forced by circumstances to try new things.

With so much changing so fast during this difficult time, what actions can brand marketers take to serve and grow their customer base, mitigate risk, and take care of their bottom lines?

As part of the new normal, there has been a reprioritization of platforms as audiovisual media, be it video streaming platforms such as Netflix, social video or broadcast TV, has led to these channels being favoured ahead of all other media. And brands are focusing on these channels to amplify their messages. While many consumer goods have significantly increased their investment in e-commerce, other brands have prioritized social media. The need for developing quick marketing communication has also become even more important in the new normal scenario given the constantly changing dynamics.

In the end, a global crisis can either paralyze a marketing team or galvanize it to triumph over adversity. Some brands have been around for over a century and, therefore, no strangers to crisis management. But the global scale and continued uncertainty around Covid-19 seem quite unprecedented. Whatever crisis response guidebooks that may have existed in

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Finally, the new normal and post-Covid-19 era, as the case may be, remain uncharted territories. While it's important to recognize the uncertainties and fears surrounding the times, brand marketers must not let the pandemic paralyze the creativity in them. Marketers enabling themselves to really understand the new normal based on timely insights is key to navigating their ways through the crisis both for their marketing teams and their companies.



UNLEASH YOUR BOLD

From the makers of *La Asera*®



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Brand marketing at a time like this

the past now seem to be from a different millennium, and even the most agile marketers, accustomed to evolving their marketing strategies in real-time, are at their wits' end.

Regardless of how long the crisis actually lasts, Covid-19 will forever change the marketing landscape. At the end of the storm, companies can't go back to their old playbooks. Their messaging and brand strategy may need to significantly evolve for the realities of the post-Covid-19 world.

Finally, the new normal and post-Covid-19 era, as the case may be, remain uncharted territories. While it's important to recognize the uncertainties and fears surrounding the times, brand marketers must not let the pandemic paralyze the creativity in them. Marketers enabling themselves to really understand the new normal based on timely insights is key to navigating their ways through the crisis both for their marketing teams and their companies.

Packaged in this edition Publication is a Special report on Re-defining CSR in a Season of Covid-19. Our choice of this unique theme was informed by the spontaneous manner in which the Covid-19 pandemic saga activated and forcefully re-ignited the humanity and brotherhoods in Nigerians both as individuals and as corporate entities. To be sure, the sad saga suddenly re-energized and redefined the concept and practice of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) like never before.

The momentum offered proactive and forward looking brands, corporate giants and distinguished Nigerians opportunity to rise to the very challenging situation that has shaken humanity to its foundation.

These individuals and organizations as well as the frontline workers have offered hope for the despair, the afflicted and the besieged. They turned the fight for survival to a collective fight and offered their means, wealth, fortunes and welfare for others in the face of very confusing, confounding and agonizing adversity that Covid-19 pandemic will forever represent and connote.

It is therefore not for nothing that MARKETING EDGE, in its characteristic style and tradition of promoting the brand idea has beamed searchlight on some of these brands and brand owners who have done exceedingly well in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

Just as we were about going to press, there was the news break of exciting developments in some key and critical sectors of the IMC spectrum with leadership baton change and installation of new leaders. Specifically, the age of the new normal that has been foisted on the world by the Covid-19 also coincided and heralded a new dawn in the Nigerian advertising and media with the election of younger generation practitioners as sectoral leaders. While the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) elected Mr. Steve Babaeko, the debonair Chief Executive Officer of X3M Ideas as President, the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria, (MIPAN) the umbrella group for all registered media agencies almost simultaneously elected the ebullient, young and self-effacing Femi Adelusi, the Chief Executive Officer of Brand Eye as President respectively.

Your darling magazine's culture of robust editorial offering cornered these two high-flying professionals for their vision and mission for the IMC industry which is reeling under the suffocating impulses of the moment. The interviews were not only rich, robust and re-assuring; they offer fresh and exciting insights on the way forward in the midst of the present melee.

Not only that, we offer our teeming readers some high-profile reviews and personality interviews that have added more beauty, colour and grandeur to our new offering. These and many others are in addition to our regular delicacies on the menu list such as industry news, gists, jests and jabs, a rich pot-pourri of reports, exclusive features and salacious columns on happenings and developments in Integrated Marketing Communications as well as impactful essays in MARKETING EDGE's quintessential style and panache.

These and many more we have put together to make the edition un-put-down able for all our readers. We enjoin you to sit back and savour this edition publication as we take you through the global world of the business of brands management and the management of the brands business. ■

Happy Reading!!!

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Amber Energy Drink launches in style



General Manager Amber Drinks Ltd, Ms. Titilola Adedeji displaying the newly launched Energy Drink at a trade parley in Lagos recently.

Amidst pomp and pageantry, Amber Drinks Ltd recently injected a new lease of life into the age-old in store retail marketing tradition in Nigeria with the introduction of its unique energy drink product into the competitive Nigerian energy drinks market.

The introduction of the product, Amber energy drink, a premium brand on the company's stable hall-marked by glitz, glamour and panache at most of the high-brow shopping malls, chain-stores and top of the league super markets in the Lagos State metropolis and suburbs, excited target consumers. Amber energy drink is enhanced with potent herbal blend of Guarana, Amino acids and vitamins

Guarana is natural Caffeine used in beverages. It was said to have been added to Amber to ensure that, alongside all the vitamins and nutrients packed in the can, consumers stay alert, energised and healthy.

The new energy drink is formulated to provide an incredible energy boost for those who lead active and exhausting life styles, top of which is sports, entertainment and games.

Speaking on the launch of Amber into the market, General Manager of Amber Drinks Ltd, Ms. Lola Adedeji said her company introduced the new product with a view to offering Nigerian consumers an additional quality option on their energy drinks list and

scale of preference.

Specifically, the Amber Drinks boss said: "The new product has been formulated with the best energy-giving ingredients and unrivalled quality consideration in line with global best standards of products formulation for discerning Nigerian energy drinks consumers.

"We are introducing Amber energy drink into the Nigerian energy drinks segment with the best of intentions to give Nigerians another quality option on their energy drinks choice list."

She continued: "Amber is scientifically formulated to provide an incredible energy boost for those who lead active and exhausting lifestyles ranging from sports to entertainment, adding that "Amber is a non-discriminatory unisex energy drink, the first of its kind".

Ms. Adedeji disclosed that Amber energy drink provides a healthy way to stay active and energised all through the day, pointing out that consumers would surely enjoy the nourishing and fulfilling taste of the slim, sleek and admirable trendy look of the brand in attractive package and affordable price.

Earlier in her interaction with the sales team, Head of Sales of Amber Drinks Ltd, Mrs. Temitope Adetiba stated that the company has put all measures in place to ensure that the new product is available in all nooks and crannies of Nigeria, with Lagos State

and its Suburbs as a starting point.

The drink, she further hinted, is unique in packaging and nourishing for optimal energy release to keep consumers going for hours without end.

The Head of Sales also said elaborate marketing and communications plans had been put together to push the product in the market, adding that there were lots of goodies ahead for the target audience which she disclosed would be rolled out soon.

Meanwhile, Assistant Head of Sales, Mr. Korede Omole said the company has massively distributed the new energy drinks in all key markets, trade outlets as well as through its accredited distributors and trade partners, adding that there would be major activations around the brand very soon.

Nigeria's energy drink sector is a lucrative industry with market research forecasting a yearly consumption growth of over 6.5% by 2022.

This is slightly an increase on the 5% annual growth experienced between 2014 and 2016, which made the average consumption to be about 25.5 liters according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) report in January this year.

The arrival of Amber Energy Drink is no doubt another great opportunity to add to their list of choices and options in the market. ■

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FG inaugurates task team on audience measurement to boost broadcast growth



The Nigerian marketing and media advertising environment is set to witness a paradigm shift on return on clients' advertising investments and expenditures as the Federal Government inaugurated an 8-man task team on audience measurement, hitherto the bane of growth in the sector.

Audience measurement measures how many people are in the audience, usually in relation to radio listenership and television viewership, but also in relation to newspaper and magazine readership and increasingly, web traffic on websites.

Inaugurating the task team virtually in Abuja recently, the Honourable Minister of Information & Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed said the initiative marked the birth of a new dawn in the nation's broadcast industry, noting that the drive for the Digital Switch-Over (DSO) of the Television from analogue was now well underway.

His words: "With this task team, we are today heralding a new dawn in our broadcast industry. The Digital Switch Over (DSO) of our television from analogue is now well under-way, and we are set to announce a new accelerated agenda, in order to ensure that the DSO becomes a veritable tool to help lift the creative industry out of crippling effect of COVID-19."

Members of the 8-man task team are: Alhaji Bello Garba Kankarofi, Former Chief Executive Officer and Registrar of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), who will serve as Chairman of the Committee. Others are Mr. Obi

Asika, Founder and Chairman of Dragon Africa; Hajia Sa'aa Ibrahim, President, Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON); Mr. Mahmoud Ali-Balogun, Chief Executive Officer of BrickHouse Media and Mrs. Pauline Ehusani, Assistant Director, Monitoring at National Broadcasting Commission. Other members of the team are Mr. Tolu Ogunkoya, Group Chief Executive Officer of Media Reach and Past President of Media Independent Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) and Joe Mutah, a media practitioner with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria who will serve as the committee's secretary and lately, Mrs. Ijedi Iyoha, Acting Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of APCON.

The Honourable Minister, who expressed delight at the caliber of men appointed for the task disclosed that over time, audience measurement has been the missing link in the entire ecosystem.

Nonetheless, he pointed out that with the present efforts, audience measurement will make the nation's Digital Switch Over sustainable for signal distributors, channel owners, Y+TV content producers and advertisers.

However, Alhaji Mohammed said: "Without it, we will not see the growth in our television and the value creation in the creative industry that the economy and people of Nigeria so need.

"We need an objective and scientific audience measurement system that articulates the value of the content to consumers, as well as the value of the audience to advertisers,

particularly in the television sector."

Continuing, the Minister said: "The absence of a world-class measurement regime has resulted in under-investment in the sector, which is necessary to foster the growth of the industry, as the advertising community continues to rely on subjective factors when making decisions on the content they want, as opposed to how many viewers the content truly attracts.

"As a consequence, television platforms are subjected to renting out space on their channels to sustain their businesses, and content producers are at the mercy of sponsors which, unfortunately, skews the authenticity of their creative output in favor of a few decision makers, instead of the millions of TV viewers."

"The existing model, he revealed "will never enable Nigeria's Creative Industry to reach its full potential as it stunts the quality of the content that can be created and also limits the capacity of television platforms to invest in dynamic contents that consumers will be attracted to".

"Furthermore, the value of Nigeria's broadcast advertising market is not proportional to the country's population, when compared to the Top 3 Markets in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite having a population more than three times that of South Africa, Nigeria's Television Advertising Revenue in 2016 was US\$309 million, compared to that of South Africa, which was US\$1,301 million."

Consequently, he said: "It is imperative that we urgently put in place an Industry Framework that will ensure that content producers receive their just due for the value of the content they create, as well as provide objective guarantees to the advertising community on their Return-On-Investment on media placements. This will then have the overall effect of guaranteeing greater spend by the advertisers, who are all seeking to grow their market share.

"This Industry Framework can only happen if the Ministry of Information and Culture, which fortunately supervises both the Broadcast and Advertising industries, serves as a catalyst for putting in place a robust Audience Measurement System that is in line with global standards and supports the realization of the immense potential that the Nigerian Creative Industry holds."

Currently, the minister hinted that government is subsidizing the signal distribution because the channels cannot pay for

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LASAA boss tasks admen on creativity, products innovation



The Managing Director of Lagos State Signage & Advertisement Agency (LASAA), Prince Demola Docemo has challenged outdoor advertising professionals operating in the state to be more creative and innovative in their product offerings.

Prince Decemo, who gave this charge in Lagos, said only creative and innovative Out-of-Home agencies that have unique selling points would enjoy concession and rebates by the agency as a way of encouraging and supporting their business.

The LASAA boss, who made this disclosure during a recent live Online Summit organized by the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), said majority of billboards are vacant in Lagos metropolis because OOH practitioners have not introduced so much innovative products to

attract advertisers to the sector.

While appreciating the fact that the players have been making their impact felt with contemporary investments on technology and billboards products in the state, he enjoined them to do more so as to get robust support from the state's Out-of-Home regulatory agency.

It will be recalled that OAAN, the umbrella body of all registered OOH companies organised a Webinar Summit with the Theme: "OOH Business & Emerging Realities", and had participants and discussants across the integrated marketing communication sub sectors.

Speaking further on the challenges facing the sector post, COVID-19 pandemic, the LASAA boss said that there were myriads of opportunities for OOH practitioners if only they could sit back and reflect on their business strategies with a view to revamping the industry.

Specifically, he advised the practitioners to invest in new technology, research and development, noting that the current regime of digital advertising will compete and challenge them.

The LASAA boss, who decried the negative fall-outs of COVID-19 pandemic,

revealed that OOH sector had experienced serious disruptions in the last few months of the crisis, adding that this development had badly affected revenue accruing to the agency.

He was of the view that despite the lull in the sector, which recorded a whopping \$125 million growth in 2019 and boasted of over 100,000 workforce, the industry could still be repositioned to enable it contribute its own quota to the national economic growth.

However, he highlighted some of the new initiatives that have been put together by the agency under his administration to ease business and boost the fortunes of OOH practitioners.

These, he said, include reduction in the number of visitation to LASAA office for business transactions as the regulatory agency has moved majority of its operations online, i.e. registration and application as well as e-payments; online activation for reconciliation and concessions and deployment of new technology for application, amongst several others.

The regulatory chieftain, however, advised advertisers in the country not to give up on advertising their products, observing that they should know and remember that there is always great opportunity in the midst of every crisis.

He stated that advertisers should pre-pay for adverts so as to cushion the operational cost of business on OOH companies.

He, nonetheless, canvassed for mergers and acquisitions, partnerships and collaborations amongst OAAN member agencies, arguing that some OOH sites have remained vacant for lack of business because they are not strategic.

He also enjoined members of the association to restore trust and confidence in the industry as such would guarantee them requisite goodwill and support by all relevant stakeholders. ■

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the carriage of their stations by the licensed Signal Distributors, who have invested in equipment and transmission. Things cannot continue like this. Government cannot continue to subsidize television forever, hence the need to create a sustainable ecosystem.

"The Broadcast Industry needs an Audience Measurement system that will encourage investment, mainly through increased advertising spend driven by confidence in the Audience Ratings data. An incremental Advertising Revenue will encourage current and prospective channel owners to create additional television channels necessary for the success of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT).

"In light of the above, I am today inaugurating this committee of industry experts to help solve the Audience Measurement issue in Nigeria, once and for all. The Terms of Reference of the Task Team are:

- Identify best practice Audience Measurement System that will support the sustainable growth of the Nigerian Creative Industry;
- Recommend a Framework for supporting the sustainability of the Audience Measurement System, independent of the Federal Government;
- Recommend a Payment and Disbursement Framework among the key stakeholders in the industry, that is, the Broadcasting

Organizations of Nigeria (BON), Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) and the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN)."

Finally in his statement, the Honourable Information Minister said: "Bringing Nigerian TV advertisement market to what it should be, which is two to three times the current size, could result in additional US\$200 to US\$400 million of revenue to the industry. This is our next task and we invite all well-meaning practitioners in this industry to join hands with us to achieve this." ■

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N5b expended on media advertising for COVID-19 pandemic, says Advertisers Group



Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups (HASG) stakeholders said members have spent over N5billion (five billion Naira) in the purchase of media space to drive publicity geared towards enlightening Nigerian public on measures to take to contain the novel deadly coronavirus pandemic code named COVID-19, currently devastating the global community.

In a statement made available to MARKETING EDGE and also published in some national dailies, the body commended the efforts of the Federal and State Governments and other stakeholders in their

support to fight against the virus, noting that such intervention became expedient to save the lives of the generality of Nigerians.

The body said: “We commend all our members and associates made up of television and radio stations, press, advertising media and OOH agencies and of course, advertisers, for all of their current support for the fight against COVID-19.”

It stated further: “Our members and associates have, through public announcements, public services updates, editorials, documentaries, video productions, digital placements and many other media placements supported the Federal and State Governments of Nigeria in bringing public awareness to this pandemic. We estimate that over N5b worth of Media spaces have been provided by the members for this cause so far.”

The advertorial, which was jointly signed by Heads of its member agencies, including Acting President of Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Mrs. Bunmi Adeniba, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) then President, Mr. Ikechi

Odigbo, Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) then President, Dr. Ken Onyeali Ikpe, President of Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), Mr. Emmanuel Ajufo and Chairman of Broadcasters Organisation of Nigeria (BON), Mrs. Sa’aa Ibrahim, urged all stakeholders not to relent in their selfless fight against the spread of the deadly virus till the war is won.

Recent report has it that there are 10,162 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria, with Lagos recording 4,943 confirmed cases. Globally, countries have adopted a lockdown initiative which has proven effective in curbing the spread of the virus, and this is also being adopted in several states in Nigeria.

Recall that records had shown that Lagos, being the commercial capital and the most populated city in Nigeria, would be the highest risk state of COVID-19 outbreak. To curb the spread of the virus, the Lagos State government imposed a full lockdown and a stay-at-home directive, one week before the federal government lockdown all of which have been gradually eased off. ■

Brandlife launches digital platform to enhance customer virtual experience



Brandlife Limited, a foremost marketing service agency with presence in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Angola,

Ghana and Nigeria, has launched its digital marketing subsidiary, Brandlife Digital. The initiative is prompted by the desire to provide digital marketing services and utilise the platform to increase brand visibility, product awareness as well as build an online community for brands.

Commenting on the launch, Julius Agenmonmen, the Group MD, Brandlife Limited, said: “Our aim is to provide support and resources to brands that are quickly embracing the use of digital marketing techniques to connect with their target audience. We would endeavor to provide impressive

content and communication strategies that are best suited to brands and their message.”

Describing the initiative as a clarion call for companies, both big and small, to embrace digital marketing and other online channels, the group’s boss expressed optimism that Brandlife Digital would help build the right level of awareness for their brands with measurable results.

“The marketing industry is growing tremendously and over the last decade, a lot of progress has been recorded in the Nigerian online market space, which has also become a great avenue for brands to relate directly with their target consumers, receive feedbacks and build captivating brand experiences,” he said.

He added: “Brandlife Digital has been founded to provide companies with strategic approach that is peculiar to their businesses and help them succeed in the digital space. Our edge lies in a unique combination of world-class digital marketing service and a

good understanding of the online space.

“Going forward, we are excited that Brandlife digital will discover new ways to help organisations harness the online platform towards actualising their marketing goals. As a part of the parent company, Brandlife Limited, we also choose to stay true to our mission of delivering experiences that make life easier for our clients and more enjoyable for consumers in Africa.”

Brandlife Limited was incorporated and started business in 2008 with a commitment to service delivered on time and on target, backed by creativity, flexibility, integrity, and excellence. With a number of clients on its portfolio, including its debut clients; HP and Nigerian Breweries, the agency provides an array of marketing solutions in Brand Activation, Events Management, Field Marketing Services, Digital Marketing Services, Channel Marketing and Sales Force Management. ■

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TVC Communications reaches over 10 million viewers and listeners across its portfolio

TVC Communications, the leading media organisation, says it is doing exceptionally well in terms of audience reach, with over 10 million viewers and listeners staying tuned daily across all its brand portfolio in Nigeria.

Conveying the latest accomplishment on its LinkedIn handle, the fast-growing media conglomerate said: "We are proud to announce that TVC Communications now boasts of over 10 million viewers and listeners every day across all its brands, including TVC, TVC News, Max FM Lagos, Max FM Abuja, and Adaba FM, making us one of the largest media companies in Nigeria.

"TVC News, our 24-hour television news channel, now has over 3 million viewers per day on all digital platforms, including DSTV, Startimes, and GOTV.

"TVC, our pure entertainment channel is now the No.1 channel in Lagos with over 4 million viewers every day across terrestrial and digital channels (GOTV, Startimes, and Play TV)."

The statement continued: "Our radio arm MAX FM Lagos (Hit Music for Lagos) and Max FM Abuja (Hit Music for Abuja) now boast of 2 million combined listeners daily.

"Adaba FM, our radio station in Akure still maintains its number one spot as it boasts over 800,000 daily listeners."

Expressing profound gratitude to its workforce, clientele and audience, TVC Communications said: "We couldn't have achieved these heights without the support of our talented employees, esteemed clients, advertisers and our ever growing audience. Thank you for supporting us daily to achieve great results."

Commenting on the recent feat, John Ajayi, the Editor-in-Chief/Publisher of MARKETING EDGE Magazine, said: "This is awesome! You guys have the Midas touch no doubt and we can all see the impact of the various innovations you have brought about at TVC and the industry. You have certainly turned the market inside out with your creative disruptions in the industry! More grace."

Also commenting, Victoria Abiola Ajayi, a strategic finance leader, said: "We are super stoked about this – reaching 10m people daily is no small fry. As we have embarked on this growth trajectory, may we continue with a never abating trend. Special thanks to the relentless and innovative staff of TVC Communications who not only serve our audience diligently 24/7, but continue to make the organisation a great place to work. To our esteemed audience, clients and advertisers, we appreciate your support as we couldn't have attained this height without you."

In the same vein, Edward Akintara,



Graphics Designer at TVC Communications, noted: "TVC Communications is on a mission that the only route is upwards and beyond. TVC Communications is on a journey to pioneer in the media industry. We are keeping tabs on it so as not to be caught unaware."

TVC Communications is a leading, independently owned and operated media organisation established in 2007, with its headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria. Its TV and radio stations include: TVC (general entertainment channel) TVC News (24 hour Nigerian news channel) Max FM, Lagos, Max FM, Abuja and Adaba FM. ■

FG moves to save broadcast industry amid huge advertising debts



In line with the Nigerian government's efforts to save the broadcast industry from collapse, the apex regulator of the industry, National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has moved to curtail the issue of advertising debts owed broadcast stations.

Recall that recently, the federal government, through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), issued a Global Standing Instruction (GSI) which authorised commercial banks to withdraw loan defaults from other accounts operated by their customers. The move, the CBN said, was to save the commercial banks from imminent collapse arising from huge debts from customers.

The broadcast industry is about to witness the same thing as the federal government has issued an amended Broadcast Code which prohibits backlogs of advertising debts. In the past, it was a common practice for advertisers to accumulate debts at a broadcast station and then move to advertise in other stations without

settling the accumulated debts.

Speaking at the unveiling of the amended 6th edition of the National Broadcasting Code, the Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, disclosed that the move was meant to save the broadcast industry from imminent collapse.

"There is an urgent need to help the broadcast stations. Of course, if there are backlogs of debts owed them, there is no way they are going to fulfill their financial obligations to the NBC. Henceforth, it is going to be difficult to accumulate debts at a particular broadcast station and then move to incur debts elsewhere without paying the accumulated debts. Government has a duty to regulate and also ensure the sustainability of the industry," he said.

The Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Prof. Armstrong Idachaba, who spoke in the same vein, opined that government effort, through the NBC, was critical to ensure the sustainability of the broadcast industry. A pointer to this

was the 2-month waiver on renewal of licence fees granted terrestrial broadcast stations in the wake of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

"Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the broadcast stations in Nigeria have been at the top of their game. They were under severe pressure as adverts were not coming. We had no choice than to empathise with them by offering them a grace period of two months to pay their licence renewal fees. We also gave palliatives to some broadcast stations to help cushion the effect of the pandemic. However, the more holistic approach is to ensure that business for broadcast stations is sustainable and that is what the amendment in the 6th Broadcast code bordering on advertising debts takes care of," he said.

The 6th edition of the Broadcast Code was launched in July, 2019 in Kano. The amendment to the 6th edition was necessitated by a presidential directive in the wake of the 2019 presidential election. ■

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Industry agog as Steve Babaeko becomes AAAN helmsman



The Nigerian marketing and advertising landscape has been agog with the news of the unanimous election of Mr. Steve Babaeko, the Managing Director of X3M Ideas as the 21st President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) recently.

As John Adair, the author of *Lessons in Leadership and How to Lead Others*, listed

some of the qualities that make a great leader as follows: enthusiasm, integrity, tough or demanding but fair, warmth or humanity, and humility – no arrogance or self-importance. And for centuries, it was thought that great leaders were born, not made. Many have professed that the Caesars, Lincolns and Gandhis of the world were born to accomplish greatness – to command and inspire hundreds, thousands or even millions.

Following the recent victory and assumption of office as the President of Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), suitable accolades and urgent congratulations have been pouring in for Steve Babaeko's well-deserved new position; and of course, the above definition and postulations on leadership fit properly into Steve's personality and leadership credentials.

One of the advert pages in *The Guardian* newspaper sponsored by Media 100, a member of the X3M Ideas Group and a new media-buying agency that was recently inducted

to the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), reads: "The Boss Becomes the President. A big congratulation to you on the just-concluded election which saw you come out as President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria. Good luck, sir."

Another advert page sponsored by X3M Music and placed in *The Punch* newspaper reads: "The era starts on a high note. Congratulations, Steve on becoming AAAN President."

With each challenge comes a new experience, a different way of thinking or an invaluable lesson in understanding others. While much is expected of Steve with the new feather that has been added to his creative and corporate cap, many believe that he is equal to the task, and will steer the ship of AAAN through the rough waters of the new normal occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic. ■

New Molfix Air Dry Diaper hits the shelves

HAYAT KIMYA, manufacturer of Nigeria's number one choice diaper, MOLFIX has introduced its newest product, the MOLFIX Air Dry Baby Diaper which is unarguably its best diaper yet in the Nigerian market.

The Air Dry Baby Diaper is a new and improved addition to the MOLFIX collection, showcasing the brand's continued efforts to provide MO' babies with skin-friendly, ultra-breathable and ultra-absorbent diapers.

Speaking at the introduction of the new product, Managing Director of HAYAT KIMYA, Nigeria, Mr. Doruk Emiroglu, said, "We are proud to be producing high-quality baby diapers that are made right here on the Nigerian soil. The current climate is testing businesses and individuals across the world; however, we trust in the viability of the Nigerian market and we will continue to seek additional avenues to innovate, create value and invest in the Nigerian economy."

Roseline Abaraonye, the company's Marketing Manager, added that "MOLFIX is a brand that cares about a mothers' convenience and the baby's freedom and comfort", adding that, "With the Air Dry Diaper, we've produced not just a product that provides maximum comfort to babies but also provides peace of mind to multitasking mothers".

Concluding, Abaraonye said, "It is

paramount that we help our mothers and babies live our motto, "For the Number 1 mums of Nigeria".

Highlighting the intrinsic and extrinsic values of the product, the company, in a statement, explained that: It is skin friendly; it's Ultra-breathable; It ensures High Absorption; and It has anti-leakage elastic barriers.

The statement explains further that "MOLFIX employs a holistic approach and this is evident in the innovation and production that has led to the Air Dry Diaper. Providing happiness and comfort for both mother and child is the ultimate goal. The future is not left out as we have sought ways to look at both mothers' Convenience and babies' Freedom and Comfort".

It would be recalled that Hayat Kimya Nigeria successfully launched its flagship diaper brand into the Nigerian market in May 2015. Five years later the brand still poses a verifiable success. Despite the tightly-contested market space, it rapidly attained the position of the NUMBER 1 BRAND within the diaper category, a fact that has been roundly affirmed by such awards and recognitions as: "Best Baby Diaper of the Year" at the African Product Awards 2016, awarded by the Institute for Government Research Leadership Technology, the Global Most Leading Premium Quality Baby Diaper

Brand of the Year, awarded by Global Quality Awards in 2018; and the "Brand of the Year" award by ADVAN also in 2018. The brand further garnered other exciting awards like "Brand of the Year" awarded by Brandcom in 2019; 1st position in both Experiential Marketing and in Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) awards, to mention but a few.

Indeed, MOLFIX has made both consumers and its other stakeholders happy and satisfied with its consistently high quality; and availability in the market. For MOLFIX, it is "For the Number 1 mums of Nigeria", and the brand relentlessly endeavors to make it a reality. ■



(L-R): Motayo Latunji, Sales Director; Doruk Emiroglu, Managing Director; and Roseline Abaraonye, Marketing Manager at the launch of Molfix Air Dry

MARKETING EDGE holds National Marketing Summit & Awards in October

MARKETING EDGE, Nigeria's leading and award winning brands and advertising focused magazine has announced a new date for its annual two-in-one event, the MARKETING EDGE National Marketing Stakeholders Summit and Brands and Advertising Excellence Awards 2020. The new date is Friday, October 16, 2020.

It would be recalled that the industry respected and nationally accepted event, the seventh in the series, was earlier slated for June this year, but had to be shelved because of the outbreak and consequent spread of COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant imperatives imposed by it, both locally and globally.

Speaking on the postponement of the award, the Publisher and Chief Executive Officer, Mr. John Ajayi, disclosed that every other thing relating to the hosting of the event remains the same.

The event's theme still remains "Making Your Business Future Fit: The Post-Digital Age Challenge to be held at the luxurious D'Podium International Event Centre on highbrow Aromire Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos.

Guest Speaker at the summit is Andisa Nstubane, one of the leading marketing strategists in Africa with over 15 years' experience in managing brand strategy in Africa across organisations such as Microsoft and Standard Bank. In his current role, Andisa leads the team that sets the direction and strategy for growing customers and building the Old Mutual brand across South Africa, the rest of Africa and Latin America.

The organisers have previously announced a twelve-man jury for the awards and a list of panelists for the stakeholders' summit.

Mr. Lanre Adisa, MD/CCO of Noah's Ark Communications chairs the jury as he

did last year; with other members cutting across the various sectors of the Integrated Marketing Communications industry such as PR, Experiential, Advertising, Digital, and Outdoor amongst others. These renowned marketing professionals include Ozoemena Mbanefo, Provost, O2 Academy; Femi Adelusi, Managing Director/CEO, BrandEye Limited and Bukola Akingbade, Managing Partner, Neukleos Company.

Other jurors are Jude Odia, Managing Director/CEO, Starcom Media Perspectives; Steve Babaeko, the Managing Director/CEO, X3M Ideas Limited; Tope Jemerigbe, Managing Director/CEO, DKK & Associates Limited; Bunmi Oke, Managing Director/CEO, Ladybird Limited and Brenda Nwagwu, Managing Director/CEO QVT Media.

Also on the list are Tolulope Medebem, Managing Director, AsterIML; Dozie Okafor, Managing Director, PHD Nigeria and Bayo Adefila, Managing Director/CEO, Downtoearth Marketing Services Limited.

Heading the panelists for the stakeholders' summit is Dr. Ken Onyeali Ikpe, Managing Director/CEO of Insight Redefini. Other panelists include Funke Amobi, Country Head, Human Capital, Stanbic IBTC Plc; Hannah Oyeabanjo, Managing Director, Redwood Consulting, Tolulope Tomori Adediji, Marketing Director, International Breweries Plc, and Oyin Adegbite, Head, Communication and External Affairs, Guaranty Trust Bank Plc.

Also on the list of panelists are Patricia Jemibewon, Human Resources Director, GMD Group; Adenike Adebola, Marketing and Innovation Director, Guinness Nigeria Plc; Ikechi Odigbo, Executive Vice Chairman, CASERS Group; Rotimi Bankole, Chief Executive Officer, SBI Media Group; Emma Agu, Marketing Director,

The LaCasera Company; Emma Oriakhi, Marketing Director, Nigerian Breweries Plc and Amaechi Okobi, Group Head, Communication and External Affairs, Access Bank Plc.

Speaking on the forthcoming awards, Publisher/CEO, MARKETING EDGE, John Ajayi, said: "All necessary activities and preparations are afoot for the 2020 annual National Marketing Stakeholders Summit & Brands & Advertising Awards of Excellence," adding that "positive responses in terms of entries and participation for the award are on the rise".

He, however, explained that while sending their nominations, the various agencies should bear in mind that it is done without any monetary value attached to it so as to encourage more agencies to showcase their works. Entries to be adjudged, he revealed, would include published and unpublished works.

In his words: "The 2020 MARKETING EDGE annual National Marketing Summit & Brands & Advertising Awards of Excellence promise to be exciting as the theme for this year's event touches the heart of the industry.

"We encourage various agencies, brands and other marketing communications practitioners to showcase their works by entering for the various award categories free of charge."

Award categories available include: Creative agency of the Year, Campaign of the Year, Media Buying agency of the Year, and Experiential agency of the Year.

Others are Innovative Brand of the Year, Outstanding TV Commercial of the Year, Preferred Seasoning Brand of the Year, Brand Re-launch of the Year, Outstanding Dairy Brand of the Year, and so on.

The MARKETING EDGE Annual National Marketing Summit and Brands & Advertising Excellence Awards are a yearly offering of MARKETING EDGE magazine, Nigeria's leading brands and marketing publication, to IMC industry as a demonstration of its commitment to its vision of 'Promoting the Brand Idea'.

The event has been widely accepted and applauded by not just the industry but the entire corporate Nigeria, both private and public. It has since become an iconic brand on its own and is gaining more and more traction, both within Nigeria and in the international community.

Each edition, the organisers proudly declared, is always an improvement on the previous one; and has always turned out better, bigger and more glamorous. ■



Elev8Media re-ignites competition with “The Tower of Oworo”



“Impossible is nothing & nothing is Impossible”, reads a captivating and attention grabbing syllogism in a recent post by the Chief Executive Officer of Elev8Media Nig. Ltd, Mr. Funmilade Alalade on the latest innovative Digital Billboard product by his company.

Indeed, the logic in Funmilade Alalade’s post best captures the competitive mood in the Nigerian Out-of-Home advertising where businesses have been on the mute mode since the global outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Recall that more than 5.7million cases of COVID-19 have been reported worldwide, as well as more than 358,000 deaths according to John Hopkins University. Out of these, Nigeria has recorded 8,915 cases of infection, 2,592 discharged cases and 259 deaths confirmed.

Efforts to stem the spread of this deadly virus amongst the citizens have resulted in complete lockdowns with attendant embargo and restrictions on movements and economic and social activities out-of-home.

This has expectedly forced all advertisers to halt out-of-home advertising campaigns while channeling hitherto budgeted revenue for OOH into other media platforms, especially online.

However, with the gradual relaxation of the lockdown, there appears to be a glimmer of hope for renewed economic activities across industries, which is expected to rub off positively on the OOH sector.

And to profit from the unfolding economic activities, future-fit companies like Elev8Media are making statements in the OOH with innovative products that will become irresistible to advertisers the bulk of whom have held back on OOH spend in the last 8 weeks or so.

A tacit statement by the company’s Chief Executive Officer said: “Despite the COVID-19 global pandemic, Elev8media has decided to complete the largest LED Portrait Billboard on mainland Lagos.”

Funmilade Alalade, the debonair, self-effacing young entrepreneur said; “The superstructure is nicknamed The Tower of Oworo located by the Third Mainland Bridge in Oworo area of Lagos State,

and is expected to create a difference in the competitive Out-of-Home sector.

The innovative billboard product was completed and launched in June amidst pomp and pageantry.

Only recently, Elev8 Media recorded a major feat in corporate politics by selling live streaming initiative to UBA in promoting the Africa Day virtual confab.

The iconic, innovative and avant-garde OOH company successfully partnered with the UBA for the second edition of UBA Africa Day 2020. This it did by streaming the Youtube live event on its iconic LED Billboard screen.

The live streaming of the UBA Africa Day 2nd edition on the LED Billboard screen allowed members of the public to share in what was solely an “Online” event.

With the use of this technology, Elev8Media was able to demonstrate the link between the Online Digital World and OOH in Lagos. The pace-setting outdoor company also provided free Wi-Fi at the billboard location for the audience to connect to the internet in order to listen to the event live.

UBA Africa conversation is in celebration of Africa Day. The event brought together notable senior political leaders and policy makers to define an African response to COVID-19.

Tony O Elumelu, who is widely acknowledged as one of Africa’s most influential business leaders and philanthropists, Chairman of Heirs Holding and Founder of The Tony Elumelu Foundation moderated a session with Heads of States, private sector and development organisation leaders titled: “Growth, Jobs and Sustainable Development Amidst a Global Pandemic”.

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 held 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 sanitize 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.

The latest initiatives by Elev8Media, and other top players who are currently perfecting their ideas confirm the thinking and belief of LASAA and advertisers who have been encouraging OOH practitioners to put on their thinking caps by being innovative.

Recently, the Managing Director of Lagos Signage & Advertisement Agency, Prince Ademola Docemo disclosed during a webinar organized by the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) that the regulatory agency would only grant concessions and rates rebates to innovative OOH companies.

Prince Docemo enjoined OOH players to drive for excellence in product innovation, believing that is the only way to continue to attract advertisers.

This view was equally corroborated by other panelists who insisted in their various comments and presentations that the age of new normal is here, and the only language for survival is innovation. With these two bold moves in quick successions by Elev8 Media, there is no doubt that the sector would soon be faced with stiff competition.

Already, the Jurors are out with the verdict that it will no longer be business as usual because COVID-19 has opened the pandora box thereby making the brands to see new territories for operation and consequently, the paradigm has shifted. ■

Cleanagent, digital marketplace for dry-cleaning, laundry services berths in Nigeria

To mitigate the hassles associated with dry-cleaning and laundry services within the Nigerian market, Cleanagent, a cleaning service technology company launched an innovative online marketplace for dry-cleaning and laundry services, specifically designed for the Nigerian consumers in Lagos Nigeria.

Developed by the duo of Estonia-based young Nigerians, Cleanagent is a co-operation and marketing tool designed and developed to empower dry cleaners and laundry experts by connecting them with individuals and businesses that need their services in order to generate more businesses and scale profitably. In essence, Cleanagent is not a competitor in the laundry/dry-cleaning industry, but a marketplace for laundry and dry-cleaning services.

While disclosing the rationale behind the innovative cleaning technology, Thomas Olusola Ajayi, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer for Cleanagent, explained that despite the disruption occasioned by technology, the cleaning industry, especially laundry/dry cleaning that account for over 60% of this industry in Africa, has witnessed slow penetration of technology. One of the numerous factors for these, he explained, is the thin income margin in the cleaning industry which leaves limited financial resources for the small and medium-sized enterprise laundry and dry-cleaning service providers to invest in service process improvements using technology.

"For the service users, access to quality cleaning services is costly in terms of time, money and energy required. The existing industry practice of consuming only from the

providers next door by the consumers creates room for emotion driven decision-making. This creates social, environmental and economic problems; hence Cleanagent was born to provide the solutions," he said.

He continued: "This product is to connect the laundry and dry-cleaning service providers and service users with the aid of mobile and web applications. Our target users are classified according to user type and their peculiar needs. The two main customer categories are the service users who are individuals, families and businesses in need of laundry and dry-cleaning offers, and the service providers who are laundry/dry cleaning service providers, including businesses offering quality laundry and dry-cleaning services.

"Our unique selling points for service users include providing quality and affordable laundry/dry-cleaning services for individuals and businesses alike. Again, one of the benefits for end users in Cleanagent is that end users can choose laundry/dry cleaning service providers by brands, prices and the quality of service at any time of the day at any environment as well as track the status of their transactions and provide post-transaction feedback for service quality improvement."

While corroborating his partner, Sunday Ayanbode Ayandokun who is the Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of CleanAgent explained that Cleanagent is not a laundromat/dry cleaner, and so is not in competition with the thriving industry.

"Laundry and dry-cleaning service providers retain their brand while on our network. This helps in creating more brand

reach and awareness and thereby improving overall market positioning of our partners in the industry. We do understand that our service partners run for-profit companies. Therefore, we offer a competitive commission model on all transactions that they get through us so that they can actually do business leveraging on modern technologies with less investment."

He added: "Our mission is to re-engineer laundry and dry-cleaning services (production, delivery and consumption) industry processes with modern technologies – thereby making the service processes less costly, more efficient, accessible, convenient and environmentally friendly. This is hinged on our vision to be the leading cleaning technology brand in Nigeria by 2025. We intend to bank on our core values of quality service delivery, transparency, environmentalism and resilience. Our value proposition will be reduced time and money of service production, increased production capacity, increased delivery efficiency and profit maximisation."

Providing further insights, Ajayi noted that customers would enjoy reduced time and money of service consumption, adding that an ordering to delivery process is automated with clear and standardized turnaround time, reduced direct loss of laundry and dry cleaning, improved quality of service experience, win-win referral system and increased clothing items lifecycle, amongst others.

"Additionally, we will be creating employment opportunities for Nigerians while reducing environmental hazards caused by unused clothing items."

For service providers, Ayandokun revealed that Cleanagent would access knowledge and resources on ethical and sustainable ways to do business.

"Also, we provide location based features that cover multiple locations where different target audiences can access services of providers easily through user-friendly mobile applications with in-app referral systems provided to create awareness and bridge suppliers visibility gap and enhance growth, automation of processes to reduce human error and effective delivery thereby improving the turnaround time, robust order tracking, payment and delivery features, reduced operational risks by connecting the suppliers with insurers to provide adequate professional cover and an in-app feedback system for adequate customer feedback documentation and subsequent service quality/product improvement."

Cleanagent is available on android and iOS platforms. ■



A new dawn beckons at NIMN as Enang emerges 1st Vice President



A new dawn may have finally berthed at the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) as the nation's regulatory marketing body recently concluded the election of major officials into its Governing Council albeit peacefully and digitally with mass participation by the rank and file across the country. Interestingly, Mr. Idy Enang has emerged the 1st Vice-President of the Institute.

Prior to the just concluded election, the body organised an online debate for individual aspirants and contestants to showcase their vision and idea for the Institute.

Top on contenders' list for the 1st Vice-President position was Mr. Idy Enang, former CEO of Samsung West Africa, former Commercial Director of Cadbury and many

other blue chip companies.

Dr. Kachi Onubogu, CEO of Frutta Juice and Services, one of the leading fruits drinks manufacturing outfits in Nigeria also contested. This was after he had served as Group Executive Director in the TGI Group. He had worked with Guinness Nigeria Plc before leaving for Promasidor Nigeria where he worked for several years as Commercial Director. He is tested and trusted as well.

Also in the race was Mrs. Ifeoma Emesiana Dike, a career public servant and Dr. Umar Mustapha, incumbent 1st Vice President who has a rich and veritable experience working in Corporations, marketing organizations and public service. Dr. Mustapha is a multi-disciplinary scholar with impeccable educational background as well as professional degree.

The position of 2nd Vice-President was unopposed with Mr. Chuka Eborah. However, the contest for the Council position was also a little fierce as five contestants jostled for 4 vacant seats. Contestants of the Council membership were in no mean order. They were, Messrs Babatunde Bewaji, Hope Gbagi, Walter Okafor, Dr. Peter Oriavwote and one female Marketing Amazon, Mrs. Adenike Olufade, former Executive Director, Marketing at Nigeria Television Anthony (NTA).

For a better appreciation of what recently unraveled at NIMN, it would not be an out

of place discussion to attribute the developments to its leadership ably led by Mr. Tony Agenmonmen and exco. This human enigma and management turn-around guru who may sometimes appear to be running a solo race but in truth and, indeed, has more than a motley of marketing eggheads and well-heeled intellectuals in his informal courts and group of friends and associates assisting him in brainstorming towards making the Institute better and greater.

Four years down the line, and as the chief helmsman, Tony has impacted and impacted. A ready pointer to this assertion is the fact that the gamut of revolutionary and brand re-engineering efforts put in place, which has paid off, are clear proofs. The self- and ebullient Tony Agenmonmen's leadership midas touch in the saddle had finally climaxed in the millennial election contest witnessed by all and sundry. Though a virtual election, Tony Agenmonmen's exco had done a pain-staking job in preparation for the historic assignment.

The NIMN is the body for professionals engaged in marketing and related fields as marketing practitioners, sales and marketing directors, customer relationship managers, media planners, channel developers, creative directors and value builders among others.

The Institute was established by Act of the National Assembly No: 25 Of 2003 with a chartered status conferred on it, the responsibility to regulate and standardize marketing professional practice through the conduct of comprehensive professional examinations and certifications, training, retraining and consultancy services geared towards ensuring that members adopt professional approach to marketing and other related areas of marketing activities. ■

How transformational initiatives are yielding results at UM Nigeria

The transformational initiatives of the management of Universal McCann Nigeria, which are aimed at positioning the agency as a thought leader and a digital first agency, are already yielding positive results.

The agency won 5 awards at the Pitcher Festival of Creativity Week which held virtually and aired on TVC News Lagos recently. This awards were significant, because it was Universal McCann Nigeria's maiden entry for the awards. The award-winning agency disclosed that the move was part of its transformational initiatives to showcase the great and innovative work the agency is now known for.

Some of the awards UM Nigeria won include the award for which its work on E-cart Internet Services Nigeria on Jumia Black Friday campaign and Western Union's Low Transfer Fee campaign.

The agency won one Gold in the 'Integrated Campaign category' and one Silver in the 'Use of Insights and Strategy' for its works on Jumia Black Friday campaign. It also won one Silver for its work on Western Union's Low Transfer Fee campaign in the "Use of Media" subcategory and another Silver for the same campaign for the 'Use of Data' subcategory.

In addition, the agency won one Bronze in the Innovation category (Novel & Devices) for its digital tech works for Western Union.

Commenting on this exciting development, Mr. Austin Efiemokwu, CEO, UM Nigeria, congratulated the UM team saying without them, the feat would not have been possible. He also lavished praise on UM Nigeria's clients for giving the agency the opportunity to be part of building great brands.

Efiemokwu said: "I congratulate the team at UM Nigeria for these awards and for relentlessly churning out winning ideas for our clients. I also want to celebrate our clients Jumia and Western Union for partnering with us and providing the platform that has helped the agency to deliver cutting edge communication solutions for their brands."

The Pitcher Awards is part of activities marking the 2020 Festival of Creativity Week which is a Pre-Cannes Lions Festival programme of CHINI Production that brings together professionals and students from all spheres of Marketing Communications in West and Central Africa.

This year, Pitcher Awards broadened its scope to include all works created, released or implemented anywhere on the African continent. ■

Leo Burnett Worldwide celebrates anniversary, impacts lives beyond 85

By KASIE ABONE

After a five-year stint in the creative business of advertising with Erwin, Wasey & Company, a global advertising agency, a then 44 year old man, Leo Burnett, threw his hat into the ring of advertising profession with passion, focus and a creatively disruptive mind as his only driving force. With only \$50,000 in his kitty, three clients and eight staff, Leo Burnett quit his lucrative job and took a dive into the creative world of advertising to found what is today being celebrated, 85 years after, as one of the leading global advertising agencies of all times.

Founded as a private advertising agency, Leo Burnett Company, Inc. in Chicago, United States of America, Leo Burnett Worldwide has grown to become one of the leading advertising industry players with 96 offices in 85 countries, including Nigeria. The global agency has staff strength of over 9,000 employees and has been carting home awards both locally and internationally with staff playing differing lead roles even beyond the call of advertising.

His inspiration in advertising may have been born after a chance encounter with Theodore F. MacManus who handled adverts for Cardillac Motor Car Company while he edited the auto company in house journal, Cadillac Clearing House Journal. This chance meeting could have stirred his interest in advertising and the creative being locked inside of him as his next move a few years later took him on a journey that was to change his entire life trajectory and the face of global advertising industry for good.

The journey to the top has been a steady rise marked by a community of dedicated and committed workforce with increased billings year after year.

In its business trajectory, Leo Burnett has worked with some of the world's most valued brands like Allstate, General Motors Oldsmobile, Samsung, Heinz Pet Products, Kellogg's, Kraft Foods, Nestlé, Philip Morris Co., Procter & Gamble, Schlitz Brewing Company, Starkist, United Airlines, WWF, Esurance, Firestone, Jim Beam, Marshalls, MillerCoors, Nintendo and UnitedHealthcare among many others creating award winning campaigns across its global network.

Burnett's advertising techniques was described as "dramatic realism, the soft sell approach to building brand equity.

Burnett believed in finding the "inherent drama" of products and presenting it in advertising through warmth, shared emotions and experiences. His advertising drew from heartland-rooted values using simple, strong and instinctive imagery that talked to people. He was also known for using "cultural archetypes" in his copy, by creating mythical creatures that represented American values. This is evident on such campaigns as Jolly Green Giant, Pillsbury Doughboy, Tony the Tiger and more famously the Marlboro Man. Indeed, these campaigns played on the 1950s attitudes towards masculinity that pervaded his campaigns.

"Burnett was known for keeping a folder in the lower left-hand corner of his desk called 'Corny Language'. He collected words, phrases, and analogies that struck him as being particularly apt in expressing an idea.

In his active years, Leo Burnett created some of advertising's most well-known characters and campaigns of the 20th century, including Tony the Tiger, the Marlboro Man, the Maytag Repairman, United's "Fly the Friendly Skies", and Allstate's "Good Hands", and



for garnering relationships with multinational clients such as McDonald's, Hallmark and Coca-Cola. In 1999, Burnett was named by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century.

Burnett also engages in social advertising as socially responsible agency. In 1947, Burnett wrote *The Good Citizen*, a booklet concerning the duties and privileges of being a U.S. citizen. This was done as a public service for The Advertising Council and The American Heritage Foundation.

Leo Burnett's Growth Trajectory

In 1944, the agency opened a branch office in New York City. In February 1967, the founder transferred all of his voting stock to a charitable organisation. Billings were then "nearing \$250 million.

On March 20, 1967, the agency completed its acquisition of D.P. Brother & Co.

In December 1967, nearing the end of his career, Burnett delivered his "When To Take My Name Off The Door" speech at the agency's holiday gathering. On June 7, 1971, Burnett went to his agency, pledging to colleagues to work three days per week due to health problems. That evening, at age 79, he died of a heart attack at his family farm in Hawthorn Woods, Illinois.

On November 3, 1999, Burnett and D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles announced the creation of BDM. BDM was quickly renamed Bcom3.

In September 2002, Bcom3 was acquired by Publicis Groupe, the world's oldest and third largest advertising agency holding group and one of the largest agency networks.

Brazil-based independent advertising agency, Tailor Made was acquired by Publicis in 2011 and merged with Leo Burnett Brazil to form Leo Burnett Tailor Made. At that time, clients included Fiat, Procter & Gamble, Emirates and Chrysler.

Beyond 85

85 years down the line, Leo Burnett's name, boldly etched in the door, is still inspiring the best of global advert creativity.

To celebrate and honour the works of its founder, Burnetters, as they proudly address themselves, have taken the path towed by only humane men. To impact its community in ways and manner that go on giving for a life time. Etched in four cardinal programme, Burnetters are empowering future creatives, putting food on the table, especially at this turbulent times as well as bringing sunshine on the faces of black children who ordinarily may not be able to afford reasons to laugh. ■

In an Instagram post on Leo Burnett handle, the agency gave reasons why they are celebrating.

“Leo Burnett’s ‘grit, determination and values’ have kept his name on the doors in every of its offices across the world since 1935 and to honour 85th anniversary, the agency worldwide is taking Leo Burnett’s spirit of creativity across three dimensions “Beyond 35WW”, “Beyond Talk” and “Beyond 85.”

In the agency’s words: “As part of activities marking Leo Burnett’s 85 years anniversary, after 85 years in this business, we’re beyond being coworkers, we’ve become a community. We’re beyond making small talk; we’re having real, hard conversations. And our support for our community has moved beyond numbers; we’re cultivating the next generation of creativity.”

For Beyond 85 the agency is empowering the only predominantly black university in Chicago, Chicago State University students to empower black students to become more creative.

“We’re taking our tradition of giving back beyond anything we’ve done before. In an effort to create change, The Pencil Project is expanding to create a pathway for students who are the difference that makes a difference, at Chicago State University (CSU); the only Predominantly Black Institution in Chicago. This is part of a long-term partnership with CSU to give our city’s Black community more access into the creative industry and help make a difference in the years to come.

“On 8.5, we’re giving every Burnetter \$85 for every year we’ve been open and Leo Burnett will match every employee donation (over \$25) to The Pencil Project, with a goal of \$85,000.” So far, over \$85, 000 have been raised thereby surpassing the original target.

“Our Citizens also have the opportunity to help create meaningful impact on the next generation of creativity by volunteering opportunities like mentoring and portfolio critiques. Together, all of your support can make a big impact,” the agency said.

Beyond 35WW tagged “Separated by Distance. United by Creativity”, Burnetters are encouraged to creating chalk art wherever they are and share their creations to inspire the future of creativity using #Beyond85. For each post, the agency would donate art supplies to local students with Off the Street Club, Chicago’s oldest boys and girls club located in one of the most dangerous neighbourhoods of West Garfield Park where children can truly find hope and are safe to play games, laugh and mentorship.

The agency also planned to spoil their employees with Grubhub gift card already sent to them under “Beyond Lunch” programme. Besides, through this programme, it is encouraging everyone to support Black-owned restaurants near them.

How Multichoice built a \$2.1 billion market value in Nigeria’s E&M sector

Nigeria has gained a reputation as one of the fastest-growing Entertainment and Media (E&M) markets in Africa. Specifically, its film industry has become a significant cultural institution in its own right, earning fans throughout Africa and beyond, while creating opportunities for the development of niche and targeted advertising and new markets.

According to PwC Entertainment & Media Outlook, 2019–2023, Nigeria’s E&M market is dominated by Internet revenue, and having reached US\$4.5 billion in 2018, its E&M revenue will rise at a 19.3% CAGR to reach US\$10.8 billion in 2023. Specifically, the report said Nigeria will become a US\$10 billion market by 2023 (before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic).

However, the ostensibly excellent growth rate must be put in the context of how much of this figure comes from Internet access revenue as it stood at US\$3.1 billion in 2018, and will rise to US\$8.7 billion in 2023, according to the report. In other words, 69% of Nigeria’s E&M revenue came from Internet access in 2018, and the figure will rise to 81% in five years’ time (2023).

Established in 1993, Multichoice Nigeria had a 7-year lead time, before the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) became a guide and used those years to build a solid business that combines profit and purpose. Today, that business represents what shared prosperity is, having created the right mix of opportunities for its people to grow, while helping to build an industry that ranks as the second-largest in the world and the most loved in Africa.

For 27 years, Multichoice Nigeria has made significant contributions to the growth of the Nigerian economy, especially the country’s E&M sector. At the heart of this investment are entrepreneurship and employment opportunities through multiple channel distribution platforms and a commitment to the continuous growth of the sports, technology, film and video sectors through infrastructural development.

Accenture in its new report for Multichoice between 2015 and 2019 estimated that about \$428million has gone into the local content production business of Multichoice, mostly in developing local



creativity and building the production infrastructure to support it. To put this investment in more perspective, it directly translates to 117,459 hours of local content which is huge both on African and global scale, and definitely more if the organisation’s 27 years is brought into view.

The PwC outlook also revealed that outside of Internet access, TV and video would be pushed towards US\$1 billion in revenue by 2023 after adding US\$172 million in five years. The main contributor in the outlook is pay-TV subscription revenue, which surpassed US\$500 million in 2018. The outlook says StarTimes is the subscription TV market leader in the pay-TV segment, but adds that many subscribers take only entry-level packages, meaning Multichoice continues to produce the highest Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) because of the important sports content on its SuperSport channels.

As Multichoice continues to build more credibility for the entertainment and media industry in Africa, through its investment in local content, future talents, even award shows, it is also ensuring the market for the content they produce grows on the other hand. This process has required a strong supply chain and Multichoice Nigeria has proven equal to the task investing over \$1 billion in their distributor, supplier, even installer network in just the last 5 years.

Whether this ecosystem model works is a question their recently released socio-economic value report put together by Accenture and covering the last five years of operations answers perfectly. The contribution of an estimated US\$2.1bn to the Nigerian economy between that 5-year period shows that they understand the role they play in achieving a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. ■



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Promasidor's \$5m investment on Ikun Dairy Farm major boost for Ekiti economy, says Fayemi

The Governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, has described the \$5 million investment valued at N2 billion by Promasidor Nigeria Limited to reactivate the moribund Ikun Dairy Farm in the state, as a major catalyst that would turn around the fortunes of the state when operational.

Fayemi said the contribution has made Promasidor a core investor in Ekiti, saying production would have by now begun in the milk industry located in Ikun Ekiti in Moba Local Government, but for the lockdown caused by the spread of COVID-19 in the state.

Fayemi, who spoke in Ado Ekiti recently while receiving palliative food products donation worth over N34 million from Promasidor Nigeria Limited, reiterated the readiness of his administration to revive some of the ailing industries in the state.

He said the donation has further attested to the fact that Promasidor was just incurably committed to the growth of Ekiti economy.

Fayemi, represented by the Special Adviser on Investment, Mr. Akintunde Oyebo, said the move would create more employment opportunities for the youths.

The governor branded the donation as eloquent testimony of the company's belief in public-private partnership paradigm shift in the developing of any nation, saying government alone can't grow the economy to an enviable height.

Fayemi said the reactivation of the ailing industry which would be done in partnership with Promasidor Nigeria Limited and the Central Bank of Nigeria, would ensure daily production of about 10, 000 litres of milk.

"The revamping of Ikun Dairy Farm, established in 1987, but abandoned by past administrations in the state, was part of the move by our administration to attract more investors to the state.

"Let me reiterate the readiness of our administration to continue to provide an enabling environment for private industries to thrive in the state. An arrangement had been concluded to revive Ire Clay Bricks Limited and other industries in the state.

"I salute the host community for their unflinching support to the firm. I urge them to give more supports to the farm and ensure its success," Fayemi said.

He solicited the support of the people

of Ekiti State on the success of the firm and assured them that the company would employ about 1,000 Ekiti indigenes when fully operational.

"Promasidor has made an initial investment of \$5 million in the farm which will be invested to procure cattle, equip the dairy farm, establish a farm to produce feed and renovate existing buildings.

"At full capacity, this farm will produce over 10,000 litres of milk per day, over 1,000 Ekiti people will also be employed to work in the farm," he stated.

Speaking earlier on his company's outreach project on COVID-19 containment in the country, especially on the products donations to Ekiti State government and others to cushion the economic pains and pangs of the lockdown, Chief Executive Officer of Promasidor Nigeria, Mr. Anders Einarsson said: "our outreach project will go a long way in helping the most vulnerable in our society who has as a result of this pandemic have been unable to go about their normal day-to day activities or have had their income disrupted."

"As a company which cares to the nourishment needs of everyone, regardless of their socio-economic status, we deemed it necessary to step in and assist in the best way possible by ensuring food and nourishment should not be a worry for them at this time." The company boss stated that the total cost of this outreach project is valued at two hundred and eighty million naira only {N280m} in cash and food products.

Corroborating the Chief Executive Officer, Director, External Relations of the company, Mr. Andrew Enahoro said "what Promasidor did was to give back to the society, especially the needy and the less privileged who are going through a lot of economic and financial stress at this time".

"Food is everything when we talk of food security that can bring a nation down; so what we've decided to do as you can see from our product donation is to, at least give a little back to the society especially to the needy and the less privileged who are going through a lot at this point in time," Enahoro stated.

Specifically, Promasidor, a leading food & dairy company has made a direct cash contribution as well as donation of its quality food products in the fight against COVID-19. While the food company donated N200million cash for the exclusive purchase of equipment and the setting up of isolation centers required in the nationwide fight against COVID-19 through the Nigeria Private Sector Coalition against COVID-19 (CACOVID), it has also donated some of its quality products worth over Eighty million naira only (N80m) to Lagos and Ekiti State Governments, respectively. ■

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Coca-Cola launches “Open Like Never Before” Campaign



Coca-Cola, the beverage giant, has unveiled first advertising campaign post-Covid-19, tagged ‘Open Like Never Before.’

Through the “manifesto for change” commercial inspired by manifesto poem written by George “The Poet” Mpang, the spoken word artist and targeted at EMEA market, Coke searches for purpose amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

Starring George The Poet, the ad encourages people to be ‘open, like never before’ and pay attention to those little things that matter and how they can define and make the world a better place going forward.

Commenting on the new creative campaign, Manager, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability at

Coca-Cola Nigeria, Amaka Onyemelukwe, said in a LinkedIn post that the pandemic has caused hardship and loss, but also selflessness, courage, countless acts of kindness, as well as an appreciation of the many things that we might previously have taken for granted.

“As we emerge into this new normal, our new campaign champions an optimism about what we have all learnt that will help us to take this moment and make it count; to be open, like never before, because open minds are the most powerful thing we have,” she said.

Walter Susini, Senior Vice-President Marketing, EMEA, The Coca-Cola Company, also said in a LinkedIn post: “When we all went into lockdown, it was clear at least to us that we needed to respond, and empathy was the lighthouse that guided our actions. We decided that as a company it was important for us to come off air and redirect our resources instead to our most critical priorities – doing everything possible to ensure our employees’ safety and well-being, as well as focus our efforts on how we could make tangible difference for our partners, for the people and for the

communities out there. Time to go back, open like never before.”

Also in his comments, George The Poet said: “The underlying message of this campaign is close to my heart. During my career, I’ve always had to be open to the idea of change, switching from rap to poetry, from music to podcasts. Being open gives you an advantage in all aspects of life. Covid-19 gave me a moment to reflect at a time when the world came to standstill, made me more patient and adapt to different ways of working. Going forward I’m going to do what I can to seize the moment and be open to change like never before.”

Coke said much of the new campaign will focus on supporting local hotels, cafes and restaurants. Individual outlets will be able to customise the ads to use for their own social media platforms in addition to OOH presence, including big sites like Piccadilly Circus.

It will be recalled that Coca-Cola suspended marketing activity at the peak of Covid-19 pandemic to redirect resources towards supporting its bottling and retail partners by donating \$100m to relief efforts. ■

Global advertising market to gross US\$ 769.9billion in 2024

IMARC Group, a leading market research company has in its latest report estimated that global advertising market size will gross \$532.5 billion by 2024.

According to the report by the market research agency titled “Advertising Market: Global Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2019-2024, the global advertising market size was estimated to be US\$ 532.5 billion.

Similarly, IMARC noted that more advertising agencies worldwide are continuously increasing their spending on advertising within the entertainment, out-of-home and digital segments.

For instance, it said, Publicis Groupe, a multinational advertising and public relations company is investing in digital advertisement, and as such, “looking forward, the market value is projected to reach \$769.9 billion by 2024, expanding at a cumulative Aggregate Revenue (CAGR) of around 6.3% during the forecast period (2019-2024).

The research group which observed that



“advertising plays a vital role in communicating the value proposition of an organization’s offering while influencing the buying behaviours of consumers said the advertising scope has been expanded with digital advertising.

Besides, it disclosed that the increasing usage of electronic devices such as Smart-Phones, Laptops and Tablets, coupled with a rise in the number of internet users, has expanded the scope of digital advertising.

Along with this, the report added, “Technological advancements have led to

the evolution of cloud advertising and other enhanced advertising business models”. Continuing, IMARC said, “moreover, advertising agencies world-wide are continuously increasing their spending on advertising within the entertainment, out-of-home and digital segments”.

Market Summary according to the report:

- Based on the type, the market has been segmented into television, print, radio, outdoor, internet, mobile and cinema advertising. Amongst these, the television advertising industry accounts for the majority of the total market share. This can be attributed to the prevalence of televisions, which has made them one of the preferred modes of advertisement.
- The market is concentrated in nature with the presence of a handful of established players who compete in terms of capital investments and advertising budgets. The stiff competition in the market makes it difficult for new entrants to survive. Some of the key market players include WPP Group PLC, Omnicom Group, Publicis Groupe, Interpublic Group of Companies and Dentsu. ■

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NB PLC's Life Beer brand breathes life to Niger Bridge

By RALPH TATHAGATA

What is a city without urban outdoor advertising? In contemporary urban aesthetics, billboard advertising is far more intimately interlaced with the architecture of cities than any other media. New York City, London and other mega cities wouldn't be as beautiful and attractive without the bright lights of out-of-home advertising (OOH).

The ubiquity of outdoor advertising around the world means that modern man has come to take it for granted because when brands advertise on public infrastructure, they become part of the public social space, entering people's thoughts and conversations.

The southeastern part of Nigeria OOH landscape is at the threshold of sweeping changes. Following the launch

of a new bottle and the 'Nduka' campaign, Life Lager Beer, a brand on the stable of Nigerian Breweries Plc has continued to spread its strong message of hope and resilience to consumers, this time with decorative lighting on the popular Niger Bridge. Etched at the background of the resplendent lighting is a tagline: Stand Strong – Nduka – Enjoy Life Responsibly.

The groundbreaking lighting project which was unveiled on August 1, 2020, is a new initiative from Life Lager Beer as a climax to the brand's relaunch activities and a message to enjoy responsibly amid the Covid-19 pandemic albeit with a profound cultural significance to consumers, especially the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria.

Of what use is life without good health? Similar to any other ethnic groups in Africa, naming in Igbo is a premeditated venture that is designed to speak to the future of the newly born child. Igbo people are

not careless in naming because of their belief that names are tied to destinies and as such have religious, philosophical, psychological, historical, social and linguistic interpretations. Personal names in Igbo land are characterised by sociological effects such as procreation and the importance of children over wealth, status, etc. For example, Ndukaku, which, when translated, means life or health is more valuable than wealth, is a masculine name among the Igbo. When shortened, it's pronounced Nduka (Life is greater...). While a majority of successful people actually name time as their most valuable asset, when it comes to value, the Igbo people put health on the number one spot.

To the Igbo, life/health is the foundation they need to attain every other valuable resource. Aware that without health, they would not have the capacity to create wealth, and that dealing with a debilitating health issue, or a chronic lack of access to the means for healthy living, makes it harder to build up a wealth of life experiences and tend to their spiritual and emotional health, the Igbo will do everything humanly possible to maintain their life and stay in good health.

In fact, among the Igbo, health is valued at par with material possessions. That's because without health, not only are the individual, family, and community unable to prosper, but they will actually reverse on the wealth scale. They believe that health gives them the ability to enjoy what life has to offer, and create

experiences that are often more cherished than physical goods.

Therefore, by tapping into an intrinsic aspect of the Igbo cosmology and identity, Life Lager Beer recognises that life/health needs to be understood holistically in order to appreciate how everything else, including the savouring of the brand, flows from it. It turns out that the path to a life of wealth is the same as the path to a life of integrated health, which includes keeping to the Covid-19 pandemic rules, eating well, maintaining a realistic outlook on life and appreciating life with Life Lager Beer responsibly.

As the novel Coronavirus pandemic spread across Nigeria, Life Lager Beer launched the 'Nduka' campaign as a means of encouraging its consumers to keep hope alive even as they stay safe at home. The campaign theme which translates to "Life is Greater" saw Life Lager engage in a number of communication activities to pass its message of choosing life in these uncertain times creatively.

With its new lighting initiative, Life Lager is now spreading the importance of resilience, and self-preservation as the phrase "Enjoy Life Responsibly" appears boldly on its new lighting construction along with other brand signages.

The unveiling of the lights display, which was done at an evening event, had in attendance the Governor of Anambra State, His Excellency, Willie Obiano, who referred to the initiative as a progressive one and used the opportunity to encourage everyone to keep following the right precautions to stay safe.

According to Wasiu Ola Abiola, Head, Digital, Brand PR & Sponsorship the project embodies the progressive spirit of the Igbo people, especially in the present trying times. "It offers a beacon of hope and resilience by encouraging people to live and enjoy Life Responsibly because as long as there is life, there is light at the end of the tunnel (Nduka)."

He continued: "Over the years, Life Lager Beer has launched various initiatives that embodies and inspires progress through communication and notable initiatives that discover and support entrepreneurs and creative talents."

Corroborating the forgoing assertion, Omotunde Adenusi, Portfolio Manager, Mainstream Lager Brands (Life/ Goldberg/33 Brands), said: "Illuminating the Niger Bridge is a symbolic gesture that enlivens the famous gateway into eastern Nigeria and the lifeline of trade and commerce for the region."

"With this groundbreaking transformation, we hope to offer a distinctive point of differentiation and build

a stronger emotional bond with our core consumers."

The choice of the Niger Bridge for this project was once again a testament to the brand's attachment to its southeastern roots, as it remains unapologetic about demonstrating its belief in the industrious nature of the people and their steady drive for progress.

Life Lager beer was first produced in 1981 in Onitsha, Anambra State, as a regional Eastern beer and has since grown to become the biggest beer brand in Nigeria. Life Lager beer is made from the choicest grains, hops and the purest waters, with the core brand belief that "Life is better when shared; and, when life is shared, there is progress".

The highly impactful outdoor campaign was handled by New Crystal Communications Limited, a front running outdoor advertising agency in Nigeria with offices in the major cities of the country and advertising coverage reaching all corners of Nigeria and most of West African countries.

Beyond commercial purposes, the agency has been in the service of innovatively converting public infrastructure into modern unipole and bi-pole structures to ensure that Nigerian cities maintain their aesthetics. If more old structures can be converted into digital formats, that will enhance the urban aesthetics.

On the choice of New Crystal Communications, Wasiu also noted: "We are quite pleased with the dedication of our outdoor partner agency, New Crystal in helping to actualise this transformation of the iconic Niger Bridge with beautiful neon lights. The bridge has been displaying our brand (Life Lager beer) message since 2012."

Commenting on his agency's role in the project, Dozie Mabanefo, the Managing Director of New Crystal Communications, noted that the Nduka campaign couldn't have been running at a more appropriate time than now when the global pandemic is challenging brands and agencies to be more innovative and creative. He is very optimistic that the brand message and its accompanying dazzling aesthetics will connect with the consumers at a deeper level.

There is no doubt that the lighting of the Niger Bridge has accentuated the architectural magnificence that had long been hidden within the iconic structure. The "Nduka" campaign has the makings to totally transform the outdoor advertising landscape of south east Nigeria, and could also help the OOH industry contribute to the beautification of that part of the country, while passing significant messages capable of helping the public navigate the new normal. ■





SMOOV: Setting the Pace in the Chapman Market

By KASIM BAKARE

The Chapman story in Nigeria is both interesting and intriguing. Its origin is shrouded in mystery, with hardly a serious story to support numerous claims. It is believed in some quarters that the cocktail originated in Ikoyi Club, Lagos, Nigeria. The drink was said to have been created by a bartender at the club who was asked to make something special for his favourite customer named Chapman. Thus, it is generally agreed that the premium value brand had its origin in Nigeria.

For decades, Chapman has been an iconic drink. Perhaps it was because of the “Nigerianness” in its origin that evoked some cultural affinity and loyalty. It’s such that this unique cocktail featured at nearly every Nigerian party, and kept guests and visitors guessing as different flavours were experimented.

Generally speaking, too, smart brands are usually committed to their customers’ beliefs and past times. They leverage on their customers’ energy and involve them in co-creating a new product or re-inventing an existing product.

Leveraging on those (above mentioned) realities, The La Casera Company (TLCC) blazed the trail when it launched Smoov Chapman in September 2014. It was a ground breaking move as it was the first ever ready-to-drink Chapman in a pet bottle. This was another first by one of Nigeria’s largest CSD manufacturers and makers of the popular Apple flavoured drink – LaCasera, through which the company re-defined the entire Carbonated Soft Drink (CSD) market in Nigeria in 2001.

Prior to this innovation, Chapman was usually offered as a ready-to-drink cocktail served with mugs and cups.

Expectedly, the exploits of Smoov in the Chapman market gave impetus to other brands to seek to get a market share of a seemingly monopolized market. This, naturally, gave birth to a cold war in the form of competition which has been similar



to the Cola war which raged very fiercely several years back and which is still on even though in a rather subdued intensity. Several brands have since joined the Chapman fray.

It would be recalled that in 2016, Rite Foods set off a Cola war that shook the operations of market leaders. The introduction of Bigi Cola ruffled the feathers of Coca-Cola and Pepsi, leading to the reduction of their shares in the Nigerian Cola market.

Six years on, Rite Foods has again, taken the Chapman fight to Smoov Chapman, with its introduction of Bigi Chapman and the clash has sparked off a Chapman war.

Interestingly, Smoov isn’t utilising the media to protect its territory and maintain its market share in the Chapman segment. It is responding to Bigi Chapman challenge by giving its customers more value than it offered in the four years since its inception.

Being battle ready, Smoov immediately increased its quantity by 20% to keep its customer base expanding, rather than shrinking.

No doubt, the CSD market in Nigeria is huge and is one in which many brands are competing for market share. Smoov has adopted a competitive pricing system to

stay afloat. This smart move has helped the brand to retain its old customers and attract new ones.

Like The Group Marketing Director of the company, Emma Agu said in an exclusive interview with this magazine, “The Affordability game is now the new order where volume and considerable pricing (N100 magic price point) makes the world of difference. So far our brands have been doing great within the mass market territory where it is positioned”.

Again, one of the major challenges facing the FMCG brands in this market is distribution. This is obviously not a challenge for Smoov brand as it is leveraging on an existing seamless and effective distribution system offered by the LaCasera group which has made its products available even in remote places across Nigeria. This has earned the brand a lot of trust from its distributors and consumers nationwide.

A lot of effort has also gone into rebranding and improving the premium value brand. As a pathfinder in the Chapman market, it has raised the stake against competitors and it is not resting on its oars to give its teeming customers maximum value.

It is safe to say that Smoov Chapman knows its onions and seems to be in control of the game in the Chapman market in Nigeria.

In the words of Agu, “Smoov has exhibited an extraordinary performance in the marketplace. It has emerged as one of the leading CSD brands and a must stock for every home. The momentum of the Smoov brand is in the upward trajectory as we expand distribution and route to market. Check every hawker’s basket and you will see Smoov conspicuously displayed. It is the undisputed best Chapman drink in the Nigeria market today. The brand has grown in awareness, availability and visibility. It is within arm’s length as it has become the retail trade favourite chapman drink. The sales volume has been in geometric progression and we are excited about it.” ■



celebrates 10 years of innovative brand building

A brand is a pivotal, strategic and financial asset for any organisation. To build a strong brand identity, a superior brand experience, and lasting brand loyalty, the custodians must be able to differentiate their brand from competition, sustain its differentiation and competitive advantage, and maximise its impact, profitability and ability to proffer innovative market solutions.

Ten years ago, the telecom giant, Bharti Airtel, acquired Zain telecom's operations in Africa and launched Airtel in 16 countries on the continent replacing the Zain brand. With the unveiling of the new brand identity, Airtel became the master brand for all the group's 19 operations in Asia and Africa covering over 200 million customers.

In Nigeria, where it was also known as Zain, the brand transformed into Airtel Networks Limited, popularly known as Airtel Nigeria, following the acquisition. Prior to that, the brand, currently known as Airtel Nigeria has undergone a series of name changes on both evolutionary and revolutionary trajectory.

Founded in 2001 as Econet Nigeria and awarded Digital Mobile License (DML) for communication service in the country, the company made history on August 5, 2001 by becoming the first telecommunications service provider to launch commercial GSM services in Nigeria. In 2004, Vodacom took charge of the company as management changed hands. Later in 2004, Vee Networks took the reins of the company and became known as Vmobile. In May 2006, Vmobile was acquired by Celtel. In 2008, Zain Group, another telecommunications company acquired all Celtel International's shares of over \$3 billion. Following the

acquisition, all operations of Celtel Africa was rebranded from Celtel to Zain. In 2010, Bharti Airtel, the parent company of Airtel Nigeria, completed the acquisition of Zain Group's Africa business in a \$10.7 billion transaction.

On July 9, 2019, Airtel Africa, the holding firm of Airtel Nigeria and Bharti Airtel's Africa subsidiary, listed 3,758,151,504 ordinary shares on the main board of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) at an offer price of N363 per ordinary share.

Segun Ogunsanya, a creative colossus and a corporate turn-around guru was handed the baton as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Airtel Networks Limited November 2012. He has

since continued to lead Airtel on its epochal growth trajectory to market stardom and outstanding value-adding offerings to its teeming subscribers and the entire Nigerian populace.

Under his visionary and dynamic leadership, Airtel has been a leading provider of telecommunications and data services in Nigeria, supporting corporate social transformation across the country by enabling millions of people to access data services and be part of the financial and digital inclusion.

Prior to his current appointment, Mr. Ogunsanya was the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) Limited, a subsidiary of Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company Inc. ■





BOLD, LaCasera's new offering makes a bold statement in stiffly competitive CSD market

By KASIM BAKARE

The word 'bold' connotes a lot and is synonymous with such words as adventurous, daring, brave, heroic, venturesome, dauntless, fearless and even audacious. To be bold implies a willingness to get things done despite risks. This is both apt and instructive for brands competing for the share of consumers' pocket in the very competitive Carbonated Soft Drink (CSD) market. The qualifier 'Bold' is an important ingredient to have in this market.

The CSD marketing landscape, globally, plays host to intensive competition with series of marketing campaigns, as brands lock horns in an already saturated 'red ocean' while some find a new path in a 'blue ocean' where consumers yearn for new flavours to satisfy their taste buds.

Interestingly, according to Market Watch, the global CSD market is expected to reach USD 330 billion by 2024 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.2% during the forecast period. The potentials in the CSD market are enormous in spite of the challenges. The market is segmented on the basis of flavour, pack type, and distribution channel. Based on flavour, the global CSD market has been divided into cola, lemon and lime, orange, and others.

For a very long time, the CSD market in Nigeria was largely stereotyped. It was an era where giants like Coca Cola and Pepsi dominate the market for a long time while the crumbs from the masters' table were feasted on by other smaller brands. However, the potency of this duopoly was put to test when Bigi caused a massive disruption in that space. Bigi was audacious and it has remained focused on its brand moves to stake a claim at the masters' table in spite of Coca Cola's fiery response. Many brands have gone into oblivion trying to navigate the murky waters of this unique market. The "Bigi challenge" has only underscored the fact that the CSD market is potentially a case of the survival of the fittest. Brands are usually competing for

market share in the CSD market sometimes at a frenetic pace. It is characteristically not a market for the lily-livered.

Enters the iconic Bold brand! In February 2020, The LaCasera Company, producers of the trail blazing ad hugely successful apple drink in PET bottle, launched Bold Orange, Bold Tropical, Bold Bitter Lemon Extra and Bold Ginger, all of which are great tasting and exciting new flavours – in addition to its existing Bitter Lemon flavor – to reposition itself for enhanced market share having faced stiff competition from fellow new entrant, Bigi drinks a Nigerian brand owned by the Rite Foods.

Unveiling the drink, the Managing Director of the Company, Chinedum Okereke said the addition of the new variants was the Company's response to the quest of its esteemed consumers who have continued to enjoy Bold since it was first launched.

On his part, the Group Marketing Director of the company, Mr. Emmanuel Agu said that "The heart of our operations is innovation driven by our desire to continuously satisfy our consumers" adding, "Today, we are fulfilling our promise to our consumers, which is to always be there to satisfy their thirst and their taste whenever they think of refreshing themselves".

The newly introduced Bold Ginger is Nigeria's first ginger carbonated soft drink, it contains real ginger extract for an extra spicy taste and peppery bite; Bold Orange has that real orange taste with its unique aroma; Bold Tropical is a blend of fruits, a unique refreshing taste quencher with an indulging experience, deeply satisfying after consumption and the existing flagship variant, Bold Lemon (formerly Nirvina lemon) which was launched in 2015, the bittersweet flavour for those who yearn for less sugar in their soft drink.

The products have been introduced into the market to provide consumers very rich options to choose from in the quest to satisfy their different taste choices.



The nutritional content on the bottle reveals that Bold Ginger contains more energy with 239kj/57Kcal. Going by this nutritional fact, Bold Ginger appears to be ahead of other carbonated soft drink brands.

To say that the launch of the Bold variants into the market at the time it did was a bold move by a company that has carved a unique niche for itself in the market which borders on innovation, strategy and audacity, is to state the obvious.

The LaCasera Company has continued to produce iconic brands all of which are holding their own and in several cases, dictating the pace in their segments in a very competitive Nigerian CSD market.

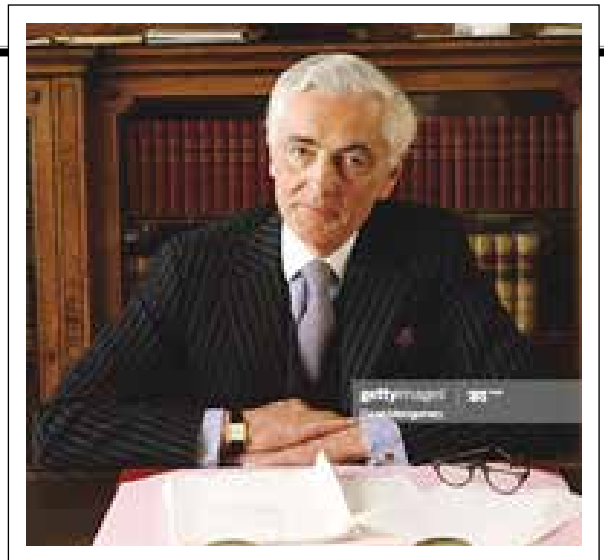
The corporate brand is constantly in touch with the desires, expectations and aspirations of its consumers and it is constantly re-inventing the wheel.

Its Group Marketing Director, Emma Agu says it all, viz, "The heart of our operations is innovation driven by our desire to continuously satisfy our consumers. Today, we are fulfilling our promise to our consumers, which is to always be there to satisfy their thirst and their taste whenever they think of refreshing themselves."

The Bold brand in its variants is already increasing and accelerating the waves of the successes being recorded by its iconic senior brands from the same stable, to wit, LaCasera Apple and Smoov Chapman. ■

David Ogilvy

Global advertising community celebrates posthumous birthday



Twenty-three June 2020 remains significant in the global advertising community as creative advertising professionals worldwide celebrated the 109 years posthumous birthday of David Mackenzie Ogilvy, the British Advertising Tycoon and Founder of Ogilvy & Mather also known as “Father of Advertising”. Born 23rd June 1911 at West Horsley, Surrey in England, David Ogilvy grew up later in life to become a legendary adman whose works and philosophies have become the live wire of the industry and the practice.

As another year rolled by, the global creative community expressed great thoughts and views about the legend who lived and died to give advertising profound meanings as a business and as a profession in commemoration of his iconic roles.

The posthumous birthday celebration was kick-started by his agency, Ogilvy on its LinkedIn page with over one million followers with the inscription of his name initials and the legend new age of 109 “boldly in white colours over the red colour of the agency in the background.

The Ogilvy inscription was preceded with the statement announcing the birthday of the “Father of Advertising” thus: “Today marks what would have been the 109th birthday of David Ogilvy, our founder. Happy birthday, David.”

Ever since then, no fewer than twenty five creative professionals have joined in celebrating the legend, even in death, while about two-thousand people have clicked to like the Ogilvy page on its posthumous celebration for the founder.

Commenting on the legend’s birthday, President, Chief Marketing Officer at Urban Entertainment Marketing, Mr. Lamny Rhem said: “One of the greatest ever ... Happy Birthday”. Similarly, Sandra Munoz - a Social Selling Expert and Commercial Marketing Manager Grupo Industrial Zeu disclosed: “I think Ogilvy brought a modern touch to advertising that really made his work stand out, and also made it tremendously effective. Many of the copy writers I work with do just as he said: they spend as much time as necessary researching before they ever start writing”.

In his own comments, vice-president, EMEA at IDG Global Solutions, Christian Drake recollected: “Shane Hannam and I enjoyed presenting in David’s old office over-looking Paris. All the best to everyone at Ogilvy”.

In a similar vein, Director, Marketing Operations at LCBO, Institute of Communication Agencies, Mark Greene said of the legend: “He would be proud of his legacy: Stove sales person. Made millions for legacy brand. Legend, RIP.

Trained at the Gallup research organisation, David Ogilvy introduced rich and robust intellectual bent to the business of advertising and the advertising business as the success of his campaigns were attributed to meticulous research into consumer habits.

Having worked as a Chef, Researcher, and Farmer, Ogilvy started his own advertising agency with the backing of Mather and Crowther, the London agency being run by his elder brother, Francis, which later acquired another London agency, S.H. Benson. The new agency in New York was called Ogilvy, Benson, and Mather.

David Ogilvy had just \$6,000 (\$59,726.72 in 2016 dollars) in his account when he started the agency. He writes in *Confessions of an Advertising Man* that, initially, he struggled to get clients. Ogilvy also admitted (referring to the pioneer of British advertising Bobby Bevan, the chairman of Benson): “I was in awe of him but Bevan never took notice of me!” They would meet later, however.

Ogilvy & Mather was built on David Ogilvy’s principles; in particular, that the function of advertising is to sell and that successful advertising for any product is based on information about its consumer. He disliked advertisements that had loud patronizing voices, and believed a customer should be treated as intelligent. In 1955, he coined the phrase, “The customer is not a moron, she’s your wife” based on these values.

His entry into the company of giants started with several iconic advertising campaigns: former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, did a commercial for Good Luck Margarine in 1959. In his autobiography, *Ogilvy On Advertising*, he said it had been a mistake to persuade her to do the ad – not because it was undignified, but because he had grown to realise that putting celebs in ads is a mistake.

“The man in the Hathaway shirt” with his aristocratic eye patch which used George Wrangel as model; “The man from Schweppes is here” introduced Commander Edward Whitehead, the elegant bearded Brit, bringing Schweppes (and “Schweppervescence”) to the U.S.; a famous headline in the automobile business, “At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock”; “Pablo Casals is coming home – to Puerto Rico”, a campaign which Ogilvy said helped change the image of a country, and was his proudest achievement.

One of his greatest successes was “Only Dove is one-quarter moisturizing cream”. This campaign helped Dove become the top selling soap in the U.S.

Ogilvy believed that the best way to get new clients was to do notable work for his existing clients. Success in his early campaigns helped Ogilvy get big clients such as Rolls-Royce and Shell. New clients followed and Ogilvy’s company grew quickly. He was widely hailed as “The Father of Advertising”. In 1962, *Time* called him “the most sought-after wizard in today’s advertising industry”.

In 1973, Ogilvy retired as Chairman of Ogilvy & Mather and moved to Touffou, his estate in France. While no longer involved in the agency’s day-to-day operations, he stayed in touch with the company. His correspondence so dramatically increased the volume of mail handled in the nearby town of Bonnes that the post office was reclassified at a higher status and the postmaster’s salary raised. ■

Folake Ani-Mumuney: Amazon with amazing leadership archetypes

“The character and qualifications of the leader are reflected in the men he/she selects, develops and gathers around him. Show me the men and I will know their leader. Therefore, to have loyal and efficient employees, be a loyal and efficient employer”, **Arthur W. NewComb.**

Above quote by the renowned American Theologist, Rev. Arthur W. Newcomb, also a famous philosopher best illustrates the brand enigma called Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney, Chairman, Board of Directors, FBN Insurance Brokers/General Manager and Global Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications of First Bank Limited.

For the uninitiated, Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney, popularly known and referred to as FAM by her numerous fans, friends, associates and colleagues was the immediate past President of Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), a privileged umbrella body for all registered leading companies in Nigeria.

Indeed, the excitement and joy to attempt this short historiography about Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney, a self-effacing Amazon, with amazing leadership archetypes under our new column stems from some discreet testimonials stumbled upon by this column from some former colleagues of this enigmatic brand and marketing enthusiast.

Added to this is the personal and close encounters the writer have had with FAM severally on industry issues, especially on the growth and development of the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications.

That the management boards of FBN Holdings and First Bank of Nigeria have continued to entrust high responsibilities on Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney speaks eloquently about the high quality of FAM's managerial and corporate leadership and acumen.

Describing Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney's brand archetypes to those who have not met her in person could be very difficult and sometimes much more so to those who intimately know her and her many brilliant and excellent ways.

Just recently, a former colleague of hers, Dr. Anderson Uvie-Emegbo unveiled Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney on his LinkedIn page where he made FAM his #Woman Crush Wednesday all in an attempt to celebrate his former boss and benefactor. That short testimony reads: “working closely with FAM, one of the indelible lessons that have stayed with me is the way she develops, empowers and coaches her team. No sacrifice is too great”.

Continuing in his testimony, Dr. Anderson Uvie-Emegbo, an International teacher reeled out names of most of the former colleagues of FAM who have become very outstanding, successful and celebrated in their various organizations and careers. These former colleagues, more than a

dozen of them had hitherto worked under the direct supervision and leadership of Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney at the Corporate Communications Department of First Bank, the financial Octopus that continues to set the pace in the competitive Nigerian financial market.

According to Uvie-Emegbo's testimony, “FAM has impacted successful team mates and professionals like Bukie Oluyadi, Funmillayo Falola, Ogechukwu Udeagha, Victoria Onwubiko, Bridget Oyefeso- Odusami, Bethel Obioma, Efethuri Doghuje, Remi-Edwards Adebisi and Babatunde lasaki”. He also disclosed that these individuals were former members of the then Marketing and Corporate Communications team at First Bank of Nigeria but today Champions currently doing exploits elsewhere.

Concluding, Uvie Emegbo said, “Dear Folake Ani-Mumuney, like so many others that are privileged to work with you, my career is much better because of you.”

Corroborating the testimony, Mrs. Bridget Oyefeso-Odusami, now Head, Marketing Communication at Stanbic IBTC and one of FAM's former colleague said “all lines, totally and fully supported Dr. Anderson Uvie-Emegbo”, thanking Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney for allowing us to crush on you”.

Also testifying to FAM's large heartedness and sterling leadership quality, Ifeanyi Anthony Okonkwo, Strategy & Executive & Project Management of First Bank has exciting story to share about the remarkable brand personae of FAM.

His testimony: “Yes, I totally agree with you Dr. Anderson Uvie-Emegbo on your comments about Folake. She (FAM) is one person with a large heart. My first experience with her was in 2018. I had just resumed at the head office of First Bank and on a certain day, we were informed of free meals for all staff in Marina. I was shocked that someone could be considerate and generous enough to do such. On enquiry, I learnt it was FAM's birthday. Truth is she didn't have to do it but she did. She doesn't even work at 35 Marina, yet she chose to spoil us with goodies that day. I recall asking for her number and reached out to her to tell her how kind she was. Thank you FAM for the very rich flavor you bring to the work place. We are better off with you at First Bank”.

Also commenting about FAM, Temitayo Akpeneye, Digital marketing Manager at the bank, said, “Dr. Uvie-Emegbo used the right words

that Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney has a way of empowering people to do exploit. She isn't satisfied with you just doing as she says, she wants you to think on your feet and always find long lasting solutions. In all of these push, she is also kind. I am a student in the school of FAM and, it has been an enlightening journey. She is simply FAMazing!”

Another current student of the cerebral corporate leader, Mrs. Chinwe Bode Akinwande, Head, Digital Marketing & Innovation captures FAM's brand essence and purpose more succinctly, when she said, “FAM is amazing, extremely intelligent; Her leadership style is admirable, so simple and gracious. More blessings and accomplishments Madam.

Aside those who have worked with her or still working with her, FAM surely has a large followership of fans, admirers and well-wishers who value her immeasurably, for the large dose of leadership qualities God has deposited in the elegant amazon.

For Opeoluwa Filani, Sales Director at JCDcaux, FAM is a true leader 100%. “I agree 100% FAM is a true leader whose deliberate actions have inspired many others to dream more, learn more, do more and have become more, I join everyone to celebrate you Folake Ani-Mumuney.”

Quite honestly, FAM personifies exemplary leadership. She is no doubt a leader by example who points the way, leads the way and gives requisite guidelines on result achievements, while acting out in practice and not in precepts. For all the testimonies so far shared, MARKETING EDGE can authoritatively confirm that none is an over statement.

Impeccable industry sources confirmed to MARKETING EDGE recently that FAM is not only a restless and relentless teacher; she is also an insatiable scholar, combing one Ivy Leagues institution after the other in search of learning and knowledge.

Gists have it that she is a voracious reader who can hardly drop a printed material until after consuming the content. What you don't want her to read is what you don't drop on her table or near her. It is no longer a secret that the quarterly training or brain-storming sessions she introduced for capacity building of her team mates has become another master class on its own. Come to think of it, she leads the session most of the times and also allows team members to lead and share knowledge all in the attempt to expand their frontiers of knowledge. If leading out- source capacity agencies have not



Just recently, a former colleague of hers, Dr. Anderson Uvie-Emegbo unveiled Mrs. Folake Ani-Mumuney on his LinkedIn page where he made FAM his #Woman Crush Wednesday all in an attempt to celebrate his former boss and benefactor. That short testimony reads: "Working closely with FAM, one of the indelible lessons that have stayed with me is the way she develops, empowers and coaches her team. No sacrifice is too great".

been hired to train employees of First Bank in the Corporate Communications Department for some years now, It is because FAM has become the in-house Professor of marketing (laughs) an incomparable but highly admirable ideas shop gifted in intellect, rich in wisdom, outstanding in kindness and generosity.

Hardly can you get her match amongst her peers. It is not an exaggeration, but a statement of fact! With over ten years behind the pro-active image and reputation management at First Bank, the Sky is surely a starting point as the Corporate Communications industry and indeed, the IMC industry has not heard the last from this humble and humane brand personality.

Tijani Akinkunmi, Deputy General Manager, FirstBank, who described Folake as the boss and leader, said her energy, drive, passion, creativity and innovation are infectious.

"I am Privileged to be with you in the same class facilitated by Andrew Kakabadse, the Emeritus Professor of Governance and Leadership at Cranfield University School of Management months ago. The outcome of your analysis under Meyers and Briggs Test says "you love to start new things, nurture it successfully but briefly, hand it over to someone else and move on to new challenging adventures".

"I find you persuasively engaging and gifted with one of the success factors for leadership – listening. Happy birthday my sister – God bless you more and more. Congratulations, FAM," he said.

Akinkunmi profoundly thanked the Amazon for her unrelenting efforts to sustain the leading banking brand in Nigeria, FirstBank and the subsidiaries.

Judging from the various testimonies by all her former and present colleagues, business associates and industry operators, there is no doubting the fact the Rev. Arthur W. Newcomb surely had the likes of Mrs. Folake Ani Mumuney in mind when he gave the world that immortal quote. Without

any equivocation, a quick check on the profiles and pedigrees of all who have passed through FAM's school of leadership training will reveal how successful and distinguish these personalities are in their respective fields of endeavours. In classifying her leadership archetypes, FAM conveniently falls within the realms of the Coach, the Builder, the Strategist, the Processor, the Innovator and the Communicator.

Profile

Folake Ani-Mumuney (FNIMN, HCIB, MCIM) leads the Marketing and Corporate Communications function globally for the FirstBank Group, Nigeria's foremost commercial banking group with presence across the African continent, China and the United Kingdom. Folake also has oversight for same function for FBN Holdings Plc and all its subsidiaries spanning Asset Management, Investment Banking, Private Equity, Insurance, Pension Fund Custodian services – making it one of the most diversified financial conglomerates on the continent.

Folake currently serves as the Chairman Board of Directors, FBN Insurance Brokers, Vice Chairman, Junior Achievement Nigeria and sits on the Executive Council of the World Federation of Advertisers.

With a career spanning over 25 years across diverse sectors such as banking, aviation, manufacturing, oil & gas, amongst others, Folake has held varied roles, leading strategy and business planning, business analysis & process re-engineering, business development, innovation and marketing.

She has managed portfolios in various locations globally, and held responsibility for diverse regions covering Europe & Africa, Asia Pacific, Middle East and the United Kingdom at various points in her career.

Folake started her career with British Airways in the UK, where she contributed to driving

business solutions across the CASAMEA region. Folake then served based out of Johannesburg for several years as Marketing Services Manager Africa from where she moved back to the UK taking on the role of Manager Brands, Policies and Communication responsible for the Europe and Africa region.

With a burning passion for development of the African Continent Folake moved to Nigeria to take on the pioneer role of Chief Marketing & Corporate Communications Officer for the Dangote Group, an executive role that saw her introduce many innovations to the largest diversified conglomerate in Africa.

From there, Folake joined the FirstBank Group, where she serves as the Chief Image Maker primarily for the Commercial Bank, with oversight responsibility for the other operating companies under the FBNHoldings banner globally.

In addition, she is leading the turnaround of one of the strategic subsidiaries, FBN Insurance Brokers as the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Folake serves on the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) a global trade association of the leading multi-national advertisers headquartered in Brussels. A past President, of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Folake serves on many boards and is particularly proud to contribute on not for profit boards such as Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN). JAN is a part of the World's oldest and largest non-profit economic education organization, operating in 120 countries worldwide. With a keen interest in diversity and inclusion Folake is an Advisory Board Member of WISCAR (Women in Successful Careers) and served on the WimBoard Advocacy committee of WimBiz (Women in Business and Politics) amongst others.

She serves as Non-Executive Director on Boards with focus on Marketing, Technology, Communication and Transportation.

Folake is often tapped to lead and contribute to many Public-Sector initiatives and was appointed as a steering committee member of the Ministry of Finance led Federal Government Presidential Committee on Efficiency in 2016.

She is an Honorary Member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, a Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing UK, a Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing Nigeria and a member of the Institute of Directors Nigeria.

Folake holds a first degree in Philosophy from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, a second degree in Law from the University of Buckingham, England and a Diploma in Business Computing Systems Analysis and Design. She is an alumnus of the prestigious Harvard Business School Advanced Management Programme and has attended many Executive Education programmes from leading Business Schools.

A recipient of many awards, such as the Lifetime Achievement Awards 2019 by Marketing World Awards, Ghana, Folake is a sought-after speaker within and outside Africa. Folake is emphatically committed and especially focused on Africa and fully dedicates her efforts to the growth and development of the continent and her people.

She is a versatile professional much sought after by A-rated multinationals because of her intellectual prowess and entrepreneurial sagacity. She was the former President of Advertisers Association of Nigeria, ADVAN, the umbrella association for all advertisers (Corporate organisations that engage in major advertising) in Nigeria.

Folake is happily married with 3 children, and currently lives in Nigeria. ■



UNCENSORED!

Industry debts: Sired by poor regulation, encouraged by advertisers' conspiracy, sustained by agencies dilemma

The industry

It is time for Frank Talk: No apologies. Yes, somebody must speak up or we all give up sooner than later. It is urgent. It is exigent. Yet, it is expedient.

The industry debts issue in the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications sector of the Nigerian economic sub-sector is fast becoming an internal war of attrition. It is a time bomb waiting to detonate.

Like a malignant disease that troubles the entire human body of the afflicted, the industry debts issue will continue to impact negatively on the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications sub-sector of the Nigerian economy.

While correct statistical data on the actual debts profile across the IMC industries are non-existent, unconfirmed figures estimated that about N50 billion may be in contention. Out of this figure, advertising is believed to have taken a chunk of 50%,

while the remaining is shared by other service sector providers, i.e experiential, PR and brand management service sector providers like research.

In other words, the total debts being owed the media by the agencies on jobs done on clients' behalf hover around twenty-five billion naira only.

According to PwC research report on outlook of Entertainment and Media in Nigeria, the total advertising spend by the clients was about \$450million (N162 billion in 2019, this amount was said to have excluded branding, marketing, and promotions. In other words, the total debts so far accumulated by the advertising agencies and the media would have grossed N25 billion, while others such as branding, marketing and promotions share the remaining N25 billion amongst themselves. Or it could be more or slightly lower.

The Issues

Over the years, controversies and conversations have been on-going on the industry debts but these appear not to have gotten desired and required attention. While players in the IMC sectors continue to grumble, sometimes in hush tones, the client companies pretend to be unperturbed as none of their agencies, or vendors hired directly and privately through a formal engagement procedure with established contractual terms have been bold enough to frontally challenge or take them up on debts being owed.

To make matters worse, some vendors or agencies who are aware of the debts profile of most chronic debtor client companies would still offer to work for the debtor clients when and if the opportunity presents itself. Not quite long ago, a media advertising agency resigned from the media advertising business of a notorious debtor client, a multinational company, simply because of the embarrassing debt culture, but very funnily enough, two weeks after that, no fewer than four competitors from the same media sector had sent their credentials for consideration by the alleged debtor multi-national.

In some cases, some media agencies approach clients for business promising heaven on earth as key performance indicators, all in an attempt to bait, woo and cajole to get business, but upon getting clients jobs on such a tight budget consideration, it becomes rather difficult if not near impossible to service the business.

Due to the sensitive nature of the discourse, and the image implication of guilty parties in the bargain, it will be safe not to mention names but cases abound in the industry why the debt profile continues to be on the rise. A particular media agency was once reported to have given an outlandish KPIs to his new client - after the contract had been awarded, the media agency discovered that the media budget approved by client would be inadequate to meet up with the expected KPIs. Rather than go back to the client to seek an honourable review, the agency in question went ahead implementing the contract even with inadequate funds' approval! Reason? The agency's reluctance to go back to the client for a re-negotiation was borne out of the fear of losing out in the business to competitors who are ready to snatch the job at a much lower budget, and the clients are ever aware of the existence of such "Hungry" briefcase-carrying hot shops.

Impeccable industry sources hinted MARKEITNG EDGE that the crisis in the industry was jointly birthed by all stakeholders in the IMC. Be it advertising agencies, the media, the experiential, OOH, PR, media monitoring, research and all that. A gist in town once had it that a big multi-national had invited top experiential agencies for a competitive pitch. During the pitch, the multinational was said to have made a request for 120days payment stating that whichever agency agrees to a 120days payment policy would be given the business. At the occasion, almost all the experiential agencies invited turned down the request for 120 days.

Advertisers' Conspiracy

However, after everyone had left, a particular agency (name withheld) was said to have gone back to the client accepting to take the brief with 120 days payment grace! In other words, the “betrayal” agency capitulated to the client’s baiting the 120 days payment policy which had never been discussed at any industry forum or fora is a grand conspiracy by the advertisers as a way of retaining cash flow for their own business operations all the time notwithstanding if their partner agencies and vendors together with



the media are bleeding.

In most cases, some clients take for granted the ideal professional services they expect their agencies and vendors to give them, but would rather prefer hiring professional agencies with consideration for low budget, rather than the quality of service. Some companies even allow the procurement departments to handle contract negotiations, which is good to some extent as long as employees in the procurement departments of such companies are knowledgeable about the service offerings expected from the agencies. What has been the practice in the country is the fact that most procurement department employees are least knowledgeable about the nitty-gritty of marketing communications business but would still go ahead negotiating albeit on low budget terms on behalf of their companies. While it is not a sin deploying employees in the procurement departments to handle contracts negotiation, as a matter of fact, that is the vogue in civilized climes, but one thing that is clear is that such employees must have requisite skills and competence for the task. The problem in hiring a non-competent employee to negotiate contracts in specialized skills sector like marketing and advertising is the low quality job delivery that may result thereafter, taking into accounts, perhaps poor budgetary considerations and approval.

Agencies' Dilemma

As most agencies and vendors are under pressure to get new business so as to stay afloat and be able to pay their bills, they jump at any offer that comes! Some agencies will even secure briefs under such pathetic situation and circumstance and yet be unable to deliver half of what was promised at initio. This could later result in either a breach of contract or a strained relationship with clients.

We have also witnessed situations where outdoor advertising agencies deliberately under-cut industry rates to secure business from a prospective client. Having done so, it later becomes difficult for the agency to provide requisite services for the client's billboard advertising needs.

What then happens in most cases is unmonitored and poorly maintained billboards and, at another level, none or inadequate exposures. Don't ask about the roles of media monitoring agencies here as some of them are also alleged to work in cahoots with the brand owners on contract execution and under reporting. The long and short of some of these explanations is that most industry debts are direct consequences of disputes or disputations arising from briefs and contracts not well executed or implemented or the latest

case of payment policy on credit term.

There are other cases like the delayed submission of Certificates of Transmissions, (COTS) or non-submission otherwise referred to as media compliance issue. Here, the fault would largely be on the part of the agency as clients are not to be blamed. It could also be the failure by the media owner to forward this on time to the agency for client's approval and treatment.

As if these troubles were not enough, some multi-national companies came up with the "tyrannical" request of 120 days payment policy. While the new payment policy was never a deliberate decision taken jointly at the industry level, it has suddenly become a generally adopted option by some blue-chip companies in Nigeria who are copying what is done overseas. Meanwhile, in other climes, multi-national companies usually advertise this policy requirement as part of their pitch requirements so as to allow agencies to be fully briefed and properly rethink participation in their pitches. But such does not happen in Nigeria. Here, everything is hidden and only made open when it comes to budgeting! That, of course, won't be disclosed until after the pitches are done, decisions taken and, in most cases, a winner has emerged. At that point in time, a winning agency would be hard pressed to accept the option hook line and sinker as failure to do that may automatically make the client to reverse the win and instead appoint the agency that comes in the second position.

Now that there are very a few businesses around, nobody ever wants to lose whatever comes along the way. A year ago, Diageo global wanted to hire media agencies for its media business. The global alcoholic giant made it crystal clear that only agencies that could guarantee 120 days payment negotiation with the media would be considered for its pitch. Some media agencies that were uncomfortable with this policy took a walk while only those who could do that went for the pitch and at the end of the day, a winner was selected.

In Nigeria, that may never happen as everything would be shrouded in secrecy. It is also worse in this clime because some media agencies hide under this new policy to unleash their own tyranny on vendors and media partners. The industry is awash with tales from many outdoor companies and media owners about the arrogance and "oppression" of some operators who play all manner of tricks on vendors simply because they have the financial muscle and won't stop at nothing to "muscle" the "poor" vendors. This often happens without the clients' knowing and these agencies continue to give their clients bad names.

As these and many more unwholesome practices continue to exist in the industry, it will also be fit and proper to say that not all media agencies are guilty of some of these unethical practices. Some media agencies stand out when it comes to integrity, honour and transparency. These agencies don't manipulate. They don't dribble vendors and media partners. Their books are open, their practices are ethical and they stand for honour and integrity as they don't get involved in over-invoicing or any of these illicit deals which time and space won't permit.

More embarrassing is the fact that some agencies with foreign affiliations are also guilty of some of these unwholesome practices. Have you ever bothered to ponder why some accounts movements occur at regular intervals? Have you ever taken the pains to know why some clients move their businesses away from dubious agencies? Have you also wondered why some foreign affiliate relationships are suddenly severed? Have you also wondered why



Mr. Adedamola Docemo,
LASAA MD



Mr. Femi Adelusi,
MIPAN President

some accounts are not allowed to move to a local agency even though such an agency's affiliate ware-houses the account at a global level? Has anybody under-studied the under-currents on agency selection in local pitch event? These are the underlining challenges bedeviling the industry.

Over the years, the Out-of-Home (OOH) sectoral group of Nigeria's advertising has been having the recurring problem involving practitioners, clients and other regulatory agencies on issues of bill and debt payment, including other sundry issues bothering on financial obligations. The OOH agencies have had to deal with clients (advertisers) who would sometimes default in payment or delay payment beyond the industry's acceptable standard.

The regulatory agencies have also had to deal with the issue of prompt payment of their bills on one hand, and complaints bordering on highhandedness on the part of the regulatory agencies' officials coupled with obnoxious policies and outrageous fees, on the other. Many outdoor agencies have gone under as a result of the huge debts owed them by clients.

Rumblings & Grumblings

Recently at the 35th AGM of Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, (OAAAN) the debt issue came to the fore, poignantly. The gauntlet was thrown by the Managing Director of Lagos State Advertisement & Signage Agency(LASAA), Mr. Adedamola Docemo when he challenged the industry to do something very urgent about the debts issue. Mr. Docemo considered the debt issue as the most germane issue that has shaken the industry to its foundation.

"To whom much is given, much is expected. This industry can only grow when debts are settled promptly rather than allow them become protracted," he said.

He appealed to other sectoral groups to help outdoor advertising practitioners meet their financial obligations to LASAA, and also urged all the stakeholders in the value chain of outdoor advertising to live up to their commitments and responsibilities.

Sometimes ago, a former President of Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Mr. Ikechi Odigbo, described as "vicious cycle" the controversies surrounding debts and payment challenges in Nigeria's Integrated Marketing Communications Industry (IMC).

And as a way of addressing the debt challenge, the advertising chieftain advised that all it would require is the collective will and

the total commitment of the stakeholders and players across various sectoral groups.

Odigbo, who gave this advice at a well attended industry event, criticized vehemently, the 120 days credit term proposal canvassed by client companies, stressing that the development arose owing to “the lack of leverage” on the part of advertising agencies as against their clients.

According to him, the multinational client companies have, over time, almost all the leverage to set the terms, and to that extent, have oftentimes capitalized on the weak leverage position that agencies have. He added that the development had to be addressed at the level of the sectoral groups.

“I would say that the inter-sectoral debt is a vicious cycle. It’s a vicious cycle because cash flow has become king. So, every client and every agency is hoping to hold on for as long as possible because it’s actually your cash flow that determines your sustainability, your ability to stay in business and ability to pay up your bills.

“I believe it is more of a situation where the various sectors within the media and the marketing communications sector would have to work together because it doesn’t just affect advertising, it affects the other sectors, too. There is a lack of leverage, and what you find is that the clients have almost all the leverage to set the terms and it’s now left for you to determine whether you would want to work based on those terms with them or not,” he said.

Speaking further, Odigbo noted: “You just mentioned the 120 days to the agencies. If an agency is working under those terms what kind of terms would you want them to work with the vendors and media partners? So, it’s a vicious cycle. You have a lot of agencies who, in the books, are looking profitable. But in terms of cash flow, they are barely surviving, and that’s the paradox.”

Earlier, and in a related development, another past President of the association, Mr. Funmi Onabolu had expressed disappointment over the lingering industry debts and the master-servant relationship in the industry. Specifically, Onabolu advised stakeholders on the need to establish a comprehensive industry-wide charter to help redefine terms of business relationships, address the debts challenge and payment issues across the industry.

According to him, the proposed charter, when fully operational would spell out the terms in business relationships amongst

players in marketing communications, particularly the clients and marketing agencies, and it must be ratified and attested to by the various industry sectoral groups namely, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), Media Independents Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), media groups; Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON).

Giving answers to questions on developmental challenges in the IMC industry in an exclusive interview with *MARKETING EDGE* in Lagos, Onabolu, Managing Director/CEO, Cosse Group observed that the IMC industry in Nigeria was replete with multi-faceted developmental challenges basic among which are debt and the instability in patterns of payment.



Mrs. Ijedi Iyoha,
Acting Registrar/CE, APCON

The agency chief executive, who was particularly critical regarding the 120 days credit terms policy by the multinational companies, noted that all industry initiatives in the past to address the debt issue had met with little success, insisting that industry debts could only be totally checked or minimized when such a charter is put in place and is seen to be operational.

“For debts to be totally or really minimized in the industry, what you need is an industry charter, basically signed by marketing organizations, agency groups and media owners. Everybody signs to a charter which says, this is how we operate and then we keep to that charter. It is done in South Africa; it is done in Europe and definitely in America.

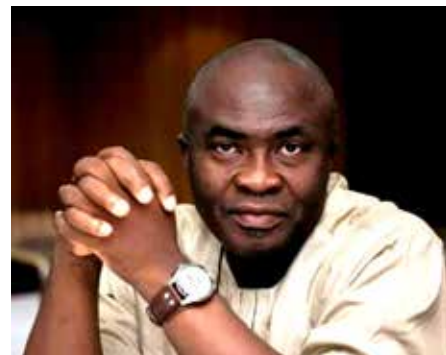
“Debt is something that we are trying

to tackle many times but there hasn’t been enough success. One thing or the other usually derails industry efforts at different levels; whether at HASG and even APCON level,” he said.

According to him, for reasons bordering on ‘poverty of the mind,’ the very tough operating business environment, lack of professional pride and sufficient confidence in people’s own capabilities, most operators in the industry were timid and not bold enough to look at clients in the face and say sorry, we won’t operate this way.”

He added, however, that once the charter comes into place, it would be very much easier to keep everybody within the rule.

In a similar vein, the newly elected President of Media Independents Association of Nigeria, MIPAN, Mr. Femi Adelusi described the proposed 120 days payment policy as unrealistic and impracticable in view of the social economic situation of the country. The



Mr. Emmanuel Ajufo,
OAAN President

MIPAN President who said he was yet unaware of clients demanding for 120 days hinted that what he was aware was client asking for 30-60 days.

His words “First, let me say I am not aware of clients asking for 120 days. The conversation I am aware of is 30-60 days. I think when you consider the state of our industry, it goes without saying that any payment term over 60 days is not in the interest of the industry for many reason.”

Besides, Mr. Adelusi said if such a policy sails through in the present economic situation, it will be a “Zero-sum game, while what the industry needs at this point in time is a win-win situation.”

He listed possible negative fall outs of such a policy to include:

- It stifles the media houses who have

- to tackle rising operational costs;
- Stifles the content producers and independent producers;
- Credit cost is too high in this market. Many agencies cannot access credit to pay on client's behalf. It's not sustainable. Agency revenue has declined over time. We need to protect the industry, we cannot just adopt global practice without consideration for location economic and business realities;
- This will create avenues for unwholesome practices;
- A 120-day payment circle has only one winner, we need a solutions where everyone wins;
- If an agency accepts this type of lengthy terms based on global procurement agreements, experience shows that they usually put the pressure on the media houses, it's at the crux of some of the issues we have today and it's a vicious cycle.

He stated that he is personally of the view that 30-60 days cycle are still preferable provided Media compliance verification is done to ensure client gets value. Conceding that payment terms and contracts are based on business to business negotiations and agreements, Adeusi advised that industry players should consider the greater good of all and the best interest of the industry.

In his own view, the President of Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, (OAAN) Mr. Emmanuel Ajufo said if the proposal for 120 days payment cycle is allowed to operate, "It will kill the industry". "My straight answer is that this kind of payment regime (120 days payment cycle) will ultimately kill the industry", said OAAN President when asked to comment on the controversial debate.

Recalling the critical debates and rejection which the idea has generated by key and leading industry stakeholders, the OAAN President said with the vehement criticism of such an idea over time, it shows that such a proposition is highly unpopular and impracticable.

He disclosed, "during the last year award organized by MARKETING EDGE, the highly respected Mr. George Thorpe spoke out very seriously against this mode of engagement", pointing out that the industry needs more of such people to speak out against 120 days payment cycle that does nobody any good".

He stated that "OAAN as an association has been engaging relevant stakeholders to see why this kind of payment regime does not stand". "Our much publicized Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is another way of addressing this unrealistic payment regime. We are working with the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) on this and we hope that in a short while, we will all be called upon to witness the adoption of the SOP by everyone" Ajufo assured.

However, there appears to be a glimmer of hope in the horizon as the issue and the controversies it has been generating ever since has been receiving positive and favourable attention by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) already.

In a short Whatsapp chats sent to MARKETING EDGE, during our investigation President of ADVAN Mrs. Bunmi Adeniba who is the Marketing Director of Unilever Plc said "the advertisers group has been having multi-stakeholder conversations with a view to evolving a resolution that benefits all players and the industry at large". Though she was of the view that there are contractual terms agreed upon by respective agencies with clients that need to be reviewed on a case by case basis, she revealed that ADVAN has been engaging on issues around compliance and speed of reconciliation".

Ray of Hope

Above all, the ADVAN President said there are much more to be done in the industry, especially with the involvement and participation of all players-agency, client, we all have to pitch in for the change and growth we want to see", she opined.

Indeed, the assurance and the step being taken by the ADVAN leadership appears to be the much awaited fillip and relief the industry may have been waiting for, judging from the tone of Mrs. Bunmi Adeniba's reaction on this highly controversial issue. It goes without saying that the current state of uncertainty and unease over the debts issue and the payment policy would soon be over. One thing is very clear: and that is that the grumblings, criticisms and controversies so far over the policy is getting the right response and all stakeholders in the IMC should rally together to resolve this once and for all before the industry finally goes on its knees. Now, bleeding is the word, hence, an affirmative action is a desirable. ■



Mrs. Bunmi Adeniba, ADVAN President

Indeed, the assurance and the step being taken by the ADVAN leadership appears to be the much awaited fillip and relief the industry may have been waiting for, judging from the tone of Mrs. Bunmi Adeniba's reaction on this highly controversial issue. It goes without saying that the current state of uncertainty and unease over the debts issue and the payment policy would soon be over. One thing is very clear: and that is that the grumblings, criticisms and controversies so far over the policy is getting the right response and all stakeholders in the IMC should rally together to resolve this once and for all before the industry finally goes on its knees.



STEVE BABAEKO

CREATIVE WHIZKID TAKES CENTRE STAGE AS **AAAN PRESIDENT**

Writing on the theme “*Strange Eccentricities of Creative Geniuses*”, Michael Michalko, one of the most acclaimed creativity experts in the world gave the literary community some insights into the world of creative geniuses.

Michalko, the American author of bestselling books revealed that “there is much anecdotal evidence to indicate that creative people are more often eccentric or more often have odd personality features than the non-creative population. The creative guru went further to reveal that famous visionaries often develop a reputation for having a few eccentricities. He cited some instances such as:

- Marcel Proust who wrote most of his novels lying in bed.
- James Joyce who kept a tiny pair of doll’s knickers in his pockets
- Composer Gioachino Rossini who was completely bald and wore two or three wigs simultaneously.
- Beethoven who had no interest in personal cleanliness and his friends had to take his dirty clothes away and wash them while he slept.

Living up to the character traits of his creative folks, Steve Babaeko, the debonair CEO/CCO of X3M Ideas, wears dreads. He does not only wear dreads but carries it with grace and candour, yet exuding grace and

confidence that draw largely from the depths of intellect and rigour.

He is an avuncular adman who bops up and down dominating his environment with a remarkable and legendary swagger. Don’t blame Steve for his volubility and eye-catching larger-than life size, as he was sired by a military man and had his own fair share of barracks training background while growing up under his military father. In those early days, he gathered not quite a few insights on street intelligence combining it with knowledge acquired in the formal learning environment.

Steve is an unusual type of businessman. In an industry that seemed to have run out of inspirational stories, he stepped in and wrote a new chapter. Now, his X3M Ideas Group, which he founded in 2012, has become the yardstick for a new generation of Nigerian creative entrepreneurs.

Unlike the creative men of old, Steve Babaeko’s eccentricities have style and fashion. He is of a special breed. Not only refined in his ways, he is divinely gentlemanly.

Besides, he is a quintessential organiser and a business man of no mean repute. Having been tested and trusted, Steve Babaeko, whom I enjoy calling a “Creative Whizkid” has rolled up his sleeves to assume the mantle of leadership at the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) where he was previously the Vice President 1.

Is the crown already made for the Prince?

No doubt, your guess would be as good as mine if you take a cursory look at the career and historical trajectory of the AAAN man of the moment. Yes, the AAAN crown is already made for the guru!

His was the proverbial case of a stone earlier rejected that has become the cornerstone. He has grown and risen through the ranks and proved some pessimists wrong.

Information reaching MARKETING EDGE revealed that prospective aspirants and contenders for the AAAN top job beat a quick retreat. In order words, the coast was clear for the Kogi-born adman to coast home to victory unopposed!

Steve’s unyielding belief in looking challenges in the face and staring them down has attracted the best talents to his firm and pulled in clients from around the world. His next stop? South-Central Africa, via Lusaka and Johannesburg, where he recently opened independent offices for X3M Ideas.

Before starting X3M, which has now grown to include X3M Music and Zero Degrees Productions, Steve was the creative director at 141 Worldwide. While there, he sparked the fire of creativity that made that agency the trendiest for many years.

Steve began his advertising career at MC&A Saatchi & Saatchi and later moved to Prima Garnet Ogilvy. For more than 23 years, he has been helping to create some of the most iconic marketing works on the continent. You might remember the “Proudly

Nigerian" campaign for British American Tobacco, the "Now You're Talking" campaign for Etisalat, "You Need A New Bank" campaign for Diamond Bank and so many others.

Steve Babaeko's story has been well narrated and captivatingly told by his first and former boss and employer, Mr. Victor Johnson, former Managing Director of MC & A, a third generation advertising company that first gave him the singular honour of plying his trade in the glamorous advertising profession.

Confessions of Mr. Victor Johnson (Former MD/CEO, MC&A Saatchi) read:

"In those early days, having to contend with all kinds of chicanery, rascality and not knowing whom to trust, I used to walk round the agency many times a day as a pilot walks round his plane; just to get a feel of what's going on, so as not to be surprised. I also banned visitors to the agency except those on business. This was how I spotted this timid, pleasant and honest-looking boy in a non-descript T-shirt always hanging around the Radio/TV room, which, by nature of its operation, always had a crowd of people – TV producers, Models, translators, Voice-Over artistes, etc.

"That, I could do nothing about. Then on April 12, 1995, the fellow, with a surprising boldness, committed a sacrilege of barging into my office. Instead of chewing him out as I would ordinarily have done, I did my first strange act where the boy was concerned by inviting him in against my own iron-clad rules and to the chagrin of my shocked secretary who could only stare dumbfounded. Inside, the chap timorously regaled me with pathetic stories of his plight and ended with applying for a job. This was when the second strange thing happened as I employed him literally, on the spot without seeing his papers and without a day's experience, although he had done the homework of learning what the job was all about. I based my odd and impulsive decision on a gut feeling as you don't get to my age and level without acquiring a sixth sense and a nose for things. I also took refuge in the belief that if my nose let me down and he fell on the job, our traineeship programme would flush him out if he did not disappear on his own without being shoved.

"Till date, I can't fully explain my impetuous act other than his face exuded honesty and that no negative vibes emanated from him. Welcome Steve Babaeko to the start of his communications career.

"Mercifully, my nose did not disappoint me, neither did Steve fail. He gave a good account of himself, demonstrated a surprising knowledge level, way above his station such that I gave myself a pat on the back but with a sneaky feeling that this Babaeko is a strange one. He took to the job like a fish to water, not like a green horn or a wet-behind-the-ear rookie that he was and never looked back.

"He was always coming up with fresh and brilliant ideas with a senior writer, Paul Ugoagwu, gave us the Texaco business in a fiercely contested pitch that featured three largest billing agencies. A pitch where nobody gave us a chance, where a respected

practitioner took a look at our materials and sneered with "No wonder you people don't win new business, if this crap is the best you can do for a big pitch like this". But we won the business hands down and serviced it so well that the account stayed with us till closure of the agency", Mr. Johnson, a veteran adman of the third generation and former employer of Steve Babaeko, MC&A recounted with nostalgia.

The testimony by Mr. Johnson, now an octogenarian vividly captures the brand essence and brand personae of Steve Babaeko whose meteoric rise and ever-rising brand equity in his chosen career has always been enhanced and activated by grit, guts and sheer audacity.

During our recent encounter with him in his expansive, high octane villa in the back street corner of Maryland area of Lagos State, the X3M Ideas founder demonstrated all these sterling attributes. His apartment, tucked almost in the middle of the houses

He talks with authority, candour and grace which only the power of knowledge and intellect can confer. At the end of the interview, the MARKETING EDGE seven-man team, led by my humble self was, not only fulfilled for getting a very rich and robust editorial content, we were, however, excited for a Saturday evening well spent with one of the industry intellectuals who has, by setting up his own creative shop a few years ago, helped in demystifying the age-long myth that creative people are not always good in entrepreneurship, or in becoming good business managers and leaders.

Today, X3M Ideas has not only broken the myth by giving birth to second line agencies, the pace-setter creative shop has shattered the glass ceiling by winning a variety of local and global awards and laurels. The most recently won creative awards of excellence by the agency was the Grand Prix of Lagos Advertising Ideas Awards and Festivals (LAIF) as well as others too numerous to mention.

He is an avuncular adman who bops up and down dominating his environment with a remarkable and legendary swagger. Don't blame Steve for his volubility and eye-catching larger-than life size, as he was sired by a military man and had his own fair share of barracks training background while growing up under his military father.

in the neighbourhood of the high profile estate, gives no clue as to the creative genius resident within. Aside the fact that the fence and the entire building are adorned in colour white with designer security lights and a giant gate reminiscent of the biblical walls of Jericho, the Steve Babaeko house maintains an anonymous posture whereas the interior design speaks so eloquently to an architectural masterpiece with creativity at its optimal best in the design and structures that will wow the uninitiated, especially a first time visitor.

Ask Babaeko who were his consultant architect and the building engineer; he will be quick to attribute the creative designs and beautiful lay-outs of the magnificent edifice to his equally creative and versatile wife, a professional to the core in her own rights.

Though a story for yet another day, Babaeko's humility and humanity resonate poignantly in his personal disposition to life and you can see through his heart not necessarily by holding up a mirror before him but through his honesty and unpretentious innocence of a sailor. Brilliant, bold and blunt, Babaeko says it as it is without blabbing or jabbering.

During our two-hour interview session with the Kogi State born indigene, Babaeko was a reporter's delight as he demonstrated knowledge of the industry in his choice of answers to questions. He is like a pugilist who surely knows his onions.

Like a Trojan, Steve Babaeko continues to soldier on in the Nigerian creative and business firmament with a mission and vision to win. And he has been winning given the profiles and pedigrees of the agency's clientele and rich portfolio of blue-chip accounts.

Today, Steve has gone full circle as an accomplished entrepreneur and renowned creative whiz-kid. He continues to represent Africa on the global stage, having been a member of the jury at the New York Advertising Week, the Loeries, and Cristal Awards. He has also been a speaker at the Cannes Festival of Creativity and is one of Adweek's Top 100 Creative in the world 2019.

With a Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts from the esteemed Ahmadu Bello University, Steve Babaeko has honed his horn in leadership and professional training both locally and internationally. He has in the course of his career exploits and sojourn attended several international leadership trainings, including some in Harvard business School and Columbia University, New York.

He was, until his recent election, the Vice-President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN); Chairman of the Board of Lagos Advertising and Ideas Festival (LAIF), and Member of the Board of International Advertising Association (IAA), Nigeria. Outside Advertising, he is the serving Chairman, Public Relations Committee of the Nigerian-American Chamber of Commerce. ■

We are set to advance together

- **Steve Babaeko**

Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) President

Newly elected President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Mr. Steve Babaeko, also Chief Executive Officer and COO of X3m Ideas is a creative juggernaut whose revolutionary approach to birthing and building advertising agencies have yielded remarkable impacts that has redefined the Nigerian advertising lately. Shortly after his election at the last and maiden virtual annual general meeting of the association in Lagos spoke glowingly to **MARKETING EDGE** about his mission and vision for AAAN. Not only that he insisted that with the recent election in the association, the industry is posed for greater changes albeit positively.

Using the theme campaign "*Advancing Together*" as the new guiding philosophy, Babaeko, a soft-spoken advertising and marketing maverick enjoins all industry stakeholders to collaborate and unite to get the industry fully calibrated in the new mullein. He spoke on other issues as well.

Excerpts:



Congratulations on your recent election as the president of Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria(AAAN)

Thank you very much. It's a great pleasure to serve the association

How has your journey been to the AAAN presidency?

Honestly, it has been an exciting journey. Don't forget that there is no individual membership in the association. Agencies constitute the members of the AAAN. The members of the AAAN usually serve the association at one point or the other in different capacities. I started serving as deputy publicity secretary of the association some years ago. Later, I became Chairman of the Lagos Advertising and Ideas Festival (LAIF) and I did that for three years. Later, I was elected as the Publicity Secretary at some point. I was Vice-President of the association about two years ago. On July 2, 2020, I was elected (unopposed) as the President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN). I feel very privileged to lead the association especially at this critical time.

Would you describe the pundits' views that your leadership connotes a generational shift in the history of the association?

I must start by giving a big shout-out to all the founding fathers of the advertising agencies in Nigeria. They made giant strides to lay a solid foundation for the association. The association started as Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (AAPN) in 1973 and it metamorphosed into Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) during an epoch-making Annual General Meeting in 2004. It has been over forty-seven (47) years old now. How many institutions in Nigeria have lasted for that long? With all the intricacies and complexities of this country, it is not a mean feat for an association to have stayed that long and strong. A lot of credit goes to the founding fathers of the association. I am always of the view that the framework for which the universe was built and erected is that the old shall give way to the new. It is no surprise that we are having the passing of the baton to the next generation. On the day of my inauguration, I made reference to the fact that this was the first time in the 47 years history of the association that we were having our AGM on a virtual platform.



To that effect, you can call me the “digital president”. It is a shift of some sort in the way things are done because it is the new normal. A new dawn beckons. I feel very privileged to lead the association at this time.

As a young president, what are some of your goals and visions for the association?

The theme of my campaign was “*Advancing Together*”. Though I contested unopposed, I campaigned vigorously. I am not taking it for granted leading the association at this critical period. The association is a honourable body and I did contest for an honourable position. There is no time in the history of this industry that I believe we need to stand together as one body, one people, more than now. The “*Advancing Together*” campaign theme was premised on four-points agenda. One of those points is, the issue of empowering women who are members of the association. If you count agencies owned by women in this country, you can count them on your finger tips. I am hoping that during my tenure as president that can be changed. Even on the board of the association, we have been able to move from having two women to having three women. We have also been able to appoint some women as committee chairmen. Again, there is a small vibrant group in the association called “Women in Advertising”. We would like to support and



All of those “solos” we used to run should be over. Let us all come to the table and have a seat at the table so we can discuss all the difficulties we are faced with. From there, we can proffer solutions. I know that we will overcome all these challenges. It is just to continue to foster unity and conversation.

empower this group. Our aim is to adopt inclusivity in running the affairs of the association and also foster unity among the members.

How do you intend to achieve all of these?

There is no industry in the world that unity of purpose and team building are not as key and crucial as the advertising industry. If you run an agency, you can't do it all alone. You can write the copy, do the aggression or be the brand manager yourself. My plan is to physically take myself in that zone where people know I'm working for the industry and not just trying to feather my nest. I just want to see that the industry survives. If the industry survives, I will survive. When people see that open demonstration, we will make one or two steps forward.

Aside from your goals, what are the specific things you intend to do for AAAN in the face of Covid-19 global pandemic?

There are lots of things we have started doing already. We intend to collaborate with other allied associations like ADVAN, OLAN, MIPAN. Our destinies are tied to these allied associations. In fact, my first courtesy call after I was inaugurated was to one of these allied associations. All of those "solos" we used to run should be over. Let us all come to the table and have a seat at the table so we can discuss all the difficulties we are faced with. From there, we can proffer solutions. I know that we will overcome all these challenges. It is just to continue to foster unity and conversation.

Knowing that the industry has evolved for over some decades, how do you intend to reposition the industry during your tenure?

Do I look normal to you? (general laughter). In the history of the association, I am probably the first president to wear dreadlocks. Beyond even the physical attributes, we operate in a digital world and I understand how it works. Even though some people might think I am too old to be a digital person. We must be able to tap all the opportunities in digital real estate to help reposition the association and put it on a different pedestal for the world to see.

How would you assess the AAAN as a key and critical sectoral groups in the Nigerian Marketing

Communication industry?

Like they say on the street, AAAN is probably the most underrated industry in this country. I remember some IAA ad said "When advertising does its job, other people who have hired us can then do theirs". Imagine if there is no advertising in the world today, all of the big corporations that hire thousands of people would probably lay off staff because they have not been selling. Nothing to push the brand in the face of the public; not forgetting the fact that the advertising industry itself hires thousands of young people. It is a powerful association and I hope that the public and government will give us the kind of recognition we desire. What we do is behind the scene and I guess that is why it is not appreciated. We contribute a lot to the growth of the economy.

How do you and your team intend to midwife the association in the midst of the Covid-19 creative challenges?

Thank you so much for that question. My shout-out goes to the health workers who are on the frontline battling the pandemic. They are our heroes. But if you are looking for the next generation or frontier of heroes, I think it would be the advertising people because of the challenges that advertisers are facing. They have had clients whose entire supply chain is being cut off or disrupted. Our job happens behind the scene and we are not the loudest set of people. We have been helping our clients to keep their businesses. We are joined at the hips with our clients. We are fighting for our clients' survival because our survival depends on their survival. We are fighting every day and night, scheduling meetings, strategizing and helping to push communication to the market place.

So, it's been a challenging period for you as the President of the AAAN especially with the effect of Covid-19

Oh yes. Don't forget that with the way the economy distribution is done, advertising is at the bottom of the food chain. If the client is hemorrhaging, one is almost dead. So, we have had to work extra hard to support our clients at this critical time.

Would you say the new normal has had a positive or negative impact on the advertising



industry?

I would say both. It has positively affected us because it challenged us to think of new ways of doing some of the old things we normally do. But at the same time, it has negatively impacted so many agencies economically. It then goes down to, what we should do or what we should not do at this point. If clients are laying off staff, downsizing or rightsizing, the agencies would also be affected. We are excited about some of the things we are doing in a novel and different way.

What are the challenges faced by members of AAAN in this new normal?

We have seen that some clients have already started adjusting to this new normal. If the economy starts to go south, the first thing the client thinks of is reducing the communication budget. Once that happens, clients start telling agencies they can't pay retainership fees or start complaining about certain fees. At that point, agencies start to bleed.

How have creative agencies responded to new ways of doing things?

Before Covid-19 hit, the tendency is for the agencies to wait for the clients for brief of solving a marketing challenge. At the moment, we are all drown in the same ship. We know that what common sense dictates is that you should wait for any client to send you a brief before Covid-19. Agencies



are now scanning their environment for marketing challenges and finding creative solutions and pushing them actively and strongly to the clients.

How do you see the relationship of AAAN with other allied associations ADVAN, OoAN, MIPAN, etc.?

Nobody is an island. We need everybody on board, ADVAN, OoAN, MIPAN, BON, etc. Since I was elected, I have been scheduling meetings and conversations with stakeholders in the industry to help move the industry forward.

The Governing Council of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) is yet to be reconstituted five years after it was dissolved, any effort in the pipeline, as AAAN President to galvanize action in that direction?

This is one the key reasons I am here. Having an advertising industry without APCON is like a plane flying without a control tower. The government is putting an entire industry that hires thousands of people in jeopardy by the dissolution of the APCON board. I met with the Honourable Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed recently before the lockdown and we had discussion to that effect. He

promised to do everything possible to hasten the process of reconstituting the APCON board as soon as possible.

How would you describe the present administration's relationship with the advertising industry?

I think the government needs to pay more attention to this industry. Personally, I feel the government is doing a couple of things right even though it is vilified by many people. But how many of those things done right by the government are known to people? The advertising industry can help them to put those things they are doing to the world to see. The advertising industry can bring a lot of skills and professionalism to bear on what government is doing. I am using this medium to seek government cooperation and synergy on how we can work together. AAAN is here to support whatever government is doing.

A while ago, there was approval of a 50 billion Naira funding by the CBN for the advertising industry. Can you tell us how many members of AAAN have benefitted from this gesture?

Let me use this opportunity to thank to the government for making the funds available. Recently, we got a letter from APCON intimating us of the availability. I hope it

will be easy to access the funds because I have not seen anyone getting the fund. If we go granular on the fund, every agency is entitled to N25million at a time and in the scheme of things, it's like a drop in the ocean. I am hoping, like Oliver Twist, to ask for more. But I also think what we need may not necessarily be cash injection but tax breaks, incentives. The government can say for instance if certain agencies do not lay off staff, you get tax breaks for some years. Don't get me wrong, cash is good but other incentives would do a lot better.

Let's talk about the LAIF Awards. How would you assess the brand and the innovations around it over the years?

To all intents and purposes it is arguably the biggest advertising award in West Africa for the past 13 years. I had a privilege of being the chairman for three years and I have passed the baton on to a senior member, Mr. Lanre Adisa, CEO/CCO, Noah's Ark. He is passionate about creativity and awards. I expect to see changes because he has always had a tone of voice on how the award should go. I believe he will lead a revolution in that regard.

What is your take on Nigeria's creative industry's attitude to global advertising awards?

I just think that we need to fight more. Having said that, let's not forget about the politics of awards. Talking about awards, let's look at the case of the Oscars. It wasn't until we had a global campaign, #OscarSoWhite which spoke about the lack of diversity in the judging room of the awards that Blacks started winning the awards. I think the same kind of stuff needs to happen to Cannes Awards as well. When you have members of a jury that is predominantly of one race, even if you have the best work and you have people on the jury who do not understand the cultural nuances and socio-cultural context behind the work, you will find it difficult to convince them. I think Cannes should apply more diversity to the constitution of its jury.

As the president of AAAN, is there anything you are doing for that to happen?

I could write to the Cannes president about that as an opinion. I believe looking at the jury's diversity can go a long way in making the awards more competitive. ■

COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

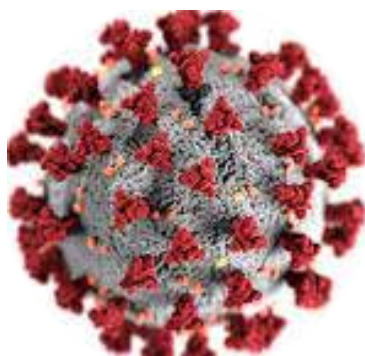
The Recharge of
CSR

By AMOS OLADELE

Historically speaking, this year is the 20th year of the third millennium; the 20th year of the 21st century; and the first year of the 2020s decade.

Interestingly, the United Nations declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health. The year was also designated as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife by the World Health Organisation, WHO. This latter (WHO) designation has left the whole world to wonder whether this was merely coincidental as year 2020 has turned out to be heavily defined by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to global social and economic disruptions which, in many climes, have resulted in a major economic recession.

Quite obviously, for the whole world, year 2020 has been unpredictably unusual! Ordinarily, the year was to mark the end of the second decade of the new millennium and hallmark the take-off of the third. And, on this count, companies, corporations, governments and even global bodies, as a build-up to the year, had geared up for reviews of extant decade(s) old projections, postulations and time-framed policies, programmes and actions. All these would have been with a view to making fresh projections and proposals for the future, in short, medium and long terms.



Paradoxically, however, the year was ushered in by, among other things, an ugly news from the Peoples Republic of China informing the World Health Organisation, WHO, about the cases of an unknown illness, on December 31, 2019! The so-called unknown illness, which crept in from Wuhan, a city in China, has since been named Corona Virus or COVID-19; it has snowballed into a global pandemic which has spread to hundreds of countries, affecting millions of people and resulting in over seven hundred thousand deaths across the world!

Among other things, since the innocuous advent of the game-changing and course-altering global phenomenon, the world has become disrupted and several new normals have emerged which humanity may have to live with for a long time to come.

Needless to say that Nigeria has not been left out of this situation. As it is across the globe, both life and business have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, it is not pessimistic to say that they will remain so (disrupted) for some time to come.

Interestingly, however, the sad saga, has brought out the humanity and brotherhood in people, both individuals and corporate. Among other things, the development has engendered a re-definition and re-direction of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, across our land – as it obtains across



the world.

It would be recalled that since **Howard Rothmann Bowen** (October 27, 1908 – December 22, 1989), an American economist, college president and author coined the expression **Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR** in 1953; the concept has grown to become a global phenomenon.

Over time, proactive CSR has become a market differentiator among competing brands; it has also become a platform for companies and organizations and their brands to express good corporate governance, best practices, ethical high standards or even environmental stewardship.

It would be recalled, too, that while Terence McKenna (November 16, 1946–April 3, 2000), American writer, philosopher, and ethno botanist was reported to have stated that **“Western civilization is a loaded gun pointed at the head of this planet”**; Edward O. Wilson, an American biologist, researcher, theorist, and author submitted that, **“The great challenge of the twenty-first century is to raise people everywhere to a decent standard of living while preserving as much of the rest of life as possible”**.

The above quoted statements, both of which have global relevance and universal applicability, are very pungent in their indication of the danger inherent in the way civilization, especially industrialization, has dealt with the planet on which we all live and in which industrial activities thrive.

The second of the two statements brings the issue nearer home by drawing attention to the current century and the very great challenge which the whole world faces in balancing improved standard of living with the preservation of life and of the planet. This, summarily speaking, is what has been globally christened Sustainability – exploring/exploiting the environment in a manner that sustains and preserves it for both the present and coming generations.

Over the years and across geographies, therefore, Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility have become twin sisters and key business priorities for companies/brands and their ways of doing business and creating values. Their approaches to Sustainability and CSR cover their entire value chain; and, in many cases their Sustainability and CSR agendas encompass initiatives and activities that have specific focus areas, with each focus area also having clearly set out milestones that signpost the companies' progress.

Globally, while some businesses and brands have done so much on CSR, especially in the last two decades, some others have done very little and many others nothing.

In Nigeria, in particular, several manifestly socially responsible corporate organizations parade very good track records of corporate social initiatives which dot the entire Nigerian landscape.

They have consistently and continuously identified and responded to major challenges confronting the nation through huge corporate social investments in various areas.

With COVID-19 pandemic, however, attention has been focused more and more social investments are made in the health sector of the country as has been the case all around the world this year and which is what it may be like, going forward.

For one, exceptionally proactive and forward-looking brands and companies/organizations have distinguished themselves by rising to the very challenging situation

created in this pandemic period; and are touching the consumers and the general public across all demographics and geographies in some novel ways.

In so doing, they have not only maintained a top-of-the-mind recall with consumers; but have brilliantly contributed into a future of consistently growing relationships with their consumers and an enhanced brand loyalty. Such brands have literally etched themselves in the minds of the customers due to their exceptional gestures and captivating CSR initiatives/efforts at this critical moment in history! Quite indisputably, the records of some of such brands and companies/organizations have been both stellar and uniquely exemplary in this regard. They are records that will speak for them even in generations to come.

Notably, as early as April, 2020, barely two months after the announcement of the first confirmed corona virus infection in Nigeria, the country had documented a long list of companies and individuals who were rising in support of the government at federal, state and local levels to fight the pandemic.

By that time, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, the sum of N25.8 billion had been donated by no fewer than 107 Nigerian companies and notable individuals, as relief funds to combat Coronavirus in the country. Amongst the biggest donors at the time, as CBN records showed, were the CBN itself and Alhaji Aliko Dangote, both of whom contributed N2 billion each, as well as Flood Relief Fund which donated N1.5 billion. Other notable companies and prominent billionaires also donated N1 billion each, including Mr. Tony Elumelu (UBA), Mr.&Mrs. Modupe & Folorunsho Alakija (Famfa Oil Ltd.), Alhaji Abdulsamad Rabi (BUA Sugar Refinery Ltd.), Mr. Segun Agbaje (Guaranty Trust Bank, Mr. Herbert Wigwe (Access Bank Plc), Dr. Oba Otedeko (FirstBank of Nig. Ltd.), Prince Femi Otedola (Amperion Power Distribution Ltd.), Dr. Mike Adenuga (Globacom), Mr. Jim Ovia (Zenith Bank), Mr. Raj Gupta (African Steel Mills Nig. Ltd.), Mr. John Coumantatous (Flour Mills of Nig. Plc), MTN Nigeria, and the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation, NDIC.

There have been more donations to governments since then; there are also countless unrecorded donations channeled directly to consumers and communities, especially the most vulnerable segments of

the Nigerian society by companies, brands and individuals.

In actual fact, to the credit of Nigeria and Nigerians, it has been widely reported that Nigerian private sector donated (and is still donating) more than most other African countries in the fight against COVID-19.

Exemplifying this development, Nigerian Breweries Plc, while highlighting to this magazine its contributions to fighting the pandemic stated, inter alia, “The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented. Our world as we know it has changed dramatically, and the level of disruption caused by the virus has affected virtually every aspect of our way of life, adding that “While the world comes to terms with the fact that things are never going to be the same again, businesses are bracing up for a difficult year ahead, balancing their corporate social responsibilities with the equally pressing needs of employees, partners and customers”; and that “As a company with a rich history since 1946, Nigerian Breweries Plc has a strong heritage of remaining committed to supporting the government and aspirations of Nigerians in line with our corporate philosophy of Winning with Nigeria. We remain committed to this philosophy and are confident that as Nigerians united and working together, we will defeat the coronavirus disease and pull through this challenging period successfully.

The company then disclosed that in view of the crisis situation presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, it focussed its response as a company on four core areas, to wit, Safeguarding the Health and Safety of its Employees; Educating and Exciting its Consumers; Supporting the Government; and Economic Continuity.

On its part, International Breweries Plc, a proud part of the Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABInBev), an American Belgian multinational drink and brewing company and the world's largest brewing conglomerate, submitted that its COVID-19 support efforts were “based on a collaborative approach of gathering insights from our communities and stakeholders so we can provide tailored interventions with the greatest impact”.

Again, The Coca-Cola Company was proud to disclose to MARKETING EDGE that through its philanthropic arm – The Coca-Cola Foundation, it has remained “at the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 in Africa, providing support to communities hard hit by the effects of the pandemic. Systematically deployed across populations, the company’s relief efforts are delivered through a range of strategic partnerships with reputable NGOs and implementing partners, equally committed to making a difference during these times”.

FirstBank, Nigeria’s premier bank, declared matter-of-factly that “Regardless of the impact of COVID-19, as a responsible corporate organization we remain committed to supporting all our stakeholders in the most sustainable manner possible. Our Bank has

been woven into the fabric of society for over 126 years, overcoming challenges and has remained a dominant player, partnering and supporting various sustainable activities towards the continued growth of our host communities and the nation at large”; adding that, “In these unprecedented times,

organisations have been supporting the government with hospital beds or isolation centres and mostly focused on the health sector and with the societal challenges caused by the pandemic we choose to intervene for the children”; and disclosed that “In partnership with government and other stakeholders in extending our attention to the immediate needs of the society, in the face of the widespread COVID-19, we put in place complementary efforts in education to support students and minimize the disruption to education resulting from closure of schools”.

In all of this, the brands, companies (several of which are spotlighted below) as well as governments and, in several cases, individuals across the world and in Nigeria, in particular, have lived up to the immortal statements, one from an unknown author,

that “Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations”; and the other from the immortal Martin Luther King, Jr., who was reputed to have said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy”. ■

In Nigeria, in particular, several manifestly socially responsible corporate organizations parade very good track records of corporate social initiatives which dot the entire Nigerian landscape.

They have consistently and continuously identified and responded to major challenges confronting the nation through huge corporate social investments in various areas.



How TVC hit 10 million viewers and listeners across platforms, says **Ronan Redmond**



Ronan Redmond is the Commercial Director, TVC Communications. He hails from Dublin City in Ireland with a background that has always been in international advertising and marketing. He has worked for a number of broadcasters, both TV and Radio, holding commercial portfolios with his role having always been about helping media companies to maximize their commercial revenues through selling advertising, sponsorships, promotions, etc and all other revenue opportunities. He also worked for some advertising agencies in London like MindShare, among others. He came to Lagos in 2017 to join the newly appointed CEO of the broadcast media organization, Andrew Hanlon to turn the organization around for good.

Since he joined TVC, Redmond has taken the TVC brands to the door steps of brand owners and major stakeholders in the competitive Nigerian marketing and advertising landscape, with resultant positive effects that reverberate through the industry and the larger society.

In an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE** team, led by the Publisher/CEO, JOHN AJAYI (with AMOS OLADELE and KASIM BAKARE), he spoke about up scaling developments in the company in the last three years and how the company is subduing the COVID-19 pandemic storm

Congratulations on the third anniversary of your increasingly famous programme, *Wake Up Nigeria*; how did the journey start?

That was our first major foray into home-produced programming. It was launched around July, 2017. It was a solution to what we saw as a major problem when we arrived at TVC Communications three years ago: We were not connecting with advertisers. Among the first job I undertook was to go to the advertising agencies and advertisers and re-engage with them because TVC hadn't done that in previous years and the message I was getting was loud and clear. They wanted a lot more than spot advertising. They wanted opportunities for product placements, brands and contents. They wanted their ambassadors to be able to sit on the couch and talk at length about products and services that were being pushed out at a time. We had experience in Europe of working on breakfast television. We saw it as hugely entertaining, attracting a large audience. We knew very well that it was a programme for advertisers and that it was capable of fulfilling the objectives of the advertisers and agencies. To that end, we set up "Wake Up Nigeria". Three years on, it has been a massive success particularly with FMCGs, who can now have their brand ambassadors on the programme. "Wake Up Nigeria" became a shop window for brand content.

TVC doesn't do anything on the spur of the moment. Can you reminisce on the efforts put into the take-off of "Wake Up Nigeria"?

You are absolutely right. We don't do anything on the spur of the moment. There is a strategy that goes behind everything that we do. When it comes to media and broadcasting, our strategy is very simple: All our efforts are aimed at maximizing our audiences because we know if we can maximize our audiences; that's what will attract the advertising, brands, contents and the likes. I will like to call it branding of entertainment because the content has to be entertaining, first and foremost, before we can attract the audiences in big numbers. So, whether it is radio or television, the content has to be entertaining. The content and branding have to be fresh; the presenters have to be engaging and on point on issues. If that is the case, and they do that consistently, the audiences will come. When the monthly research result comes out, we can take it to the advertisers and tell them that: Look at how our audiences have grown viz-a-viz our competitors. There is therefore no ground why you shouldn't divert some of your ad spend to us. It is a simple strategy but it is a strategy, nonetheless.

Can you give us more details about the growth trajectory of "Wake Up Nigeria" in the last three years?

Everything we do is driven by research. Our success or otherwise of our radio and television programmes usually depends on what the audience measurement is telling us on a monthly basis. We have worked very closely with the research companies in this market. We challenge them a lot. If we see figures that don't make sense to us, we go back and scrutinize them. In the early days, that led to an interesting dialogue but I think what has happened since is that the audience measurement companies have realized actually that TVC is one of the few media companies in Nigeria who put such faith in research and research numbers. This is because we believe if we don't have the research numbers, there is something wrong with our programmes. We believe if we have the research telling us our programmes are attractive to audiences, then we have the currency to sell to the advertisers and agencies. So, when I say that "Wake Up Nigeria" has been a huge success, I should follow that by saying we measure that internally by the fact that there is a million daily viewers in Lagos alone! That is not a number we plucked out of the air. That's what the research tells us on a monthly basis. So, TVC, the entertainment channel, of which Wake Up Nigeria, is the flagship breakfast show, is the No. 1 TV terrestrial channel in Lagos. That's what the research



tells us. That's not me giving you those numbers. Within that channel, programmes like Your View, Wake Up Nigeria, are the flagships. However, there are other instances where we might see a show not getting the audience we think it should get, once the research bails us out, we immediately swing into action and make positive changes on that show and see that there is a positive effect on the research, going forward.

What were the major challenges you faced in achieving the success you recorded with Wake Up Nigeria?

The major challenge I faced in TVC communications was a legacy challenge. The legacy challenge was that for many years, TVC prior to my arrival, had not been engaging with agencies and advertisers to the point that communication had broken down between both parties. That was the situation. The difficulty I would have had was that while the agencies and advertisers were incredibly and cordially receptive to me as an individual, they had a negative experience with Continental Broadcasting Service, CBS (as the company was then named), in the past (We hadn't launched TVC at that time). My biggest difficulty was having to go and present a strategy and saying: look, this is what we are going to do and they were saying, let's wait and see. Our message has been consistent. That is an important strategy we have adopted. We adopted it with our advertisers and staff. Everything we promised the staff we made sure we delivered on it. We tried to be consistent and transparent both internally and externally. But the difficulty, summarily speaking, is the time lag to convince people that what you told them you were going to do is what you are delivering.

What new heights are you taking the programme to?

We are fundamentally a commercial business. So, we are always analyzing, assessing how we can grow our revenue. We have had tremendous success in an unfortunately declining market in the last three years. Covid-19 and oil price fall put further pressure on our businesses. We have to ramp up efforts to find new revenue opportunities. The area we are going to focus all our resources in the next 18 months will be brand and content, advertising funds of programmes.

In the last three years, our efforts have been on rebuilding the channels, building the audiences and attracting back the advertisers. That has been successful. Now, we need to get into the space everybody is in now. Not the least, the likes of Big Brother Naija, etc, have seen massive success. We will be moving into areas where we see opportunities. Now that we have been here for three years and have had very close relationship with media agencies and advertisers, we will be going into areas they asked us to come into.

Consistently in the last couple of months, a lot of the major players in the market have been saying to us that they want a relationship with us around brand and content, brand of entertainment. For us to do that, we have to put a huge strategy and investment in place, put relevant individuals, skills set, etc. We will be going to market with the big brand and content in the next few months.

How has Covid-19 affected the company's projections for 2020?

There have been a number of negative impacts of the pandemic. The first is the oil price as a result of the trade war between Saudi Arabia and Russia. This affected the economy and ad spends. Then of course, in March, Covid-19 came in. It has impacted us in the sense that it created a lot of uncertainties. No one has the answers. No one knows what budget one is going to spend. We are a business that invests a lot into our business and we try to see what to do in the long term; all that has gone out of the window because we have become short

term in trying to manage our business on a week to week and month to month basis. How has it affected a company like TVC communications? We would have expected to be on the long term trajectory. We haven't finished as we still have a long way to go. Our expectations would be that we continue to grow our revenue year on year as we have done in the last three years. To do that sometimes, you need a market that's keeping you growing. Not a market giving you tail wind. Covid-19 has decimated that market. In many ways in 2020, we have had to re-engineer to stay in it. The next best thing is to make sure that we are not showing any decline year on year. We will manage to do that at the end of this year. In the context of Covid-19, that's a good result; but in the context of where we would like to be, it presents a challenge as we would have expected to grow our revenue this year as far as we did last year and even farther.

In practical terms, how has TVC coped with the challenges posed by Covid-19?

We have spoken a lot about business and commerce. We haven't spoken about the human angle of this business. TVC Communications remains a massive employer with about 500 staff. An awful lot of them are based in Lagos. We also have a big operation in Abuja at the moment. We are known for "First with Breaking News". Our audience ratings have continued to grow on the back of that. This means we would have camera crews and reporters in every state of the federation. We have staff everywhere. So, when something like Covid-19, which is like a once-in-a-generation health pandemic hits, your first concern is with your staff and their well-being. Initially, it starts with their health wellbeing. So we would have done everything we could do to alleviate the stress of the people who work with us. We helped them to manage their family situations as well. From the practical point of view, we encouraged about half of our staff to work from home during the lockdown. We are one of the few businesses that have remained open right through the pandemic. I have been coming to the office since March. We have a huge role to play in helping the government.

Coming back to the staff, most of them worked from home. Those that were needed to be on-site, we sent buses to convey them and drop them after work. We made a guarantee through the support of the owner and the board that we will lose no job. We have all taken a pay cut for a defined period of time. We have a staff representative body which has become a fantastic voice piece for the staff. All the staff equally understands that having a job is far more important than losing 20% of their salaries for a fixed period of six months. Again, it goes back to, how people receive the message. I have been working with the C.E.O for the past three years. If we say something, they know we will deliver on it. If we say we are not going to lose jobs, they know we will do everything we can to make that happen. Then, we brought in sanitary officers to clean and secure the premises. We also have health professionals to do testing for our staff.

Secondly, we then think about our audience. So, we make sure they get the news as it breaks. That is a huge risk for a news organization because you are asking camera crew to go to areas they are not supposed to be considering social distancing and all of that. Our staff have been exceptional in doing this.

Thirdly, our commercial partners like Airtel, Glo

etc, have done incredible CSR works. They have spent hundreds of millions in terms of donations to help the government efforts during the pandemic period. We have put our resources to partner with them. Through our news coverage and reporting, we have continued to articulate and give oxygen to what they are doing. It is really important to note that so many companies and individuals have put their shoulders to the wheel to get us through this pandemic.

Would you say that Covid-19 has imposed a new normal on your organization?

I think it's early to say that. I look at the news in Europe and I see everybody saying, it's going to be a new normal. We will spend the next couple of quarters to look at our businesses again. We will be looking at the industry and ask ourselves pertinent questions like: What changes do we need? How do we re-align ourselves? We have been on a journey for three years. How do we re-align and reshape ourselves for the next 3-5 years? That will be a huge body of work. The answers to these questions may not be available today. The media is dynamic and you need people working as a team. It is always team-based. Take for instance, Wake Up Nigeria, people see only two presenters but there is a team of twenty persons behind those two presenters. I always believe that teams work better when they are physically in close proximity. I know we have got a young team in the commercial department, they have got great comradeship. This notion that we can all work from home, I think an element of it is true. I believe it can work well in a more developed market. Even in such markets, there are still challenges of working from home.

In the developed market, you have good internet, good laptops and all of that. We don't have the best of that here. We do have the best of equipment on site. This means staff would have to come to the office to work. We will have to sit down with our media and advertising partners to know how Covid-19 has impacted their businesses. We have seen since 2016 that the advertising market has declined. We can't continue to operate in a declining market because ad spends keep declining. It didn't just start declining today. Covid-19 is just going to fast track that further decline in ad spend.

The media have been very supportive of government, in the fight against Covid-19; what has been TVC's contribution in this regard, particularly against the backdrop of the revelation that the media group in Nigeria spent around N5 billion in terms of space donation?

We are still dealing with the Covid-19 issue. Our obligation during this pandemic is focused on getting news out there objectively to the public. We take that incredibly serious. The stories and news we push out there are objective and up to the minute. Even today, we are all still scrambling for information. I am expecting the president to speak, to make some announcements tonight, or tomorrow about schools, flights and all of that. Our news people have a huge responsibility to the 3-4 million people who watch our news channels every day.

On our entertainment channels, we have seen our audience grow especially during the lockdown. People were at home and stressed. You might say this is a major concern. We would believe they were stressed and they tuned to television to watch entertainment for



Everything we do is driven by research. Our success or otherwise of our radio and television programmes usually depends on what the audience measurement is telling us on a monthly basis. We have worked very closely with the research companies in this market. We challenge them a lot. If we see figures that don't make sense to us, we go back and scrutinize them

some relief and that was why the audience on TVC Entertainment increased in March/April/May. That also happened globally as the viewing for terrestrial radio and television increased during the lockdown as people were going back to that form of viewing as well as streaming on the digital space.

The media, in general, have behaved credibly during this period and I hope we have proven to people the importance and role of media organizations in the society. I have worked in the media for decades and I am a firm believer in the role the media have to play in the society. During Covid-19, TVC Communications and some of our media partners have proved that there is still a major role for the media in the society.

Reflecting on all that, would you say there is more the media could have done?

I am not sure about that. I guess that you are referring to financial contribution. The problem with the media at the moment is that we are all operating in a declining market. The other observation is that it is an incredibly cluttered market. There are too many media outlets in this market and there is not enough money for us to go round. So, those of us who have the ability and resources try to be the best in our category because that is the only way we can guarantee getting the ad revenue. We have got a radio station Max FM, which is performing fantastically well in Lagos. It is in the top 5 but there are other 30 or more stations in Lagos alone and most of them are not making money. They can't be making money because there is not enough money to go round. I would argue that there are way too many media outlets for the amount of money available in this market. It is a false business model. If a media outlet is not making money, it does not have enough money to invest in or train the staff. All the money we have made in in TVC communications in the last three years does not go back to the owner, it goes straight back into the business to buy more equipment, improve what we have. All those media outlets don't have money to invest in the business, no money to train staff. The quality of staff available is poor. That has a cyclical effect. Poor staff breeds poor media. Then, the advertisers get frustrated and they don't spend and it becomes cyclical.

Where we could improve as a group is, we could suggest that they don't issue as many licenses as are issued. As a group, those of us, the biggest media owners need to stop looking at our own self-interest and come together and remind advertisers of the power of the media, power of television, radio and the role of a campaign. However, the problem is that, and it's not different from other markets, we are all very focused on our own business plan and that's what we worry about. It is a huge job for the media. The irony of the advertising business is that we spend our whole life convincing people to advertise their products and we are the world's worst when it comes to telling people about how we are and how good a job we can do. That's the irony of those of us that work in Africa.

Would you see mergers and acquisitions as a panacea to this problem?

One hundred per cent! It has to be. We have seen it in the media agency side of the business: Consolidation. The media agency business has been consolidating for the last couple of years because there is strength in numbers. That's on the media agency side. On the media owners' side, I agree with you absolutely.

You look at TVC Communication, for instance, 500 staff, well trained, fantastic expertise, great directors, and great vision. Look at what we could do to help

other media companies if we are in a position for mergers and acquisition. We will certainly welcome that. Again, a lot of people just have radio stations whether or not it makes money. They see the media as a vanity project. That is a false business model. To propel this industry, forward, you need fewer but better players doing things properly and that attracts more advertisers.

Talking about the media and their support for government during this Covid-19 pandemic period, how would you rate their performance against their counterparts globally?

To be honest with you, in all areas, I have been asked this question all the time. As a European, who has spent three years in Nigeria, are there differences? Yes, there are differences; but the essence of the business and business process remains the same world over. The challenges I face every day in Nigeria are the challenges I was facing in Europe. There is a real battle going on in Europe today between traditional media, broadcast media, terrestrial television and radio and the whole online digital space. We have seen so much advertising revenue going to Facebook, Google. There is a whole lot of argument around: can't we regulate Facebook, Google, etc, because they are taking our news content and putting it up for free and we are spending all the money? Those arguments are coming to this market as well. We are seeing the distrust of social media in this market.

Interestingly, in this market, terrestrial television and radio remain incredibly strong, much stronger than they are in Europe. The reason being the fact they are free and they attract big numbers of viewers and listeners. In our business, if you put a spot in Wake Up Nigeria, you could talk to a million people at once. You could do that cost-effectively and that has real value.

To come back to your question, there are always tensions between the media and advertising, the government, through the regulators like NBC, APCON, etc. We know there has to be regulation. Of course, we are an incredibly responsible organization. Not every organization is responsible though. When adverts come in here, we have got our team of copy viewers; they will view it before we air it. We are always proactive. We do need regulation but at the same time, those regulations have to be in cognizance of the environment we are working in, which at the moment is an incredibly challenging commercial environment.

Wake Up Nigeria is a fantastic show, with a million viewers. The reason we launched it was so that the Tolaram Group could put their Kellogg's boxes on display at the kitchen in the studio. The moment we do such for a length of time, Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, NBC will say, Stop, you can't do that. That's not encouraging. We are investing our money to keep 500 people on a job, to build a better product, grow revenue and ultimately the industry. Why are you stopping us doing that? Those challenges are in every market, they are here also. We just need a soft treatment sometimes from the regulators.

Can you give us an update on the re-branding, re-engineering and the re-organization that have been going on in TVC in the last three years?

The rebranding was a huge body of work. Just to remind ourselves, the first big job we did was on TVC Entertainment. New look, new shows. We spoke earlier about Wake Up Nigeria. In actual fact, now, we produce about ten hours of our own home-produced programmes on TVC Entertainment everyday as



Interestingly, in this market, terrestrial television and radio remain incredibly strong, much stronger than they are in Europe. The reason being the fact they are free and they attract big numbers of viewers and listeners.

against just 2 hours everyday, three years ago. This gives us control over what we can do for the advertisers.

The next big job we did was on Radio Continental. The problem with it then was that they had just 250,000 listeners. When I was talking to the ad agencies as to why they were spending their money on other stations back, then. Their response was that Radio Continental was not in the top 5 radio stations. Our strategy was that if we could have a music station targeting a young audience, it will attract more listeners. We closed down Radio Continental and opened Max FM the following day. Max FM is currently in the top 5 with nearly 2 million listeners. A year and half ago, we launched Max FM in Abuja with 400,000 listeners and it is currently No. 7 Radio station in the FCT. Remember that Radio is the most popular medium across Africa.

The final and biggest job we faced was the rebranding and re-launch of TVC News. The reason for this was that we had a huge legacy and investment on TVC News. We made the rebranding to coincide with the launch of TVC News for the general elections in 2019. The other reason was that we wanted to be ahead of our major competitors in news reporting. We had to come to our viewers with a point of difference which was "First with Breaking News". We had to have a new look that is comparable to the best international standard. The final umbrella brand was to be unveiled: Everyone knew us as either TVC or CBS, etc. TVC seems to patrilineal. So, we just rebranded as TVC Communications which now is the umbrella body for all the channels.

We are both glad and proud that our efforts are paying off because the company is doing exceptionally well in terms of audience reach. We now have over 10 million viewers and listeners staying tuned daily across all our brand portfolio in Nigeria, including TVC, TVC News, Max FM Lagos, Max FM Abuja, and Adaba FM, thus making us one of the largest media companies in this country.

TVC News, our 24-hour television news channel, now has over 3 million viewers per day on all digital platforms, including DSTV, Startimes, and GOTV; TVC, our pure entertainment channel is now the No.1 channel in Lagos with over 4 million viewers every day across terrestrial and digital channels (GOTV, Startimes, and Play TV); our radio arm MAX FM Lagos (Hit Music for Lagos) and Max FM Abuja (Hit Music for Abuja) now boast of 2 million combined listeners daily; while Adaba FM, our radio station in Akure still maintains its number one spot as it boasts over 800,000 daily listeners.

What are the company's projections for the future?

We had a 3-year plan and we have delivered on it. However, there is still a long way to go. Now that we have laid the foundation of the business, there is still a lot to be done in terms of improving the channels, driving the revenue, moving into new areas. Whenever anyone talks about the media in Nigeria, they usually talk about Nollywood, music, media and entertainment. They don't talk about advertising. It is a small component part, so when PWC looks at forecasts they would say, Oh the Nigerian market is the second largest market after South Africa. The media and entertainment market is worth billions of dollars, they talk about music, gaming and digital. That's a whole space that TVC Communications would love to look at and position ourselves to get into that space. Unfortunately, the ad sales and ad spot revenue is just too small and declining to rely on. We are on that journey. When you mention TVC to someone three years ago, what will be on the person's mind was TVC News. They saw us as a News

Channel. What we have consistently done in the past three years is that we are turning it to a media and entertainment business, not just a channel. We have a news channel and it's an important part. We want to become the biggest media and entertainment business in Nigeria in the years ahead. That will be the goal we will set for ourselves but that will involve us getting into lots of different entertainment areas that we are currently exploring. We have to lay the foundation and we have done that in the last three years.

For you as a person, professionally, managerially and entrepreneurially, how has it been working in this market?

On reflection, there are a number of things I would like to say. I have been consistent with this. I'm Irish and definitely not English. For the first year, I had to say this to everybody. And immediately, I got a more warm welcome. The Irish and the Nigerian share a lot in common. Irish are gregarious. They love meeting people. They love doing deals. Irish do their businesses face to face. For me, our (Nigerian and Irish) personalities are compatible.

Nonetheless, it's been a challenging market. I come from Europe which has been in recession since 2008. They are also challenging markets. I have lived in South Africa for some time. I have been buoyed over by the entrepreneurial spirit of the people here. I have never experienced it in Europe neither have I experienced it in South Africa. This is one of the big differences and I see it every day on the streets and on my way to work and even with my staff. I am not sure there is anywhere in the world I want to be than Lagos, Nigeria.

Lastly, looking at the advertising agencies in view of the developments around brand building, the brand owner's perception, how do you see the declining fortunes of the agencies viz-a-viz the future of the media business?

It's a real worry for me. As media owners, we rely hugely on the media agencies. The problem is, with declining ad spends, they don't have enough money to invest back into their businesses. They don't have the requisite skills set whether on planning, investment on planning tools, research tools, collection tools, etc. And if they don't have that, you then ask, what is their purpose? If I am a brand advertiser, my agency is supposedly the expert. They are advising me on how best to spend and they are doing the analysis to make sure that money has been spent wisely, that it has hit the right numbers of people, turned into actual sales on my behalf. Truth, however, is that there are only a handful of them that can do that. Most of those agencies are now aligned to international groups. That's the way it has gone around the world. The media agency model is challenged in every market. It is challenged because a lot of the big consulting firms like PWC, have identified this as an area they could move into and they could instead go to the advertiser and say, look, we are in the best position to do a robust analysis on how your investment is being managed. They have all the tools, the expertise to do that. Once they start moving into that area, the media agency starts losing its point of difference. That's why you find media agencies moving into creative areas, getting involved in production, etc. I would really worry about media agencies in this market.

Again, it goes back to us not telling the advertisers what we can do. If we are not in a position to stand in front of the advertisers and tell them what we can do for them, I am not sure what the role would be, maybe managing budget. Eventually, the big advertisers can decide to do that in-house. ■



The final and biggest job we faced was the rebranding and re-launch of TVC News. The reason for this was that we had a huge legacy and investment on TVC News.



Communications braves the odds against COVID-19

... Retains all jobs across the company to protect everyone's livelihood



TVC Communications, a leading media and entertainment group in Nigeria has recorded tremendous progress in line with its adjusted plans for the year 2020 which is in response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

Significantly, the Covid-19 virus meant the company needed to protect the health and safety of all its staff in Lagos, Abuja, Ondo and across the Federation by introducing special measures designed at safeguarding everyone from contracting the disease.

The company has gone to great lengths to protect everyone by introducing a company-wide Covid-19 Policy which included the following:

- Retain all jobs across the company to protect everyone's livelihood.
- Temperature checks on the main gates
- Hand sanitizing dispensers in all main areas
- Hand gloves and masks for all staff.
- Enforcing social distancing across the company for staff and guests.
- The introduction of Covid-19 Marshalls to enforce social distancing.
- Staff working from home wherever possible.
- New rosters to minimize the numbers of staff on ground.
- New travel and transport arrangements for all.
- Palliative food assistance.
- Temporary closure of the creche to minimize risk to children.
- The retention of free lunches every month to ease the burden on all.

In so doing, the company has demonstrated that the wellbeing and safety of its staff is its number 1 priority, whilst at the same time, it is carefully managing the business to ensure it exits the crisis fitter, and better than before.



STILL A GREAT PLACE TO WORK DESPITE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The last few months have been extremely challenging for many businesses around the world considering the outbreak of the novel COVID-19 Virus resulting in a Global pandemic. As a result of this strain, organizations were faced with tough decisions leaving them with a myriad of options.

TVC Communications however, decided to put its PEOPLE first and this was evident with specific steps and activities put in place by the company and led by the People Culture Experience & Operations Department as well as the Corporate Communications & PR Department in line with its journey to becoming a Great Place to Work. They include:

- A Rota System was introduced which ensured that staff were able to work with a staggered work pattern (different days in the office vs work from home remotely). This approach was explored predominantly to guarantee that company had a reduced number of persons within the premises at every given time which was in line with the social distancing campaign.
- A Covid-19 policy was designed and in turn implemented specifically for the organization which captured preventive measures put forth by the NCDC.
- COVID Marshalls were appointed with a concise brief of ensuring that staff adhered strictly to laid out guidelines/ preventive measures contained in the policy. These Marshalls were handpicked from different teams to ensure proper representation across board.
- Online trainings were deployed to all staff which were specially curated



and sourced for the different business units. This was targeted at ensuring opportunities for learning and development continued, despite the pandemic and absence of physical trainings.

- Members of the PCEO team were assigned to groups of staff with the sole responsibility of checking up constantly on their welfare and that of their families via phone calls and messages. This particular action helped reiterate the company's commitment to our People especially at these unprecedented times.
- Weekly messages were sent to staff and also displayed on the company's communication screens around the premises detailing the Covid-19 preventive measures to further reiterate the importance of adherence and how to preserve the safety of both people and the company.
- Welfare Packages (food stuffs) were distributed to all staff to ease the burden & inconvenience of the lockdown which was necessitated by the pandemic.

Overall, TVC Communications has been deliberate and thoughtful about continuous engagement with all employees during this period, to reassure & remind employees that they remain the topmost priority of the business.

No doubt, these actions boosted employee morale and, in turn, maintained efficiency.



Niger Bridge Light-Up is a historic landmark, say Wasiu Ola Abiola & Omotunde Adenusi

Poised to make a lasting impression on the minds of the Eastern Nigerians and indeed the Nigerian populace, the Nigerian Breweries Plc's Life beer brand recently invested huge amount of money in lighting up the bridge that connects the Eastern part of Nigeria with the South-West. It is an epochal give back to the land of origin by the popular premium beer brand.

In a Media chat with MARKETING EDGE, the duo of Messers Wasiu Ola Abiola, Head, Media, Digital, Brand PR & Sponsorship and Omotunde Adenusi, Port-Folio Manager, Mainstream Lager Brands spoke on the initiative. Excerpts:



Wasiu Ola Abiola,

How will you describe the project initiative by NB PLC's Life Beer to light up the Niger Bridge?

The Niger Bridge light-up is a historic landmark event not only for Nigerian Breweries Plc but also importantly for the people

of the South East of Nigeria because of our long-standing history.

This project embodies the progressive spirit of the (Igbo) people; especially in the present trying times, it offers a beacon of hope and resilience and encouraging the people to live and Enjoy Life Responsibly because **AS LONG AS THERE IS LIFE, THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL (NDUKA).**

What informed this project initiative?

Life Continental lager beer has always had a long-standing heritage of progress. Over the years the brand has launched various initiatives that embody and inspire progress through its communication and notable initiatives that discover and support entrepreneurs and creative talents.

On May 1, 2020, Life Continental relaunched with an exciting new packaging design that reflects its progressive traits and prominently displays its long standing iconic brand identifier; the Niger Bridge, a bridge we term the 'Bridge of Progress' because it represents the progressive journey of optimism and assurance of hope for a better life.

As a climax to the relaunch activities, Life Continental delivers a first of its kind beautification of an iconic landmark in Nigeria, breathing new life and aura to the iconic bridge – by illuminating it in a symbolic gesture that enlivens this famous gateway entry into Eastern Nigeria and the lifeline of trade and commerce for the region

How long did it take to achieve this?

The project spanned a period of almost two years, and we are quite pleased with the dedication of our outdoor partner agency, New Crystal Communications in helping to actualize this transformation of the iconic Niger Bridge with beautiful neon lights.

The bridge has been displaying our brand (LIFE lager beer) message since 2012, we decided to do something more befitting with the bridge, with the magnificent lighting, that was commissioned on August 1, 2020.

Was this borne out of desire to take brand war to the door step of competitors or a deliberate CSR initiative aimed at



identifying with the people?

Life Continental Lager Beer was first brewed in Onitsha, Anambra State in 1981, and the brand has since then grown from just a regional beer brand to becoming the biggest beer brand in the country.

In view of this, the brand has always shared a very strong connection with the people of South-Eastern Nigeria, owing to its message of progress, a key narrative that the brand pioneers, and now with this project we are reigniting the progressive spirit of the Easterners, whilst strengthening the connection with our roots.

Furthermore, with this feat, we have gone beyond elevating the brand's key identifier to an iconic landmark but have breathed new life to this historic monument that serves as a testament to the progressive spirit of our people. What better way to identify and say thank you to the people that have made the brand No. 1 brand in Nigeria.

What is the significance of this effort?

With the Lighting of the Niger Bridge, we want to pass across a strong message of resilience, progress and togetherness. It is a tribute to the long-standing show of love from one kinsman to another and we hope this message resonates with everyone and inspires them to keep living right in their pursuits of progress.

What do you intend to achieve with this?

While more bridges will be built, more



Omotunde Adenusi

routes to connect the cities in the East, and even more means of transportation may arise. But none will be as iconic as our historic Niger Bridge - Our Bridge of Progress.

For many, this bridge symbolizes the start of something new and its long tradition of progress will withstand the times; so the project represents preserving this historical monument that has created an easier way for its citizens to move around, but more importantly for the Igbos, it is a symbol of trade, access to greener pastures and bears so many tales for many different people.

As a project which directly falls within your purview, how do you feel with the completion of this project?

I am highly elated and honoured to be part of the team that conceived this project and also led it to conclusion.

With this achievement we have brought something different to our landscape and the brilliance of the lights serves as a message of our strength and adaptability especially in these times, because life is progressive.

As you know, MEDIA is anywhere consumers can be reached with our brand's communication messages. I can modestly refer to this as the greatest media platform I have been involved in its creation in my over 20 years of advertising media management, both on the agency and client sides.

What impact and brand equity would this project have on Life Beer?

With this ground breaking transformation, we hope to offer a distinctive point of differentiation and build a stronger emotional bond with our core consumers.

The lights on the Niger bridge carries the message - "Enjoy Life Responsibly" which is a call back to the message of self-preservation, a message that could not have been more relevant in times when not just our livelihood but our lives are being threatened. It is imperative that we treat life as the precious gift (NDU KA) while pushing forward in our resilient pursuits.



How **Eat'N'Go** is using innovation and employee management to become the #1 QSR company in Nigeria

– Patrick McMichael, *Eat'N'Go CEO*



Eat'N'Go is the master franchisee for Domino's Pizza, Cold Stone Creamery and Pinkberry Gourmet frozen yoghurt. Headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, the company is dedicated to bringing the best F&B brands to Africa. Since it entered the Nigerian market in 2012, the restaurant group has grown massively across Nigeria. In an exclusive interaction, Patrick McMichael, the CEO of Eat'N'Go speaks on the highlights of the company's growth in 2020 and its future projections.

Around the world, the pandemic disrupted the operations of many organisations and birthed a 'new normal'. What changed for you at Eat'N'Go?

When the COVID-19 pandemic erupted and as we could see the spread of the virus, we brought together our internal Crisis Committee, which now meets daily at the beginning of each day to monitor the impact of the virus and plan actions we need to take to deal with the spread as it pertains to our business operations. Our first point of action was "team and customer safety".

we found an APP to use to monitor and report all our store team members' temperatures daily. We mandated the wearing of face masks, and gloves for all team members. Our dine-in services closed in early March as the Government enforced these processes on businesses.

We then urged our customers to opt for delivery, to ensure their safety and our staff members. We started our Zero Contact delivery services across all our stores, while continuing to drive our 25 minute delivery guarantee. We also partnered with Jumia and a 3rd party delivery company to deliver Ice Cream and Yoghurt from our Cold Stone and Pinkberry business across the country.

Recently, we started Curb-side delivery in our Domino's business; which is a way to drive more safety of our customers so they can stay in the comfort of their cars while we deliver to them in the parking spot, thus reducing their exposure to risk of the virus.

In June, we received a visit from the Lagos State health Department DG to inspect our stores in readiness for the reopening of dine-in services, and we received positive recommendations and a provisional approval to open our stores for dine-in once the State is ready.

The pandemic has forced several companies to adopt the use of technology like never before; what have you done differently at Eat'N'Go?

Being a technologically inclined brand, we pride ourselves in the use of technology to drive growth. We will always continue to invest in the digital side of our business. Over the years, we have invested massively in different forms of innovative technology to offer the best value to our customers whilst also easing our own operations.

We developed a mobile app where our customers can place their orders from the comfort of their homes and have delivered to them in 25 minutes guaranteed! We are also a digitally driven company, driving communication via various technological platforms to grow sales and able to effectively communicate with customers using our newly built data warehouse and customer relationship management platform. We recently partnered with Jumia, allowing us to serve more customers through online sales.

We also leverage technology to its maximum capacity to run our operations in store through our POS systems. Our new e-learning platform to equip our members of staff and keep upgrading our team to provide them with best-in-class learnings to better serve our customers.

Your expansion rate is really commendable, how are you achieving this?

For us, success is always our target and this is evident in ENG's 2020 theme – 'Relentless'. We believe success is never owned, it is rented, and the rent is due every day. This belief pushes us to be hungry to be better at all we do, and it is bedrock off our being ahead of our game.

Having evolved from a one-store restaurant chain in 2012 to 110 stores in 2020 is a huge accomplishment for us. Our Ice cream and Pizza brand just reached a 50th store milestone last week, after we opened the Badore outlet and we hope to launch more stores before the end of the year.

Also, at Eat'N'Go, we own all our outlets and operate them with our staff that we put a lot of time

The pandemic has only shown us that we need to do more. For us at Eat'N'Go we will continue to strive towards upholding our word. Being a company that has benefitted from the environment in which we exist, we will continue to intensify our effort to give back to the society. A key achievement for us in the year 2020 is our continued dedication to supporting our partners Slum2School despite how much our revenue was hit as a result of the pandemic. We are currently in partnership with Slum2School, intending to raise 60 million naira in 2020, which will be used to send one thousand, two hundred Nigerian Kids to school.

into training to best serve our customers. We train all our staff in all regions of the country to maintain the consistency in the quality of our products. For Domino's Pizza, Cold Stone Creamery and Pinkberry Gourmet Frozen Yoghurt, the quality of product and standard of customer relations is equal in all our outlets across the nation. This consistency is part of why our consumers keep coming back to us and we are super grateful for their patronage.

While we focus on our business, our people are also very key to us. We focus on safety for our team and our customers. We have developed a lot of policy around safety in our business to protect everyone from the virus for example. Our strength is in our people, we focus on people, food and value to develop the best of products and flavors. Finally, we focus on the most innovative technology to deliver our products to our customers.

Let's talk CSR, will the pandemic affect your existing commitments?

The pandemic has only shown us that we need to do more. For us at Eat'N'Go we will continue to strive towards upholding our word. Being a company that has benefitted from the environment in which we exist, we will continue to intensify our effort to give back to the society. A key achievement for us in the year 2020 is our continued dedication to supporting our partners Slum2School despite how much our revenue was hit as a result of the pandemic. We are currently in partnership with Slum2School, intending to raise 60 million naira in 2020, which will be used to send one thousand, two hundred Nigerian Kids to school. We are also pleased about our continued support to the frontline emergency workers throughout the pandemic, whom we have so far provided with 13,000 slices of pizza, 12,000 cups of ice cream, and 2,000 cups of frozen yogurt which worth over N35Million.

Now that the government is beginning to ease the regulation on the lockdown, what should we expect from you?

As always, we will continue to add taste and fun to our customers' choice. We will be launching some exciting flavors across all our three brands and be bringing our brands closer to our consumers through opening of new stores in new locations or other various ways of bringing our products to our consumer, for example our Street Pizza project, where we take the pizza to the consumers on the street while they are busy at work or with life and they are unable to come to the store.

We are also looking at re-opening dine-in services as soon as we can. Worthy of mention, we welcomed a visit from the Lagos State Health Department DG, in June to inspect our stores in readiness for the reopening of dine-in services, and we received positive recommendations and a provisional approval to open our stores for dine-in once the State is ready.

Despite the happenings in 2020, we are proud of our consistent growth and expansion. We are thankful to every member of our staff, customers, and stakeholders who continue to believe in us and trust us enough to add fun and tasty food to your menu. ■

COVID-19: Agencies must unlock new grounds to stay competitive

— Austin Efienamokwu

Mr. Austin Efienamokwu is the CEO of Universal McCann Nigeria, established in Nigeria in 2000 as a strategic media planning and buying agency that leverages Better Science to create Better Art that drives Better Outcomes for its clients. He spoke with ANIETIE UDOH on how the Coronavirus pandemic has impacted media agencies and gave very robust insight about his own agency

To what extent would you say COVID-19 has impacted on media agencies in Nigeria?

2020 is really a nightmarish fiscal year for the industry largely due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. We are witnessing budget cuts from clients due to the pandemic and the lockdowns that followed; disruptions to supply chain; goods and services became expensive and most clients looked inwards to see what to be rationalized in the marketing OPEX. Media budgets stood out and was the most hit by the rationalizations particularly OOH without corresponding review of media KPIs.

Agencies have to come up with ingenious ways to maximize every buck of spend by delivering high discounts, extra value and furloughing salaries, etc.

Also, we should expect to see the rise of Client procurement led media negotiations and increased demands for discounts from clients; thereby leading agencies to reinvent themselves towards unlocking new grounds to stay competitive.

However, the palliatives and reforms that are being announced by the Government may reduce the probability of the economy sliding into a deep recession or quicken recovery once the incidence rate of the pandemic begins to drop and the economy is fully re-opened

What are the challenges facing media agencies in Nigeria?

Insufficient and quality data is a bane in the industry. Data collation methodology remains challenge in the Nigerian advertising space and this has created a lot of questions when developing marketing strategies. The most robust data sets available in the industry are still being tracked manually which has created difficulty in ensuring real-time campaign optimization.

Lack of innovation is another challenged faced in the industry, our agency Network has been driving the frontier of innovations to unlock transformational

business values to our clients and stakeholders in Nigeria and Africa. Being part of a global network gives us a massive innovation advantage to drive business result for our clients. Our winning 5 awards at the recently concluded Pitcher awards is a clear attestation to our commitment to innovative media strategy and execution. A brilliant case in point is our works on Jumia Black Friday and campaign Western Union which won Gold in the 'Integrated Campaign category and Silver in the 'Innovation Category (Novel & Devices) for our in digital tech works and programmatic.

Additionally, Clients have gone past the days of stereotypic media planning, to an era where consumers mindset is taken into consideration in effectively delivering

media, that then begins to address business challenges.

The optics of positioning media agencies in the last stages of IMC is also a challenge agencies need to overcome. A lot of the media agencies are still comfortable with taking an existing creative idea or platform from a creative agency and activating this across media (traditional media planning approach)

Media agencies need to have a media first thinking mentality with a clear understanding of the consumer media consumption ecosystem when engaging clients and strive for the best possible outcome in terms of idea development, creativity with innovation at the core of the ideation process.

Business challenges are what clients are increasingly asking us to solve, not just media challenges.

Why do you think advertisers are gradually moving away from traditional media to new media in reaching consumers?

Clients are constantly demanding return



on investment through measured media and Realtime results. In the digital economy, Mass media (largely unquantified media) will decline dramatically from next year. In order to survive, media planning will need to become more measured / addressable. Access points to content are expanding via mobile, online content portals, Facebook, Google etc. You'll look for the best content and the likelihood of that being online is 60-80%. Remember, consumers are following content and not channels! and the growing internet penetration is an attestation to what to expect in the future.

Tell us about Universal McCann (UM)

A global media network within the IPG Mediabrands family, UM operates in over 100 countries, with 4,800 people innovating on a roster of powerful brands.

Established in Nigeria in 2000 as a strategic media planning and buying agency that leverages Better Science to create Better Art that drives Better Outcomes for our clients. As architects of the media experience, we strive for Better because simply being "different" is not enough. Perhaps I should elucidate on this a little further:

Better Science: Data is at the center of everything we do. UM's proprietary Business Analytics Engine (BAE) ingests data from the Audience Management Platform (AMP), our end-to-end data stack built on Acxiom, as well as other custom data sources and uses advanced analytics to identify the High Value Audiences that will grow our clients' businesses as well as the relationship between media, marketing and results. The BAE is embedded into our planning teams to ensure innovative, real-time data solutions are at the heart of our approach.

Better Art: Better Art is about using insight and empathy to create a real human connection between a brand and its customers. It's about identifying the moments that matter — moments when customers are most receptive to hearing what we have to say. Our creative content unit focuses on the co-creation of content to bring brand ideas to their fullest expression across media plans. Using our Addressable Content Engine (ACE), UM's custom content specialists at UM work within planning teams to optimize content at scale.

Better Outcomes: Every action we take is in service of driving business results for our clients. Our unique approach optimizes the entire media mix before and during the campaign against key business outcomes such as sales, market share and brand metrics. Our top-to-bottom, integrated tools enable us to optimize campaigns against audiences, channels, content and partners on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. This approach ensures that we are taking every opportunity to make our media plan work Better.

We embrace media touchpoints to build

powerful connections between brands & people at speed & scale.

UM operates in more than 100 countries worldwide, using industry leading and proprietary tools, data and analytics to power our innovative approach to planning, investment and custom content creation. The result is an audience-first approach that discovers, defines and disseminates the moments that matter in media, fostering meaningful, authentic connections between brands and audiences.

What are your company's core values?

Curiosity: The innovations of tomorrow are born out of the curious minds of today. At UM we are relentlessly curious about the evolving media landscape, our clients, and their consumers as we continue to find new, exciting ways to reach audiences in the moments that matter most.

Courage: Fortune favors the bold, which is why UM takes a courageous approach to media. We believe in taking calculated risks, supported by data, because to be the leading media agency is to shape the emerging trends that become the new standard.

Commitment: Our commitment to being better is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to each other and our clients, a UM guarantee that we will seek every opportunity to bring the most to our brands and their audiences.

Candor: At UM we never shy away from an honest conversation because we believe that the best outcomes are forged in open and constructive communication. We will always speak truthfully — to our clients and to each other — in pursuit of the better outcomes for our clients.

Caring: We care about being a diverse agency that celebrates a spectrum of viewpoints and opinions and makes each member of the UM team feel valued and respected. Our Diversity & Belonging initiatives have set industry standards, making UM an open, inclusive and dynamic agency where our individual employees can not only flourish, but feel like part of the UM family.

Community: Our active involvement in the global community is something we pride ourselves on at UM. In order to be a voice in the community, UM takes an active role in improving our communities across the globe. Through Better World, our globally integrated community platform, UM can think globally so our teams can act locally within their communities.

As a result of our commitment to a better corporate culture and Diversity and Belonging, UM has celebrated back-to-back spots on Ad Age's highly coveted Best Places to Work list in 2019 and 2020.

How is your agency different

from other media agencies?

UM is a strategic media agency committed to proving that media is a topline growth driver as much as an efficiency play. We believe that better science and better art deliver better outcomes for our clients. We deliver science through the transformational power of business analytics and real-time data intelligence. We deliver art through creating moments that matter in media to deliver momentum for brands.

We add real business value and accelerate growth to deliver bottom line results for clients like no other media agencies in this region.

What is your company's competitive edge in the media planning & buying business?

Our agency's competitive advantage is simply our superior (bespoke) single sourced data system called Moments tool which houses rich insights on media behaviour, lifestyle, values and attitudes which are essential elements for better understanding of the consumers, thus enhancing our consumer centric approach to media. For instance, we now not only know what our consumers are watching, but how they are watching, and why — enabling us to spend where the eyeballs are and when it will have the most impact.

We also attract people from diverse backgrounds. We believe this is essential in nurturing a culture of innovation. We offer an agile environment that works around client's different needs and allows everyone to reach their potential.

We offer data solutions that take clients from marketing to people we don't know, to people we do know through our proprietary data systems. We build unique consumer segments to scale big ideas and nurture one-on-one relationships to connect to people's behaviors and passions.

Our agency's core competences that give us an edge in the industry lies also in our communication strategy and planning, consumer insight, media buying, global media partnerships, branded content and product placement, content development, digital media, search engine optimization, online marketing, social media management, sponsorship, data management, direct marketing.

As our world becomes increasingly delineated, we see new possibilities in how data, media and technology can be blended together to build innovation and effective brand communications. Using our unique network operating model, we build integrated, scalable solutions for our clients.

Who are your clients (past and present)?

We are proud to work with some of the top multinational clients; Jumia, American Express, Johnson & Johnson, The Hershey Company, Levi Strauss & Co., Energizer, Sony, Western Union, South African Tourism, ExxonMobil, Wazobet and more recently Emirates Airline. ■

FirstBank: CSR Interventions in COVID-19 Pandemic



At FirstBank, we are committed to driving sustainable social, economic and environmental transformation. Our corporate responsibility and sustainability framework is anchored on three strategic pillars namely: Education & Health; Financial Inclusion/Literacy; and Responsible Lending & Procurement.

Our engagement in sustainable business practices is based on our commitment to enhancing economic development thereby ensuring economic stability for the present and future generation. We also place great emphasis on human capacity building with a supportive talent management framework which has informed the various initiatives in the areas of Education.

Furthermore, our recognition of the environmental and social impacts of our operations has made us adopt policies and procedures that minimise negative environmental and social impacts. We therefore put in place an Environmental, Social, and Governance Management System (ESGMS) to help the Bank integrate environmental social and governance considerations into its decision making processes. We pay attention to our host communities by engaging in community support initiatives to enhance a long term mutually beneficial relationship.

Corporate responsibility and sustainability approach

Our commitment to nation building largely informs our approach to corporate responsibility and sustainability (CR&S) which is

three-pronged: citizenship, stakeholder management and impact management. Citizenship and stakeholder management involve considering the needs of stakeholders when making decisions; while impact management is about minimising our negative impacts and increasing our positive inclusive impacts on society. It is about creating long-term stakeholder value by adopting the opportunities and managing the associated environmental, social and governance risks. The CR&S approach is contained in the Group's corporate responsibility policy. The policy clearly outlines our commitments and approach to corporate responsibility, as well as the Group's CR&S governance framework. The policy's scope and respective guidelines apply to operations and activities throughout the Group, including the subsidiaries in all locations, stakeholders and associated partners representing the Group.

The CR&S approach is designed to deliver value in a structured way along four key areas within the subsidiaries of FBN Holdings: driving sustainable finance and investments; empowering people; supporting our communities; and contributing to environmental sustainability

Regardless of the impact of COVID-19, as a responsible corporate organization we remain committed to supporting all our stakeholders in the most sustainable manner possible. Our Bank has been woven into the fabric of society for over 126 years, overcoming challenges and has remained a dominant player, partnering and supporting various sustainable activities towards the continued growth of our host communities and the nation at large.

In these unprecedented times, organisations have been supporting the government with hospital beds or isolation centres and mostly focused on the health sector and with the societal challenges caused by the pandemic we choose to intervene for the children.

In partnership with government and other stakeholders in extending our attention to the immediate needs of the society, in the face of the widespread COVID-19, we put in place complementary efforts in education to support students and minimise the disruption to education resulting from schools' closure.

As you are aware, many parents are concerned about our children whose education have been truncated by the current crisis and are particularly worried about keeping children idle at home as all schools from primary through to tertiary institutions are closed across the nation. We therefore proffered a solution to the urgent national need to ensure that our children are not disadvantaged, but are kept engaged and safe.

Education remains the bedrock of any society and we believe that when we educate our children we enable our nation and produce global citizens who provide ground breaking solutions for



R-L: Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Lagos State Governor being presented with the Roducate e-learning device by Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, CEO, FirstBank to kick off the distribution of the preloaded Roducate e-learning devices to schoolchildren across the state in furtherance to the Bank's drive to move 1 million students to e-learning.



His Excellency, Umar Usman Kadafur, Deputy Governor, Borno state receiving the medical equipment from Hajjiya Fatimeh A Jarma, Business Development Manager (Borno), FirstBank on behalf of CACOVID-19 to the Borno state Government towards the support to fight against COVID-19 in Maiduguri, Borno state.

the continent and the world at large.

We are supporting the initiative to enable as many children move on to safe e-learning, convinced that we must ensure our children remain fully engaged at this time, so they can compete favourably with their peers internationally. By partnering with the government and other well-meaning organizations and Nigerians on this initiative we are solving a problem for families and for our future generations.

We have partnered with the States, innovative technology firms to provide e-learning solution with the Government-approved curriculum for students across the country.

We kept our promise not to forget the children at this time and amidst the unavoidable closure of schools, we kicked off our initiative to move 1 Million Students to e-Learning, beginning with a number of great partners who have come on board from within and outside the continent, namely IBM, UNESCO, and Roberts & John in association with the Lagos State Government.

Furthermore, FirstBank donated N1 billion towards the joint effort of the Nigerian private sector-driven CACOVID (Coalition Against COVID-19) under the leadership of the Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Godwin Emefiele. CACOVID is providing the bulk of emergency infrastructural interventions across Nigeria.

These partnerships and initiatives will be elaborated upon subsequently.

Remarkably, the Sub-Sahara African subsidiaries have also made donations so far in the total sum of \$173,000 in cash and kind towards alleviating the impact of COVID-19 on the continent.

We enhanced palliative measures to help customers through these times. We introduced special waivers on repayment fees on our credit cards and a 90-day loan moratorium on our First Edu and First Trader solution, for example to help cushion the impact of the toll on employment and livelihoods.

FIRSTBANK E-LEARNING INITIATIVE – DRIVE TO MOVE 1 MILLION STUDENTS TO E-LEARNING

FirstBank e-learning initiative provides students the opportunities to get e-learning solutions. These solutions include Government accredited curriculum-based content for students from pre-school, primary through to secondary school as well as select university courses designed to ensure children are adequately guided and engaged through their learning experience. It also provides opportunities for the acquisition of digital skills to encourage self-development and continuous improvement.

Partnerships:

FirstBank is working with different partners to deliver the e-learning solutions to the target audiences (students, the youth and staff). Currently, in the drive to move one million students to e-learning, FirstBank has kick-started partnership with United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); IBM; Lagos State Government and Roberts & John Limited.

Roberts & John (Roducate)– Roberts & John is an Edu-tech company that offers Roducate. The platform has eight modules which include: lecture notes, tutorial/revision videos; assignments/class work for students; exams; life skills; games and network.

The advantages of using this platform beyond accessing content include: teachers' notes can be uploaded by class and by subject; teachers can upload lecture/instructional videos for students to review at set times or on demand as preferred. These videos are watched within the application. In addition, assignments can be scheduled on a daily/weekly/monthly basis with option to set timeline for submission, so it can be submitted at a specific time, as preferred. This can be in the form of objective questions with automatic grading or essay writing submitted for teachers' review and scoring. The platform comes with a huge bank of mock exams (NECO, GCE, Common entrance, JAMB, etc.) and schools also have the option to set their own exams for students to complete online. Exams can be timed as required.

Through this module, teachers can create groups to chat with the students, and provide support for class work. Additional benefits include safe learning. A major advantage of Roducate is that it supports online safety. Whilst giving students full access to preferred content including links to games and videos, it blocks unwanted ads and content.

There are two learning models Roducate offers which are online and offline.

- **Online model:** This option offers students online access to the solutions. For students with access to devices, there are apps and web options on a subscription model payable monthly.
- **Offline model:** For indigent students who may not have access to devices there is an offline model preloaded on a device for the lowest end device with the functionality required. The entire curriculum from primary through secondary and several university courses are preloaded in the device which means the student has and owns access for life. Curriculum Updates are done remotely once the phone is plugged in and data activated just for the duration of the update.

Lagos State Government

- The partnership with Lagos State has seen us provide low-end devices for students preloaded with Roducate offline; content which include Government accredited curriculum for primary through secondary and several university courses. On Thursday, 11 June 2020, the CEO, First Bank of Nigeria Limited presented 20,000 units of e-learning devices to the Lagos State Government at the State House in Marina, Lagos. These devices will see Lagos state distribute to children in the lower bracket who may not have access to devices or data from home. The solution is preloaded on smart phones with little usage technicality to ensure ease of use or user friendliness. The phones in partnership with MTN have SIMs and limited data usable for and tied only to the learning product, which means the recipients cannot browse but can submit mock tests etc.



L-R: Dr. Bashir Bello, Commissioner for Health, Oyo State; Pharm. Lukman Akinwande, Director of Pharmaceutical Services, State Ministry of Health; Dr. Timothy Arowoogun, Coordinator of CA-COVID Oyo and Osun State/Group Head, Public Sector Group (West), FirstBank and Engr. Rauf Olaniyan, Deputy Governor of Oyo State at the donation of medical equipment presented by FirstBank - on behalf of CACOVID - to Oyo State Government in Ibadan.

Following the gesture, the Lagos State governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu said the State had found a “real development partner” in FirstBank, noting that the intervention came at a time the Government was massively deploying technology to transform the conventional mode of teaching and learning.

IBM

The IBM partnership free offering - The IBM Digital - Nation Africa program is an online youth-focused learning programme that enables innovation and skills development on the emerging technologies.

The Nation Africa program is categorised into three stages (Explorer, Innovator and New Collar) and includes Coding, Cloud, Artificial Intelligence; Data Science & Analytics, Internet of Things, Blockchain, Cybersecurity, Quantum Computing; designed for everyone who is interested in acquiring skills in emerging technologies. For example, the Explorer is structured for people with basic digital literacy skills, keen on learning about the new emerging technologies; while the Innovator helps accelerate innovation and enable ‘would be’ innovators to bring their ideas to life; and interestingly, the New Collar speaks mainly to those who want to align their skills to the requirements of the job market and seek better employment opportunities.

As part of our commitment to self-development and ensure the continuous learning and development of our staff every staff has the opportunity to access the DNA programme through our FirstAcademy learning portal to gain skills beneficial for the future of our workplace.

UNESCO

UNESCO is focused on providing literacy and numeracy skills for children in pre and early learning categories. Our proposed partnership with UNESCO includes working on an Immediate Response to School Closure) of the UNESCO implementation strategy of the Curious Learning Early Grade Learning Initiative,



L-R: Dr. Baba Waru Goni, Chief Medical Director, Yobe State University Teaching Hospital, Damaturu; Mr. Marcus Audu Dibal, Business Manager, FirstBank Damaturu branch; Dr. Mohammed Lawan Gana, Honourable Commissioner for Health, Yobe State; Dr. Mohammed Goje, Executive Secretary, CIMA, Yobe State; Dr. Musa Baba, Executive Secretary, Yobe State Health Management Board; Dr. Bukar Yusuf Ngamdu, Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, Yobe State; Dr. Baba Gana Aba, State Programme Manager, Saving One Million Lives; Dr. Kundi Machina; State Executive Secretary, Yobe State Primary Healthcare Agency at the unveiling of the renovated isolation centre and donation of medical equipment presented by FirstBank - on behalf of CACOVID - to Yobe State Government in Damaturu, Yobe State.

which is designed to reach smartphone users using available curated and tested literacy and numeracy Apps. Access to these apps are free. FirstBank is a member of the Global Education Coalition led by UNESCO. The Curious learning offers a number of mobile applications designed to empower young children in a fun, self-guided learning process through exploration and curiosity. Examples of these apps are Feed the Monster and Read with Akili.

So far, the Bank has enabled over 50,000 free sign-ups to the e-learning platforms with the goal to empower one million students across these aforementioned initiatives and partnerships.

In a bid to drive engagement and participation on the e-learning initiatives, several competitions have been done and are ongoing to ensure the students are learning on the platform, thereby making learning fun.

As an active member of the CACOVID intervention, the Bank has launched isolation centres and donated medical equipment worth hundreds of millions of naira to the government of Borno state, Oyo state, and Yobestates as well as cash donations to the government of Cross River and Oyo state to fight the spread of the deadly coronavirus in the states.

The e-learning initiative aligns with our Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability initiatives and falls under one of our key strategic pillars, Education. We have promoted education and have consistently demonstrated this in our support of 10 universities and 3 secondary schools on infrastructure projects; our support of 10 universities with professorial Chairs and provision of financial literacy, entrepreneurial and career counseling to over 80,000 students in over 80 secondary schools in the country.

As we collectively rise to address and face the challenges posed by this pandemic we may well change the way we lead our lives and for our children and youth of our society who must be competitive globally and for whom this may well be a game changer.

To join us to enable 1 million students to move to e-learning platforms, please visit www.firstbanknigeria.com/e-learning to sign up for free. ■

INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC

Impacting life and society with unique CSR offerings

Its corporate vision is people centred and better-life-in-a-better-world focused. It is therefore not a surprise that sustainability and corporate social responsibility are ingrained right in the core of its corporate existence. Quite naturally, CSR is in its creed; it is in its credo. This is talking about **International Breweries Plc. (IBPlc)**, a proud part of the Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABInBev), an American Belgian multinational drink and brewing company and the world's largest brewing conglomerate.

BY AMOS OLADELE

With a clearly stated vision (declared as its Manifesto to the world) of “**Bringing People Together for a Better World**”, International Breweries Plc, reflecting the DNA of its parent company, has always backed its brands and operations up with well thought out and expertly delivered sustainability and corporate social responsibility, CSR initiatives all of which gain so much traction with benefitting consumers and communities; and this has, quite naturally, raised the bar for its brands when it comes to brand loyalty, market share and return on investment.

Significantly, International Breweries Plc has been both innovative and proactive in its Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility offerings at this period of the COVID-19 pandemic which is currently ravaging the world, Nigeria inclusive.

The company demonstrated its commitment to collaborate and partner with its stakeholders, including government, to reduce the spread and

impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria.

Building on its longstanding commitment to its above stated vision of ‘Bringing People Together for a Better World’, IBPlc, in a statement heralding its offerings, said that its COVID-19 support efforts were “based on a collaborative approach of gathering insights from our communities and stakeholders so we can provide tailored interventions with the greatest impact”.

It then went ahead to make the following donations to the governments of Anambra, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, and Rivers States; and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), amongst others:

- 30,000 bottles of hand sanitizers are being distributed to the states, hospitals/government institutions, and communities
- 200,000 bottles of our nutritious non-alcoholic beverages (Beta Malt and Grand Malt) have been donated to support the food distribution drive by the government in various states
- 2,500 bags of rice were shared to families in host communities across



Hugo Dias Rocha, MD, IB Plc



Lagos, Ogun, Anambra, Rivers and Osun states

- Tens of millions of naira committed to providing medical consumables which included COVID -19 test kits; Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) for the frontline workers and medical personnel: coveralls, hand gloves; Infra-red thermometers; N10m donated by the Trophy Stout brand (during an e-concert by TuFace) to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for the procurement of test kits.

Speaking on his company's above listed COVID-19 intervention, Managing Director, International Breweries Plc., Mr. Hugo Dias Rocha, said, "As an organization, we are always looking to support our local communities and are positive that our donation will assist and support the government and our communities greatly in the fight against the spread of this pandemic."

He added, "We appreciate and lend our voice to the various initiatives by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the State Governments, the private sector to which we belong and all other sectors, organizations, individual and players that have all teamed together to assist in curbing the spread of COVID-19. We stand with you, and indeed the world, in the joint resolution to eradicate this virus and its impact on communities and economies."

Rocha concluded by saying, "This is an intense moment in global history. The actions we take now will shape the future; so as International Breweries, we are pleased to be a part of the solution for our communities. We will continue to explore with our stakeholders, especially government, on areas of further potential collaboration and support."

Worthy of note also is the uniquely historic and hugely momentous e-concert on which Trophy Extra Special Stout (@trophystout), a brand from International Breweries Plc partnered with Innocent Idibia, popularly known as Tuface on April 12, 2020. The highly successful e-concert was aimed at rallying support and unifying Nigerians against the spread of the COVID 19 virus in Nigeria. The online concert also aimed to encourage people to stay safe during the period by supporting the stay-at-home directive by government.

The e-concert was streamed live on Tuface's social media handles (@official2baba) and that of Trophy Extra Special Stout (@trophystout). Needless to say that the concert created an extra special moment for people to be entertained with the live performances from the African Queen crooner while they stayed at home the period.

Notably, Trophy Extra Special Stout together with Tuface made a N10m donation to support initiatives combating COVID-19.

Speaking on that unique event, Trophy's Marketing Manager, Bamise Oyegbami, said "we decided to support Tuface in that quest because as a brand, we acknowledge the importance of the initiative, hence we were fully behind it", adding that "a healthy population is key for any nation to grow and develop and with COVID-19 threatening to disrupt the lives of the citizenry, all hands must be on deck to do whatever is possible to ensure it is curtailed".

Oyegbami stressed that his company is "not in business just for profit, our ecosystem is very key to us based on our purpose of bringing people together for a better world. This can only be attained if necessary support is given to people and the society whenever it is needed, which is what



Tolulope Adedeji,
Marketing Director, IB Plc

we wanted to achieve with the e-concert".

He concluded, "We realised that with everywhere being on lockdown and people told to stay home to stop the spread of COVID 19, we could actually make the stay at home more optimistic for consumers at home by supporting our own African music legend, Tuface with a live e-concert".

Notably, too, with the forced closure of many offices and businesses including bars and restaurants across Nigeria, courtesy COVID-19 and the risk which this posed to micro, small and medium enterprises, Budweiser, another iconic brand from the stable of IB Plc., the company in May, 2020, launched a unique initiative, termed 'Naija Bar Rescue' to help sustain these bars during and after the pandemic, and



Mrs. Temitope Oguntokun,
*Legal and Corporate Affairs
Director*

also provide a platform for consumers to support their favorite bars.

Through the initiative, Budweiser ensures that bars and pubs remain financially strong and are able to quickly resume full operations as soon as the lockdown is fully lifted, while co-opting loyal consumers, who are also willing to see their favourite relaxation joints remain in business, into a scheme that has rightly been described as 'first-of-its-kind' in the country.

The programme encourages loyal consumers to buy gift cards online from their favourite bars via the website: www.naijabarrescue.com for consumption on-premise at the end of the lockdown. This will not only make liquidity available to the bars during the lockdown, but also assure the bar owners of the future of their businesses.

Beyond providing the idea, the technical platform and the administrative structure on which the scheme runs, Budweiser has made the commitment to match-up, one-to-one, whatever amount the consumer is spending on his or her gift card, and make the money available to the participating bars within 2 weeks. This means the bars actually get double the value of the gift card the consumer is buying, with Budweiser contributing exactly the same amount as the consumer is paying, as its own contribution to the sustenance of the bar in particular and the beer retail trade, in general.

The novel initiative cuts across the country as bars in various states and the FCT are registered on the platform and

WITH A CLEARLY STATED VISION (DECLARED AS ITS MANIFESTO TO THE WORLD) OF **"BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER FOR A BETTER WORLD"**, INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC, REFLECTING THE DNA OF ITS PARENT COMPANY, HAS ALWAYS BACKED ITS BRANDS AND OPERATIONS UP WITH WELL THOUGHT OUT AND EXPERTLY DELIVERED SUSTAINABILITY AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, CSR INITIATIVES ALL OF WHICH GAIN SO MUCH TRACTION WITH BENEFITTING CONSUMERS AND COMMUNITIES; AND THIS HAS, QUITE NATURALLY, RAISED THE BAR FOR ITS BRANDS WHEN IT COMES TO BRAND LOYALTY, MARKET SHARE AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT.

consumers are encouraged to recommend their favourite bars for inclusion in the scheme, where such bars are not already on the launch-out list.

Speaking on this initiative, Sandro De Assis, the Route-to-Market, Tech Sales and Trade Marketing Director of International Breweries Plc. assured Nigerian beer lovers of the company's full commitment to the scheme and solicited their buy-in on the lofty idea. He added that the technical platforms, as well as the administrative structure to manage the scheme, have been perfected and that the process is simple and very user-friendly. He enjoined consumers to visit www.naijabarrescue.com to start supporting their favourite bars to stay in business while COVID-19 lockdown

subsists by buying the gift cards which are available in N1,500; N2,000; N4,000 and N9,000 denominations. The scheme, which has already started, will last until the lockdown in several parts of the country is fully lifted.

Also speaking on the initiative, Marketing Director, IB Plc, Tolulope Adedeji said the 'Naija Bar Rescue' initiative would not only help strengthen the loyalty of consumers to their favorite brands and bars, but also help minimize the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the general economy of the nation.

In her words, "We hope, through the 'Naija Bar Rescue' project, our trade partners, I mean the bar owners, can heave a sigh of relief that the future of business for them is bright after all. This is a collective effort between us and the consumers to support the bars, pubs and restaurants. We will continue to do our best to ensure that their businesses come out stronger and better from the pandemic".

Reflecting on the age-long records of the company in Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, Temitope Oguntokun, Legal and Corporate Affairs Director, said, "Our longstanding commitment to our core values of Health, Safety, Environment and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), readily serves us in this trying time. We will continue to drive COVID-19 awareness and interventions with our employees and in our communities".

Oguntokun disclosed that aside from the donations, IB Plc has been supporting its employees with resources and consistent COVID-19 information to stay safe and healthy and that as part of the company's other ongoing collaboration against the virus, the company, through its International Breweries Foundation, is currently engaging with government and other stakeholders on the production of local face masks, adding, "We believe this intervention will go a long way to reduce the further spread of the virus while also boosting our already challenged economy through youth entrepreneurship".

International Breweries Plc "IB Plc", a proud part of the world's largest brewer, Anheuser-Busch InBev, (AB InBev) was established in 1971 and was listed on The Nigerian Stock Exchange in 1995.

AB InBev consolidated its business stakes in Pabod Breweries Limited and Intafact Beverages Limited into its majority ownership of IB Plc in a merger that was concluded in December 2017.

Its major National brands are Trophy Lager, Hero Lager, Betamalt, Grandmalt, Castle Lite, Trophy Extra Special Stout, and the premium brand, Budweiser. ■



IB Plc's COVID-19 Fight CSR Activities in Pics



From Left: Joseph Ohonyon, Plant Manager, IB Plc. Ilesha Plant; Bola Olanipekun, Hon. Commissioner for Commerce, Industry and Trade, Osun State; Dr. Charles Akinola, Chief of Staff, Osun State; Mr. Akintoye Omole, Non Executive Director, IBPlc and Eniola Alli, Corporate Affairs Manager, International Breweries Plc. Ilesha Plant during the first phase of IBPlc's donation of CoVID relief items including Beta Malt and Grand Malt Cases, and hand sanitizers to the Osun state Government in support of the fight against COVID-19 in the state.



From Left: Temitope Oguntokun, Legal and Corporate Affairs Director, International Breweries Plc., presenting the letter from Hugo Dias Rocha , Managing Director, IB Plc. to the Ogun State Deputy Governor, Her Excellency Engr. (Mrs) Noimot Salako-Oyedele during the first phase of CoVID Relief items donations by IBPlc., including hand sanitizers and cases of Beta Malt and Grand Malt drinks to the Ogun State Government to support the State Government's fight against CoVID 19



From Left: Marian Reginald-Ukwuoma, Corporate Affairs Manager, Port Harcourt Plant and Akintayo Oguntunde, Plant Manager, Port Harcourt, both of International Breweries Plc. (IBPlc) while presenting hand sanitizers and cases of Grand Malt to the Secretary to the Rivers State Government, Dr Tammy Danagogo as part of IBPlc's first phase of donations towards the fight against CoVID 19 within the state.



Michael Odutayo, Logistics Manager, IB Plc. Gateway Plant alongside Stella Sawyerr, Corporate Affairs Manager, IBPlc Gateway Plant and Temitope Oguntokun, Legal and Corporate Affairs Director IBPlc, presenting hand sanitizers to the Ogun State Deputy Governor, Her Excellency Engr. (Mrs) Noimot Salako-Oyedele as part of IBPlc's first phase of donations to support the State Government's fight against COVID-19



Sylvester Ameke, Plant Manager, International Breweries Plc. Onitsha presenting a letter from IBPlc. Managing Director, Hugo Dias Rocha, to the Chief of Staff, Anambra State, Chief Izu Obiano during IBPlc's first phase of donations of Relief items including hand sanitizers and cases of Beta Malt to the state government to support the fight against COVID-19 in the state



From left: Stella Sawyerr, Corporate Affairs Manager, International Breweries Plc. Gateway Plant; Akinola Oyebola, representative of the Lagos State Government and Assistant Director, Ministry of Agriculture and Muyiwa Ayojimi, Company Secretary and Legal Adviser, IBPlc. during the donation of various relief items including sanitizers and non-alcoholic beverages, Beta Malt and Grand Malt, as part of IBPlc's first phase of donations of CoVID Relief items to the Lagos State Government in support of the fight against COVID-19



How Hello Products is supporting the fight against COVID-19

Before the Ebola outbreak, carrying a hand sanitizer around was considered a fad. Many Nigerians did not know what a hand sanitizer was, except for a privileged few who had been exposed to them abroad. Some of those early adopters even opted for the flavoured sanitizers such as aloe vera, lavender or strawberry, without paying much attention to alcohol content or efficacy, creating even more mystery around the product.

So, it is not surprising that hand sanitizers were not produced in Nigeria. The high-end stores which sold them stocked the imported Dettol and Carex brands.

But the devastation caused by the Ebola virus created a reawakening for frequent handwashing and the recognition of hand sanitizers as a germ-killer by the populace. The imported products became inadequate to meet a sudden surge in demand, so Cormart, Cybelle Cosmetics and May & Baker applied for the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) licence to produce hand sanitizers locally. Thankfully, Nigeria quickly curtailed the spread of the Ebola virus, but Nigerians reverted to old habits, forgetting about the use of hand sanitizers.

However, if there is one truth about history, it is that it repeats itself. And so, five years after the deadly Ebola outbreak came the novel Coronavirus causing a global pandemic. Despite the five players in the market, Nigeria witnessed a shortage of hand sanitizers in the market. And, while several organisations made monetary donations to the government to curb the spread of COVID-19, Hello Products joined in the fight by taking a holistic approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) as suggested by American academic, Michael Porter.

Porter introduced the creating shared value (CSV) concept. He advocates “for corporate practices and policies that enhance the competitiveness of the company while simultaneously advancing economic and social conditions in the communities in which the company operates.” Porter explains that a business must focus on those areas in which it most intersects with the most important social challenges.”

For those to whom Hello Products does not ring a bell, Tetmosol certainly will. The Tetmosol Citronella soap is the company’s flagship product. It has been trusted for its unique germ-fighting properties since 1977 because it works.

Hello Products embarked on the production of Tetmosol hand sanitizers thereafter donating the sanitizers and soaps to the Lagos State Ministry of Health for use in isolation centres through the Jagal Group Foundation. The company is also running a consumer education campaign which shares tips, facts and counters myths associated with Coronavirus. Furthermore, before the closure

of schools, it had a schools’ handwashing drive. Shining Star School and Oregun Junior High School are some of many schools impacted.

Formerly Jagal Pharma, Hello Products a 100% indigenous company, has been a valuable contributor to Nigeria’s economy with its headquarters and a manufacturing plant situated in Lagos, and providing hundreds of direct employments to indigenes and thousands more through its distribution networks and value chain.

In one month of securing NAFDAC approvals, the company has flooded the market with affordable Tetmosol hand sanitizers which come in three sizes. The 60ml, portable enough to fit into a pocket or handbag, 300ml table-top size and 500ml suitable for spaces with high human traffic. Hello Products’ packaging can compete with any imported brand.

Managing director of Hello Products, Chedli Ben Frija said the company’s distribution network of over 10,000 distributors and eight warehouses located across the six-geopolitical regions of Nigeria (including Lagos, Enugu and Kano), enable the company deliver products throughout Nigeria within 48 hours hence, Hello Products was able to quickly make the Tetmosol hand sanitizers available to Nigerians.

Since the world became a global village, one never imagined that there would a time when countries would refuse to export equipment and medical supplies because it could not cater to local demand, or travel restrictions would impede importation. One of the biggest lessons from the COVID-19 crisis is that local manufacturing is critical. While certain goods and services such as travel might be considered a luxury, life would be unbearable if we couldn’t access basic consumer goods because of an overdependence on importation. Consequently, this indigenous organisation decades deserve a pat on the back for engaging in 100 per cent local production for over 40 years. It should be encouraged to do more.

hello
products

Making a difference, the *Coca-Cola* way

As the global Coronavirus pandemic ravages the world, its impact on underserved communities has been devastating. With varied effects across populations, many have lost jobs or accepted pay cuts while still navigating the critical demands of everyday life.

Although governments have put measures in place to stem the tide of these ripple effects, several socially conscious organizations have risen to the challenge posed by the disease, by partnering with federal governments to provide relief to populations, all in service to humanity. One of such organizations is The Coca-Cola Company, a leading total beverage company and home to several beloved household brands.

Through its philanthropic arm - The Coca-Cola Foundation, The Coca-Cola Company remains at the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 in Africa, providing support to communities hard hit by the effects of the pandemic. Systematically deployed across populations, the company's relief efforts are delivered through a range of strategic partnerships with reputable NGOs and implementing partners, equally committed to making a difference during these times.

With the provision of over \$17million in grants to support relief efforts across Africa, several initiatives have been pioneered to support governments and impact communities in a bid to pave the way to recovery of local economies.

It is therefore no surprise that in Nigeria, Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited has leveraged diverse local partnerships as part of its unwavering support for the local community through the facilitation of relief efforts during the initial phase of the pandemic as well as during the eased lockdown of affected states within the country.

The Coca-Cola System in Nigeria which comprises Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited alongside its bottling partner, Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC), recently donated over 13 million centilitres of its beverages including Eva premium table water and other drinks, to cater to the hydration and refreshment needs of patients and healthcare workers at Isolation and Treatment Centres across different states in the country. In response to the critical need for hand sanitizers, Nigerian Bottling Company deployed their technical expertise to produce over 5,000 litres of alcoholic sanitizer and 2,000 3-D Face Shields in line with World Health Organization (WHO) standards, which were distributed to governments and

vulnerable communities at no cost.

Additionally, The Coca-Cola System through its "Ad to Aid" initiative, also supported the Federal Ministry of Health and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in the development of risk communication materials for public education and mobilization initiatives around the disease, while effectively suspending all commercial advertising of its brand products.

In furtherance of its support, the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) also commenced its Food Relief Intervention through the distribution of food items to thousands of households across the country. The intervention saw over 2,000 households in 14 locations receive essential food items, comprising rice, noodles and cooking oil amongst others. Some beneficiary locations include Ota, Asejire, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Maiduguri, Makurdi, Warri, Enugu, Minna, Benin, Owerri, Challawa and Ikeja.



The Coca-Cola System, comprising Nigerian Bottling Company Limited (NBC) and Coca-Cola Nigeria Ltd, handed over beverages to the Federal Medical Center Ebute-Metta in support of frontline workers.



CHI Limited donated cases of Hollandia products to the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 in Abuja

Similarly, Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited is working with some NGOs and social enterprises, including Givefood.ng and Whitefield Foundation to provide food parcels for vulnerable families whose livelihoods have been disrupted by the lockdown and other restrictions. This food drive provided hundreds of families in the most impacted communities with food relief materials during the initial statewide lockdown.

CHI Limited, a member of the Coca-Cola System in Nigeria, made significant product donations to the COVID-19 Presidential Taskforce and to several Isolation & Treatment Centers across the country. The donation, which comprised 15,000 packs of Hollandia Evap Milk, was provided nationwide as part of its support to the government.

In a concerted effort to uplift the spirits of individuals during this difficult time, Cola-Cola's music hub, Coke Studio, launched its Coke Studio Sessions in partnership with BeApp. Created as a live music streaming platform by tech giants Ray Smith and Ross Mason, BeApp is an immersive digital destination for fans with its interesting and interactive features.

Officially launched in May 2020, the programme features a mix of 180 global, regional and local artists who perform live over 60 days. Coke Studio Sessions offers viewers the opportunity to make individual donations to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement after which The Coca-Cola Foundation will match the donations with up to \$3million for COVID-19 relief efforts.

To address the issue of shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) across health institutions tasked with fighting the Coronavirus disease, The Coca-Cola Company through its philanthropic arm, The Coca-Cola Foundation, provided a grant of 228 million Naira to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to help procure PPEs to support the efforts of frontline heroes curbing the spread of the disease in Nigeria. This grant also covered risk communication support in driving community sensitization across the country especially in the most affected states.

As Nigeria navigates through recovery from the disease, Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited backed by The Coca-Cola Foundation, remains committed to providing support through several interventions that will be rolled out subsequently to support businesses and communities as we steer our way back to normalcy. ■



Community outreach activities by Nigerian Bottling Company amidst the COVID-19 pandemic



L-R: Public Affairs and Communications Manager Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited, Nwamaka Onyemelukwe; Community Affairs Manager, Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited, Emeka Mbah; Founder and CEO, Whitefield Foundation, Olufunmilola Johnson, and Coke CARES Volunteer, Nkechi Odiari at the Coke CARES food support community outreach sponsored by employees of Coca-Cola Nigeria Ltd.



MULTICHOICE

MultiChoice Nigeria, Corporate legend in sustainability and CSR

MultiChoice set up its operations in Nigeria in 1993 as a joint venture between Nigerian lawyer and business man - Adewunmi Ogunsanya (SAN) and MultiChoice Africa. It has since then become a significant part of Nigeria's broadcasting landscape, providing Direct-to-Home (DTH) services under the DSTv brand, Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) services under the GOTv brand, as well as subscriber management services for both brands, mobile and various value-added services.

Contributions to the Economy

MultiChoice Nigeria from 2015 – 2019 alone, contributed an estimated N634.6 billion (\$2.1 billion) to the nation's economy which translated to over N357.4 billion (\$1.2 billion) in GDP contribution. The company has also created over 12,323 jobs within the nation's workforce.

Contributions to the Creative Industry

In just 4 years (2015 – 2019), MultiChoice Nigeria created value worth over N31.9 billion (\$108 million) in the creative industry through the commissioning of more than 177,459 hours of local content. The organisation has approximately spent over N47.3 billion (\$164million) on content and production infrastructure since 2015 with over 9955 jobs created within adjacent industries and an estimated value of over N105.4 billion (\$351.5 million) created through partnerships in the industry.

Contributions to Staff, Partnerships and Its Supply Chain

MultiChoice values its employees, thus the initiatives implemented for the benefit of its employees, social investment beneficiaries and consumers from 2015 – 2019 have generated a value of over N74.3 billion (\$237.3 million). As a result of its investment in partnership, an estimated value of N430 billion (\$1.2 billion) was directly and indirectly invested by MultiChoice in its supply chain thereby creating employment opportunity to over 3000 GOTv Sabimen - an initiative that tutors participants on the rudiments of service activation and response to customer enquiries – over 8700 canvassers and over 1000 DSTv installers.

Contributions to CSV

MultiChoice Nigeria has positively impacted on the lives of over 1.59million Nigerians through its Corporate Social Investment projects. For one, over N10 billion (\$34.8 million) has been invested

in education, sponsorship and development of the entertainment industry in Nigeria. These investments include the flagship Shared Value initiative known as the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF); a project designed to ignite Africa's creative film and TV industry through training and skills development and the MultiChoice Resource Centre (MRC); a programme designed to integrate audio-visual learning technologies in public schools via digital satellite television currently in 493 centres in 35 states.

Activities in Support of the Fight against Covid-19: N1.2 billion Donation for Coronavirus fight

To support efforts of the Federal and Lagos state governments in ameliorating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, MultiChoice Nigeria unveiled several initiatives such as:

- Cash support of N200 million and N50 million to the Federal and Lagos State Governments, respectively
- Broadcast Public Service Announcements (PSAs) comprising prevention tips in English, Pidgin, Ibo, Yoruba and Hausa languages as well as highlighted NCDC's COVID-19 helplines on more than 10 channels across the DSTv and GOTv channels, adding up to an inventory worth over N550 million
- Committed up to N400 million in the form of remunerations of engaged creative industry professionals whose productions had been disrupted by covid-19

Cushioning COVID-19 Impact on DSTv, GOTv Customers with *We've Got You* offer

Despite all the uncertainties associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, MultiChoice Nigeria rewarded its customers on DSTv and GOTv with mouth-watering discounts on their subscription to ensure they remain connected during this period.

Tagged *We've Got You*, the campaign which commenced on April 20 offers active and disconnected customers the opportunity to enjoy discounts and get upgraded to the next viewing package when they pay on their current package.

The offer is the company's way of showing appreciation to loyal subscribers during these challenging times and to also cushion the impact of the economic disruption triggered by the pandemic.

Support for Hotel Owners through up to 75% Discount as Palliative

MultiChoice Nigeria offered hotel owners up to 75% discount each month from April to June 2020. Providing world-class service to these businesses comes at a significant cost, which includes absorbing a significant portion of these costs to avoid passing it



Mr. John Ugbe, CEO, MultiChoice Nigeria

on to its customers. The world over, Coronavirus (Covid-19) has impacted sports and all other programming globally, with events either postponed or cancelled by organisers. As the situation continues to evolve, MultiChoice Nigeria commits to ensuring that these businesses continue to receive its services as well as access to the best in sports, entertainment and news programming currently available.

Talent Factory Webinars Masterclasses

MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF) Masterclasses are “Best in Class” workshops which are open to industry professionals and facilitated by industry experts. The Masterclasses aim to further develop the technical skills of industry creatives in Cinematography, Audio and Storytelling in order to improve the quality of local productions. During this period, MultiChoice felt the need to assist industry professionals gain more skills through webinars on the MultiChoice Talent Factory portal. This was in partnership with international brands like Dolby and New York Film Academy.

Virtual classes like Produce Like a Pro! gives professionals an insight into practical, industry expert-led skills to produce content like professionals. The Produce Like a Pro! series is part of MultiChoice’s mission to upskill emerging creatives and seasoned professionals in the Film and TV industry and is an answer to the industry’s need for easier access to training materials, tutorials and templates.

The “Produce Like a PRO!” series is also rooted in ensuring that veteran knowledge and experience is passed on to the next generation of African storytellers. The series also compliments recorded Masterclasses which address industry concerns such as accessibility, opportunity, and quality in local productions.

Opening of the Free to Air Channels

MultiChoice Nigeria also opened its free to air channels so that subscribers can get essential information during this period of the pandemic. These include news, kiddies and sporting channels.

Addition of New Channels

MultiChoice Nigeria launched the Hallelujah channel for access to religious content from well-known churches in Nigeria, giving customers the opportunity to experience church from home, with praise and worship sessions, sermons, choir ministrations, prayers

and more. The channel is part of MultiChoice Nigeria’s customer-centric response to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic and mandatory lockdown which has made many people to adjust to new ways of life, work and worship. Hallelujah channel featured content from churches such as Diplomats’ Assembly, Daystar Christian Centre, KICC, HICC, Kornerstone, City of David, The Elevation Church, Salvation Ministries and more.

Also, MultiChoice Nigeria introduced a new Islamic channel, Sunna TV which is available to customers on DStv channel 351 and GOtv channel 84. The new 24/7 Sunna TV channel featured Islamic content tailored for the whole family to enjoy such as, teachings on religious awareness, lectures, lifestyle shows & entertainment, discussions from an Islamic perspective, Friday sermons and other special programs. Sunna TV channel was available to DStv Premium, Compact Plus, Compact, Confam, Yanga, and Padi packages as well as on GOtv Max, Jolli and Jinja packages.

Channel Launched during Easter

MultiChoice and TBN Africa brought Easter to homes despite the lockdown. This year, MultiChoice launched the African Easter pop-up channel (DStv channel 344). The channel was available to DStv customers on Premium, Compact +, Compact, Confam and Yanga customers.

The pop-up channel ran from Thursday, 9 April 2020 until Monday, 13 April 2020, bringing the Easter experience to viewers’ homes during the social-distancing and lockdown period.

DStv’s New Pop Up Channels Offer Something for Everyone

There was also the launch of the DStv Pop Up Channels. Premium and Compact Plus members can look forward to days and nights filled with classic entertainment and binge-worthy series, while almost everyone gets access to two channels to keep younger family members glued to the set during their TV time.

MultiChoice Care Initiative; a staff engagement programme to create awareness on the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria

MultiChoice did not only engage in external community engagement in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, internally, MultiChoice took care of its staff; which is its greater asset. With the MultiChoice Care initiative, they provided PPE materials, hand sanitizers and multivitamins to help protect the lives of staff during the period of the pandemic and provided virtual education on do’s and don’ts during the pandemic.

Delivery of Face Masks to Dealers

MultiChoice Nigeria also distributed face masks to its mega dealers and dealers across the country to protect them from the Covid-19 pandemic. In all, 10,000 face masks were distributed by MultiChoice Nigeria.

COVID-19 Hope for Africa Concert

MultiChoice and One Africa Global Foundation joined forces for the broadcast of the Covid-19 ‘Hope for Africa’ Concert. The concert is part of the Foundation’s efforts to support the fight against the novel Coronavirus which is still devastating Africa and the rest of the world.

The company also introduced programmes like Turnup Friday and the Owambe Saturday that bring authentic African live band music and dance experience to homes.

According to John Ugbe, CEO, MultiChoice Nigeria; the company will continue to “use the power of entertainment to give hope, enrich lives and bring people together especially during these uniquely difficult times. This is why we are partnering with the One Africa Global Foundation to broadcast the Covid-19 Hope for Africa Concert in more than 49 countries across sub-Saharan Africa”. ■



STANDING WITH NIGERIA – NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented. Our world as we know it has changed dramatically, and the level of disruption caused by the virus has affected virtually every aspect of our way of life.

While the world comes to terms with the fact that things are never going to be the same again, businesses are bracing up for a difficult year ahead, balancing their corporate social responsibilities with the equally pressing needs of employees, partners and customers.

As a company with a rich history since 1946, Nigerian Breweries Plc has a strong heritage of remaining committed to supporting the government and aspirations of Nigerians in line with our corporate philosophy of Winning with Nigeria. We remain committed to this philosophy and are confident that as Nigerians united and working together, we will defeat the coronavirus disease and pull through this challenging period successfully.

In view of the crisis situation presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we focussed our response as a company on four core areas -

- Safeguarding the Health and Safety of our Employees,
- Educating and Exciting our Consumers,
- Supporting the Government
- Economic Continuity.

SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR EMPLOYEES

Our people are the heartbeat of our organisation. In line with the *HEINEKEN Brewing a Better World (BaBW) Sustainability agenda*, we deployed existing and newly created employee engagement channels to interactively share key information on the pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Nigerian Center for Infectious Diseases and Control (NCDC) recommended measures to prevent the spread of the virus and steps to take if an infection occurs.

Following the global outbreak of virus, Nigerian Breweries implemented a robust Work from Home policy, ensuring that employees remain safe with an opportunity to work conveniently from home supported with relevant ICT applications, whilst only those on essential duties are allowed to work in the breweries. Access to the breweries and offices remain restricted, with strict safety protocols in place in line with NCDC guidelines and best practices.

Whether they work from home, in the office or in the breweries, our employees receive regular communication through multimedia channels, creative display units, emails and real-time updates through company social media platforms. Regular safety, health and wellbeing webinars are frequently scheduled and moderated by expert resource persons. Feedback channels such as hotlines and dedicated email address were set up to respond to emergencies and answer questions about COVID-19.

OUR CONSUMERS - THE BEDROCK OF OUR OPERATIONS

Our consumers are as diverse as our brands - from a family brand like Maltina to a national iconic brand like our STAR Lager Beer. We recognize that some of our products are deemed essential. This is why during this challenging period, we consciously took steps to prioritize the production of malt and energy drinks to ensure that consumers (especially our health workers and patients) continue to receive required nourishment. To make these products available, we implemented measures that ensured the safety of our frontline sales employees in full compliance with NCDC guidelines. This was complemented by a constant stream of educational materials to consumers via traditional and social media channels, reminding them of the need to comply with the WHO and NCDC guidelines to stop the spread of the virus.

Often overlooked in times of crisis is the toll on one's mental health. To celebrate and promote that resilient spirit that is uniquely Nigerian, we celebrated the selfless and courageous service of our frontline health workers, kept our consumers across Nigeria entertained and engaged with online parties and promotions, while bringing back some TV shows

sponsored by Nigerian Breweries, such as the widely popular Gulder Ultimate Search.

OUR SUPPORT TO GOVERNMENT TO COMBAT COVID-19

In an internal communication to employees, sharing information on the company's response to COVID-19, the MD/CEO of Nigerian Breweries Plc, Jordi Bel emphasized that *"Nigeria has been there for our organization since 1946. Now is the time for us to be there for Nigeria."* In demonstration of this commitment, Nigerian Breweries moved swiftly to support the Nigerian government in alleviating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through a donation of Six Hundred Million Naira (N600,000,000) in financial support, relief materials and logistics support to the Federal and State governments as follows:

- N250 million cash donation to the Federal Government, paid directly to the CBN designated account of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19.
- N250 million cash donation to seven (7) State Governments' Task Force Against COVID-19. Lagos and Ogun States received the sum of N100 million and N50 million respectively, while five other states where our breweries are located - Kaduna, Oyo, Enugu, Abia and Imo received N20M each.
- N100 million worth of relief material comprising of the following:
 - o Personal Protective Equipment, sanitizers to be distributed nationwide,
 - o Provision of 5 double-cabin vehicles (including the cost of drivers' salaries and fueling) for use by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Abuja, Lagos, Ogun and Kaduna States.
 - o Regular supply of malt, energy and soft drinks to the various COVID-19 NCDC centres nationwide to support the nourishment needs at the centres.

In addition, the International Federation of Red Cross Society received a donation of €15m (Fifteen Million Euros) from HEINEKEN, our parent company to support relief efforts in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

ECONOMIC CONTINUITY

In supporting the economic continuity drive for the nation, especially at a time that organizations are embarking on radical restructuring and laying off staff, Nigerian Breweries Plc has committed that no employee will lose his or her job in 2020 as a consequence of COVID-19. This is because we are keenly conscious that job stability is crucial to the safety and wellbeing of Nigerians during this difficult time and to mitigate the potential future economic consequences of the pandemic.

To further support economy continuity, we made a commitment to support groups of vulnerable individuals in various host communities across 7 states where breweries are located. This category includes widows, elderly ones, physically challenged and economically disadvantaged people.

AN UNWAVERING CONVICTION

Winning with Nigeria, is not just a mantra to NB Plc. It is a representation of our conviction that our fortunes as a company is tied to the future of our great nation, and as such where the country wins we all win.

Corporate Social Responsibility remains a core focus for our business driven through our sustainability agenda on Brewing a Better World (BaBW), as well as a dedicated long-term approach to creating shared and sustainable value for our stakeholders, the company, society and the planet. It also informs our approach to tackling the challenges presented by COVID-19. When all Nigerians pool resources, backed by our collective creativity, mental strength and incurable optimism, our country will emerge stronger.

We Stand with Nigeria.



Nigerian Breweries Plc

WE STAND WITH NIGERIA



Winning with Nigeria.

ELEV8MEDIA Advertising Limited: Offering unique CSR initiatives at trying times

By AMOS OLADELE

It was Bill Ford, an American businessman and father of Bill Ford Jr., Executive Chairman of Ford Motor Company who said, “Creating a strong business and building a better world are not conflicting goals – they are both essential ingredients for long-term success”.

To Dame Anita Roddick (1942-2007), a British businesswoman, human rights

activist and environmental campaigner, best known as the founder of The Body Shop, a cosmetics company producing and retailing natural beauty products that shaped ethical consumerism, “The business of business should not be about money. It should be about responsibility. It should be about public good, not private greed”.

Again, Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), American essayist, poet, and

practical philosopher, said, “Goodness is the only investment that never fails”.

Apart from underscoring the near absolute necessity of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility by business entities, the above statements bring to a sharper focus the very unique essence of CSR initiative which Elev8media Advertising Limited, a leading Out-of-Home advertising agency in Nigeria has offered to small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos at this period of Corona virus global pandemic.

It would be recalled that Elev8media Advertising Ltd, in April, announced the initiative to support Nigerian businesses, especially SMEs with 30 days of free exposure which was worth a whopping N40,000,000 (Forty Million Naira) on its iconic billboard located at CMS, Marina, Lagos State.

According to a statement by the Chief Executive Officer of the agency, Mr. Funmilade Alalade, the significance of the project was to enable it contribute its own quota to alleviating the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nigerian businesses, by reducing the costs of stimulating business growth.

It further stated, “We have dedicated 10 advert slots on our digital billboard for 10 selected Small and Medium Scale businesses (SMEs). These businesses will receive 30 days exposure worth N4,000,000.00 (Four million Naira) each,” thus totaling N40million!

Elev8media Advertising Ltd then invited all SMEs located in Lagos State to register for the allotted advert slots via tiny.cc/elev8media, adding that the selection would be administered by the agency based on the information received.

As should be expected, this initiative



was promptly applauded by both the industry and the business community across Nigeria. To many who commended the agency, the said CSR offering was well anchored on its (Elev8media's) corporate credo of Experience the Difference, saying that Elev8media, indeed differentiated and distinguished itself by the unique initiative.

The Elev8media's unique CSR offering is one goodness which the agency has invested and which will never fail, just like Henry Thoreau has been quoted (above) to have said.

Only recently, the iconic OOH Company successfully partnered with UBA group for the 2nd edition of UBA Africa Day 2020. The YouTube event was streamed live on Elev8media's iconic LED billboard screen, thus allowing members of the public to share in what was solely an "online" event. With the use of this technology Elev8media was able to demonstrate the link between the online digital world and OOH in Lagos. It also provided free Wi-Fi at the billboard location for the audience to connect to the internet to listen live to the event.

UBA Africa Conversations was in celebration of Africa Day. The event brought together senior political leaders and policymakers to define an African response to COVID-19.

This novel introduction of digital media into Out-of-Home advertising practice in Nigeria has undoubtedly transformed the outdoor business from one where carpenters and welders held 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 sanitize 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 realizing the tremendous opportunity that the new outdoor regime in Lagos presented for forward looking entrepreneurs, Elev8media quickly carved a niche for itself by deploying the Elev8media Transit TV to give brands a broader reach within the Lagos metropolis.

Elev8media 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.

Also recently, Elev8media re-ignited

competition in Nigeria's Out-of-Home advertising with a new product which it christened, "The Tower of Oworo". In announcing the grand entry of "The Tower", the Chief Executive Officer of Elev8media Advertising Limited, Mr. Funmilade Alalade captivantly said in a post, "Impossible is nothing & nothing is Impossible".

Quite instructively, the logic in the above (Alalade's) post very well captured the competitive mood in the Nigerian Out-of-Home advertising where businesses had been on the mute mode, courtesy of the global outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Since its unveiling on Sunday, June 7, 2020, "The Tower of Oworo", the billboard portrait with an unprecedented height and the largest of its type in our clime, that boasts of no fewer than 5million eye-balls per-day, is not only the latest innovative Out-of-Home product in Nigeria, but has promptly become a game changer in the industry.

And just a few weeks back, Elev8media

is why we are introducing the New Music Monday".

Commending the digital-driven OOH company and its new offerings, Mr. John Ajayi, Publisher/CEO of MARKETING EDGE, Nigeria's foremost brand and marketing publication, disclosed that Mr. Alalade's creative genius and ingenuity are not only entrepreneurially sound and logical but mostly value-driven, adding that Elev8 was already speaking and acting the words and wisdom of the new normal.

Ajayi said: "In today's marketing and advertising environment, the paradigm has shifted radically beyond mere selling in the traditional way. It is no longer the seller's market. We are all in the buyer's market where the language for competitive advantage, growth and requisite profitability in a fast-changing post-digital age is about value".

"It is the recurring decimal and the word in the heart of competitive growth in modern marketing. This, Elev8media has been doing with grit and gusto. I am so

happy for you and promise to help amplify your new value addition as an obsession and a culture all others should emulate."

Elev8media Advertising Limited was founded in 2016 and its core business is OOH advertising. The agency's mission is to provide its clients with effective and efficient medium of advertising that best targets

their audience.

The agency's client base is made up of large, medium and small scale businesses (Publicly quoted and Limited liability Companies) located in Lagos State.

The company has actually been in operation in the OOH market in Nigeria since 2007 but in February 2016, it rebranded as Elev8media Advertising Ltd with the aim of providing audience and technology driven effective solutions in the advertising sector.

Its mission is to connect its clients with their audiences in the most direct and engaging way possible through various effective means of advertising at all times.

Its offerings include LED OOH billboards, Mobile Billboard Trucks, and Transit TV, among others. The agency never fails to assure its clients, both actual and prospective, with the statement, "We Sell Audience Reach, Not Billboards".

Till date, Elev8media has been upbeat in its value offerings to its ever rising clientele, the industry in which it operates and the larger society. ■



added yet another new value when it unveiled "New Music Monday" on its two major state-of-the-art digital billboards, to wit, "King of Marina" and "Tower of Oworo", both strategically situated in the Lagos metropolis.

In this regard, the company will set out every Monday to celebrate and promote talents, especially music arts in Africa, and any song that makes it will get featured on the two iconic billboards.

Commenting on this novel development, Alalade observed that, "ELEV8 is not just a name, it's a lifestyle. We will take time every Monday to celebrate and promote talent, art and new music across Africa. Whichever song makes it gets featured on both billboards, which include King of Marina and Tower of Oworo, all day.

"With over one million views daily on both billboards, we have more than enough audience to make a difference. We want to ensure that everyone benefits from our audience, and what better way to do that than to promote our African sound? That

COVID-19 has necessitated a re-definition of CSR strategies – NDPHC boss

Mr. Chiedu Ugbo, an electric energy law specialist, is the Managing Director/CEO of Niger Delta Power Holding Company, NDPHC. He is a legal practitioner and an infrastructure regulation specialist, with extensive experience in advising clients on electric power and gas-to-power, sea port and other transportation modes – including sector reforms, privatization and commercialization, concessions, project development and off-take agreements, etc. His Specialties include Electric Power and Gas, Infrastructure, M&A, Privatisation, and Public-Private Partnerships. Under his leadership, the company has been commendably responsive to the challenges thrown at its stakeholders by the COVID-19 pandemic with highly impactful initiatives especially in its host communities across Nigeria. In an exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE, Ugbo reflects on the situation and elucidates on its company's strides in this regard. Excerpts:



How will you access Covid-19 pandemic and the corporate response so far?

Since this is the first time the world is facing a pandemic of this magnitude, the response was rapid and swift from Niger Delta Power Holding Company Limited {NDPHC} because as an organization that is service oriented; we had to step up and quickly look for ways to adapt to the new exigencies.

NDPHC developed a COVID-19 workplace guideline in accordance with the Federal Government's National Centre for Disease Control {NCDC} directives on COVID-19 response and Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA). The guideline promoted behavioral change among employees and visitors and provided information on precautionary measures to curb the spread of Corona virus.

Also, the company dispatched Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and palliatives to our host communities where our Power Plants and other projects are located nationwide. In assessing our

response, therefore, I would say so far so good, we have intervened as fast as we could in the first instance, and we are still doing more in that regard.

Would you say that Covid-19 pandemic has re-defined Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability?

Absolutely! The fact that this is a deadly and novel virus has made every responsible organization redefine their strategy in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, has become an all-essential for what companies do to integrate social and governance issues into their businesses. Before now, it had been a mere philanthropy, social engagement, and investor relations. But the coronavirus pandemic has pressed corporation and investors to make sure CSR is truly connected to delivering value to the host communities.

Using Niger Delta Power Holding Company as an example, the company had to re-strategize and re-organize; but, of course, had to be quick and effective in our actions towards alleviating the pains faced by Nigerians, especially those living in our host communities that need the assistance the most. They are most affected by this pandemic as most of them survive on daily wages, so it was a whole lot of hardship experienced especially during the total lockdown. Moving forward, we have been schooled by this pandemic and we are now rest assured that no matter what comes, we would be able to surmount any challenges in the future.

How will you assess the type and scope of CSR by the corporate bodies in Nigeria?

Different corporate philosophies drive CSR programs in every organization and their unique ways of handling such. The pandemic has shown Nigerians that we must always be ready for the unexpected.

Personally, I assess the type and scope of CSR by the corporate bodies in Nigeria very high because judging by the unexpected nature of the virus, Nigerian organizations have shown a lot of empathy in terms of combating and responding to an unexpected pandemic through various interventions. NDPHC is one of the corporate bodies that extended interventions to communities that lack the means of economic sustainability especially their host communities during the lockdowns.

Would you say that the COVID-19 pandemic has re-defined Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility? If yes, how? And, what are the new rethinking and re-definitions?

To me, it's a yes! It has re-defined Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility in various ways. Like I mentioned earlier, this is a brand new phenomenon to this generation; so we are learning all



through the way. Therefore, the new way of thinking should be how best we can improve strategies in making sure we are more effective in responding to such. More information should be harnessed, and we should always be ready and vigilant; and while being ready and vigilant we should also invest in trainings relevant to this.

Has there been any new normal in Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, courtesy of COVID-19? If yes, what is the new normal?

Of course! Since it is a novel virus, it is new to everyone so new innovative measures are being dished out every day to target this issue. The new normal of COVID-19 is its strange protocols of lockdowns, observing social distancing, wearing of face masks, and of treating everyone as suspect until they prove their innocence. Also, working from home has become the new norm, thus threatening teamwork and decision-making.

At NDPHC, we are making sure that every day we focus on ways to keep our staff safe through the safety measures highlighted by the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC). We sanitize our office spaces intermittently; all our staff are provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and are educated properly on the benefits of social distancing. So, our new normal is basically the new normal for the world going forward till we win the fight against this pandemic.

In what ways has NDPHC responded to the new normal in Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility?

NDPHC has been allocating resources towards COVID-19 response through sensitization program for Staff at the Corporate Headquarters in Abuja, facilitated by Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC), provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and compliance with the Federal Government's directives on restriction of movement to curb the spread of Corona virus.

What specific CSR initiatives has your organization embarked upon as a direct response to COVID-19 pandemic?

Following the rising cases and numbers of Covid-19 infections across the country, in our swift response, NDPHC extends its

interventions to the Host Communities, spread across nine states where its Power Stations are situated, as part of efforts to show empathy on this sad situation. Hereunder, is the list of Host Communities that benefited from PPE supply:

The breakdown of the host communities to each Genco are as follows:

- i. Geregu --- 4 host communities
- ii. Omotosho --- 2 host communities plus TCN and police station
- iii. Ogorode --- 2 host communities
- iv. Calabar --- 4 host communities
- v. Gbarain --- 1 host community
- vi. Benin --- 4 host communities
- vii. Alaoji --- 5 host communities
- viii. Oloronsogo --- 4 host communities

NDPHC distributed relief materials like hand sanitizers, face masks, hand wash, latex hand gloves, tissue paper boxes and some other incentives to give succor to the host communities.

How will you assess the impact of such initiatives so far on the people and your publics?

Well, since the culture of CSR is embedded in our organization, I feel it is a no brainer for us when it comes to engaging and impacting the lives of people meaningfully in those communities. We strongly believe that apart from what we have done and are still doing during this pandemic, we have always pushed the envelope further in terms of our engagements regarding Corporate Social Responsibility. The communities are very appreciative of this gesture.

To what extent have these initiatives helped in meeting your set corporate goals and objectives?

We are a corporate organization that is service oriented. Our key mandate is to provide infrastructure that will ease the issues in the power sector in Nigeria. NDPHC, under the NIPP (National Integrated Power Project), has built several Power Stations and Transmission Sub-Stations in different communities in Nigeria and as we are providing power to Nigerians, we are also being seen to be providing social amenities alongside to ease people's sufferings.

How do those initiatives align with your sustainability/CSR credentials as an

organization?

Since we are experiencing this strain of Corona virus that has spread across the world for the first time, of course new measures and new initiatives have been recognized and put in place. So, these initiatives are borne through necessity. These are new times, so I must say that the pandemic has brought us to a new level of thinking. The virus necessitated the new initiatives that are being adopted in the battle to end the spread.

What's NDPHC's outlook on the future of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility post COVID-19?

Our outlook on the future is very positive. No one expected 2020 to be this way but it just shows us that in all things we must always be prepared. We have seen our strengths and weaknesses and know where to improve in terms of Sustainability and CSR, post COVID-19.

Technology will play a significant role in the operations and processes of the organization, coupled with a new approach to strategic planning and management in work environment is now required. Scenario planning will enable the company to produce better plans for how it might effectively respond to the new, emerging future. ■



11 PLC: Excelling in Operations, Exemplary in CSR

The story of 11 PLC Formerly Mobil Oil Nigeria Plc in Nigeria dates back to 1907 when Socony Vacuum Oil Company began marketing operations in Nigeria, through the sale of Sunflower Kerosene.

In 1951, the company became a limited liability company with a change in name from Socony Vacuum to Mobil Oil Nigeria Limited. Twenty seven years later in 1978, the company became a publicly quoted company and assumed the name Mobil Oil Nigeria Plc.

In October 2016, NIPCO Investment Company acquired 60% shareholding of ExxonMobil and in pursuant of a special resolution passed at her Annual General Meeting in May 2017, changed its name from Mobil Oil Nigeria Plc to 11 PLC (Pronounced Double One PLC).

11 PLC is the sole authorized distributor of Mobil fuel and lubricant brands in Nigeria and continues to post superior returns to its shareholders. She is committed to lead the oil industry in efficiency, brand image and safety.

The company is one of the six major petroleum products marketers in the country. It currently has over 250 retail outlets located in all 36 states of Nigeria; these include many state-of-the-art outlets.

11 PLC is respected in the industry for its high ethical standards and adherence to safety, health and environmental standards. It also plays a leading role in the promotion and sharing of best practices in the downstream sector of Nigeria's oil and gas industry. It has a fuel facility and an ultra-modern lube oil plant in Apapa, Lagos, with a capacity of 450,000 barrels per annum, which is regarded as one of the most sophisticated in Africa.

Its talented and diverse workforce remains the most prized asset. Through their efforts, the

company has met and in many cases exceeded its key objectives. 11 PLC cherishes its workforce and invests significantly in the upgrading of their knowledge and leadership skills required to maintain the cornerstone of the business. 11 PLC continues to receive complimentary feedbacks about the quality and value of its products and services.

Its backcourts partnership with UAC (Mr. Biggs) at some Mobil retail outlets are models in Nigeria; while its product haulage vehicles continue to set the standard in transportation safety in the industry. The company remains the industry benchmark for ethics, safety, operational excellence and quality standards.

Fuels

11 PLC serves retail and commercial fuels customers across Nigeria using its own fuel terminals and other strategically located terminal. Its products and services in this area include:

- More than 250 franchise retail stations to meet customers' needs throughout Nigeria.
- Food stores and marts that provide fast and friendly services.
- It continues to explore opportunities in aviation and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Commonly called cooking gas) for business growth and expansion.
- In November 2018, the company announced its re-entry into the sale and marketing of Aviation Fuel popularly known as ATK (Aviation Turbine Kerosene) at Murtala Mohammed International Airport, General Aviation Terminal (GAT – Domestic) with other selected airport terminals to follow nationwide. This was possible having made huge and significant investments in ATK storage and pipeline infrastructure to take Aviation in Nigeria to greater heights.



Mr. Tunji Oyebojani, MD, 11PLC



As part of our Corporate Social Responsibility during this period of COVID-19 pandemic, 11PLC had embarked on the production and distribution of nose masks for the Marine Beach community in Apapa LGA. On hand to receive the initial tranche of 2,500 pieces is the Head of The Community, "Baale" and a member of his council. Additional 2,000 were made available to other stakeholders within the adjourning community including the security formations



11PLC provided 50 bags of rice and 10 cartons of vegetable oil as relief packages during this COVID-19 pandemic to support the food bank of the Apapa Federal constituency under the auspices of the Honorable Alhaji Mufutau Egberongbe, representing Apapa Federal Constituency in the Federal of Representative of The Federal Republic of Nigeria. On hand to receive the items from 11PLC representative is the Special Adviser to the Hon. Member of The House of Representative, Mr. Mike Egbayelo



Food supplies presented to the Ogbonna family (Mobil s/s Waterlines site landlord) by 11plc as support towards mitigating against the adverse effects of the Covid 19 pandemic



With approval from 11PLC management before the Sallah break, we procured and distributed some food items as palliative to retirees of Mobil Oil/ 11PLC during the COVID 19 pandemic. On hand to receive the materials on behalf of the group was Mr Samuel Okpanku (Vice Chairman) and another member.

Lubricants

11 PLC's Mobil 1 brand keeps people and machines moving since before the first gasoline-powered automobile. From the Wright Brothers' first flight to the launch of the space station, from the first automobiles to the latest Grand Prix cars, its fuels and oils have continuously been keeping millions of vehicles performing at their best.

The Mobil 1 brand meets or exceeds the latest standards of the global oil industry and vehicle manufacturers. From NASCAR to Grand Prix, Le Mans to Indy Racing League and Formula 1, winning motorsport teams trust Mobil 1 technology to deliver the performance and engine protection needed to meet the grueling demands of the race tracks.

Its Mobil Super™ is the global family of premium passenger vehicle engine oils that provide different levels of protection to match the conditions you face, so that you can drive with full confidence.

As a caring corporate citizen, 11 PLC's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) aims to support health and malaria control, science and mathematics education, youth and women empowerment and other charitable programs especially for the less privileged within the immediate community and beyond.

Significantly, the company since the Coronavirus pandemic crept into Nigeria, the company has come up with several well-thought-out CSR initiatives through which it has touched the lives of people in its operating communities. Such initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Provision 50 bags of rice and 10 cartons of vegetable oil as relief packages during this COVID-19 pandemic to support the Food Bank of the Apapa Federal constituency under the auspices of the Honorable Alhaji Mufutau Egberongbe, representing Apapa Federal Constituency in the Federal of Representative of The Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- Presentation of food supplies to the Ogbonna family (Mobil s/s Waterlines site landlord) as support towards mitigating against the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The production and distribution of nose masks for the Marine Beach community in Apapa LGA.
- Procurement and distribution of some food items as palliative to retirees of Mobil Oil/ 11PLC during the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



Leading the pack on mass public awareness campaign against COVID-19 pandemic

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). Plural Media has also 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.

Quite significantly, the front running OOH company has joined both the governments and the people of Nigeria in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic by deploying its LED boards to a massive public enlightenment campaign in several major cities in the country.

The pictures below attest to this:



At Ojota Interchange by Gani Fawehinmi Park Ftf Magodo, Motorways to Ojota, Oworonshoki



At Ojota Interchange by Gani Fawehinmi Park Ftf Magodo, Motorways to Ojota, Oworonshoki



Allen Roundabout FTF Allen Avenue, Alausa/Awolowo Way, Ikeja Lagos



Along Aba road by Air Force junction FTF Artillery, Shell to Rumuola, NAF Heliport, Stadium, P/H

A new dawn at National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria

A new dawn may have finally birthed at the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) as the nation's regulatory marketing body today concluded election of major officials into its governing council albeit peacefully and digitally with mass participation by the rank and file of members across the country.

The National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) is the body for professionals engaged in marketing and related fields as marketing practitioners, sales and marketing directors, customer relationship managers, media planners, channel developers, creative directors, value builders, etc.

The Institute was established by Act of the National Assembly no. 25 Of 2003 with a chartered status conferred on it, the responsibility to regulate and standardize marketing professional practice through the conduct of comprehensive professional examinations and certifications, training, retraining and consultancy services geared towards ensuring that members adopt professional approach to marketing and other related areas of marketing activities.

Prior to the election that ended today, the body organized an online debate for individual aspirants and contestants to showcase their vision and idea for the institute.

Without any equivocation, the NIMN 2020 election debates, and indeed the electioneering process and procedure were quite unique, novel and distinctly rich and robust in all aspects and ramifications.

Top on contenders list for the 1st Vice-President position is Mr. IdyEnang, former CEO of Samsung West Africa, former Commercial Director of Cadbury and many other blue chip companies.

Also contesting is Dr. KachiOnubogu, CEO of Frutta Juice and Services, one of the leading fruits manufacturing outfits in Nigeria. This was after he had served as Group Executive Director in the TGI Group. He has worked with Guinness Nigeria Plc before leaving for Promasidor Nigeria where he worked for several years as Commercial Director. He is tested and trusted as well.

Also in the race is Mrs. IfeomaEmesiana Dike, a career Public Servant and Dr. Umar Mustapha, incumbent 1st Vice President who has a rich and veritable experience working in Corporations, marketing organizations and public service. Dr. Mustapha is a multi-disciplinary scholar with impeccable educational background as well as professional degree.

The position of 2nd Vice-President is unopposed with Mr. ChukaEborah. However, the contest for the Council position is also a little fierce as five contestants are jostling for 4 vacant seats. Contestants the Council membership are in no mean order. They are, MessrsBabatundeBewaji, Hope Gbagi, Walter Okafor, Dr. Peter Oriavwote and one Female Marketing Amazon, Mrs.



AdenikeOlufade, former Executive Director, Marketing at Nigeria Television Anthony. (N.T.A).

For a better appreciation of what is currently unraveling at NIMN today, it would not be an out of place discussion to attribute the developments to its leadership ably led by Mr. Tony Agenmomen and exco. This human enigma and management turn-around guru who may sometimes appear to be running a solo race but in truth and indeed has more than a motley of marketing eggheads and well-heeled intellectuals in his informal courts and group of friends and associates assisting him in brainstorming towards making the institute better and greater.

Four years down the line, and as the Chief helmsman, Tony has impacted and impacted. A ready pointer to this assertion is the fact that the gamut of revolutionary and brand re-engineering efforts put in place which have paid off are clear proofs. The self-evasive and ebullient Tony Agenmomen leadership midas touch in the saddle have finally climaxed in the millennial election contest being witnessed by all and sundry. Though a virtual election, Tony Agenmomen's exco had done a pain-staking job in preparation for this historic assignment. ■

David Idahoise, a Nigerian Experiential Marketing Revolutionary

He is a revolutionary of some sort, not necessarily because he is participating in or advocating a revolution; but because he has made and is making a major impact on experiential marketing, his sphere of professional practice and entrepreneurship, and, through it, the larger Nigerian society, in particular, and humanity, in general.

He is David Idahoise; Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Lagos, Nigeria based Route712 Experiential Agency.

By AMOS OLADELE



If anyone is in doubt of his revolutionary bent, such a one should just check Idahoise out in his office and on his company's website. One insightful statement that will keep gracing your face everywhere is "Everything you can imagine is real", a statement credited to Pablo Picasso, a Spanish artist who is recognized not only as the most important artist of the 20th century, but

also as one of the most significant artists in recorded history. Picasso was said to have revolutionized modern art and influenced all subsequent generations of artists.

In the same talking, David Idahoise has, for over 10 years emerged as one of the leading lights in the Nigerian experiential marketing ecosystem which he is still bestriding like an emerging colossus, and impacting on the sector's generationnext,

positively.

An experiential marketing professional cum entrepreneur, Dave, as he is simply called, is the founder and chief executive officer of the above mentioned company which is a front running experiential marketing agency in Nigeria.

He is a dynamic, bold, savvy, highly creative and skilled experiential/events marketer with strong commercial mind with experience in brand and segment marketing and management.

With over 15 years Demonstrated Experience in Live + Brand + Digital Experience Strategy Development - Experiential Marketing, his areas of expertise include, but are not limited to Brand and Consumer Marketing Management; Segment Marketing and Management; Experiential marketing concepts; Social and sponsorship marketing; New Product Development/ launches Presence field marketing and brands research; Events management.

In terms of specialties, Idahoise has much knack for Administrative support, Brand management, budgeting, Competitive analysis, Concept development, Leadership, Logistics, Market analysis, Idea generation, Research, Staff training & Motivation, Strategic, and Team management & Building.

This prodigious professional cum entrepreneur founded Route 712 over ten years ago. The company is an indigenous Nigerian experiential marketing agency, dedicated to fascinating consumers with the



marketing practitioner had traversed the industry and garnered experiences and exposures, both local and international that prepared him for the roles he now plays, not only in his company but also in the entire industry and the larger society.

He was Activation Specialist at EXP Nigeria, Nigeria's first international activation firm between 2004 and 2005; and Operations/Business Development Manager at Oracle Experience, one of Nigeria's leading experiential marketing agencies between 2006 and 2008. Before then, he had been General Manager, Operations at Mabatpro Agency; and Operations Manager (Activations) at ResQ Promotions (2005-2006).

At all of those places, the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State graduate of Biochemistry recorded record breaking performances that birthed numerous milestones for both the organizations and him.

This record has been vastly replicated in the very intimidating records of achievement of Route 712, in terms of account wins, running record breaking campaigns, and a consistently rising growth trajectory for both itself and its clients' brands under its belt.

For instance, stakeholders would not forget in a hurry such campaigns handled by the agency like MOUKA Flora & Legend Mattress Brand Unveiling; DIAGEO McDowell Football Frenzy Activation; McDowell platinum whisky launch; ONGA Foodies Hangout Activations; ONGA Next Top Chef Campus activation; COWBELL Coffee Campus Revelation; COWBELL Choco NYSC Volleyball Activation; COWBELL Milk Roadshows & GSM Consumer Experience; COWBELL Milk Schools Activation; COWBELL Evaporated Milk Activation; KASAPREKO Kalahari And Carnival Strawberry Brands Activation; LOYA Milk Brand Activation; FERRERO Tic-Tac Shake & Share Activation; and Reckitt Benckiser Door to Door activations, just to mention a few.

As should be expected of such a deeply experienced and vastly exposed egghead, Dave has been recognized, honored and celebrated through several recognitions, commendations, referrals and awards.

Perhaps, Jack Nwaigwe, Cluster Retail Sales Manager at 9mobile Nigeria, captures it all when he said, "David is a Manager oriented towards achieving any set target; he is both a team player as well as master strategist, i do recommend him to give a detailed report on whatever task he embarks upon, a very thorough and efficient individual". ■



sole objective of brand awareness.

He has attracted to the company some of the brightest minds in Nigeria's brand activation and marketing industry to keep it at the top of the experiential marketing space.

With a primary business objective to maximize budgets and reach a wider target audience for its clients, Route 712 has proven itself to be an invaluable partner to the most successful companies in Nigeria as their strategic experiential marketing solutions agency.

As the helmsman of the burgeoning agency, Dave has direct responsibility for generation of creative proposals to clients; managing strategy development for the brands as well as driving the implementation of agreed integrated marketing programs, including market analysis and consumer segmentation. He is versed at maximizing all opportunities to activate demand for leading brands through innovative solutions; competitive analysis and strategy for top leading Nigeria brands; he is accountable for flawless execution of clients' events/promotions projects; ensures effective utilization of resources to achieve set client/project objectives; and managing, direct, motivate and develop subordinates to attain high standards of performance, all at a competitive and an affordable budget for clients.

He effectively plans for long and short term strategic objectives for both client and company; and sets and achieves turn-over budget/target for the business development unit; as well as tactical PR management and media tracking.

Before founding his own company over a decade ago, this iconic experiential

WHY WE LAUNCHED AMBER ENERGY DRINK,

SAYS **LOLA ADEDEJI**,
GENERAL MANAGER, AMBER ENERGY DRINK LTD



Despite the general lull occasioned by the recent lockdowns on the national economy because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Nigerian market remains resilient, vibrant and dynamic with multiplicity of brands and products jostling for consumers' attention.

Reviewing the post-lockdown market situation vis-à-vis the Nigeria economy, the General Manager of Amber Energy Drinks Ltd, Ms. Lola Adedeji whose company recently launched Amber Energy Drink into the market at an interactive chat with a select group of newsmen in Lagos said the Nigeria economy offers great hope for prospective investors.

Specifically, she said the energy drinks market where she is a major player offers far greater opportunities and potentials for growth. She also enjoined the Federal Government of Nigeria to encourage small and medium scale entrepreneurs by granting them tax rebates while providing an environment that is conducive for business enterprises.

Amber is now playing in Nigeria's energy drinks market; how do you assess the market?

The Nigerian energy drinks market, is, no doubt, a very big market; it is one that can accommodate anyone and everyone. Nigeria's energy drink sector is a lucrative industry with market research fore-casting a yearly consumption growth of over 6.5% by 2022. This is slightly an increase in the 5% annual growth experienced between 2014 and 2016, which made the average consumption to be about 25.5 liters according to the World Health Organization (WHO) report January this year. The questions would then be who are you targeting and what are you delivering? So, it is the best market and I think that if you understand who you are targeting,

where you are going, you will play perfectly well in it.

So, who are you targeting and where are you going with Amber brand?

We are targeting the man; woman or girl who understands quality; who understands what it means to have a healthy lifestyle.

The market is very competitive; are you ready to play and, if yes, how ready are you?

We are ready to play ball. For us, we have done everything possible; we have even gone the extra mile to which many other companies cannot go to prepare ourselves. We have taken our time to study not just the market but also who our consumers are, and we have decided that every step of the way, Amber will meet the needs of

that consumer anyway we can. So, if you say it is competitive, yes it is. To ask if we are ready to play ball, yes we are. So, as we unveil, as time goes on you will see the wonders of Amber.

The market is not there just for the taking; there would be challenges. What do you perceive as challenges and what strategies would Amber deploy to surmount these challenges?

One of the biggest challenges in the Nigerian market is that quality is not what a lot of Nigerians understand. For instance, for an energy drink, the first question they ask is "Is it cold? How much is it? Is it sweet? Is it bitter? These are their four main questions. On our part, we have taken our time to come up with the Amber brand. Besides answering all those questions it also nourishes the body. The challenge is communicating to the average Nigerian why this is the best option for him/her. That is what we have taken out time to study and find ways to get to them easily. Once they have it or they come in contact with the brand, every step of the way they are being informed about the good things about the brand and why they should take Amber as their preferred brand. It will take time; but we will get there.

What are the unique selling points of Amber?

Just for the lay man; let's assume that you like coffee and you can have three cups of coffee and feel like you have had enough of it. But with Amber energy drink, you will have three Cans of it, and the total caffeine intake is equivalent to that of one strong cup of coffee. However, with one Can of Amber you are energized!

We played with the caffeine level; we introduced Guarana which is a natural caffeine. It will boost you naturally without

being detrimental to your heart or to your liver, but it will give you the boost that artificial caffeine will give.

Mind you, I am not saying that there is no artificial caffeine in it at all; but the quantity is reduced. We also packed it full with vitamins and nutrients that would help to energize your body. For instance we all know that sugar is an energiser but too much of it is a death trap; These are the things we took into consideration when creating a Can of Amber, such that even if you decide to take three Cans a day you are still within limit. That is why Amber is your best option. It gives you a better taste; it gives you a lasting impression; the Can is beautiful. And it's also going to meet with some of your nutritional and economic needs

But, then, I don't want to give out all our secrets. But it will meet all your needs when you become a loyalist to Amber because it is not just refreshing you, it also builds your energy and gives you a better quality of life

Are you saying that Amber is for everyone?

Yes, it is for everyone that is not pregnant. Pregnant women should not take it. People below sixteen should not take it; reason being that they are still in their formative stages. Ideally, you take water or juice but from sixteen upwards, but in Nigeria they say eighteen. All said and done, I'm sure it is good for everyone.

What strategies do you have to communicate these special attributes of Amber to your potential customers?

First of all the quality, the affordability, the availability and our passion for the consumer. We have BTL and ATL marketing; we have digital marketing and the main media marketing. The drive is to make sure that anyone who interacts with

our brand can easily understand what we are communicating.

The next question is how? When you go on the landing pages of all our social media; on our website; you can even go on our helpline; these are all available to let you know that every step of the way you can get Amber to release the energy in you. In every aspect of your life, right from waking up from your bed Amber is available to stimulate the energy you need for each day. It is also there to unleash the energy in you to take you from one level to another. That's what we want to communicate to our consumers.

What is Amber's brand personality and what strategy have you put in place to communicate that brand personality?

When you first look at it, the first thing you see is brand appeal. This is a sophisticated Can, good design and packaging. The next thing you see is the logo and you will see there is something adventurous about this logo. Over time, when you get to meet Amber, you will say oh this brand is actually sincere. When you open it you taste the excitement. So, these are some of the things I would say we are communicating to our consumers.

What activities are you creating to launch and communicate Amber brand in this global lockdown occasioned by COVID-19?

We have launched digitally. We launched in the new normal way. We had to go back to the drawing board to assess and identify areas and places where the government have allowed people to meet and gather in line with the Covid-19 safety protocols. We identified what the people are looking at now, We discovered that most people are watching their TV, listening to their radios, they are seeing billboards, they are looking at buses, they are reading newspapers, and they are looking at things that will create excitement for them because it has been a trying time for the whole world. For us, therefore, we key into those areas to make sure that Amber is available at every point. If you wake up in the morning and walk out, you find Amber on the BRT buses. When you get out and you are in the BRT bus and you look at your phone screen you will see Amber. When you listen to your radio or put on your TV you find Amber on your TV. When you get into a supermarket, you will find Amber there. So, we are taking our time to track the lifestyle of an average Nigerian and we are following them there to



ensure that we are within the regulation of the federal government but we are meeting Nigerians at every point of the way.

Launching a new product at this COVID-19 era; you must be bold and courageous. Despite the challenges occasioned by the lockdown, here you are expressing confidence at the success of Amber. Where is that confidence coming from?

For me as a person, I have always been intrinsically motivated. One of my key words is “Nothing is impossible.” Second, I believe in the Nigerian market; the Nigerian market is not one that will wither away because of the storm. We have been through many storms and we know how to weather them. I am a Nigerian with the original naija spirit. I am resilient and my brand is resilient.

Is Amber your first experience with the Nigerian business environment?

No, I am a serial entrepreneur. I have been around in the market. I have been in the Nigerian business environment for a long time.

What has been your experience doing business in Nigeria?

First of all, I would say that the Nigerian market is not for the faint hearted. If you want to do it you have to do it. With the Nigerian business experience I learnt that every challenge is there to teach you something; not that it is not going to break you down temporarily but you will definitely come back stronger. And over the years I have learnt that every time there is something blocked, when I go back and look at it properly, there is a solution in it. So, using this theory, there are many things people are scared of. Most of the time fear is a function of the mind, it's not reality. That is how I see life. So, for me every time something shows up, I sit down and look at it properly. You take self away from it with business, self means emotions, because we all have our fears; once you are able to push past that, that means, nothing is impossible, absolutely nothing.

Given what you have said, would you advise investors to come and invest in Nigeria?

I will say yes to a large extent depending on what you are investing in. Once you know what you are investing in and you have done your research and you have your data, go ahead and invest. A seed has to die to grow. But now, if you feel you just have the money to throw around, this is not the time to throw around money. For someone that doesn't know what he is doing but just wants some kind of investment, I would say keep your money in the bank and let it be giving you some little returns till we find some stability.

How do you see your brand adapting and adopting to the local business environment?

My brand is a household name. That is how I see it. For me, therefore, adapting to the environment is a no brainer. The moment you experience the brand, you fall in love with it, you will take it home. Your kids will tell their kids and their kids will tell their kids. It becomes a household name.

Your plans to grow the brand?

I am very passionate about the grassroots because that is the strength of the country. So, we are growing the brand from bottom up; making sure that the average Nigerian would experience the brand.

Is it positioned for every segment of the market?

Yes, affordability is one of the things we pride ourselves in.



Affordability is relative; that's why I didn't say cheap. Now, once you understand quality you will understand that it is affordable. So, the most important thing is to get people to understand what they are getting first. Give people value, which is key. Let's use, for example, the bus conductor; he is doing that because he is aspiring to be something. Every step of the way there is a value proposition for him and there is a value he is looking for. He feels like he is going somewhere else. Amber is there to show you that from the lowest to the top, you are always going to need Amber. So it is positioned that everybody should drink Amber, from the boy that is pushing Keke to the CEO, everybody should have Amber. It is positioned to meet the energy boosting requirements of everybody.

What's your plan to sustain Amber's market share in this new normal?

First and foremost, a brand takes the character of the owner and so if the owner is very fickle it is inevitable the brand will be fickle. We are indomitable. That's my take on that.

What is your take away from COVID-19, which would guide your business strategies going forward?

For me, it reminds me that emergent strategies are very important. Don't ever think in your mind that the strategy I have is the best and will remain so forever. It has thought me to always think. I always think; but it has made me to go back thinking and to find details. I am very open to new advice; but you have to be more open because COVID-19 thought us that you don't know until you know or you think you know. And you may not even know. And that at every time you should be willing to be fluid but don't lose your core.

When we began the year, we had a strategy. But oh with Corona virus pandemic, we said this is what we have. So we have to tune it to what is happening now to get the same result. So, COVID-19 opened my mind and I faced one of my biggest fears which is staying at home and not doing anything. I couldn't imagine it. I am always traveling. I am someone that is so used to being busy. I travel a lot and in four months I haven't gone anywhere. Even at that, I am a very smiling person who wants to be in the midst of people; but now you can't hug and things like that. It also showed compassion for people. Even if I have been compassionate, I now have a bit more compassion for people. Now I pay closer attention to people, to my

staff, etc. It opened up that human side that I knew I had but I didn't know the depth of it.

What do you have for the consumer who is faced choosing either of two choices, food and Amber, to go for Amber instead of food given the times we are in?

The beauty of the drink is that everybody wants to unwind with something nice; even if I want to eat or drink water which is necessary. Sometimes I may want to have a drink. The pandemic changed only the way we associate with people and not the way we associate with the things we buy. The new normal has not affected consumption and the needs that must be met. What we are trying to do is to make you experience Amber; once you like Amber it will make its way to your house. That's the plan. Alongside that, we want to meet the needs of our consumers. Consumers' needs are food, drink, life, shelter and money. Those five things we are meeting. Amber will empower its consumers. We have plans on how we can ensure that because you interacted with a Can of Amber, your life will never be the same. Apart from you giving us your money, we are going to give you a reason to live.

Advise to the Federal government on how to support businesses at this time?

I think they should support businesses, by looking at tax rebates for Nigerian brands whether it is produced here or elsewhere but it is marketed in Nigeria and it is for Nigerians. For instance, Amber is produced in South Africa but you see if the federal government has provided us with enabling environment production in Nigeria is good. However, to produce the quality we need, certain raw materials which were imported from all over the world to ensure that every Can has top quality. Now bringing it down here, the first issue we have is with the ports, in the process of clearing, some of our things have been vandalized. So, it is safe to bring the finished products in Cans. Nonetheless, over time, our plan is to produce Amber in Nigeria at some point; but when I cannot tell you.

Having met your brand, can I get to meet the person behind the Amber brand; who you are; your background, etc?

My name is Lola Adediji. I will say that I am a serial entrepreneur. I had my educational background in Nigeria, UK and Ghana. I have a passion for God; I love God. I love people. I can be fun but I am super driven.

I can be playful sometimes but not when I am doing business. I love traveling. I love shopping. I love meeting people but that is weird because I am very reserved. I can meet people but I don't want them in space too much. I take people in bits. I spend more time thinking, creating things in my head and bringing them to life. I do a lot of mingling. When you eat too much pizza, you don't like pizza anymore. That is how it has been.

Your passion?

I think that the first thing is that when I put



my pen on paper on a plan, I relax. I like seeing it come out. I like getting results. I love helping people achieve their dreams. I find joy in that. For instance, my staff, I want a situation in which when they leave, they are better than they ever imagined. I like investing in people and I like people investing in me. So, my passion I would say is bringing things to life and building people. I am always looking for a way to play my part to make people better.

What's your style?

I would say I like classy, elegant style; but sometimes I am edgy. The basic thing is that I like to feel comfortable in whatever I am wearing. Sometimes it might look edgy, and, at other times, classy or elegant. I put together stuffs that I feel look good on me. It might not necessarily look good on someone else because we don't have the same body type.

Are you crazy about any brand name?

No. I put together anything that I like but, most times, brands that have quality. It is not necessarily about a name, but it must be about quality it is about perception.

What's childhood like?

First of all, I am the twelfth child. I am the last child.

How come you were not spoiled?

From a very young age, I said to my dad that I never wanted his wealth. I think at age sixteen I asked him how he became so rich. He told me how he had to struggle and all that before he made it. And it occurred to me that he didn't have any inheritance yet he had made so much for himself. So, from that time on I figured that I wanted to do my own thing and that's how I have been driven. Of course, I have supportive parents, supportive family. I was blessed to have people who guided and tutored me from every mistake; who will say if this didn't work, try it this way. I had a community; and that sharpened my confidence.

Tell us about this mingling stuff

I used to be super friendly. I used to have a lot of girls. I had my fair share of parties. One of my past time in life is events planning. So, I know how to put things together and I enjoy seeing people have fun; even if I don't want to be part of the fun, I can create the fun and then move out. As such, I had my fair share of partying, traveling, clubbing, house parties but in my head, I keep reminding myself of who I am; I never strayed. Even in my parties, there was always decency. This explains why you will never see my face or name in anything wrong. I always had it at the back of my head that even while I was partying if I must be something in life then I must be proportionate in everything I do.

There is the belief, out there by some youths, that there is easy money; that they don't have to work hard to make money. With your wealthy background you are still working hard to earn an honest living. Being a young beautiful woman yourself, what advice would you give to that young girl or boy who still believes by virtue of what they watch or read on social media, that there is easy way to make money?

First thing I always say is that money is a deception. It is because of the deception that they always say there is easy money. Money always gravitates to the people who know how to use it. If money comes to you and you don't know how to use it, it will fizzle away. So, easy money does not exist; but foolish money does. So, what I need to tell young people is, invest in your mind. Money is a reward for hard work. It is not a reason for hard work. ■

At Brands Optimal, we go beyond what is humanly conceivable

– Otis Ojeikhoa

Mr. Otis Ojeikhoa is one of the leading lights in the experiential marketing sector of Nigeria's integrated marketing communications industry. A professional cum entrepreneur, Otis, as he is simply called, is the founder and chief executive officer of Brands Optimal, a front running experiential marketing agency in Nigeria. Before founding his own company, this iconic experiential marketing practitioner had garnered over 15 years marketing and sales experience with nine of those years in Senior Management positions. He was Country Sales Manager at Kodak; and Managing Director at Brand Footprint. It is on record that Otis designed and executed successful major brand building campaigns for such clients as P&G, Airtel, Cadbury, La Casera, SABMiller, PernodRicard, Diageo, Coca-Cola, Reckitt and Guinness from Strategy to Execution, Monitoring and Evaluation. Brands Optimal, which he founded and he's leading, is one of Nigeria's leading Experiential Marketing agencies with presence both in Nigeria and Ghana. In this exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE's AMOS OLADELE and ANIETIE UDOH**, the soft spoken yet very deep professional cum entrepreneur goes down memory lane to talk about the journey so far of an agency which he founded basically to find fulfillment and how so fulfilling it is turning out to be.



You went full blast with Brands Optimal five years ago; what was the drive behind it?

The reason I went full blast with Brands Optimal five years ago was because of the need to fulfill myself; not because I thought it was cool to start an agency of my own.

Before then, I was the MD of Brand Footprint Communications; but towards the end of 2014, the relationship became very frosty, so I had to leave to avoid embarrassments, having used my sweat and blood to build it to the level it was. I didn't need to destroy it; I just took my passion and energy to fend for myself.

The story is not one of the happiest ones, because all I asked for was just 10% of the businesses I got; but it didn't quite go well with the owners. So, I decided to take the bull by the horn and move on.

There were so many times in the past (before 2014) that people thought I owned Brand Footprint; people who knew I didn't own it had called on me to start my own business but I was blinded by passion and the need to take the business to a certain level.

In fact, at that time, I was taking the business to a point where we did businesses of up to a billion Naira! We started doing that within 2 to 3 years after I took it over. Later, I moved it to 2 billion because I was always setting higher targets for myself with the company until I realised that I wasn't appreciated as I should have been; so I moved on to start something of my own.

Mind you, it wasn't about pride or the knowledge that I had acquired through my eight-year experience in the industry at the time; it was about fulfilling myself elsewhere.

When I started Brands Optimal full-fledged, the impetus then was to prove to myself that what I did with Brand Footprint wasn't a fluke; I set the same target which I had set for Brand Footprint for myself, though the conditions of the business environment had become more harsh than it was in 2008, I still set the same target for myself. Also, I surrounded myself with a group of people that I believe share the same kind of passion that I have, and we went into the industry, and because of the goodwill that I built and the technical experience that I have in the industry, it was easier to pitch for jobs, and that was it! To prove to myself that what I did with Brand Footprint was borne out of passion, dedication, commitment and uncommon zeal to succeed.

In setting out full-fledged, did you in your mind (theoretically or practically) benchmark what you were birthing against any local or International agency of its kind?

I'll be very honest with you, I grew up with standards and before setting out to be on my own, I had worked with big multinationals with global best practices and standards. So, there was no way I could have gone into Brands Optimal full-fledged without looking for someone I could measure myself against. Yes, I did! This person is

not just a friend in the industry, the experience is somewhat similar; it is X3M Ideas owned by Steve Babaeko. Even till now, he remains one of the hottest heads in the creative industry and his agency one of the most powerful award winning agencies we have around.

I wanted to create something that measures against the performance of X3M Ideas; even our call to actions and operating principles signify going beyond the normal and what is humanly conceivable. We tell ourselves internally that “we would rather die doing it than to use the excuse of I don’t want to die”. We take on extreme initiatives and take bold steps. So, we mirrored our principles, business objectives, staffing, and creativity against those of X3M Ideas. Our mission statement also clearly mirrors them because I saw him as best in class and a standard of measure.

What are the game changing projects that Brands Optimal has handled within these 5 years?

The very first one was audacious, not because of its size but because of the concept and the location of it. Brands Optimal was part of the team that handled the Hero lager brand so when we wanted to launch, we wanted to launch with a music property in the heart of Onitsha which is the core of Hero lager beer.

At that time, there wasn’t any known social event of that size happening at night, at least none that is recorded, done by any corporate brand PR; no alcoholic brand. As such, when we proposed to stage ‘Hero Fiesta’ as the launch platform for Hero lager beer, everybody thought we were crazy. They asked, “do you want to die?” This was simply because it was unheard of to do a night show in Onitsha in the last 10-20 years because of the security challenges. Up till that time, if people wanted to do big events like that, they would go to Enugu, Awka or Asaba. But we said, that is why we should even do it! We had spoken to a lot of people and sampled opinions also bearing in mind that the Onitsha people are not inherently destructive and aggressive, they are also peace loving, and they looked forward to unwind after the long day’s work; they just didn’t have the platform to express and enjoy themselves.

For sure, it was a bit difficult to get the stakeholders convinced ab initio; but somehow we got it through; we got adequate security and we staged the first night event at the stadium, the stronghold in Onitsha. It was massive, we had over 20,000 people, the stadium was packed full. Thereafter, the brand launched off and they exceeded their two years’ production target in less than three months! As should be expected, that instantly threw us up as having the ability to do big stuffs and it still remains one of the proudest things which we have done in terms of understanding what the gaps in the markets are; what consumers are yearning for, and what to do to bridge the gap between what the brand wants to deliver and what the consumers are looking for.

Till date, the brand still does the Hero Fiesta and it continues to drive consumer engagement for the brand. So, that is one, and the results are obvious; you can go and check it up anywhere.

The second was an internal conference for the leadership team of Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC). We were quite small at the time, doing bits of jobs here and there; but we had the opportunity to pitch for one of their leadership conferences. It was about transformation and we took the core idea literally. We wanted to experientially, functionally and literally build transformation so people could see and feel transformation.

Again, we took an audacious route; we proposed to build a make-shift plant inside Federal Palace Hotel, so we built a pavilion that showed the transformation which Coca-Cola as their mother brand had gone through for over a century. We built the first plant that operated in Nigeria (in 1953 or so) up to the current realistic experiences; we built jungles and waterfalls, then again we had a futuristic execution where people are determining where the bottle would be in another 100 years. It was so audacious and we built it; it had moving

I’ll be very honest with you, I grew up with standards and before setting out to be on my own, I had worked with big multinationals with global best practices and standards. So, there was no way I could have gone into Brands Optimal full-fledged without looking for someone I could measure myself against.

parts, and so on. Needless to say, the clients were wowed! After that event, we launched ourselves into big time jobs and since then we have continued to grow within that business and we continue to be a reference point in terms of how you can use content, production and fabrication to bring experiential events to life. It was quite audacious because people thought we couldn’t do it, but we did it.

The third, for me, is really not about the audacity of the idea, but about the impression which we created in the market. We launched Jameson as the whiskey brand in Nigeria. We were also doing some small off tray, on tray executions, until we got the opportunity to do the first Jameson Connect. We also had the opportunity to do the second Jameson connect.

Jameson Connect remains one of the reference points for brand execution in the last 10 years in this country. In fact, it revolutionized event execution, bringing lifestyle to live events, bringing new waves of fabrication, taking what used to be the norm, throwing it out of the window and doing the unexpected. Jameson Connect built a pedigree, likeness and followership of its own and we were there to share from the glory because we executed Jameson Connect. Even though it wasn’t our idea, the execution was spot on! We took the global idea and localised it.

Whenever we look back to what we did on Jameson and Jameson Connect and how many referrals we have received as a result, it excites us. Last year, we got a call from a client, who said their principals abroad only wanted them to work with the agency doing Jameson Connect.

If you look at the last five years for me, Jameson execution and Jameson Connect remain one of those things that I have strongly and passionately been involved with and which has set us apart from competition in the industry.

Another one is what we did with World Bank which happens to be one of our top clients. At the beginning of 2016, they had launched the “Enlighten Africa” programme. I think they had launched a year before with above the line execution, creative execution and experiential marketing; but there was nothing in the tray.

Perhaps I should give you a perspective so that you will understand what “Enlighten Africa” is; World Bank doesn’t manufacture anything; but they vote funds which they use to support humanitarian initiatives and projects across the globe. So, in Africa they have a program called ‘Lighten Africa’ helping to drive penetration for renewable energy or environmental friendly energy; so ‘Lighten Africa’ supports the penetration of home systems that are not fossil fuel based but are solar based. As such, they work with manufacturers that are verified and have verified products that can not only serve the needs of the Nigerian market but are also durable and cost effective. The manufacturers, distributors and suppliers that have those products must have passed through the quality verification process of the World Bank. Once they have that, they put out the funds to support those businesses to drive traction in the market (creating consumer awareness, driving traction in sales, etc).

While the creative work was being done, there was still no traction in trade because there was no notable, effective, seeable road to market. So, our job, after we were recruited, was to develop the road to market for the World Bank initiative in Nigeria.



One of the things that we quickly discovered was that, as big as the distributors and manufacturers are, none of them had any solid distribution infrastructure in the market; so when we were recruiting retail stores, nobody could deliver the orders. After a month, we had close to 10,000 orders; we recruited over 300 retailers in Lagos but there was no way to deliver to them. We then sat back with our team and thought about creating an aggregator, because the line of business was not properly understood; wholesalers were hesitant to sign up for distribution of the product so we created an aggregating company. We had the deal and the plan, we showed the clients that we had 20 distributors with about 5 products each; we have hundreds of retailers in the market across the country; there are some stores that have ordered 3 pieces of products from 3 different distributors, so you find out that from one town you could have received an order going to like 20 distributors; in some cases, you

have 5 orders from 5 different distributors which means that it's going to cost one person the same amount of money to send one product to that store instead of one person taking the 5 products to the store.

So, we created this aggregating company who now had the ability to buy from all the distributors, aggregate the products and then send by one channel to the stores. Thereafter, we started creating bulk stores, so that if there are orders, we would just pick from the store. Because of that move we made, we started seeing products in all the stores across the country almost immediately. As a result of what we did, World Bank invited at least 5 to 7 countries to understudy what we were doing with the aggregator company in Nigeria. Even countries outside Africa like India and Pakistan, they all came to understudy what we were doing in Nigeria so that they could go and replicate the same model in their countries to completely eliminate the problem of getting products into the retail stores.

This proved to the World Bank team that they had recruited the best agency; it also showed that the agency had the ability to think beyond what the break is and help provide solutions that can help them achieve their terms of reference. And, because of what we did, we were invited to speak in the Global Lighting convention which was held in Hong Kong at the beginning of last year. We also got the support of DFID by way of Grants to help us do more. We got global

recognition because of that initiative when we could have gone back to the clients to complain.

There are quite many other feats that I'm always proud of, it's not just about the size of it, it's also about the impact and impressions you have created within your stakeholder network. These four feats that I've mentioned have been game changing for us.

We have definitely thought about it, against the backdrop of where the industry is and where the industry is going and how we can continue to stay relevant and more relevant in the coming years and also differentiate ourselves with the opportunity that we see in the next 5 years. It's my job as the leader of this team to be visionary.

I have looked at the industry and I have identified some gaps that we have; some are new and some have been there but they are worsening so it's hard to bridge those gaps to at least protect the commonwealth of Brands Optimal, secure opportunities for our team members and continue to grow. I wouldn't want to share in specifics because they would be trade secrets.

However, in the next 5 years, we are definitely diversifying our business, looking at how we can be more cost effective because the clients are looking for cost leadership; we are looking at selling off some arms of our business to be able to deliver cost effectiveness and take cost leadership positions on behalf of our clients. ■

Red Star Express Plc's intervention during the COVID-19 pandemic

...delivers food items to less privileged communities



In line with its Corporate Social Responsibility, Red Star Express Plc, one of Nigeria's foremost logistics solutions providers has been involved in the delivery of food

items to several less privileged communities in Lagos and Ogun States.

According to the company's Group Managing Director, Dr. Sola Obabori, these efforts were made to support families and communities affected unfavorably by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his words, "Over the last few weeks, we have been working with some organizations to deliver food items. Some of these organizations include Farm Shops, Religious Organizations and Non-Profit Organizations (NGOs). For example, we made a few

deliveries for United Way Greater Nigeria. These organizations are keen to reach as many families and communities as possible to deliver food items that can provide relief in a tough time like this. We have been to various communities to deliver items like rice, beans, palm oil and groundnut oil".

Obabori commended the efforts of these organizations during the lockdown period and assured that Red Star Express Plc would continue to deploy its resources to ensure that more communities are reached.

"As a company, we will continue to be involved with initiatives like this because we believe that it is our way of helping the families and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for such opportunities and we welcome more organizations that we can make similar deliveries for," he remarked.

Attesting to the company's gesture, United Way Greater Nigeria thanked Fedex

Red Star for its generous donation and support to its COVID-19 response initiative.

In a letter of appreciation sent by the NGO to the company, and signed by its Chairperson, Projects Committee,

Mrs. Amaka Onughalu, United Way Greater Nigeria stated, inter alia, "Your partnership has helped provide relief packages amenities for vulnerable individuals and families who have been disproportionately affected by the impact of Covid-19", adding, "Through your donation, United Way Greater Nigeria has been able to distribute care packages containing hygiene and food products to over 1,000 families and individuals in Makoko, Lafaji and Akoka communities in Lagos State. Your support has truly made the difference for us, and we are extremely grateful".

The letter (of appreciation) also conveyed to the courier firm, the words of Mrs.

Ajoke Olawoye, Chairperson of the Elderly Community in Makoko, who, on behalf of others, said, "with the continuous spread of the virus, we have been instructed to stay safe and maintain a sanitary health; and with these products that have been distributed, we can comfortably clean ourselves and our surroundings and reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Thank you for these products".

MEDIA ADVERTISING PRACTITIONERS MUST INVEST IN TECH TO ADAPT TO NEW NORMAL – Femi Adelusi

Mr. Femi Adelusi, Founder and Group Chief Executive Officer of BrandEye|Mediaplus was recently elected President of the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria, MIPAN. In an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE's AMOS OLADELE**, he shares his vision for the association and the industry. Excerpts:



How would you trace your journey to this esteemed office?

I think it's safe to say that I have been preparing for this assignment over the past 25 years in my various jobs, roles in sales and various aspects of marketing communication. However, my core specialist media career started in Year 2000 and I have spent considerable time on both the agency side and client side at senior levels rising through the ranks.

I belong to what I will call the first generation of media planners trained in the use of scientific media planning tools, data and technology in Nigeria. I have always believed in the objectives and the principles of Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), and I have been an active member since I got the first opportunity to join the association. I was the Head of MIPAN Accreditation committee (Year 2016-2020), and I represented MIPAN on LAIF Board (year 2016-2020). I have represented MIPAN at the ADVAN Awards and also represented MIPAN on different committees leading to the First National Advertising Conference Abuja in 2019 among many other roles and responsibilities. In all of the above roles, I have contributed to the development of the advertising and media industry in Nigeria. I have worked with the MIPAN EXCO in moving the practice forward in the area of training, capacity building, ethics and professionalism.

I had the privilege of serving as the Executive Vice President of MIPAN in the last four years. During this period, I promoted the purpose and objectives of our association and supported the outgoing Executive President, Dr. Ken Onyali-Ikpe in achieving his vision and goals for association.

I would qualify myself as a technocrat with courage, who truly believes in professionalism. In summary, I would say my unwavering passion for marketing communication and media, hard work, perseverance and great support system in my previous roles and my mentors and role models within the media/marketing industry have helped significantly in my journey so far.

What is the current state of MIPAN as a vital umbrella body of a major sectoral group in Nigeria IMC Industry?



We empathize with many of our clients who have seen brand equity and brand value decline in this period of the lockdown and this is unlikely to go away quickly for many product categories. This has also inevitably led to significant decrease in the level of investment for a lot of sectors as the consumers are having to make tough decisions and prioritize expenses on essential products and needs over wants. The pandemic has forced the media industries to revisit their strategies and we have to keep evolving based on consumer and market insights.

MIPAN as a body has been in existence for about 20 years. Over the years, MIPAN has stayed in tune with growth and development of the IMC industry. It has also taken it upon itself to develop members of the association as well as individual members of the IMC industry.

I must commend the efforts of the past leaders of this association for the great achievements and the standard they have set for this great association. In my opinion, MIPAN has done very well as a sectoral body, we put a lot of demand on ourselves for improvement and the new Executive Council which includes our Ex Officio members and various Standing Committees, with the support of our Trustees, are ready for the tasks ahead.

What new heights should the industry and larger society expect your tenure to lead the association to?

We the members of the executive committee have a manifesto on our game plan. This is summarized in the acronym THINC. This agenda would be focused on the following:

T – Technology, Data & Innovation

Step change audience measurement, scientific planning tools & leverage the power of technology and consumer/ media data to migrate to a new audience measurement system

H – Human Capital development

Develop our associates in media, digital & the marketing communications industry through our various training programs and our academy (Alphabet Media Academy, AMA)

I – Industry thought leadership

Actively contribute consistently to the development of a knowledge based economy that helps to shape policies, strategies and regulations in the marketing/ communications industry in Nigeria and in Africa

N – Nclusive & Collaboration (Inclusiveness)

Break all barriers, both real & imagines, that limits the optimal self, drive gender equality & equal opportunity work environment. We must reach out to the Digital Agencies to join us in building a robust association. We will work with leading industry sectoral bodies like APCON, AAAN, EXMAN, OAAN, BON etc in our quests for a progressive industry.

C – Commercial stability of the media ecosystem

We must support our member Agencies to succeed and co-build a thriving marcoms industry for sustainability and growth of the media/marketing ecosystem which comprises of media owners, content

creators etc.

You have become MIPAN's president at a very unique period in the history of the industry courtesy of COVID-19 pandemic. What does this mean to MIPAN under your leadership?

It's a challenging period for everyone and all businesses are impacted one way or another. We have to manage a healthy and a financial crisis as a country. Livelihoods and lives are at stake and we must make the right decisions that preserve both. We as MIPAN must find creative ways of meeting our goals despite all the challenges. There are things within our control and that's where our focus will be. For instance, the MIPAN Annual General Meeting was held on a virtual platform because all members could not be physically present with respect to the strict Government regulations on gatherings. Our agencies have to adapt to new ways of working that ensures safety, and we must explore ways of working with our clients and media partners to deliver our services in safe & effective ways. We must leverage technology a great deal in driving our agenda forward. Our balance of year activities and initiatives are being reviewed in line with current realities.

What does it portend for the association and its members?

Adapt, adjust, and pivot into new areas of opportunities. Find segments and sectors that are thriving so you have a more balanced portfolio and drive a diversified service offering. Help struggling sectors to find relevance that can stimulate faster recoveries. Some strategies could also require focusing on your areas of strength to reduce operational waste. Explore areas of collaboration and partnerships with other agencies.

How has the media advertising business been impacted by the pandemic?

We empathize with many of our clients who have seen brand equity and brand value decline in this period of the lockdown and this is unlikely to go away quickly for many product categories. This has also inevitably led to significant decrease in the level of investment for a lot of sectors as the consumers are having to make tough decisions and prioritize expenses on essential products and needs over wants. The pandemic has forced the media industries to revisit their strategies and we have to keep evolving based on consumer and market insights. Business and brand planning have to be more short term focus due to the unpredictability of

the market in certain sectors. It is important to also note that it is market & consumer behaviour that is driving shifts in advertising expenditure, so things will get better as the health concerns and lockdowns reduce.

The pandemic has caused a rapid fall in some media channels. For example, Out-of-home suffered significant decline in advertising investment during the lockdown and same with cinema advertising, cinemas are still closed. Newspaper readership online and even online radio is also growing. Other areas such as TV, Online movie & music streaming grew significantly and Video Gaming has increased also and this is obviously positive for online advertising being the biggest gainer. As confinement measures were introduced around the world, out-of-home and cinema advertising shrank almost instantly, traditional print advertising also fell.

We have to keep tracking these dynamic changes and science has to drive our decision making more than ever before. I believe marketing budgets will rise steadily as we get out of the lockdown/restrictions, advertisers will need to invest behind their brands to recover some lost grounds. However, prioritizing marketing expenditure will be a more rigorous decision, the choice may not always be in favour of above-the-line advertising, and brand teams will be very ROI sensitive as they make marketing decisions. The ROI consideration will more often than not be short term sales



focus and less on brand equity development.

From the look of things working remotely has actually helped in driving greater investment and adoption of technology based work tools & work processes, helping to reduce operational expenses. We have been forced to make decisions that perhaps we should have made even before now.

What would you say is the new normal in media advertising in this pandemic period?

We have a very youthful population of millennials and gen Z, our internet penetration is rapidly growing and smartphone ownership have become increasingly democratized. Data costs are also reducing, though there is still a long way to go and we need to still accelerate broadband access, but these all make it inevitable for investment in digital advertising to grow faster than

other channels. In Nigeria digital advertising spend has been rising steadily in double digit growth year-on-year over the past 5 years, revenue has also been growing. This is highly enabled by content moving digital as well. The market is experiencing growth in music/movie streaming, video gaming, eCommerce, even radio and TV broadcast is moving online, so that's the reality of today. Our work processes and work spaces have also evolved, This is our new normal.

How have MIPAN members been adjusting to the new normal? What are they doing right?

Pivoting and finding creative ways of staying in business, recognizing the need to collaborate more. We have a lot of empathy for the consumer and for our clients.

What are they doing wrong?

Worrying too much about decreasing advertising budget, we must adapt and make operational changes. Let's focus more on helping to find new consumer and brands insights that will prompt the next wave of growth.

How do Nigerian media advertising operators' responses compare with what obtains in other markets across Africa and the globe?

Similar ways. The world is a global village, many of our members are affiliated to international media networks and so transfer of knowledge is fast. We have been lucky that we had the opportunity of watching C-19's impact abroad before it really hit us and therefore more prepared, though you can't quite be fully prepared for the overreaching impact.

What future do you foresee for media advertising in view of current realities?

With the pace of technology, media fragmentation & consumer sophistication, our job is well cut out for us. I can see more disruptions, not necessarily a pandemic. More around technology e.g. impact of 5G, big data, AI, AR, IoT etc. I think there are exciting times ahead when we cycle out of this pandemic and recession. With the pace of Technology innovation, digitisation and the internet of things, it is impossible to see too far ahead, so much can happen so quickly. Our work place, work processes and tools would have completely transformed in 5yrs. We hope more wise men come from the East and not pandemics. Our media decisions making would be highly machine led and our understanding of consumers, cultural relevance and our creativity/Art might be the only edge in getting ahead and standing out. Even folks like us must be retired or reborn because the industry would have completely evolved.

What survival strategies would you recommend for your members, going forward?

Adapt, pivot around all business operations, embrace technology in processes, and embrace smart work space. Leverage on free and online training because people development will still be very important. Invest in tools, invest in technology and embrace the change. Understand the brands and the business challenges of clients more and be true business partners that help the client to succeed. We need to be more immersed in the brands and the consumer, so we need to seek fresh insights that will point us in the right directions. ■

We have strong passion to leverage technology,

Says Lanre Ashaolu, MD/CEO FPL OOH

Mr. Lanre Ashaolu is the MD/CEO of Four Pulley Limited, FPL, a leading outdoor advertising agency in Nigeria. In this interview, he dwells on how the agency is leveraging technology to take outdoor advertising to new pedestals. He also takes a look at the industry, generally.

Can you assess the *Out of Home* advertising industry in Nigeria?

Well, the industry is a subset of marketing communications industry in general. It doesn't exist in isolation. It offers a means of exposure of a brand's information to their target audience. It exists alongside other platforms of exposure like electronic, print and digital. The OOH industry in Nigeria is an interesting industry in the sense that despite the encroachment of digital media replacing the role of traditional media, the outdoor is the only arm of traditional media that is going to witness the test of time and can co-exist with the digital media through the fusion of digital out of home advertising. It is an existing industry that is here to stay and we it be here for a very long time.

What would you say are the challenges of the OOH industry in Nigeria?

The challenges are multifaceted. We look at it from the regulatory aspect, from the buying power of the advertisers, and from the level of options that advertisers are faced with in terms of how they want to expose their message to the public. It's a keenly contested and highly competitive industry. Over 50% of advertising expenditure is made in Lagos and every single operator would like to have their presence in Lagos because of the competitive and attractive nature. This could be a positive challenge because if competition is keen and fierce, innovation will stand out. On the regulatory part, there is the issue of firm regulation. Sometimes, it could be extremely high. In that case, there is need for a continuous dialogue between the regulators and operators so that there could be a common ground. We (operators and regulators) are using the same ecosystem and the purpose of our existence is to complement each other.

How can these challenges be addressed?

Like I mentioned earlier, continuous dialogue and innovation would go a long way to address the problems. I would always implore operators and practitioners to be on top of their game in terms of innovation of services and offering to the public because gone are the days of you just thinking you can establish an outdoor platform somewhere and expect brands to jump on it. It doesn't work that way anymore. So, Innovation through the introduction of technology to



actually be able to deliver accurate information to your clients. For example, a lot of people always ask, how do we measure the effectiveness of our campaign? How do we verify that this is the actual number of people that gets to see our advertisement? For a very long time, there was no accurate or scientific way of addressing that. We worked with a lot of qualitative data and assumptions. However, in recent times, innovation is bringing technology to be able to give accurate insight on the number of people that actually see a message. That's value and it is a way to improving on the quality of service in the industry.

Tell us about Four Pulley Limited

Four Pulley Limited, known as FPL Media is a creative OOH agency where innovation is at the forefront of all we do. Our major promise is to deliver return on investment to our clients. We intend to develop innovative platforms in strategic locations that connect audiences to their brand and vice-versa so that whatever we are offering both the advertisers and audience is value for money. We are here to contribute to the growth and development of the industry. We are here for a long time because the management of the company has a lot of experience on the client side of the industry before transitioning to the agency aspect. We have seen both sides of the divide and we know the questions that advertisers and brand managers want to ask and get answers to. We are not new in the industry. We have been in the industry operating both on the agency and consulting side. Now that we are in the OOH space, we want to be able to deliver the best value for our client.

Your Vision and Mission?

In terms of vision, we want to be known as an establishment that brought about remarkable innovations where others can leverage upon so that overall, our contribution will not exist in isolation but will lead to the general upliftment of the industry. Whatever we do we will like others to take a cue from it and integrate it into their service because a tree cannot make a forest. We want to be known as a company that has raised the bar in the practice of outdoor advertising.

How would assess your performance viz-a-viz the challenges in the OOH industry?

The challenges are not immune to us. They are general challenges that everybody faces. Like I mentioned earlier, we like to bring about innovation and I believe that for every challenge it's a question of what you have in your process that can improve your situation. We are looking forward to improving on the status quo. We don't want to do business the way everybody does it. We don't want to be part of the statistics. We want to bring value addition and innovation to our offering.

The buzz word in town is "New Normal". How have you coped in this new normal that has been placed on us as a result of Covid-19?

The new normal or the pandemic took everybody by surprise because I am sure when every company was going into 2020 with their plans from the last quarter of last year, nobody anticipated

a situation or phenomenon like this pandemic. The first few months had to get everybody back to the drawing board. We developed a strategy to survive the situation going forward. Where there is over reliance on one medium of advertising, the need to diversify service offering has to come into place. For us, the way forward is for us to diversify our portfolio as much as possible so that if one aspect of the portfolio experiences a down time, others can stay afloat and augment the business.

What comparative advantages does FPL media has over other outdoor advertising agencies?

We have a strong passion to leverage on technology to improve return on investment for advertisers and audience in general. Other means of advertising like electronic, print to a large degree have a predictable and acceptable matrix for measuring the impact of advertising on such platform. The outdoor has just simply been relying on estimates and based on the physical traffic we see in the environment. We are investing a lot on technology, artificial intelligence to be able to deliver accurate feedback in terms of how effective advertising campaigns work on our platforms. I believe that is where the whole industry should look forward to go to so that the industry can be better respected. This will help the operators to deliver more premium services to their clients.

Do you have any target as to where you want to be placed in the industry in the near distant future?

We are not in a hurry to be placed on any particular pedestal. We just want to do what is right, what is professional. We just want to add value and I think the industry will reward us for our dedication and contribution.

Can we know a little more about your background?

I have a degree in Economics from Covenant University, also an alumnus of London School of Economics and School of Media and Communications, Pan Atlantic University. I am a member of APCON and I continuously look for ways to evolve and improve myself. If you ask me this same question tomorrow, I must have added another feather to my cap. In terms of the professional side, I have been privileged to work across different sectors of the economy. I have worked in the advertising, manufacturing and telecoms sectors. Now, I am here in the OOH space. My cross-functional experience gives me an overview of how the economy responds and what we need to do in terms of offering value to clients. I love history and research a lot. I also love sports.

What inspires you?

For me as a person, I like to leave my community and environment a better place than I met it. I like to make an impact on any system and the world in general. I love to contribute to the growth and development of wherever I find myself in. I am not always satisfied with the status quo. I am builder, I don't like to destroy. I love to build. ■

We are investing a lot on technology, artificial intelligence to be able to deliver accurate feedback in terms of how effective advertising campaigns work on our platforms. I believe that is where the whole industry should look forward to go to so that the industry can be better respected.

Consumers should expect more from the “house of LaCasera”

- Emma Agu

In this interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, the Group Marketing Director, Jotna Nigeria Limited, a member of the Jotna Group and The LaCasera Company, **Emmanuel Chukwuemeka Agu** speaks on Nigeria's beverage market, emphasizing on the Carbonated Soft Drinks segment and its dynamics.

How would you assess the entire soft drinks market in Nigeria's FMCG segment?

The market is evolving. It is very dynamic with lots of changes happening here and there. It's actually becoming very unpredictable because you don't know what your competitors have up their sleeves. Currently, I think it's one of the fiercest battle fields that you see in the FMCG space, with the big multinationals fighting with the insurgent brands that are making headways. A lot of flavours, brands, new introductions, new innovations and the rest are all happening in the same space, quite unlike what you would have seen in the last ten years. There are lots of flavours in the Carbonated Soft Drinks (CSD) market today; it's more like the survival of the fittest.

The Nigerian beverage landscape consists of the CSDs, Lager, Malt, Stout, RTDs, Spirits, Energy drinks and bitters.

CSD still has a lion share within the beverage industry and controls about one-third (32.1%) of the entire value of the FMCG, and there are quite a lot of options from different splinter manufacturers. The CSD, within the Non-alcoholic beverage segment, makes up approximately 47% as at full year 2019.

In summary, the CSD category continues to show growth prospects; the PET packaging mainly in Lagos and South West are expected to lead this growth particularly in the GSM (Groceries and Supermarkets).

Manufacturers continue to rely on price discounts (at the expense of profit margins) as the major volume growth mechanism.

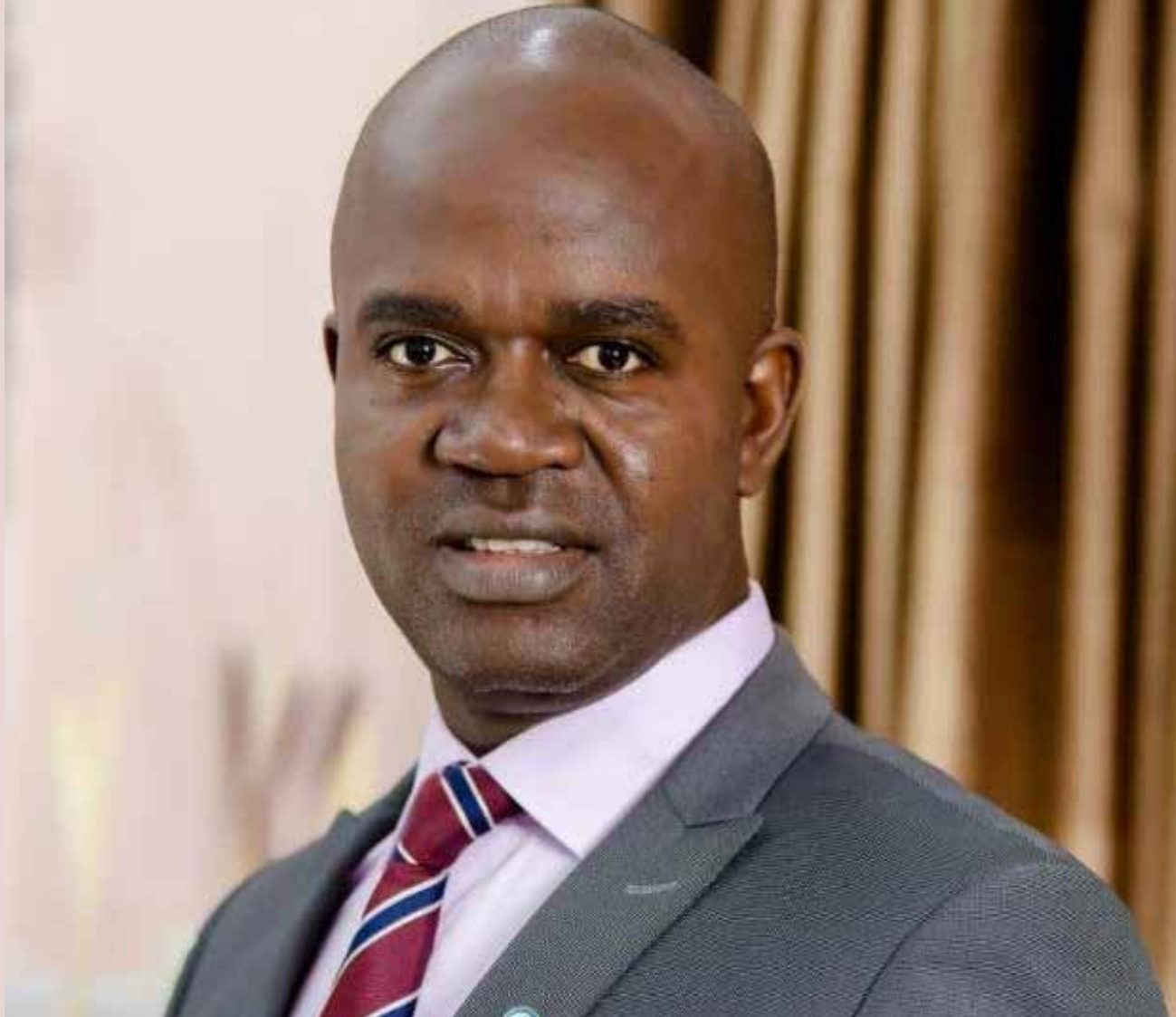
How would you describe consumers' response to FMCG market segment generally?

What you would see from the reports of the companies' results is that basically the FMCG category in Nigeria is bleeding, and the result may not be unassociated with the economy's performance. Those posting profits are indexing below gains from the last 3 to 4 years. So, the entire market, in terms of FMCG, is bleeding. Could we attribute that to the economy? May be yes; or could it be attributed to the ways of doing business in Nigeria, which can be linked to high operational costs?

Look at our low power generation and distribution network, poor road infrastructure, exchange rate fluctuations, high input costs, rising inflation and logistical challenges, all the indices that make manufacturing business successful in other parts of the world are lacking or not sufficiently harnessed in Nigeria. Consequently, we're exposed to fiscal policies that have seen high levels of taxation from 5% VAT to 7.5%, currency (Naira) adjustment from N360=\$1 to N380=\$1 and then in the beer sector the increase in excise tax that has impacted negatively on their profit margin. Again, talks on the proposed excise tax on CSD are on going, which might likely impact the industry negatively if the government does not sheath their sword. So, operating a manufacturing company in Nigeria is quite challenging.

LaCasera is no doubt an iconic brand in Nigeria's market, a house hold name. Can you take us through the growth trajectory of the brand since its arrival?

Launched in 2001, LaCasera redefined the CSD marketing space in Nigeria by being the first carbonated soft drink to be in PET bottle. If you read a book called '*Execution*' by Larry Bosidi, it explains that big multinationals will never innovate in the areas where they have comparative advantage over others and will not innovate against themselves. So, what LaCasera did was to innovate against big multinationals in Nigeria; against their comparative advantage. The comparative advantage of majority of big multinational CSD manufacturers in Nigeria was the returnable glass bottles, and if you look at the Porter's 5 forces, that model that shows you how easy or difficult it is to get into a new business, you will see that RGB (returnable



glass bottle), like we technically call it, was a major barrier in starting a CSD business in Nigeria, because it entailed significant capital outlay. For example, think about the production cost of glass bottles, the logistics, stocking, product distribution, as well as the hygiene (washing) and the cumbersome nature of dealing with rubber crates and bottles.

So, you will be outdone if you did not have the capacity and budget to invest in RGB, for you to get into the carbonated soft drinks business in Nigeria. That's why you see that so many brands that came earlier into this market were eased off as glass capacity was amongst the major barrier to entry into the carbonated soft drinks business.

LaCasera took the advantage of being the first CSD in PET and drove massive growth for itself in the past 19 years. Since then, the brand has been in an upward trajectory.

How are your brands currently positioned in the market and how well are they performing among their peers?

Our brands are currently positioned as mass market brands in the Nigerian carbonated soft drinks market. We are the king of the streets. We were born in the street, made in the street and made for the street. Apart from a few brands in the CSD market that you could actually tag as premium brands, the entire carbonated soft drinks market in Nigeria is basically mass market driven. Any brand that is trying to position itself as premium might just be doing so based on price and communication, but such price premium-ness has fast eroded with the advent of recession in Nigeria and multiples of different CSD flavours in the market. The affordability game is now the new order where volume and considerable pricing (N100 magic price point) makes the world of difference. So far, our brands have been

doing great within the mass market territory where it is positioned.

What do you consider as a competitive advantage; what stands your products out amongst the host of other brands in this market?

I will start from PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate), even though we no longer have the sole monopoly of that innovation, because most CSDs are now in PET, it is no longer a competitive advantage. As confirmed by several taste tests conducted over the years, we are proud to say that we have the best apple flavoured CSD with LaCasera; we have the best tasting Chapman with Smoov Chapman drink; we have the best Lemon drink in Bold Bitter Lemon Extra. We have the best and the first Ginger CSD in Nigeria and our Orange, Tropical, Tonic and Soda water are arguably one of the best in their segment. Nirvana Premium Table water is the most sought after premium table water within the region where it is distributed.

From a production facility point of view, you would see our world-class production equipment with international endorsements and certifications from ISO 22000; FSSC 22000 & PAS 223. Our business operation is built on a fully integrated system of raw materials sourcing; packaging and beverage manufacturing that can compete globally and meet consumer interests sustainably. This business ecosystem is being coordinated by the JOTNA Group of which you have The LaCasera Company, Prima Corporation and Engee Pet manufacturing. Engee Pet produces the PET resin that Prima Corporation uses to produce the preforms and caps; The La Casera Company then uses the preforms and caps to produce and package beverages in PET bottles. Prima also supplies preforms and caps to most manufacturing companies in Nigeria that deal in PET. All within the group, you can see that there is synergy and sustainability in the business model.

How has the market responded to these brands, particularly Smoov brand that came on much later into the market?

Smoov has exhibited an extraordinary performance in the marketplace. It has emerged as one of the leading CSD brands and a must stock for every home. The momentum of the Smoov brand is in the upward trajectory as we expand distribution and route to market. Check every hawker's basket and you will see Smoov conspicuously displayed. It is the undisputed best chapman drink in the Nigerian market today. The brand has grown in awareness, availability and visibility. It is within arm's length as it has become the retail trade favourite chapman drink. The sales volume has been in geometric progression and we are excited about it.

What are your projections for these brands? What plans do you have for them over the next one year?

I see them as category leaders in their different flavours, in the sense that when you come to ready-to-drink Chapman, Smoov will remain unbeatable. When you look at apple flavour, LaCasera would remain the king irrespective of the fact that we have other competitors. This is the only apple drink in Nigeria with 5% real apple juice concentrate validated by the regulatory body i.e. NAFDAC. That's why I tell you that what we do is more like a lifestyle innovation. We don't do innovation just for innovation sake. Market demand guides our strategies. With invaluable consumer insights, we help the consumers to answer the questions that they don't even know how to ask. Look at our Bold Ginger; it is the first of its kind. Ginger is a spicy product known in every home as a healthy product. Bold Ginger CSD makes it even more accessible to many homes. Bold Tropical, Orange and Bitter Lemon Extra will perform excellently because of their unique taste which differentiates them from the lots we see in the market space.

How has competition responded to your innovations on these brands?

We haven't seen any response from competition yet. I guess it is too early to judge what will be their response to our innovation, but what we see is the intensive and aggressive drive in various trade channels and other areas of marketing to ring-fence their brands from our innovation. We see massive trade loading and discounting which are all geared towards fighting for the dealer's share of wallet. But we are not perturbed because we know we have good innovation brands that will on their own generate the right consumer pull that no dealer or retailer can afford to resist.

Let's see the much you are doing with regards to brand building and marketing efforts around your products. What has it been like?

From the launch date till now, we have focused our efforts on driving massive awareness for the innovation brands both above the line (ATL) and below the line (BTL). We have been involved with our partner agencies in driving massive sampling across different cities in Nigeria and will not relent in our brand building efforts until we establish the new brands.

Our idea is to continue to support the new brands alongside other brands with strong marketing and sales efforts. We will follow

through with our winning brand strategy and tweak where necessary but be rest assured we have lots of work to do.

Innovation is expensive, but managing existing brands is also not cheap. So it calls for concerted efforts and resources to strike the right balance.

What are the consumers to expect from the house of LaCasera for its various brands going forth in the Year?

They should expect more because we are in a dynamic market where things change sporadically. We will be as fluid as ever in order to remain relevant and competitive. We have our plans well thought through and will respond to the needs of our consumers at the appropriate time. I am sure the market was not expecting us to come up with four different flavours at a go; but hey, it just happened. That explains how audacious we can be; so expect more from us.

What impact has the general economic situation in the country had on you as a company and then on your products and brands?

Our brands are currently positioned as mass market brands in the Nigerian carbonated soft drink market. We are the king of the streets. We were born in the street, made in the street and made for the street. Apart from a few brands in the CSD market that you could actually tag as premium brands, the entire carbonated soft drinks market in Nigeria is basically mass market driven. Any brand that is trying to position itself as premium might just be doing so based on price and communication, but such price premium-ness has fast eroded with the advent of recession in Nigeria and multiples of different CSD flavours in the market.

Well, we are not immune to the current economic realities in Nigeria. However, the way our business is structured in terms of backward integration always provides us with some level of resilience and sustainability against the tough economic landscape. If we were able to weather the impact of the 2016 recession, this one will also come to pass. It all comes to how effective our strategies are and how disciplined we are with our execution in the marketplace.

Where did you meet LaCasera and where do you want to take it to?

I met great brands in The LaCasera Company and would want to take them to greater heights. It is my responsibility and that of my team to nurture and build these brands into iconic brands, thereby making them category leaders in their different flavour groups. The launch of the new innovation is in line with our portfolio expansion plan. These we have done in order to reposition and restore the company as a dominant player in the CSD space. ■

FirstBank leverages technology to promote virtual bank account opening for customers



First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier and leading financial inclusion services provider, has announced that it has reinforced its technology infrastructure to enable anyone in the country open a FirstBank account through their mobile phones, without visiting any of its branches nationwide.

The investment in the bank's mobile banking infrastructure is in furtherance of the need to deepen financial inclusion in the country, enabling account opening to be carried out on its *894# USSD banking, FirstMobile (self-service telephone banking), its website – www.firstbanknigeria.com – as well as the Bank's staff, through the Direct Sales Executive (DSE) application installed on their mobile phone, ATMs and the bank's over 55,000 FirstMonie Agents spread across the country. Opening an account with FirstBank through any of these means is seamless, convenient, fast, and user-friendly.

The DSE App is an end-to-end encrypted mobile application installed on the phone(s) of FirstBank staff which enables them to open an account for to-be customers. Upon the completion of the account opening process via the DSE App, the customer is notified of his or her account number through a text message on the mobile phone used to register the account.

With FirstBank's *894# USSD banking, various banking activities are carried out on a mobile phone – across the four major GSM network operators in the country – without the use of the internet. To open an account via this means, dial *894# then select 'open an account' to provide the information required or by simply dialling *894*0#. The Bank currently has over 9.5 million of its nearly 20 million customers on its USSD banking platform.

The FirstMonie Agent Banking is an agent banking initiative from the bank that is designed to take banking closer to

people, thereby bridging the gap between the banked and unbanked. FirstMonie is a channel through which various banking activities like FirstBank account opening, funds transfer, bill payments, data and call credit recharge services, amongst others are carried out. The Agent Banking initiative has also contributed to reducing poverty, being responsible for the indirect employment of over 150,000 people across the country.

According to Chuma Ezirim, Group Executive, e-Business & Retail Products, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, "beyond opening an account in any of our over 700 branches, we are delighted with the investments at reinventing our business processes over the years, especially with the use of

technology. This has been critical to staying relevant in the industry for over 126 years and being the financial partner of the first choice to all our customers and Nigerians, irrespective of where they are."

He continued: "Creating these virtual ways of opening a bank account with us – thus; the staff DSE App, ATMs, FirstMonie Agents, *894# USSD banking, FirstMobile and our website – reinforces our resolve to ensure that more Nigerians and residents have access to banking, especially through our state-of-the-art financial services and we remain resolute to being the key to banking, enabling business and financial activities that would continue to propel the country's economic growth and development." ■

Zenith Bank ranks Nigeria's number one bank on 2020 top 1000 world banks ranking

Zenith Bank Plc has ranked in the position of the Number One Bank in Nigeria. The ranking was done by Tier-1 Capital in the 2020 Top 1000 World Banks Ranking published by The Banker Magazine.

According to the Ranking Report, Zenith Bank extended its lead over the second-placed bank in Nigeria. Zenith's financial performance for the year was underpinned by a 29% increase in non-interest income, with an improved market share in both retail and corporate sectors.

Commenting on the recent rankings, the Group Managing Director/Chief Executive, Mr. Ebenezer Onyeagwu said: "this ranking, which further attests to our market leadership, is the outcome of a well-thought-out strategy of always delighting and creating value for our teeming customers through a broad range of superior product offerings, best-in-class service and top-of-the-range technology."

The ranking which was published in the July 2020 edition of The Banker Magazine of the Financial Times Group, United Kingdom, was based on the 2019 year-end Tier-1 capital of banks globally. Climbing a whopping 29 spots from 415 in 2019 to 386 in the 2020 global ranking of banks, Zenith



Bank retained its position as the number one Tier-1 bank in Nigeria with Tier-1 Capital of \$2.79 billion, an increase of 16.1% on the \$2.40 billion recorded in the 2019 rankings.

Recent awards received by the bank include; The Best Commercial Bank in Nigeria 2019 by the World Finance and the Best Digital Bank in Nigeria 2019 by Augusto & Co. It was voted as Bank of the Year and Best Bank in Retail Banking at the 2019 BusinessDay Banks and other Financial Institutions (BAFI) Awards.

Most recently, the bank was recognized as the Most Valuable Banking Brand in Nigeria, for the third consecutive year, in the Banker Magazine "Top 500 Banking Brands 2020", Best Bank in Nigeria in the Global Finance "World's Best Banks Awards 2020" and the Bank of the Decade (People's Choice) at the ThisDay Awards 2020. ■

Cititrust Holdings renames three subsidiaries in rebranding strategy

Cititrust Holdings Plc has announced a change of name for three of its subsidiaries after receiving the nod of the board and shareholders. The move was made to rebrand and reposition the company for growth.

A statement from the Group noted that the decision was taken at its Executive Management meeting held recently.

According to the statement, the affected subsidiaries include, Core Capital Limited, which is now Cititrust Financial Services Limited; First Option Microfinance Bank Limited, which is now Cititrust Microfinance Bank Limited; and Bermuda Forex BDC Limited, which has become Cititrust BDC Limited.

Commenting on the recent development, Country Chief Executive, Ikechukwu Peter, in a statement said: "The change of name of



these strategic business units became quite imperative to enhance brand visibility and synergy."

Explaining further, Mr. Ikechukwu said: "For an institution that is positioned to provide bespoke financial services to its teeming customers, it became important that it had a unified brand representation as it delivers on its mandate of exceptional

customer service experience."

Also commenting individually on the development, the Managing Director of Cititrust Financial Services Limited, Charles Olaluwoye, observed that the name change would, "bolster the efforts by the company to increase its share capital to one billion naira, and enable it do more in terms of online consumer lending and delivering on digitalised financial services".

In a similar vein, the Managing Director of Cititrust Microfinance Bank Limited, Jeff Ejemai, said the rebranding offers the bank the leverage to obtain the regulatory approval which will enable it operate as a state Microfinance Bank, and thus take the institution's business to the next level.

On his own part, the Managing Director of Cititrust BDC Limited, Tunji Salahudeen said: "The development would not only reposition the brand for superior service delivery, but most definitely engender greater opportunities for our business, particularly in buying and selling personal travel allowances and business travel allowances for our several clients."

Cititrust Holdings is a leading investment holding company in Africa with operations in eleven countries of the continent. ■

Access Bank gets \$50m IFC Covid-19 loan to support SMEs

Access Bank Plc has secured a \$50 million loan from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

The IFC, in a statement, said it is providing the loan to help the bank increase liquidity to thousands of SMEs in the country which are navigating the economic challenges of COVID-19.

"The funds from the loan, made through IFC's global COVID-19 fast-track financing support package, will allow Access Bank to provide increased trade financing and working capital to their business clients experiencing disrupted cash flows, supporting business activity and preserving jobs," the statement read.

Herbert Wigwe, chief executive officer of Access Bank, said it is important to ensure adequate finance for SMEs especially during these difficult times because they contribute

over 45 percent of Nigeria's GDP and account for about 96 percent of businesses and 84 percent of employment.

"IFC's funding will not only enable us to extend financial relief to our clients across all sectors during the pandemic but beyond the COVID-19 crisis as well. Our partnership with IFC will help Nigerian businesses weather COVID-19 and set a course for recovery," he said.

In the same vein, IFC country manager for Nigeria, Eme Essien Lore, said: "It is crucial to support smaller businesses to keep Nigeria's economy going during this unprecedented economic challenge.

"IFC's longstanding partnership with Access Bank means together we can move much-needed funding to businesses that need it most, helping them remain in business and retain their employees."

According to the statement, IFC's global COVID-19 fast track facility, worth \$8 billion, was launched in March 2020 to



support business activity and preserve jobs in the face of COVID-19 and so far it has invested about \$400 million through the facility in Africa.

Access Bank is the third deposit money bank to access the facility; the first was Zenith Bank on June 18 with \$100 million and FCMB on June 25 with \$50 million. ■

FBN Holdings makes capital injection of N25 billion into FirstBank to drive growth



FBN Holdings Plc has made a capital injection of N25 billion into First Bank of Nigeria Limited. The equity capital, according to a statement by FBN Holdings, the parent company of FirstBank, emanated from its recent divestment from FBN Insurance Ltd. As a result of the equity capital injection, FirstBank's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) has increased to 16.53%.

Recall that in April, FBN Holdings disclosed ongoing talks with Sanlam Emerging Markets (Proprietary) Ltd over a possible sell-off of its 65% stake in FBN Insurance to the South African firm. Also in June, the holding firm informed stakeholders that it had completed the divestment process. Meanwhile, the value of the transaction was kept under wraps up until now.

FBN Holdings' share price on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) is currently trading at N5.05 with a market capitalisation of about N181.3 billion, according to a report.

According to the holding company Secretary, Seye Kosoko, the overriding objective of the capital injection is to drive business growth, enhance efficiency, and improve overall shareholders' value among the group.

Commenting on the development, FBN Holdings' Chief Financial Officer, Oyewale Ariyibi, said: "The divestment has unlocked significant value embedded in the former subsidiary which is being leveraged to strengthen the core business for which the group is renowned."

FBN Holdings reported a profit after tax of N49.5 billion for the half-year period ended June 30th, 2020, which represented a 56.3% increase when compared with N31.6 billion reported in H1 2019. ■

Union Bank expands agency banking network, set to increase financial inclusion

Union Bank of Nigeria Plc has said it will continue to expand its agency banking network to complement its operations and to also increase financial inclusion in Nigeria. This is in line with the bank's policy of allowing ease of access to, availability of and usage of formal financial systems by its customers.

The bank also said it recently concluded a corporate social responsibility project to support individuals contributing towards reducing economic hardship and fallout of COVID-19 pandemic across Nigeria, by giving out a total of N10 million.

In a recent virtual media parley with journalists, the Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing at Union Bank, Ogochukwu Ekezie-Ekaidem, said the bank planned to increase its agency banking nationwide.

In her words: "Agency banking is a critical piece of how we are growing our network and channels and we are focused on it. Our

agency banking footprint continues to grow at this time and we are very much focused on growing that network to reach more customers across the country."

Furthermore, speaking on the 'Rise Challenge,' concluded recently, she said: "We launched the rise challenge about five weeks ago which was popular and successful across online channels. We received nearly 1,200 entries of people who were doing great things within their communities.

"Every week we selected 10 of those stories and rewarded them with N250,000 and we had 40 winners over four weeks which is a total of N10 million."

She added: "In the face of this pandemic people are still resilient and putting their best foot forward and trying to rise above the challenge and we are very proud of them."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Ekezie-Ekaidem noted that the bank would continue to focus on reaching more of its customers through its electronic channels as well as through the



agency banking network, which according to her, "is critical to its operations".

Also speaking on its continuous support for the education sector, she said: "We had identified the education sector early on as an area that needed intervention because there were issues before the pandemic and now that we have the pandemic it is a different level of challenges. "Globally, education is going through an evolution given the pandemic and everyone from first world to third world is grappling with what education will look like going forward."

Union Bank has been in the forefront of supporting critical sectors of the economy through its corporate social responsibility. ■

Mergers and Acquisitions loom in the fintech sector, says Niyi Toluwalope, CEO eTranzact



The competitive Nigerian fintech market appears set for an imminent transformation which may eventually culminate in mergers and acquisitions amongst the players and gladiators in the industry believed to be worth several billions of dollars. Specifically, the Nigerian fintech landscape, which consists of about 210-250 fintech companies all engaged in different services and product solutions, may eventually merge with bigger players or get acquired with a view to consolidating for greater profitability and growth as well as bigger competition.

Dropping the hint recently during a live Instagram chat with **MARKETING EDGE**, a leading brand and advertising focused magazine, the Managing Director of eTranzact, Mr. Niyi Toluwalope said the transformation has become necessary in view of the growing numbers of fintech companies in Nigeria and the need to evolve into mega companies.

The eTranzact boss whose company remains a pathfinder in the sector with over seventeen years of outstanding records of performance also hinged the looming mergers and acquisitions in the fintech market on regulation. He stated that the Central Bank of Nigeria, which is the chief regulator for all financial services, including financial technology has been putting together regulatory guidelines on how to regulate and manage fintech companies.

His words: “The industry is growing. It’s relatively new and passing through the stage of several entrances depending on what part you want to play.”

Continuing, the eTranzact boss said: “I am seeing a lot of new entrants and lots

of services/products solutions in so many fragmented ways”, adding that “consolidation will come. When it comes, you will see mergers and acquisitions of small players by big players or you will see Mergers of Equals (MOE), where similar corporations in size and strength come together to take bigger competitions”.

He further stated that “once the CBN guidelines are out and ready, there could be stipulated capital requirement which would be the minimum operating standard capitalisation that most of the fragmented companies may or may not be able to afford. This, he reasoned would force them into mergers, a development which he foresees would be a healthy development for the industry in not too distant future.

The eTranzact chieftain, who disclosed that the Nigerian fintech market is huge, however, lamented the dearth and decadence of requisite infrastructure for the growth of the market. He specifically challenged the government and the regulatory agencies to do something about the current state of infrastructure in the industry now that there is a new paradigm shift that has been forced on the people of the world with Covid-19 global pandemic.

According to Frost and Sullivan, Nigeria’s fintech revenue is expected to gross USD543.3 million in 2022 from the

USD153.1 million three years ago. Key stakeholders in this emerging critical sector are banks, telecoms companies and the government enablers and funding partners (i.e Universities and research institutions, investors, incubators technology, consumers).

The Nigerian fintech industry continues to evolve on the crest of technology advancement and demographic support as 50% of the population is expected to be less than 25 years of age by the end of 2020. Besides, the prevailing financial exclusion has resulted in low access to complex financial products for the masses. Now that the government and the various stakeholders have been promoting financial inclusion, the industry may soon begin to witness an exponential growth in all aspects and ramifications.

Meanwhile, eTranzact is Nigeria’s first award-winning multi-application and multi-channel electronic transaction switching and payment processing platform.

eTranzact has operations in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Cote d’Ivoire, and UK and the pioneering fintech company is currently expanding operations to more and more countries of the world. The company handles billions of dollars yearly, supporting millions of forward thinking businesses and individuals who believe that their financial transactions would be properly taken care by eTranzact daily. ■

Internet penetration rises to 138.7 million

The total number of internet subscriptions recorded across mobile, fixed wired and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) as at April 2020, reached 138.7 million.

This is however, as broadband penetration, which drives internet access and connectivity, dropped from 39.90 per cent in March 2020 to 39.58 per cent in April 2020, according to the latest statistics released by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the telecoms industry regulator.

According to the statistics, both broadband and internet penetrations maintained a

steady rise in figure in the past one year, until broadband penetration slide to 39.58 per cent in April this year, from 39.90 in March this year.

While internet penetration is the population of the percentage of people that are connected to the internet through various devices like mobile phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers, and through various technologies like Mobile GSM, Fixed Wired and VoIP, but broadband penetration is the high transmission capacity obtained from fibre optic cables that drives internet connectivity.



From the statistics, the total internet subscriptions from a combination of mobile GSM, Fixed Wired and VoIP, reached 119.9 million in April 2019, but the figure rose to 123 million subscriptions in May 2019, before dropping slightly to 122.7 million subscriptions in June 2019.

In January 2020, internet subscriptions maintained a steady growth to reach 128.7 million subscriptions and another increase to reach 132.01 million subscriptions in February 2020.

The NCC statistics however, stated that broadband penetration dropped in April 2020, to 39.58 per cent from 39.90 per cent penetration it recorded in March 2020, after

In June 2019, broadband penetration was 33.31 per cent and in July 2019, it rose to 33.72 per cent, before climbing to 35.10 per cent in August 2019 and 35.40 per cent in September 2019.

In January 2020, broadband penetration increased to 38.49 per cent and in February and March 2020, it further increased to 39.58 per cent and 39.90 per cent respectively, before sliding slightly to 39.58 per cent in April 2020.

Through the resilience of NCC, coupled with the efforts of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and ISPs, Nigeria was able to surpass 30 per cent broadband penetration in December 2018.

Pleased with the attainment of 30 per cent broadband penetration in 2018, government in 2020, came up with the second National Broadband Plan (2020-2025) with a target to achieve 70 per cent broadband penetration by 2025 ■



The NCC figures for the month April showed that the number of voice subscribers on the network has risen to 12,568,088 from

Previously holding 6.1 per cent in March and 6.5 per cent in February, 9mobile now has 6.6 per cent. This is as the telco maintained its lead in incoming subscribers' porting for the fifth straight month, beginning December 2019 when it received 8,613 subscribers from the other operators.

9mobile received 5,516 customers from other operators in January 2020, 5,371 in February, 8,225 in March and 3,829 in April to underscore its determination to reclaim its pride of place, especially in the youth market and mobile money space amongst other critical territories in the telecoms consumer market.

It embarked on the expansion of its 4G LTE deployment to more Nigerian cities earlier in February as part of efforts to continue offering superior quality services to its customers. Some of the benefits of the expanded 4G LTE include a low latency rate for high-speed connectivity and planned redundancy to minimise downtime impact.

Sinfield had promised to use his experience and unique value propositions to lead the company in the next exciting phase of its journey. He said he would build on the existing strong foundation to create value that will transform the Nigerian telecoms sector. ■

Airtel reaffirms commitment to consumers in its latest campaign

Bharti Airtel has restated its commitment to the consumers in a new campaign, highlighting that it has set itself a target of answering and resolving every single customer query, learn quickly from failures and ensure they don't get repeated. Taking the new message to its customers across India through a bold multi-channel marketing campaign, Airtel's new campaign will run across TV, Digital and Print to communicate the company's promise to customers. The campaign has been conceived by Dentsu-Taproot, led by Pallavi Chakravarti and team.

Commenting on the latest marketing campaign, Shashwat Sharma, Chief Marketing Officer, Bharti Airtel, said: "The relationship between Airtel and its customers has never been more important, and to serve them even better we have decided to take our customer obsession to the next level. We know that "ZERO questions" is an IMPOSSIBLE utopian thought especially for a telecom brand, but that won't stop us from trying because we know that the closer we get to ZERO, the happier our customers will be.

"We promise to be humble, learn every time we fail and be relentless in our approach. For us, this is not just a campaign, we are now re-engineering the entire organisation towards this goal and are obsessed with building a culture of consumer centricity."

Recently, Airtel became the first mobile operator in India to launch Voice over Wi-Fi to solve the indoor coverage issues faced by its customers. Today, millions of happy customers enjoy seamless indoor coverage over Airtel Vo-Wi-Fi.

The current times have put telecom services and reliable



connectivity at the core of the daily lives of customers. Be it Work from Home, Virtual Classrooms, Online shopping, or Digital Entertainment, telecom networks have become the backbone for accomplishing most things from within the safety of our homes.

Continuing, the Bharti Airtel boss added: "Consumer centricity has always been at the heart of everything that Airtel does, but during these testing times, the brand has realised that a network provider's responsibility towards its customers has never been greater. Airtel acknowledges that it not only has the responsibility to provide access to high-quality telecom services but also to give answers to all their service related queries by responding and resolving them in a quick and transparent manner." ■

MTN plans to sell \$243million stakes in Jumia to drive growth and enter new markets



MTN Group Ltd. is planning to sell part or all of its \$243 million interest in Jumia Technologies AG as Africa's biggest wireless carrier looks to pay down debt and enter new markets, according to a Bloomberg report.

According to the report, MTN, which had previously marked the online retailer as a non-core business, is reviving plans for a sale after

Jumia's shares surged 142% this year, recovering from a dip in 2019. No final decisions about the sale have been made, the report said because the plans are private.

MTN has been disposing of non-core assets as part of the group's strategy to reduce debt and drive future growth. The company also has a 29% stake in IHS Towers, which it may sell in the future, the report said. Africa's largest wireless carrier by footprint has generated 14 billion rand (\$812 million) in asset sales that included selling its towers holdings in Ghana.

The report noted that a spokeswoman for MTN declined to comment because the company is in a closed period ahead of financial results. A representative for Jumia also declined to comment.

Called Africa's Amazon, Jumia operates in 14 African countries including Nigeria and Ivory Coast where the U.S. giant still lacks distribution infrastructure. The company — headquartered in Germany and run by its two French founders, Sacha Poignonnec and Jeremy Hodara — had dropped below its initial public offering price in 2019 after improper transactions in its Nigeria business were uncovered.

Source: Bloomberg ■

Glo offers subscribers 55% reduction in international calls tariffs

Globacom has offered its subscribers about 55% reduced international calls tariffs. The latest offering, according to the company, is to enable its customers stay in touch with their loved ones business partners abroad at a much more affordable cost, especially as the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown remains effective in its restriction of international travels.

Globacom said in a statement that the reduced tariffs, which come without any subscription fee, cover calls made to major destinations such as the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Ireland, South Africa, Spain and Saudi Arabia. Other countries affected by the reduction are Cameroon, Niger, Benin Republic, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire. The specific tariffs for each country vary, but are the most competitive in the market, the company stated.

"We understand the need for our subscribers to stay in touch with their friends and family overseas now more than ever before. With the ban on international travels imposed by most countries because of the Covid-19 pandemic, people are unable

to travel to reunite with loved ones. They now rely heavily on efficient and affordable telecom services to communicate with them. We have, therefore, reduced tariffs to these major destinations to make our subscribers still feel at home even when they are thousands of miles apart from their loved ones," the statement said.

"With these reductions, calling your loved ones abroad has never been more affordable.

"Subscribers can enjoy premium quality calls to the United States, India and China for just 50 kobo per second," the statement added.

For instance, calls to the United Kingdom which used to cost between N30 and N130 per minute now cost between N24 and N100 per minute depending on the network the call is being terminated on. Similarly, calls to Spain and Italy have been reduced to N75 and N60 per minute from N90 and N130 respectively.

Also, calls to South Africa will now attract N85 per minute instead of N150, while calls to Saudi Arabia will now be charged at



N55 per minute, down from the former N60 per minute. For France and Ireland, the tariff has been slashed to N50 and N40 respectively from N65 and N60, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Togo and Niger N150 instead of the old N200 per minute rate.

Globacom urged subscribers to take advantage of the tariff slash to connect and talk at a cost-effective rate with their friends and relations in the countries covered by the offer especially in view of the prevailing international lockdown caused by the global Coronavirus pandemic. ■

MTN Nigeria tries its e-SIM technology to boost digital economy



In its continued drive to lead digital transformation, foster inclusion, improve customer experience and maintain the highest quality of service for its customers, MTN Nigeria has announced the trial of e-SIM services on its network based on approvals received from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC).

The next step in the evolution of Subscriber Identity Modules (SIM cards), as e-SIMs are designed to deliver unprecedented freedom and flexibility. Unlike the physical SIMs, e-SIMs are built into smartphones, devices and wearables. They

support multiple profiles and allow customers to connect multiple numbers to their e-SIM devices.

The trial, which kicked-off recently, will run for one year and is open on a first come first served basis to a limited number of subscribers who own compatible devices. Expressing satisfaction at the latest innovation, Mazen Mroue, Chief Operating Officer, MTN Nigeria said the company was eager to get through the trial process so that the technology could be deployed for the benefit of every Nigerian.

"We are in a fast-paced digital age with new technological advancements driving the constantly changing landscape. Against this backdrop, customers depend on us to provide high quality, reliable and easy-to-use connectivity solutions.

"With the introduction of the e-SIM, we will offer customers a seamless and distinctive digital experience with new levels of flexibility, simplicity and convenience. This is a further demonstration of our firm commitment to delivering the benefits of a bold

new digital world to our customers; and we will continue seeking new ways to provide solutions that address old and new challenges, making life a little easier and brighter," Mroue stated.

Notwithstanding the sophistication of e-SIMs, the onboarding requirements are the same as are required for a physical SIM. Hence, SIM registration in line with existing regulatory prescriptions remains a requirement for activating a device embedded with an e-SIM.

e-SIMs are particularly useful for people who want to manage personal and business lines easily and effectively or want a separate profile for data. The new technology will also be extremely convenient for frequent travellers and tourists, making it easier for them to opt for and keep a local subscription when visiting Nigeria.

MTN is spearheading e-SIM adoption in Nigeria as part of efforts to enable the digital economy. For all MTN mobile subscribers who own e-SIM compatible devices, setting up an e-SIM profile with a new or existing mobile plan is quick and easy. All it takes is a visit to an MTN service centre where frontline staff will help in registration and onboarding at no cost. Soon, e-SIM users will also be able to link multiple compatible devices and smart wearables such as tablets, smart watches, etc to their profile. ■

NNPC ready for biofuel production, grows 2,675 hectares of cassava for ethanol



In line with its automotive bio-fuel programme for the production of fuel-ethanol and bio-diesel that would be blended with premium motor spirit, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has cultivated 2,675 hectares of cassava plantations for the processing of bioethanol in Kebbi State.

Ethanol is a biofuel extracted from starchy crops like maize and cassava.

According to the Chairman of Kebbi

State government committee on biofuels, Prof. Mohammad Ka'oje, the scheme is a joint project between Kebbi State and NNPC which was jointly financed to the tune of N500 million each, and 5,000 hectares of land was acquired for biofuel production.

He explained that the state government was required to provide up to 20,000 hectares for the scheme with NNPC for cassava and sugarcane, while the NNPC handles the other productions.

"I wish to seize this opportunity to report to you that KBSG has met all its obligations under the MOU.

"In addition, it was agreed at a joint meeting of the partners that the state government should cultivate 5,000 hectares of cassava which will also form additional equity share for the state.

"So far, 2,675 hectares have been cultivated and fully established. This is for the purpose of generating seedlings and raw material for a test run of the machinery," the committee chairman said in a statement.

He added that the NNPC would handle the land validation, feasibility studies, and soil testing and also interact with the necessary stakeholders to handle the project.

Recall that in 2017, NNPC signed an MoU with Kebbi State to cultivate 20,000 hectares of cassava and sugarcane in the Kanya district of Zuru emirate of Kebbi for biofuel production.

Biofuel is known as an alternative to diesel fuel, but there are other uses. It can provide hydrogen, clean up oil, work as cooking oil and more.

The United States was by far one of the largest producers of biofuel in the world in 2018. The country produced 35 million metric tons of oil equivalents in 2019, while Brazil produced 22.4 million metric tons of the same. ■

Stakeholders advocate strategies for developing Oil and Gas Free Zones

Stakeholders in the oil and gas sector have advocated for a repositioning of the Oil and Gas Free Zones in order to ensure global competitiveness.

They spoke during a webinar organised by SING Nigeria, a good governance and accountability organisation, which partnered with other CSOs in her accountability project. The speakers called for an enabling environment that will promote competition for all operators to thrive in all oil and gas export free zone in line with global best practice.

The Speakers at the webinar included Prof. Pat Utomi, Fr. Edward Obi, Mr. Willem Vermeer, Hon. Rimande S. Kwewum and Mr. Umana O. Umana. They addressed various strategies that can assist the efforts of the Oil and Gas Free Zones, towards repositioning

it for global competitiveness.

Participants at the Webinar agreed that time was ripe for Nigeria to embrace local production in order to grow the economy. They further advocated that the Oil and Gas Free Zones should engage in peer review so as to learn from contemporaries in places like South East Asia.

They also advised that each Trade Zone should specialise in certain derivatives, while government Institutions should be strengthened in order to avoid hindrances to ease of doing business.

The forum also urged the private sector to see it as a collective responsibility by working together to ensure that they are strong institutions.

While commending the Umana Umana led incumbent management of the OGFZA,

the forum said that business in the Oil and Gas Free Zones should support a precautionary approach towards ensuring environmental standards, while stringent regimes of environmental regulations are enacted to punish or deter unfriendly activities in the ports and elsewhere, since the long term cost of dealing with environmental hazards is considered over short-term high revenue with respect to environmental hazards and degradation.

It was also suggested that Nigeria's free trade zones should integrate its plan with the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) of the African Union, while developing its opportunities in Agriculture, education, and others, as a spillover from Foreign Direct Investments. ■

UBA supports Nigeria's petroleum industry with \$200million

To support investment growth and liquidity requirements amid the Covid-19 crisis, the United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA) is providing the sum of \$200 million in a consortium of Nigerian commercial and international banks in a \$1.5 billion Pre-Export Finance Facility for the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and its upstream subsidiary, the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC).

According to a statement, the \$1.5 billion facility will be disbursed in two tranches. The first tranche of \$1 billion, to be repaid over a period of five years, will be provided in dollars, with UBA acting as the Facility Agent Bank. The second tranche of \$500 million will be provided in local currency, over seven years, with UBA acting as Lead Bank, providing \$200 million in naira equivalent.

Commenting on the support, UBA Group Chairman, Tony O. Elumelu, said: "This has been one of the most economically

challenging years that Nigeria has witnessed. With the sharp drop in the price of oil and the ensuing hardship that followed the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the private sector must come together and contribute meaningfully to the economy. This facility is clear evidence of this – UBA is providing investment that will significantly improve Nigeria's production capacity and in doing so also demonstrating the strength, depth, and sophistication of our commercial banking capability. I believe that together, working with governments, we can create more jobs and more wealth for people, not only in Nigeria, but across Africa."

The \$200 million, which will be in naira equivalent, will provide capital for investment in NNPC's production capacity, which is of strategic importance to the Nigerian economy and the country's leading source of foreign exchange earnings.

Both facilities will be repaid from an allocation of 30,000 barrels per day of NPDC's crude oil. UBA has a strong track record



in the resources sector across Africa, having facilitated oil prepayment deals with the NNPC, including its 2013 \$100 million participation in the PXF Funding Limited transaction, and a further \$60 million in the 2015 Phoenix Export Funding Limited transaction. In Senegal, UBA was responsible for the EUR 240m revolving crude oil financing facility for the Société Africaine de Raffinage and in Congo Brazzaville co-funded the \$250m crude oil prepayment facility for Orion Oil Limited.

Other participants in the NNPC deal include Standard Chartered Bank, Afrexim Bank, Union Bank and two oil trading companies, Vitol and Matrix. ■

Malabu: Italy prosecutors want Shell, Eni executives jailed



Italian prosecutors have asked the court to impose a fine on oil giants, Shell and Eni, indicted in the Malabu oil deal scandal. The prosecutors are also asking the court to

jail some of their present and former chief executives, including Eni Chief Executive officer, Claudio Descalzi, in a long-running trial over alleged corruption in Nigeria.

Eni and Shell jointly acquired the rights to a Nigerian offshore oil block, Oil Prospecting Licence (OPL) 245, for about \$1.3bn, but the deal had spawned legal cases spanning several countries. A related trial in Italy has lingered.

The OPL 245 is one of the biggest sources of untapped oil reserves on the African continent with reserves estimated at nine billion barrels.

In a Milan court, prosecutors asked on Tuesday for eight years in prison for Descalzi and seven years and four months for Shell's former Head of Upstream, Malcolm Brinded, according to Reuters.

The prosecutors also asked for Eni and Shell to be fined 900,000 euros (\$1.04m) each and sought to confiscate a total of \$1.09bn from all the defendants in the case, the equivalent of the bribes alleged to have been paid.

The companies and individuals accused have all denied wrongdoing in the case. ■

Promasidor Nigeria contributes over N280 million towards COVID-19 fight

As the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the world with numbers of confirmed cases increasing astronomically daily globally, Promasidor Nigeria Ltd, joined forces with other critical stakeholders in the fight to contain the spread of the deadly virus with the contribution of over Two-Hundred and Eighty million naira (N280m).

Specifically, Promasidor, a leading food & dairy company had made a direct cash contribution as well as donation of its quality food products in the fight against COVID-19. While the food company donated N 200million cash for the exclusive purchase of equipment and the setting up of isolation centers required in the nationwide fight against COVID-19 through the Nigeria Private Sector Coalition against COVID-19 (CACOVID), it also donated some of its quality products worth over Eighty million naira only (N 80m) to Lagos and Ekiti State Governments respectively.

From the Eighty million naira (N80m) products supports, the company donated milk, beverages, cereals and seasoning products worth N44million in support of the food bank in Lagos state. Similarly, it gave out products worth N 34m to Ekiti state even as it gave products worth N5.7 million to Isolo community, a major part of Lagos metropolis that plays host to its operational headquarters.

Speaking on the company's gesture during a media chat in Lagos, the Managing Director of Promasidor Nigeria Limited, Anders Einarsson, stated that the palliative was a combination of various initiatives that the company was doing in the form of transformations and food support with the quality food for nutrition that the organisation produces.

"Promasidor's intervention in the support of the COVID-19 crisis that we are facing in Nigeria is a threefold intervention strategy: it comes in form of cash contribution to the tune of N200 million that we are contributing to the CACOVID initiative for a nationwide reach."

"We are also intervening in the form of food support to the people in dire need of food, and that is being distributed across three key initiatives. We are giving food support to Lagos and Ekiti States, as well as food support to the Isolo community in Lagos," he said.

Explaining further, the company boss noted: "Isolo community is very close to our heart. It's the community, in which we have been operating in the last couple of years, and we are seeing and witnessing every day the struggles that her citizens are facing. It's important that we partner in our direct host community."

"We are working with Ekiti State on a specific backward integration project which

we are doing in Ikun Dairy Farm, we are giving N34million in the form of food products. And finally, we have given products worth N5.7 million in value to Isolo Community through the traditional ruler of the community, His Royal Majesty, Oba Kabiru Kolawole Alani Agbabiaka" he said

It was disclosed that Promasidor was working very closely with the Lagos State government and the Nigerian Governors' Forum.

"As an industry, we are presently humbled by how well Lagos State engagement on the COVID-19 crisis has been progressing, and we hope and desire that it will continue. Everybody has a part to play in the whole of this and all of us have to come together to support the government in this unprecedented challenge," the Chief Executive Officer said.

However, while much of the world's attention is rightly focused on the human toll of COVID-19, including the 217, 000 deaths reported as of 29 April, the economic toll of the outbreak also is having disastrous implications.

In a swift and effective response to the economic hardships occasioned by the lockdown on the residents of the aforementioned states, Promasidor noted that it had most of its teeming consumers covered.

Also speaking at the occasion, Marketing Manager, Promasidor Nigeria Limited, Mr. Abiodun Ayodeji, said: "as effective as lockdowns are, there were economic impacts on citizens of a state, especially amongst the low-income earners and daily wage earners. To reduce the impacts by providing palliatives to consumers, Promasidor's relief package targets the vulnerable households in Lagos and Ekiti States.

While receiving the products donations from Promasidor, Mrs. Abisola Olusanya, Special Adviser to Governor of Lagos State on Agriculture commended the company over its corporate social responsibility gesture to the state and her citizens.

"We must appreciate Promasidor for this generous gesture towards the state and its citizens. I want to assure Lagosians on behalf of Promasidor that these items would be well expended by giving them to vulnerable groups, which includes the aged, the indigent people among others. At such a time like this when COVID-19 is ravaging all over the world, we will do our best to ensure that it gets into the right hands," she said.

ABOUT PROMASIDOR

Promasidor was founded in 1979 by Robert Rose, who left the United Kingdom in 1957 for Zimbabwe to pursue his African dream. It has since grown with presence in 25 African countries. Promasidor Nigeria has achieved tremendous growth since it



Marketing Manager, Promasidor Nigeria – Mr. Abiodun Ayodeji (Right), handing over the product donations to the Oba of Isolo - His Royal Majesty, Oba Kabiru Kolawole Alani Agbabiaka as COVID-19 palliatives, in Isolo, Lagos.



L-R: Marketing Manager, Promasidor Nigeria Limited, Mr. Abiodun Ayodeji; Special Adviser to the Lagos State governor on Agriculture, Mrs. Abisola Olusanya; Director, External relations, Promasidor Nigeria Limited, Mr. Andrew Enahoro, and Lagos State Permanent Secretary on Agriculture, Dr. Olayiwola Onasanya, at the Promasidor product donations as COVID-19 palliatives, in Ikeja, Lagos.

commenced operations in 1993.

Promasidor Nigeria produces, distributes and markets quality range of products such as Cowbell, Loya, Miksi, SunVita, Top Tea and Onga seasoning across the country bringing joy to millions of consumers. Its Milk powders, culinary and beverage products are affordable, delicious and good for all. ■

Airtel employees donate N20m to Lagos State to fight COVID-19

Nigeria's leading telecommunications services provider, Airtel Nigeria has scored a first in Corporate Nigeria as its employees have donated the sum of N20m to the Lagos State Government to support its fight against the COVID-19 global pandemic.

By this unique gesture, the company's employees have become the first employee group in the country to have made such a donation.

In a letter to the Lagos State Governor, Airtel Nigeria's Managing Director/CEO, Mr. Segun Ogunsanya, stated that the donation by his colleagues was to show their support to Lagos State in the battle against the COVID-19 plague.

He added that the donation was specifically meant to support the state government in the provision of relief materials to indigent residents and citizens as well as families of those who are badly affected by the on-going COVID-19 crisis.

The letter reads, "I am pleased to inform

you that employees of Airtel Nigeria have donated the sum of N20 million (Twenty million naira) to the Lagos State COVID-19 account for the provision of relief materials to indigent families during this crisis.

Acknowledging the donation, the Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, expressed appreciation to the staff of Airtel Nigeria for standing to be counted when the support of every kind-hearted Lagosian was needed. He thanked them for the support and reiterated his administration's commitment to fighting the pandemic as well as mitigating the impact on the good people of Lagos State.

The Airtel letter further states, "The donation comes under the Airtel Nigeria Employee Volunteer Scheme (EVS), an initiative launched nine years ago, as part of our corporate philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework, which offers employees a platform to volunteer their time, a fraction of their monthly earnings and their skills to support relevant



charitable causes that positively impact our communities and country at large.

"Once again, we commend you and your team for the excellent work you have done to ensure residents and Indigenes of Lagos are well protected and safe at this extremely challenging period. Please be assured of our commitment to exploring further collaborations with the Lagos State Government to flatten the COVID-19 curve and ultimately defeat the deadly virus."

Responding further, the Governor, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, expressed his sincere appreciation to the staff of Airtel Nigeria "for standing to be counted when the support of every kind-hearted Lagosian was needed", stressing that his administration was committed to fighting the pandemic as well as mitigating the impact on the good people of Lagos State. ■

LaCasera celebrates COVID-19 frontline heroes



In appreciation of the frontline workers who have been committed to the overall well-being of Nigerians during the Covid-19 pandemic, The LaCasera Company (TLCC) is celebrating and rewarding them with the "LaCasera Heroes". The initiative is designed to celebrate and recognise frontline heroes that have been providing essential services from the inception of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

Speaking at the gift presentation and the unveiling of the LaCasera Heroes, the Managing Director, The LaCasera Company, Mr. Chinedum Okereke, explained that recognising the contributions of these unusual yet special heroes are extremely important. He also revealed that The LaCasera Heroes initiative is to contribute to the emotional well-being of individuals working at high risk and under intense pressure by recognising, appreciating and celebrating them in an unforgettable way.

"These are unusual times and many people are doing incredible work to keep our

people and cities and the country running as best as is safely possible. LaCasera Heroes is our way of shining the spotlight on them for their self-sacrificing work as we show our appreciation. It's a time like this that a thank you goes a long way," Okereke said.

Announcing the winners, the Group Marketing Director, LaCasera, Agu Emmanuel said: "We have many individuals who have done well to assist the country during this period and it is important for us to support the communities where we operate. It is wonderful to hear these stories which are great examples of how people are making a real difference to people's lives during this uncertain period.

"In light of the current pandemic, LaCasera is excited to bring well-deserved recognition to these hardworking individuals. Ten super heroes emerged from the pool of outstanding entries received from individuals online who nominated their 'everyday super hero'. These Super heroes are celebrated in a spectacular way, with their own super hero names and avatars with products and shopping voucher gift packs."

The first Batch of the LaCasera Heroes are Tolani Odukoya, a medical student and a member of the COVID-19 response call centre; Segun Adediji, a pharmacist at the University of Lagos Teaching Hospital; Mrs. Ikemenego Chika, a Store Owner in Port

Harcourt; Khafilat Ojomu-Ilelaboye, the Head Nurse at the Onikan Isolation Centre; Dr Amarachukwu Karen Allison, a medical doctor in Ogun State; Dr. Bella Nifemi in Lagos; Uche Akano, a police officer in Lagos; Uka Mary-Ann Oluchi, a nurse in Abia State; Oduala Olorunrinu, a biochemist in Lagos and Dr. Ola Brown of Naija Flying Doctors who have been working on the frontline and staying away from home to protect everyone, while we are cocooning at home. Many congratulations to the competition winners.

"With the large number of entries received, LaCasera is pleased to announce that the celebration of the heroes will continue until the end of the year. More heroes will be unveiled and celebrated as they are nominated via our social media pages," Mr. Agu explained.

About LaCasera:

Incorporated in Nigeria in the year 2000, The La Casera Company (TLCC) is a member of JOTNA Group of Companies.

TLCC is a leading beverage company and the pioneer of PET bottled Carbonated Soft Drinks (CSD) in Nigeria. The company manufactures, markets, and presently distributes six products, including LaCasera Apple drink across the nation and other parts of West Africa. Its flagship product, LaCasera Apple was launched in Nov. 2001. ■



9mobile appoints Alan Sinfield new CEO

9mobile, a leading telephony company in the country has announced the appointment of Mr. Alan Sinfield as its substantive Chief Executive Officer.

Sinfield whose appointment was made known recently succeeds Stephane Beuvelet, earlier heading the telecom company in acting capacity as CEO since November 2018 when the new board took over the company's management.

Speaking on his new appointment, Sinfield said: "The Nigerian telecoms industry is characterized by strong competition, but it is also an industry that is important to people everywhere. Nigeria is rich in diversity and boasts of energetic, resilient, friendly and hardworking people.

"I am delighted to join the 9mobile family and I look forward to using my experience and unique value propositions to lead the company in the next exciting phase of its journey.

"The goal is to build on the existing strong foundation of the company to create value that will transform the Nigerian telecoms sector."

Nasir Bayero, 9mobile Chairman, in a statement by the telecom company said Sinfield's experience will play a critical role in improving the company's position in the telecommunications industry.

Testimonies about Sinfield's brand equity rating and pedigree on LinkedIn reads: "Hands on CEO with proven track record of increasing shareholder value through developing strategic plans, building high performing organisations and enhancing operational efficiency often through the implementation of fundamental change, in both turn-around and high-growth situations. Proven funding acquirer and M&A deal sourcing; achieving successful exits both buy and sale side globally."

"Alan's wealth of experience of building high performance and high-growth organisations will play a pivotal role in strengthening 9mobile's market position in the highly competitive telecommunications industry," Bayero said.

"He brings with him the vision, passion and years of experience from diverse environments, which will consolidate our priorities to provide superior customer experience and sustained network quality.

"He is expected to work closely with the board of directors and all stakeholders to define credible and achievable long-term business plans, through the introduction of solutions to address the evolving needs of the Nigerian telecommunication market."

According to the statement, the new CEO has worked in several countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, Slovakia, Iraq, Qatar, Myanmar, South Korea, Cambodia and Hong Kong.

He was said to have been the CEO of Amara Communications Co. (ananda), a 4G LTE mobile broadband operator in Myanmar, and before this, the CEO of Cadcomms (qb), in Cambodia.

He also was the CEO at Starlink, Qatar; COO at Planning

International in Dubai; and the chief information and chief customer service officer at Orascom Telecom in Iraq.

Sinfield was said to have begun his career in the banking sector at Bank of America through a management trainee programme to become a programmer and business analyst.

He joined the telecom industry with SK Telecom, Korea, which led to a merger and acquisition role with the merger of SK Telecom and Shinsaegi Telecom.



Heineken appoints Jacco van der Linden new President of Heineken APAC

The Heineken Company has appointed Jacco van der Linden new President of Heineken APAC as his predecessor Dolf van den Brink starts in his new role as CEO of Heineken.

Commenting on the new role via his LinkedIn page, Linden, who is currently the Managing Director of Heineken Vietnam, said: "I am grateful for the trust that has placed in me and take on this role with a great sense of responsibility to lead this beautiful and diverse region, especially amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

My priority continues to be the safety of our colleagues as different countries start easing their public health and safe distancing measures. I am extremely proud and thankful for the resilience they've shown over the past months and the kindness and compassion they've displayed in helping each other, our local communities and our customers. Moments like this stir in me real pride in being part of the Heineken family."

He added: "I am full of confidence that together and with the support of our partners and customers, we'll be able to navigate this pandemic and come out stronger than before, true to the indomitable Asian spirit that I admire so much. In the five years that I've lived in Asia, I've come to love this region and its people, and my family and I are excited to continue this journey as we make Singapore our new home."

Heineken Vietnam is Heineken's largest operating company in Asia with over 3,500 employees and 6 breweries in the country.

Jacco van der Linden was Marketing Director and an executive member of Board of Directors at Nigerian Breweries Plc from August 2008 to January 2012.



Duracell appoints MediaCom as global media agency

Following a competitive pitch, MediaCom has been appointed Duracell's global media agency of record. The win covers 32 markets, including the US, UK and China, and MediaCom took over the business on July 1, 2020.

While many global pitches have been paused due to Coronavirus, the Duracell pitch started in November and the key chemistry meetings and face-to-face presentations were completed before the lockdown began in many markets.

"The future is battery powered. Duracell is an iconic brand and it gives us great pride to welcome them back into the MediaCom family. We are excited to apply our unique expertise and strategic thinking through our standout people," said Nick Lawson, Global COO, MediaCom.

The account was previously managed by Starcom.

Lagos Business School appoints Deputy Dean



Africa's leading graduate business school, Lagos Business School, has appointed Professor of Strategic Management, Chris Ogbechie as its Deputy Dean. The appointment was announced by the Pan-Atlantic University (PAU) Governing Council and became effective on July 1, 2020.

Professor Ogbechie has been a member of the Lagos Business School Management Board since March 2012 and is the founding Director of the School's Sustainability Centre. He teaches strategy, sustainability and corporate governance at the School and is a visiting professor at Strathmore Business School, Kenya and the University of Kigali, Rwanda.

Speaking on the appointment, Lagos Business School Dean, Professor Enase Okonedo said: "The combination of Professor Ogbechie's excellent academic qualifications, experience, drive, and values stand him in good stead to

assume this responsibility, and I appreciate his willingness to take on this role."

In his reaction to his appointment, Professor Ogbechie said, "it is always an honour to serve, particularly at this time of a very turbulent business environment when many businesses in Nigeria and Africa will look up to LBS for assistance in navigating this new normal caused by Covid-19".

The Deputy Dean holds a first-class degree in mechanical engineering from Manchester University, an MBA from Manchester Business School and a PhD in Business Administration from Brunel Business School in the UK.

He has decades of academic and non-academic experience, with the latter derived from his work as Head of Marketing/Sales at Nestle Nigeria and from his consulting work with Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan firms.

While in Nestle, he held international positions in Malaysia, Singapore, and Switzerland. He was the Chairman, Board of Directors, Diamond Bank and is on the board of several private and public companies including National Salt Company of Nigeria (NASCON), Summit Healthcare Group, Health Partners, ActivEdge Technologies, Hubmart Stores, and Palton Morgan Holdings.

Professor Ogbechie's research interests are in strategy in turbulent environments, strategic leadership, board effectiveness, and corporate sustainability. He has several publications in financial services marketing, strategic planning, corporate social responsibility, and corporate governance.

Andy Main appointed as Global Chief Executive Officer of Ogilvy

Ogilvy has appointed Andy Main as Global Chief Executive Officer. Andy, Global Head of Deloitte Digital and a Principal at Deloitte Consulting LLP, succeeds John Seifert, who stepped down in April after 41 years with Ogilvy including five as CEO. Andy will join Ogilvy at the end of July to begin the transition.

Andy took the helm at Deloitte Digital in 2014 and rapidly grew the business into a prestigious global brand. During his tenure, Deloitte Digital made the first significant move by consultancy firms into creative services with the acquisition of multiple creative agencies, beginning a trend that has reshaped the industry. Today, Deloitte Digital offers creative, technology and consulting services to many of the world's leading companies.

Andy is one of marketing's most highly regarded executives, featuring in Adweek's



Top 100 Leaders in Marketing, Media and Technology. He has also been named as one of the world's Top 25 Consultants by Consulting magazine.

He has more than 25 years of consulting experience working with Fortune 500 brands to modernise their businesses and bring new ideas to market quickly. He began his career with Andersen Consulting and moved to Deloitte Consulting in 1999 as a Principal in the Hi-Tech Practice. He has also previously served on Deloitte Consulting's board of directors.

John Seifert said: "I am so grateful to have spent the past 41 years with Ogilvy. I have been supported by so many generous colleagues and clients. It's been a wonderful life. Andy's personal and professional experiences could not be more relevant for the ongoing transformation of Ogilvy and WPP at a moment of extraordinary change and opportunity in our industry. My partners and I are very excited to have someone of Andy's character and accomplishments join Ogilvy and lead our global creative network into the future (our founder would approve... and be incredibly proud that another Scot is at the helm). I will partner with Andy through the rest of the year to ensure a seamless transition for our people and clients."

Andy Main said: "Ogilvy is a name synonymous with creative and strategic excellence and I am honoured to become the company's next CEO. We have a great opportunity to help clients deliver sustainable growth by using Ogilvy's creative genius to transform not only brands but entire businesses. We must also be a company with a clear culture of belonging where talented people from under-represented groups are championed and supported throughout their careers, and given the chance to reach the very highest levels of the organisation. Ogilvy will play its full part in implementing WPP's clear and unequivocal commitment to anti-racism—with the recognition that we will be judged not by our words, but our actions. I look forward to working with the fantastic people at Ogilvy and the wider WPP team."

Mark Read, CEO of WPP, said: "Andy is one of our industry's most admired leaders. He has demonstrated the effectiveness of blending creative, technology and consulting services. His belief in the power of creativity to transform businesses and the importance of people and culture in organisations aligns closely with our vision for WPP and our agencies. John Seifert joined Ogilvy as a summer intern in Los Angeles in 1979 and for the subsequent 41 years has dedicated himself to the success of the business. I would like to thank him for his tremendous leadership."

Last week, The One Show named Ogilvy the 2020 Network of the Year in recognition of its outstanding work across disciplines on behalf of clients.

About Ogilvy:

Ogilvy has been producing iconic, culture-changing marketing campaigns since the day its founder David Ogilvy opened up shop in 1948. Today, Ogilvy is an award-winning integrated creative network that makes brands matter for Fortune Global 500 companies as well as local businesses across 132 offices in 83 countries. The company creates experiences, design and communications that shape every aspect of a brand's needs through six core capabilities: Brand Strategy, Advertising, Public Relations and Influence, Customer Engagement and Commerce, Digital Transformation, and Partnerships. Ogilvy is a WPP company (NASDAQ:

Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe named first female MD/CEO of Fidelity Bank

Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe has been appointed as the managing director designate of Fidelity Bank Plc. This was contained in a notification sent to the Nigerian Stock Exchange and the general public.

The appointment, which has been approved by the Central Bank of Nigeria, is ahead of the retirement of Nnamdi Okonkwo, the bank's current MD, who will retire on December 31, 2020, upon completion of his contract tenure.

Ernest Ebi, the bank's chairman, said Onyeali-Ikpe will assume office as the substantive MD from January 1, 2021, to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

Onyeali-Ikpe currently serves as the executive director, Lagos and south-west directorate of the bank. The bank said it had also appointed Kevin Ugwuoke, who currently serves as its chief risk officer, as the executive director subject to the approval of the CBN.

"Fidelity Bank has enjoyed a very stable leadership since inception. These appointments underscore the bank's robust human capital capabilities, governance and succession policies," Ebi said.

"We thank Nnamdi for his significant contribution to the development of the bank during his tenure on the board," he added.

Okonkwo was appointed to the board of the bank in April 2012 as an executive director and became MD on January 1, 2014.

The bank listed some of the achievements of his tenure to include a customer case increase by 121 percent from 2.4 million to 5.3 million, digital banking penetration improvement from 1.0 percent to 50.1 percent, accounting for 28.4 percent of total fee income, profit before tax growth from N9.0billion to N30.4 billion and return on equity increase from 5.5 percent to 13.3 percent.

Onyeali-Ikpe was appointed to the bank's board in 2015 as an executive director.

Nneka has over 30 years of experience in various banks, including Standard Chartered Bank Plc, Zenith Bank Plc and Citizens International Bank/Enterprise Bank, where she held management positions in legal, treasury, investment banking, retail/commercial banking and corporate banking.

She holds bachelor of laws (LLB) degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, a master of laws (LLM) degree from Kings College, London.

Ugwuoke joined Fidelity Bank in 2015 as general manager, chief risk officer. He is said to have 29 years of banking experience across various banks namely Citi Bank, Access Bank Plc, United Bank for Africa Plc and legacy Mainstreet Bank Limited, and was the chief risk officer at United Bank for Africa Plc and Mainstreet Bank Limited before joining Fidelity Bank.

Ugwuoke holds a first-class honors degree in civil engineering from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and a post-graduate diploma in management from Edinburgh Business School of Herriot-Watt University.



First electric Bentley due in 2026



Bentley announced earlier recently that it is undertaking a research project to develop an “e-axle” that is fully recyclable, and eliminates the rare-earth magnets used in many current production electric cars. The first all-electric Bentley production model, due in 2026, could set new standards for sustainability.

Wearing the bizarre acronym OCTOPUS (Optimized Components, Test and simulatiOn, toolkits for Powertrains which integrate Ultra high-speed motor Solutions), the project could

significantly reduce the overall environmental impact of electric cars by taking a closer look at the materials used to make them, in addition to emissions from propulsion.

A prototype powertrain has matched the performance of comparable permanent-magnet motors while “simultaneously removing the need for both rare-earth magnets and copper windings, delivering a package both cost effective and recyclable at its end of life,” according to a Bentley press release.

OCTOPUS is scheduled to run for three years, with the goal of producing a powertrain “suitable for real-world application by 2026.” Bentley plans to launch its first production electric car that same year. That car will arrive about 10 years after Bentley started talking about its electric-vehicle plans.

Recall that in 2016, Bentley announced that it was studying an all-electric coupe. An all-electric convertible concept followed the next year, plus news of an electric Bentley SUV that might have shared some components with the Audi E-Tron.

By 2019, after a change in leadership at the brand, Bentley was no longer sounding bullish on EVs.

Bentley launched its first electrified model—a plug-in hybrid version of the Bentayga SUV—that year, and mentioned plans for an all-electric model by 2025. So it appears the electric model’s launch has been delayed somewhat.

If you’re an EV enthusiast and a Bentley enthusiast, until then, your best all-electric bet might be to put a classy Bentley EV conversion in the garage. ■

Nissan redesigns 2022 Nissan Rogue Sport, other brands for market repositioning

Nissan suffers from an aging lineup and is bleeding cash as a result. Fortunately, the Japanese auto giant is working on a fleet of new or updated models to help turn its fortunes around, one of which has just been spotted.

One of these is a redesigned Rogue Sport compact crossover SUV which we’re likely to see reach dealers in 2021 as a 2022 model. In other markets, the vehicle will be badged a Qashqai.

The proportions look similar to the current model, though more modern styling looks to have been inspired by recent Nissan crossover concepts like the Xmotion and IMQ. The redesigned 2021 Nissan Rogue is a preview of what’s to come. Inside should be a much improved infotainment system, as well as the latest in electronic driver-assist features.

The platform of the new Rogue Sport is likely to be an updated version of the current model’s CMF modular design. This points to the vehicle coming with front-wheel drive (with available all-wheel drive) and, unfortunately, a continuously variable transmission. One of the vehicles the engineers have been using as a benchmark is the Lynk & Co. 01 currently sold exclusively in China.

It isn’t clear what powertrains will be offered, though the current model’s 2.0-liter inline-4 good for 141 horsepower will likely

carry over, possibly this time paired with a mild-hybrid setup. Don’t look for battery-electric power; Nissan will launch the Ariya electric crossover in late 2021 instead.

As mentioned above, Nissan is working on a fleet of new or updated models. In addition to the redesigned Rogue Sport and Rogue, as well as the new Ariya, the global auto market will also see an updated Armada and redesigned versions of the Pathfinder, Frontier and even the Z sports car. ■





TAMUNO KIRI

Brands and Consumers: Marriage of a Tap Dance (2)

Conversations between brands and consumers have always towed the line of one party screaming and yelling at the other, rather than a two-way street of cross pollination. The past five months of the year twenty-twenty, revealed the continuation of this common pattern of communication, brands talking down at consumers, giving no room to listen. Even in these odd times, when consumers are grappling with the attendant effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that has crippled families with joblessness, mental issues, debts, and near-death situations, brands (corporate, product, and personal), jump in too quickly to provide all the answers, rather than listening. Consumers are mentally tired, not looking up to hear new things, they rather want to be heard and listened to, no wonder the likes of Tik-Tok, thrived during this period, because people just want to express themselves and be heard, not to be preached to.

All the Instalive, Zoom sessions, Webinars, etc, are losing audiences because there is information constipation. Consumers are simply tired of it, because brands always feel that they have the sole right to just keep talking on and on, whereas consumers wish that they remain quiet for once and listen. Let consumers talk about themselves, their vulnerabilities, fears, and desires. The art of good listening, is the major character flaw brands have. Good listening could enable a marriage talk itself out of divorce. It can make a person talk himself or herself out of suicide, affliction, danger and adversity.

The history of brand talkativeness did not start today. Under traditional marketing, branding was done through intrusive communication approach, of repetitive advertising which was judged to be the process of achieving consumer mind-recall.

It was done through advertising weighting of frequency and reach (share-of-voice). The process assumed that whoever spends more, achieves voice dominance, better mind-recall, and consumer mind-share at points-of-purchase. The consumer was a sitting duck, watching everything thrown at him.

This approach was deduced from the communication theory called the Hypodermic Needle Theory, postulated by Harold Laswell (1920). The theory holds the belief that all humans can be lumped into certain categories of predicted behaviour, and that the media had the power to create that influence and impact. Today, Harold will watch with awe, how power has moved back into consumers' hands thanks to the mobile phone.

In this postmodern era of in-bound marketing, where the consumer holds sway, brands struggle to create attractive and consumer interesting content to win the consumer over. Content deployed through triggers of engagement that would elicit favourable consumer actions towards achieving life time value. While brands seek to explore the consumer to establish that profitable lifetime engagement, the consumer is seeking to forge a life time relationship with the preferred brand to bond with. Brands exert cost and effort to occupy the minds of consumers, the latter scans through every content to know what makes the brand thick, in other to appropriate it to self. Psychologists call this, the Interdependent Philosophy.

The above philosophy was first proposed by the US Social Psychologists Harold H. Kelley and John W. Thibaut, in their book, *The Social Psychology of Groups* (1959). They explained how this theory affects interpersonal relationships. The theory explains that the nature of interdependence between two individuals depends on the manner in which each can influence the other during the course of social interactions, which is called "Outcome

Interdependence". Today, this theory is developed into building national economies and blue-chip organizations. The theory inspires "inclusive learning", "inclusive living", "import knowledge", "import learning", "import development", "import strategies of success".

The above consumer insight, is what developed into the consumer co-ownership theory, proposed by Lindal Price and Russell Belk, in their set of essays on Sharing and Ownership. They stated that "keeping (downloading), and sharing are not only fundamental to consumer behaviour, but these are basic acts of social interactions linking both individuals and groups. When consumers find a very instructive, inspiring and educative content from a brand or any source, they make the content theirs, and become co-owners by sharing and re-sharing. This tap dance between brands and consumers truly affords brands the opportunity to have more impact on consumers.

In summary, the postmodern consumer, wants to see brands wear human face, for him to relate with. The consumer uses touch and feel gadgets, and would love to like, download, own, appropriate, personalize, humane messages that will make his life better, and help create a better world. This is a far cry from brand benefit hyping or bandwagon COVID-19 jargons and dry empathy. Creating consumer feedback strategies, especially during this pandemic, may well transform the jaundice-infested communication relationship between brands and consumers. The inability for consumers to talk with brands, makes them gather clusters of friends and colleagues and go on social media to lambast brands of poor service and brand experiences. Truth is, consumers want to talk back at brands, express themselves and be heard. It is high time brands create room to just listen to consumers and not talk, to enhance a much better "marriage of a tap dance".

AGENCIES 2020: Re-invention is the new currency

By ADEDOYIN ADEWUMI

Marketing communications and advertising are intrinsically linked to the economic indices of any nation and serve as one of the barometers for gauging the heartbeat of an economy. Where there is a lull in this sector, there are possible indications that the economy is not running at its full capacity.

Nigeria has had its fair share of 21st century challenges, especially in the area of business and investment. The political class is making tremendous efforts to stabilize the economy but the issues of insecurity, ease of doing business, prohibitive tax reign, and political volatility are some of the factors that when aggregated portend gloomy indications that this may not be the best of

times for business in Nigeria.

Businesses are not being able to plan or make strategic projections given the current pace and direction of the economy, coupled with the socioeconomic dynamics and political exigencies. Advertising is about brand building through a strategic communication, but where new investments are not attracted by the prevailing economic realities, then the multiplier effect on which advertising is expected to hinge its energies would hardly be realistic.

That said, agencies are not unaware of the positive implications of this situation. As a leading segment of the creative industry, the business of advertising is being forced to dig deeper especially in the direction of innovative solutions, so as to be able to approach clients and prospects with

mind-shifting ideas with the potentials of renewing or sustaining consumers' loyalty towards the client's brand. So, the tasks before agencies should be the strategic re-invention and re-imagination of their operations. Ideas must be able to soothe the frayed nerves of clients and reassure them of the winning and leading edge in the marketplace.

This is the new orientation and philosophy at Creativexone which is why we have remained relevant to our diverse clients, and in the same vein continued to stir curiosity with our strategic creative output. Investment in people and other resource must be prioritized because we believe that for businesses to remain sustainable and recover lost grounds, they should of necessity discover new and refreshing ways of achieving cutting edge results both in the short and in the long run.

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