

LACK OF NATIONAL RALLYING POINT, NIGERIA'S GREATEST DRAWBACK – YUSUF ALI, SAN

MARKETING **EDGE**

Promoting the brand idea.

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Nigeria @ 60:

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Plus

**Corporate Players
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INSIDE

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APPROVED CODE OF
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OPERATING MANUAL FOR
ADVERTISING INDUSTRY**

**GLO MARKS 17 YEARS OF
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**PROMASIDOR UNVEILS TIWA SAVAGE
AS BRAND AMBASSADOR, LAUNCHES
TWISCO CHOCOLATE POWDER**

**OGILVY BECOMES FIRST AGENCY
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General Manager, Amber Energy Drinks Ltd. Ms Lola Adedeji (middle) surrounded by family members and guests at the formal commissioning of the energy drink's ultra modern office recently in Lagos

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L-R, Managing Director, Promasidor Nigeria Ltd, Mr. Anders Einarsson, Nigerian Star Actress/ Singer, Tiwa Savage and Head of Commercial, Promasidor Nigeria Ltd. Mario Russo during the unveiling of the Actress as Twisco Brand Ambassador and the launch of the Chocolate Powder drink in Lagos recently.

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A regime of robust brand journalism

Gradually, MARKETING EDGE is coming of age! Perhaps it is apposite to say that we are almost of age!! Yes, that is the way to put it having been able to put in very successful, consistent, determined and focused efforts at promoting the brand idea. Just last September, our magazine hit the landmark age 17! It has been seventeen years of brand journalism in the highly fragmented Nigerian media landscape.

Our adventure into brand journalism venture was not a happenstance, neither was it unconnected with the need to promote marketing and advertising knowledge while expanding the frontiers of profitability and value-addition amongst relevant stakeholders.

At inception, we made it unequivocally clear that we shall remain an undisputable leading source of news and insight serving the brand marketing ecosystem. First published September 3rd 2003, MARKETING EDGE's award winning coverage is read by over 6 million engaged audience of professionals cutting across different platforms, including print, digital, events, podcasts, newsletters, social media and mobile apps. We went a top notch higher two years ago when we launched **MARKETING EDGE ON TV** in partnership with TVC Communications. Today, the half hour weekly TV programme which airs Wednesday every week has become another landmark content rich TV program in the IMC sector. As a veritable touch-point for the advertising and marketing community, MARKETING EDGE is an unparalleled resource for leaders across various sub-sectors of the integrated marketing communications business who depend on its rich, robust, and well-researched contents in helping them play their parts as relevant stakeholders in the competitive sector.

In propagating our vision statement, this magazine has projected brand visibility and marketing efforts thereby serving as a source of knowledge to both marketers and the consumers. We have done this task with dedicated attention and commitment such that

our magazine has attained a high equity rating in the industry. Ours is a practice built and nurtured on a strong foundation of journalism of excellence.

During these past seventeen years, we have been consistent in promoting the brand idea and, today, any brand that is serious with its marketing efforts but has not featured in MARKETING EDGE could well be said to be winking in the dark.

This is because MARKETING EDGE, a monthly all-colour glossy magazine, has carved a niche for itself as the most authoritative brands and marketing journal in Nigeria and is read basically by decision makers, industry leaders and gladiators.

Nonetheless, we remain resolute in our self-imposed tasks and duties as encapsulated in our mission statement.

As we celebrate our Seventeen Years of market leadership and dominance, we are happy to once again excite our industry with the seventh edition of MARKETING EDGE NATIONAL MARKETING STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT & BRANDS AND ADVERTISING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE.

Our Summit theme, "Making Your business Future-fit: The Post Digital Challenge", will be featuring a global marketing leader as guest speaker, Mr Andisa Ntsubane, former Managing Director of Microsoft in Africa and Marketing Lead at Emerging Markets and Old mutual, South Africa, Africa and Latin America.

A galaxy of seasoned professionals and industry intellectuals of renowned pedigree are to dissect the main theme offering penetrating insights on all aspects of the integrated marketing communications business. Our panelists, who were painstakingly selected across the industries, remain our valued assets in further expanding the frontiers of marketing and advertising while promoting the brand idea. The summit initiative which we hold clearly to our heart remains a testament and testimony to our market leadership and brand awareness evangelism. The same goes for the Brands and Advertising Awards of Excellence *Continued on pg 8*

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holding at the prestigious and luxurious D'Podium International Event Center, at Aromire area of Ikeja, Lagos State.

For us at MARKETING EDGE, this year's award is one with a special attraction and uniqueness. It was organically planned and designed to reboot, re-start and re-energise the social, intellectual and entrepreneurial landscape of the Nigeria IMC. We are particularly excited to organise this award event to celebrate the triumph of humanity over the calamitous ravage of Covid-19 pandemic which origin remains an elusive medical contestations. While some may say it is not yet time to shout Eureka, as we are all still in the mood and moment of Covid-19 protocols, we cannot continue to hold ourselves bondage to the evil we are yet to understand its source and origin. We have overcome. But we shall not go back on keeping safe in line with the present social distancing order. Let all remain hopeful that the battle is more than half won and life will soon return in full force.

As we recount our story and the journeys so far, we have again, in line with tradition, style and culture, packaged a two-in-one edition in this publication.

We have put our searchlight on one of the most topical issues of the moment - "Financial Inclusion" - in a bid to further create requisite compass for the bulk of our target audience to navigate contemporary and emerging financial markets. Financial inclusion as defined is the availability and equality of opportunity to access financial services. It is a process by which individuals and businesses can access appropriate, affordable and timely financial products and services.

Our team of intelligent writers has put together very robust and comprehensive insights on this emerging sector.

Similarly, we have also attempted an historical review of the Nigerian National Brand at 60 as well as an exciting pull-out on Top Nigerian Amazons on Nigeria at 60. Notwithstanding the fact that Nigeria still teething at 60, it has produced women and men of timber and caliber.

The failure of the nation state has never affected the success of outstanding individuals who have become achievers and pacesetters in their respective industries and places of endeavours. By a dint of hard-work, focus, vision and mission, these human avatars and primus inter-pares have earned their gold and epaulets in the comity of legends, heroes and heroines.

Thus, it is only fit and proper to celebrate these personalities while we overlook or downplay the failures that have beset the nation over the years. We are deliberately celebrating success, not failure!

Not least on our menu in the new edition are the regular delicacies and potpourri on gists, jests, and authoritative news on happenings in the industry. It is rich, robust and well packaged in lucid prose and style characteristic of MARKETING EDGE.

Again, we enjoin our teeming readers and subscribers to sit back and savour this beautiful edition as we welcome all to an even better and brighter future post-Covid-19.

Happy Reading!

JOHN AJAYI, fnimn, NGE ■



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Industry practitioners express divergent views on advertisers' choice of media selection for celebrating Nigeria at 60



Media and advertising practitioners in the country have expressed different opinions over the preference of companies, brands and products to communicate their messages in national dailies on Nigeria at 60 Independence celebration at the expense of other traditional and conventional media of advertising.

Specifically, the practitioners in the Integrated Marketing Communications sector, who lauded the initiative by the advertisers to connect with their consumers during an epoch-making event like independence day celebration but decried the use of newspapers alone as the strategy is lop-sided.

Speaking on the development during a chat with MARKETING EDGE, President of Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), Mr. Femi Adelusi, said the major reason most advertisers choose the print medium for communicating their brand messages on Independence and special anniversary occasions is not unconnected with the fact that “the print enjoys a spike in readership on public holidays like October 1st of every year and other anniversaries”.

Besides, he also said that “there is a theory and belief that a large number of government and executive officials read the print publications a lot particularly on days like the independence day, noting that the target audience for the print messages are usually not the primary consumers of the products.

However, he said these placements are largely tactical (Public Relations, Political)

and directed to speak to those in senior political and executive positions.

Adelusi, also said the nature of these communications are long prose that require long span attention and the environment is more of long editorial, hence the print channel is an attraction.

In a similar development, President of Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), Mr. Emmanuel Ajufo, argued that the choice of newspapers for celebrating and communicating brands messages at independence day was not unconnected with the fact that the platform offers a robust choice to read and digest the

message properly.

He stated that many readers usually have the opportunity to see and read the message because the medium allows pass on.

Besides, the OAAN President explained that cost consideration is very key in the choice and selection of the print medium over other media platforms. He revealed that messages printed in the newspapers could be archived for a long while as the print has a shelf appeal and attraction.

Expressing similar view on the issues, former Editor of The Nation newspaper and Chief Executive Officer of Media Career, Mr. Lekan Otufodunrin, said the popular choice of newspapers as platform for communicating brands' independent day messages is due to the fact that most organisations and corporations in the country have over the years been used to print for such messages.

Even though he said advertisers also use broadcast and digital media platforms for advertising purposes, he said “the print seems to suit them for getting the attention of those in government, especially as good corporate citizens.

His words: “It’s definitely not for reach, but the permanent nature of the print still makes it preferable to them for record purposes,” Otufodunrin explained. ■

Tiwa Savage unveiled as Twisco Brand Ambassador

Nigerian music sensation, Tiwa Savage, has been unveiled as the new and first brand ambassador of Twisco, a premium chocolate drink powder from the stable of Promasidor Nigeria Ltd.

The multi-talented and award-winning singer was unveiled at an exclusive media parley held at the corporate head office of Promasidor at Isolo, Lagos State.

Tiwa Savage was unveiled alongside her son, Jamil, to signpost the brand building objective and essence of the new product

offering from the foremost dairy company. The new chocolate drink powder, according to Promasidor, is fortified with ENERFORT, a special blend of ten power-packed micro-nutrients, including Vitamins B2, B6, B12, C, D3, Niacin, Calcium, Phosphorous, Iron and Zinc- all of which are necessary for optimal energy release that consumers need to power their dream.

Speaking on the choice of Tiwa Savage as an ambassador for Twisco, the Managing Director, Promasidor Nigeria, Mr. Anders

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L-R – Managing Director, Promasidor Nigeria Ltd, Anders Einarsson with Nigerian Star Actress/Singer, Tiwa Savage during their unveiling as Twisco Brand Ambassadors at the formal launch of the Chocolate Powder drink in Lagos recently.

Einarsson, said: “Tiwa Savage is a great Nigerian, multi award-winning singer and songwriter known worldwide.

“She is a multi-talented Nigerian whose brand equity rating remains remarkably inspiring and admirable. In addition, she is a mum of a fun-loving and energetic boy named Jamil, and supports her son in achieving his dream which is what Twisco stands for,” he stated.

Tiwa Savage stated that the new product from Promasidor, Twisco, will benefit a lot from her brand considering her cult-like

following on social media.

She continued: “For kids, the packaging is very attractive, and I’m glad that Twisco is nutritious and affordable for consumers across all social strata. I particularly like the brand because it meets my expectation. My son, Jamil, genuinely likes Twisco, too. I think selling something that one truly believes in is a stronger way of marketing,” she said.

Also speaking during the event, the Marketing Manager, Promasidor Nigeria Ltd, Mr. Abiodun Ayodeji, said that the

company launched Twisco into the market with a view to offer Nigerian consumers a Premium Chocolate Drink Powder that delivers optimal nutrition and energy to power their dreams.

“Twisco has the goodness of cocoa, malt and milk comes. It comes in a premium look and feel packaging available in 25g Sachets, 500g Tin and 500g Refill”, Ayodeji explained.

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 several African countries. Promasidor Nigeria has achieved tremendous growth since it commenced operations in 1993.

Promasidor Nigeria Limited, produces, distributes and markets quality range of products such as Cowbell Milk, LoyaMilk, MiksiMilk, Kremela, SunVita Cereal, Cowbell Chocolate, Miksi Chocolate, Cowbell Coffee, Cowbell Strawberry, Top Tea and Onga Seasoning across the country bringing joy to millions of consumers.

Promasidor is an organisation that demonstrates high standard of corporate governance and corporate social responsibility throughout the Group. It has clear obligation to consumers, suppliers, its employees and to the communities. These obligations are respect, integrity and openness. ■

MARKETING EDGE new award logo excites industry practitioners

Against the backdrop of the recently unveiled logo of 2020 MARKETING EDGE Summit & Awards, practitioners in the IMC industry have lauded the new logo, describing it as a creative innovation accentuating the brand essence and equity of the leading marketing publication.

Recall that MARKETING EDGE recently unveiled a new logo for its annual Brands & Advertising Excellence Awards 2020 in a move to reposition and rebrand the highly respected and anticipated annual industry event.

Commenting on the new award logo, the Managing Director, X3M Ideas, Steve Babaeko, said: “The award logo is simply creativity at its best. It speaks to the value and essence of the award itself.

I am excited at the rebranding effort and creativity put into the new award logo.”

Expressing his view in a similar vein, the Managing Director, Nitro 121, Lampe Omoyele, lauded the new award logo. Hear him: ‘The logo is very colourful and impactful. It says a lot about the brand.’

Also reacting to the new award logo, Boye Adefila, an IMC expert, described the award logo as ‘aesthetically pleasing’, noting that the creator of the logo did a good job.

The new MARKETING EDGE logo is a combination of text and visual imagery that serves two purposes. The text, which has bold ‘ME’ as the acronym of the organisation, tells people the name of the company and creates a visual symbol that represents the brand’s essence.



MARKETING EDGE National Marketing Stakeholders Summit will hold on 15th October (10am -2pm), while the Award night is scheduled for 16th October (6pm -11pm prompt), 2020. The virtual venue of the summit is Zoom, while the physical venue (strictly by invitation) is D’Podium International Event Centre on the highbrow Aromire Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos.

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FRIESLANDCAMPINA WAMCO ACQUIRES NUTRICIMA FOR STELLAR GROWTH



FrieslandCampina WAMCO has announced the acquisition and takeover of Nutricima's production facility in Ikorodu, Lagos State. Nutricima is a dairy company and the maker of Olympic, Coast and Nunu, a range of powdered, evaporated and ready-to-drink milk brands.

Commenting on the acquisition and takeover, President of FrieslandCampina Consumer Dairy, Roel van Neerbos, said: "FrieslandCampina WAMCO has been a key player in Nigeria since 1954. With this acquisition, we demonstrate our strong commitment to Nigeria and its dairy market."

Also commenting, Managing Director of FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria, Mr. Ben Langat, said: "It is our mission to bring affordable and attainable quality dairy products to all Nigerians and meet the growing demand. That's why we are pleased with this acquisition."

Langat noted that operations have commenced at the newly acquired plant.

The acquisition is expected to satisfy the need for additional production capacity for FrieslandCampina WAMCO to meet the growing demand for locally produced evaporated and powdered milk by Nigerian consumers.

Recall that PZ Cussons Nigeria held an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) with its shareholders in July this year, on how it would transact the sale of Nutricima Limited to FrieslandCampina. The board of directors reportedly agreed on the sale and transfer of Nutricima production plant to FrieslandCampinaWamco Nigeria Plc of all the portion of land measuring approximately 67,733.235 square meters, alongside all rights and investment interests in the buildings and improvements.

Nutricima Limited was founded in Nigeria in 2005 and has, since then, earned itself consumer awareness within the dairy industry.

NIMN releases approved Code of marketing practice

National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) has released its Code of marketing practice. Tagged NIMN Code of Professional Marketing Practice 2020; the rules and regulations will take effect from 1st September this year.

According to a statement made available to MARKETING EDGE, the Institute is committed to promoting the highest standards of professional conduct, ethical norms and values for all its members, including practitioners, academics and students.

"As marketers, we recognise that we not only serve our organisations but also act as stewards of society in creating, facilitating and executing the transactions that are part of the greater economy. In this role, marketers are expected to embrace the highest professional ethical norms and the ethical values implied by our responsibility toward multiple stakeholders (e.g., customers, employees, investors, peers, channel members, regulators and the host communities).

"In furtherance of the provisions of the Act, the Council therefore makes the following rules and regulations to guide the professional conduct of all marketing professionals in Nigeria and to maintain discipline within the profession. These rules and regulations will take effect from 1st September, 2020 and shall be cited as NIMN Code of Professional Marketing Practice 2020," the statement said.

The Institute stated that it is the duty of all marketing professionals to apprise themselves of this code and to conduct themselves professionally in line with its provisions, adding that the code was issued as a directive to assist members to conduct themselves in a manner, which the Council considers appropriate to the profession in general and to the members of the Institute in particular.

"The Code must, of course, be read in conjunction with the Institute's Act, other Laws or Act in force and binding on the marketing profession. Members who are in doubt as to their correct course of action in particular circumstances should obtain further advice through the Registrar of the Institute," the statement said.

On compliance with Nigerian laws, the Institute said: "We expect at all times for marketing professionals to respect the laws of Nigeria, regulatory organisations, licensing agencies, or professional associations governing their professional activities."



Specifically, the Institute added: "The most important of the other relevant Codes are: Advertising -APCON Code of Advertising and Promotion guidelines and Nigeria Broadcasting Code."

Citing various reputable national and international sources of the Code, the Institute noted: "This NIMN Code of Professional Marketing Practice draws extensively from the guidelines of the following organisations, to whom we are very grateful: America Marketing Association (AMA), Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and Marketing Institute of Ireland (MII)."

Commenting on the Code, Mr. Tony Agenmonmen, President and Chairman of the Council said Council made the rules and regulations to guide the professional conduct of all marketing professionals in Nigeria to maintain discipline within the profession.

"It is the duty of all marketing professionals to appraise themselves of the code and to conduct themselves professionally in line with its provisions.

"I certify the NIMN Code of Professional Marketing Practice to be the true and correct decision of the Council of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) and approved by Annual General Meeting (AGM) of 16 July 2020, and is in accordance with the provisions of NIMN Act 25 of 2003," he said.

The National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) was established by Act 25 of 2003. The Act recognises the Institute as the sole body for the regulation and control of the marketing profession in Nigeria. In addition to determining the standard of knowledge and skills required to be recognised as a marketing professional, the Act empowers the Council to make rules and regulations for the guidance of professional practice and conduct by marketing professionals. ■

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MultiChoice unveils new content, promises to tell stories that resonate



MultiChoice, a leading pay TV service provider in Nigeria, recently held its annual Media Showcase where the management further amplified the company's promise to continue telling stories that resonate with their viewers.

The virtual event was also used to unveil some of the new offerings as well as the company's plans for the year.

The Chief Executive Officer of MultiChoice Nigeria, Mr. John Ugbe, said: "Putting our valued customers in the forefront has always been our goal at MultiChoice Nigeria.

"We have continued to invest in the Nigerian economy by creating quality and entertaining content for Africa by Africans, and the Media Showcase provides an opportunity to celebrate these investments."

The MultiChoice Nigeria Media

Showcase happened virtually as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and journalists were taken on a journey through the past, present and future of the company's investments in local content.

It was also an opportunity to showcase the company's advancements in technology, innovation and customer experience as seen on DStv and GOtv.

During the event, updates were provided on new programming such as two new Africa Magic shows 'Enakhe' and Riona 'Fighting Fate', as well as a new reality show, 'Shoot Your Shot'. The company also spoke about other investments such as the N3.5 Billion that went into the production of the fifth season of BBNaija and supporting the growth of the film industry through the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF). MTF inspires and nurtures talented young people to work in local creative industries, thus

generating a pipeline of local content.

Additionally, Masterclasses were launched to address the increased interest of industry professionals in learning specialised aspects of film making.

"We've been at the forefront of creating and exporting Nigeria's entertainment, providing a platform for the country's talent to be showcased across the continent. The MultiChoice Talent Factory is a testament to that investment and the crop of academy graduates have been equipped to take on the industry," added Mr. Ugbe.

In addition to investments, MultiChoice Nigeria also mentioned their newly revamped M-Net Movies and SuperSport channels, which offers DStv and GOtv customers easier access to preferred content, more choices and better value. ■

APCON boss raises hope on Standard Operating Manual for advertising industry

The newly appointed Chief Executive Officer and Registrar of Advertising Practitioners Council in Nigeria (APCON), Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, has assured that the apex regulatory agency would soon create a Standard Operating Manual (SOM) to guide operations of all stakeholders in the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) sub-sector.

Speaking during an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE** in Lagos, Fadolapo said the entire advertising industry needs a reform and as such there will be need for SOM.

According to him, "for me (Fadolapo), one of the focuses is: How do we implement advertising industry reform in such a way that agencies can be empowered?", noting, however, that one of the things the Council wants to start implementing is the advertising industry reform in such a way that it creates jobs. He added that the sector is capable of creating over 5000 jobs within the first six months of full implementation of the reform. This, he said, is in conformity with the Federal Government directives to its agencies to create jobs.



On the operating manual, the registrar said the Council has commenced industry-wide engagement to get everybody's support.

His words: "We need to do some ground work, and that is what we are doing right now – engagement. We are talking to the media owners, we are talking to the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and we are talking to everybody that is in the advertising industry. So, we may just need some time."

However, he assured: "We need to have Standard Operating Manual for the industry. So within three months we should

be able to pull this up. By January next year (2021) the advertising industry would have witnessed full implementation of the reform."

The much expected Standard Operating Manual would once and for all resolve the age-long industry debts issue and put to rest discordant tunes on payment circle, especially the controversial 120 days payment circle being canvassed by some multi-nationals.

The manual will also address other issues like agency-client relationships, pitch fees, contract terms and all hitherto unethical industry practices like rate cutting, over-invoicing and non-performance amongst several challenges impeding the growth and development of the industry.

The registrar also raised the hope that the APCON Council which has long being in limbo would soon be reconstituted by the Federal Government. "APCON Council will be reconstituted as soon as possible," hinting that nobody could say precisely when this will happen. ■

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X3M Ideas emerges sole African agency to win award at Lisbon Advertising Festival

Trailblazing Nigerian agency, X3M Ideas Limited, has won Bronze at Lisbon Advertising Festival for its International Women's Day press campaign, *Make History Equal For Women*.



Announced in Lisbon, Portugal, X3M Ideas is the only African Agency to win an award at the festival this year and is one of the 17 bronze winners in the international competition.

The agency also scored three finalist entries which included Mum Hotline – its breath-taking integrated campaign for Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI) and Forgiven – X3M's widely acclaimed social media campaign for Easter, all selected by an executive jury consisting of high profile, global creative leaders such as David Kolbusz, the Chief Creative Officer of Droga5.

The bronze winning work *Make History Equal For Women* was previously selected as one of the 62 ads from across the globe for the 2020 Great Ads For Good Exhibition; and has been celebrated lots of times in the advertising community.

Speaking on the award, Founder and CEO, X3M Ideas, Steve Babaeko said, "As the President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, it's part of our agenda to keep putting Nigeria's advertising on the global stage. I am glad we won this award as this is one step in the right direction."

"The *Make History Equal For Women* piece was one created with a deep sense of respect for women and we're glad it is getting the recognition it deserves. We're also grateful to the jury and our colleagues in the advertising industry, across the globe, for always supporting our work. And I'm proud of the X3M Ideas team as I know we will only continue to do great work that we can all be proud of," he added.

Founded in 2012, by Steve Babaeko, X3M Ideas has become the yardstick for a new generation of Nigerian creative agencies. Operating out of a model office space in the heart of Lagos, with footprints in East and South Africa, X3M Ideas' clientele consists of some of Africa's biggest brands including telecommunications giant Globacom Limited, Dangote, Multichoice, and FrieslandCampina WAMCO, among many others.

Lisbon International Advertising Festival was created in 2016 and is one of the most exclusive worldwide festivals in advertising. Recognised internationally by the quality of its jury members and speakers, it has gained such importance that it is already considered one of the most prestigious advertising awards in the world by many advertising industry personalities. ■



MALTINA LAUNCHES TWO NEW FLAVOURS TO SPICE CONSUMERS' TASTE

Maltina, a premium malt drink from the stable of Nigerian Breweries Plc, has launched two new flavoured malt, Maltina Pineapple and Maltina Vanilla, in addition to the Maltina Classic, to appeal to the dynamic taste of Nigerians.

Speaking on the launch of the new flavours of the premium malt drink on his LinkedIn page, Managing Director, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Jordi Borrut, said: "We have just launched two new flavours for Maltina: Pineapple and Vanilla, with an amazing taste and a cute design. This is the result of great team work and the passion from the entire NB family. Well done team!"

Also speaking on the launch, the Marketing Director, Nigerian Breweries, Emmanuel Oriakhi, said that the launch of the flavoured malt was long overdue adding that as the market leader, Maltina took the lead to reintroduce consumers to the refreshing and indulgent taste of its nourishing drink infused with flavours.

In addition, the brand also announced a new campaign titled, "Own The Flavour", which invites consumers to flavour up their day and express themselves creatively, while enjoying the new Maltina flavours.

In the same vein, the Portfolio Manager, non-alcoholic drinks, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Kehinde Kadiri, said that with the "Own The Flavour" campaign, Maltina is encouraging young Nigerians to freely express themselves on their own terms, while owning their narrative and flavour of choice.

He added: "With this campaign, we want to show Nigerians that you do not have to be stereotyped into one thing. You are free to be different versions of yourself."

FirstBank MD conferred with Forbes' Best of Africa award

First Bank of Nigeria Limited CEO, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, has been honoured with the Best of Africa Award by Forbes magazine. The award is in recognition of his contribution to the banking industry in Nigeria.

The award presentation was held by Forbes in conjunction with the Foreign Investment Network (FIN).

The event, an online roundtable discussion supported by the World Philanthropy Network, featured a keynote address by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo.

According to a statement by Forbes, "Dr. Adeduntan believes strongly in

the importance of doing well by doing good. In March 2020, he spoke at the Edinburgh School of Business about financial institutions' role as drivers of financial inclusion. In his leadership role at FirstBank, Dr. Adeduntan is part of a 126-year legacy of sustained development-oriented services"

Commenting on the award on the bank's LinkedIn page, the FirstBank boss dedicated the revered honour to the great team at the premier bank.

"This Forbes Best of Africa award is an incentive to do more in Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, and I dedicate it to my colleagues at FirstBank



who are committed to this course with me," he said.

The Forbes Best of Africa Award is for business personalities with a record of creating and building great global businesses that have made far-reaching contributions to the development of Africa. ■

Co-creators counter plagiarism claims over Nigeria at 60 logo



Following accusations and counter accusations trailing the recently launched Nigeria at 60 logo, Nigerian agencies which include Chain Reactions Nigeria, TBWA Africa and The Temple Management Company that jointly created the controversial logo have rebutted the claims that the logo was plagiarised.

The group, in a joint statement, said: "The attention of Chain Reactions Nigeria, The Temple Management and TBWA Africa has been drawn to an unfortunate conversation in some sections of the online media regarding the recently unveiled logo for the Nigerian Diamond Jubilee celebration (Nigeria at 60) by President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR).

According to the statement, a few hours after unveiling the logo, myriads of reviews poured in from different stakeholders across the country as expected. "As

envisaged, the views expressed are symbolic of our diversity as a nation. In fact, it captures what we are celebrating. The theme of the Diamond Jubilee anniversary, TOGETHER, is all about how we have stayed together as a people despite our diversity."

On the plagiarism, the statement said: "The primary allegation of plagiarism on the unveiled logo deserves a quick dissection. To Plagiarise,

according to Oxford Language Dictionary, is to take someone else's work or ideas and pass them off as one's own."

Commenting on the controversy, Mr. Israel Opayemi, chief executive officer of Chain Reactions Nigeria said: "This isn't surprising as major brands and government initiatives have undergone barrage of condemnations and commendations in times past. Are we surprised? No."

Opayemi reiterated that it is commendable that the Nigerian government has done the right thing by engaging the services of Nigerian professionals to develop the thematic direction, campaign strategy and the logo for the Diamond Jubilee celebration pro bono.

"In the past, you would have heard that the Nigerian government engaged

the services of some foreign agencies for some nerve-cracking and ridiculous sum of money," Opayemi emphasised.

"To meet the qualified meaning of this definition, it means the Nigerian professionals who designed the campaign picked another logo that is exactly like this or similar to this and delivered it to the Federal government. Have they shown Nigerians the logo that looks exactly like the Nigeria @ 60 logo from another jurisdiction," Opayemi asked rhetorically.

Alleging plagiarism, Ottah Kalu, a social media commenter said: "Shame on the artist who designed that logo for directly lifting Alrosa's 51- carat "dynasty" diamond which was unveiled three years ago. Alrosa is Russia's mining giant. What happened to original creative thinking?"

However, Opayemi, who is equally the president of the Public Relations Consultants Association, said: "A quick check on the internet shows that there are thousands of diamonds with crystals that look alike. The images on the Internet are there in any way for creative usage and purposes. Some are backed by rights and paid for while others are free.

Reacting further to the controversy, the Chain Reactions' boss added: "Without an announced budget or costing being declared from the Presidency, some social media commentators have hastily concluded that the logo was designed with an outrageous amount.

"This controversy is a great disservice to these Nigerian professionals who have invested their time into giving Nigeria a beautiful identity in commemoration of her 60th anniversary." ■

LASAA, top five digital billboard companies partner MARKETING EDGE Summit & Awards

The Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) and top five leading digital Out-of-Home companies in Nigeria have indicated intention to partner with MARKETING EDGE Publications Ltd with a view to amplifying efforts aimed at boosting this year's National Marketing Summit & Awards.

The top five leading digital OOH companies backing the Summit and Awards initiatives are: New Crystal Communications, Elev8 Media Advertising Limited, Plural Media, Invent Media and Four Pulley Nigeria Ltd.

A statement issued by the Publisher/Chief Executive Officer of MARKETING EDGE Publications Ltd, organisers of the event, Mr. John Ajayi, disclosed that the leading OOH companies are in support of the initiative.

According to the publisher, a frontline brands journalist, "the publication has concluded plans to hold the yearly two-in-one marketing and advertising functions tagged "National Marketing Stakeholders Summit & Brands & Advertising Awards of Excellence 2020 with a view to continuing to promote the brand idea while expanding the frontiers of marketing and advertising knowledge".

He stated that the industry-wide accepted and highly rated event has been scheduled to hold 15th and 16th October 2020 as a virtual and live event. The publisher, who disclosed that the Summit would hold virtually on Zoom and the award dinner at the popular D'Podium International Event Center, Ikeja, explained that events will draw participants from global and local players in the Integrated Marketing Communications sector.

Obviously excited at the level of successes and preparations for the events, Ajayi noted that the industry is already agog with excitement as feelers emanating from industry players have indicated that there are high expectations on behalf of the industry.

His words: "We are very grateful and appreciative of the high level support coming from outstanding companies and brands as far as this great event is concerned. We are greatly humbled by this over-whelming show of support and partnership which we reckon will boost the profile and brand equity rating of the IMC industry in Nigeria."

He further stated that the yearly 2-in-1 event, which is the seventh in the series in the seventeen years corporate history of the company, is designed to create an avenue for marketing professionals and all those involved in the business of brand management and the management of brand business to dissect the topic and provide valuable insights on the contemporary theme "Making Your Business Future Fit: The Post Digital Age Challenge".

The Summit, comprehensively designed to ignite genuine conversation across the IMC sub-sectors, will be led by the Guest Speakers, Mr. Andisa Nstubane, Former Group Managing Director, Africa Microsoft and Head Marketing Planning & Africa

Marketing Old Mutual Emerging Markets. He will be joined by a Nigerian marketing professional in diaspora, Mr. Baba Awopetu, a leading Marketing Director and Director of Marketing Excellence in Stryker in Switzerland. Baba Awopetu, a Nigerian and popular speaker at conferences in Europe, America and Africa, is renowned for his outstanding marketing feats.

The two lead speakers will be joined as panelists by other eminent and industry gurus and titans in Nigeria. These prominent players in the Nigerian IMC sector who are panelists are:

Advertising/Creative: Steve Babaeko, Ikechi Odigbo, Tope Jemerigbe, Biodun Adefila, Lanre Adisa

Experiential: Tunji Adeyinka, Tolu Medebem, Felix Eiremiokhae, Victor Afolabi

Media: Dr. Ken Onyeali Ikpe, Jude Odia, Alaba Fadero, Ada Adheke

Advertiser: Amaechi Okobi, Emma Agu, Nkiru Olumide-Ojo, Segun Ogunleye, Dolapo Otegbayi, Bunmi Adeniba

Digital: Ose Osundeko, Dayo Adefila, Oti Ukubeyinje, Oyebowale Akindeinde

PR: Bolaji Okusaga, Dr. Phil Osagie, Meka Olowola, Adebola Williams, Tokuboh George Taylor

The statement further hinted that as a major stakeholder in the Nigerian marketing and advertising business in Nigeria, MARKETING EDGE has been soliciting support from all relevant stakeholders in the industry.

Already, leading brands in the Nigerian marketing environment have indicated intention to partner with the organisation. Some of the brands that have so far confirmed their participation and involvement are: Nigerian Breweries Plc, The Lacasera Company, Promasidor, Amber Drinks Ltd. and International Distillers Ltd and C-WAY Group. Others are, PZ Cussons, Coca-Cola, Unilever, 7-UP and Nasco.

The award dinner will hold on October 16, 2020 in the evening at D'Podium International Events Center, Ikeja in full compliance with Covid-19 pandemic protocols. ■





COVID-19: LASAA announces palliatives for outdoor advertising practitioners

From Left: Managing Director, Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA), Prince Adedamola Docemo; the Head, Client Services and Registration, Mrs. Buky Ayodele; the Head, Monitoring, Compliance & Enforcement, Mr. Akinola Tukur; the Head, Mobile Advert, Small Format & Temporary, Mr. Bayo Aluko; the Head, Business Development, Mrs. Olamide Oyegoke; the Head, Billing & Debt Recovery, Mrs. Bimbo Odunmbaku and the Head of Legal, Mrs. Titilope Raheem while addressing the press on Covid-19 palliatives for outdoor advertising practitioners in Lagos State, today.

Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) has announced various palliatives to cushion the adverse impact of the COVID-19 on the operations of outdoor advertising practitioners in the state.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of LASAA, Prince Adedamola Docemo, who disclosed this at a press conference in Lagos recently, said the agency had decided to waive the permit fees for outdoor practitioners spanning three months, following the approval of the state governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu. "This represents 25 percent of the outdoor practitioners' bill for the year 2020," he said.

He added that the agency is also willing to offer a special discount to all outdoor advertising practitioners that are ready to offset their 2019 outstanding bills completely and immediately. "This will, however, be done on a case-by-case basis," he said.

Prince Docemo explained that a revised bill for this year would be sent to all registered outdoor advertising practitioners with a letter detailing the terms and conditions attached to the rebate, adding that a major condition is the practitioners' readiness to settle all 2019 outstanding bills as well as the outstanding payment for January to March, 2020.

He said a formal letter had been sent to the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) and other stakeholders in the industry intimating them of the new developments.

He expressed optimism that the initiative will go a long way to demonstrate the agency's resolve to help the industry grow as well as cushion the negative effects of the pandemic on outdoor advertising business in the state.

"We hope the members of the outdoor advertising industry will reciprocate this good gesture from the state by ensuring prompt payment of all their obligations to the agency as this will help the state's agenda to achieve accelerated infrastructure development."

Prince Docemo remarked that the palliatives had become imperative because the advertising sector and the economy at large had been badly hit by the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, particularly the outdoor advertising industry.

He added that most advertisers had suspended or cancelled their advertising contracts for the year 2020, a situation that made revenue collection an enormous task for the agency.

He said that the aftermath of the pandemic had left many businesses struggling and on the brink of collapse,

adding that as an organisation that listens, it became necessary for the agency to take appropriate steps in assisting small businesses under its regulatory purview.

The CEO said the OAAN had, on behalf of its members, repeatedly requested for the agency's intervention and support to cushion the effects of the pandemic on their businesses.

"You have spoken and we have listened and showed empathy. As an agency, we believe this will go a long way to demonstrate our readiness to support businesses in the state," Prince Docemo said.

He assured members of the public that the agency would continue to raise the bar when it comes to outdoor advertising regulation while also striving for the outdoor advertising industry to flourish.

LASAA was established by the Lagos State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law 2006 and with subsequent amendment to regulate and control outdoor advertising and signage displays in Lagos State, and it is set to re-define the signage and outdoor advertising industry through effective signage and outdoor advertisement regulation and civic beautification ■

APCON to collaborate with NILDS on legislative branding

The Registrar /Chief Executive of APCON, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo led a delegation from APCON and Brandmark Communications Limited to pay a courtesy call on the Director General, Prof. Abubakar O. Suleiman and Management of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS).

The visit was to review the extent of progress made on the proposed collaboration by the two federal government agencies to further deepen democracy in Nigeria and legislative branding.

Other areas of mutual interest covered in their discussion includes re-branding and Integrated Marketing Communications support for the legislative arm of the government through the institute, IMC training and education, etc.

In his address, the Director General, Prof. Abubakar Suleiman stated that NILDS is a capacity building and think-tank organ for legislators in Nigeria and indeed the ECOWAS sub-region and beyond. He noted that the expansion of the mandate of the Institute has made it necessary for it to collaborate with Civil Society Organisations and other arms of government to further deepen democracy in the country.

Dr. Fadolapo while expressing his thanks to the Director General, Prof. Suleiman, noted the importance of the legislative arm of the government and the efforts of the Federal Government in establishing a positive and distinct reputation for trustworthiness and a positive set of values for all government arms and agencies. The Registrar assured the Director General that APCON will do its best in providing IMC support to the institute and the legislative arm of the government.

The two institutions are currently working on an MOU and



framework to define the scope and areas of mutual interest.

In attendance at the meeting were Head, Abuja Zonal Operations, APCON, Mallam Ahmed Yelwa, Head of Legal and Executive Assistant to the Registrar/Chief Executive, Mr. Chukwudi Ezeaba, Mr. Tunde Ashaolu and Mr. Chidiebere Onwumere both of Brandmark Communications Limited for APCON and Director, Special Duties, Dr. Adeyemi Fajingbesi, Director, Democratic Studies, Dr. Adewale Aderemi, Head, Bills and Legislative Drafting, Professor Yusuf Arowosaye, Acting Director, Training and International Cooperation, Hajia Amina Bibi-Farouk and Special Assistant to the DG on Administration, Alhaji Sarafadeen Alabelewe for NILDS. ■

Zenera celebrates 7 years of innovative brand management



Zenera Consulting, a leading agency that offers integrated communications consultancy to corporates, is celebrating 7 years of igniting great brands in Nigeria.

For seven years, the avant-garde PR agency has provided effective solutions for top national and international brands through a variety of offerings through its specialties, including energy, public, legal and financial space. It has carved a niche for itself by offering high-value storytelling across all media, managing high profile events, and providing full-service advertising with cutting-edge brand imperatives across the board.

Zenera Consulting as an agency serves clients in industries such as FMCG, automobile, telecom, and banking & finance, public and legal sub-sectors.

The multi-award winning agency established in 2013 has won many local and international awards.

It emerged as the 'Outstanding Brand Management Company of the Year' while its Chief Executive, Mr. Meka Olowola, bagged the 'Innovative Leadership in PR and Image Management Award' at the 2019 MARKETING EDGE Brands and Advertising Excellence Awards in Lagos, Nigeria.

Earlier, at the prestigious Kempinsky Hotel, Accra, Ghana at the Marketing World Awards (MWA), Zenera Consulting emerged the 'Most Inspiring Agency for 2017'. ■

JCDecaux Grace Lake reaffirms commitment to Lagos, expands LATIS network across the state

Two years after entering the Nigerian market via a partnership with Grace Lake Partners (GLP), globally renowned multinational JCDecaux S.A. (Euronext Paris: DEC), the number one outdoor advertising company worldwide, has reiterated its commitment to the country by announcing an expansion of its innovative Lagos Traffic System (LATIS) with the addition of three new strategic routes across Lagos State in October, 2020.

The announcement of the company's new investments, which comes as other companies scale down on operations and investments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is further proof of the Lagos Government's commitment to ensuring the state's viability as the number one destination for Foreign Direct Investments in sub-Saharan Africa, and will further increase the over 200 jobs created by JCDecaux Grace Lake in the state.

The first of its kind LATIS project delivers a solution that gives citizens real-time information on traffic, through digital traffic arches at key junctions across Lagos. In just under two years, this traffic information system has helped ease traffic flow in the city by suggesting alternative routes and estimating times of arrival for travellers. The data collated from the LATIS system has proved extremely valuable to the Lagos government, which continues to show support for the JCDecaux Grace Lake business whilst ensuring that multinational organisations are able to thrive and bring in much needed FDI.

Speaking on the announcement, the Country Manager, Nigeria, for JCDecaux Grace Lake, Mr. Dele Odugbemi, said: "The impact of COVID-19 on the global economy has been tremendous and we have seen the shattering of business across the world, in major and developing economies alike. Fortunately, with the support we have received from the Lagos State Government, we are thrilled to announce an expansion of our investments by increasing the number of routes on our LATIS network. As Lagos is an aspiring megacity, the data and traffic support provided by our LATIS network is extremely beneficial as it provides commuters with the information they need to make decisions regarding their travel times and schedules especially when traveling through notoriously congested routes."

The LATIS expansion announcement

also comes as JCDecaux Grace Lake increases the capacity of its innovative self-cleaning automatic public toilets programme, located at Lagos' busiest bus stations. Launched in 2018, the toilets boasted a capacity of 40,000 people freely using the services every month. With the recent announcements, the toilets' capacity will be increased by 100 percent in October 2020, meaning that up to 80,000 people will now freely use the services every month when the toilets are re-opened in line with government mandated COVID policies.

Speaking further, the Managing Partner of Grace Lake Partners, Mr. Ladi Delano said: "The expansion of the LATIS network and increase of the public toilets' capacity is indicative of our commitment to ensuring that we make critical investments in the communities where we operate. As we all continue to grapple with the impact of COVID-19, there is a need to also reinforce our belief and confidence in the Lagos economy and its people. LATIS has proved immensely beneficial to the people of Lagos State by providing citizens with the power to make informed travel choices, and also providing the government with real time data to make decisions regarding infrastructure development and deployment of critical traffic and works' personnel. We must also acknowledge the role of the Lagos State government in providing the necessary operational support to make these investments possible."

The LATIS and public toilet expansion further demonstrate the strength of JCDecaux's economic model, which can deploy public utility urban infrastructures financed completely by selected, high-quality advertising anywhere in the world.

Martin Sabbagh, the CEO, Middle East

and Africa for JCDecaux, said: "Nigeria remains an important market for our business. Lagos, being its most populated city, is the economic hub of West Africa and therefore experiences significant vehicular traffic across major routes. Our LATIS network blends our expertise in digital innovation and street furniture to provide Lagosians with the power to make informed choices. This unique blend ultimately propels Lagos towards its megacity status, making life easier for citizens and boosting the economy in many ways. JCDecaux is proud to have partnered with Lagos State and we applaud all that the Government is doing to ensure the success of foreign businesses in the State."

The LATIS expansion comes as Nigeria, like many other countries around the world, slowly returns to normalcy in a post-COVID-19 world. After mandatory lockdowns in Lagos State and the Federal Capital, Abuja, the country's government announced an easing of COVID related restrictions for people and businesses, allowing daily vehicular movement within a stipulated time frame.

About Grace Lake Partners

Founded in 2014, Grace Lake Partners (GLP) is a Pan-African Shared Value conglomerate based in Lagos, Nigeria. Based on the philosophy of Creating Shared Value, GLP builds and operates profitable businesses that address important societal needs in Nigeria while creating economic value for GLP and its shareholders. GLP's core mission is to "Build a Nigeria we can all be proud to call home". To date, GLP has made investments in infrastructure, healthcare, media and retail. ■





General Manager, Amber Energy Drinks Ltd. Ms Lola Adedeji (middle) surrounded by family members and guests at the formal commissioning of the energy drink's ultra modern office recently in Lagos

Amber opens new corporate office and warehouse in Lagos

Amber Energy Drinks Ltd, makers of premium energy drink, Amber, has unveiled a state-of-the-art corporate head office and warehouse at Ogba, Lagos State.

The strategic move, according to the Managing Director, Ms. Lola Adedeji, was to ensure more accessibility of its products to consumers and distributors.

The office building was commissioned at a colourful ceremony, which witnessed impressive turnout of staff, distributors and consumers of the premium energy drink.

During an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE** at the event, Ms. Adedeji stated that the new office speaks to the brand identity and essence of the Amber brand albeit at a huge cost to the company.

"As a responsible corporate entity, one of the major things we wanted to reiterate is that we don't compromise on quality and it is important the way we portray ourselves to the public.

"So, it was important we put a lot into what our head office and warehouse look like. Because we tell our distributors that the warehouse has to be in a certain way, we have to be able to show them what we want. So, it took us time and resources to achieve that; but we have them in here now."

The new corporate office houses many corporate offices of senior management staff and sales officers of the company. An expansive warehouse with a high capacity for millions of its products is also situated within the premises. The location of the new office is strategic considering its accessibility to its teeming customers and distributors.

"I feel the location of our new corporate office is strategic because our product is both aspirational and accessible. It's very important placing your product where your head office is. The masses are on this axis but the aspirational are on the other axis (our former location). We are now placed in

the middle where you can find us here and there. So, this was a deliberate move."

On the secret of the phenomenal growth and acceptance of the Amber brand, three months into the energy drink market, the debonair young C.E.O had this to say: "It is very important to understand who your target market is and we have taken time to understand our consumers, their lifestyle and how they react. We were able to put that into the marketing and production of the drink. This is why we have been having positive and phenomenal results as people love the drink. We are excited that they love it and we are doing our best to achieve more."

Amber energy drink was launched in June this year and market intelligence shows that the product has become the choice of many Nigerian consumers. ■



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DISTRIBUTION

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- Construction of 33kV ... 2,643km
- Construction of 11kV ... 4,760km
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GAS INFRASTRUCTURE

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THE BIG 10 PLANTS

CALABAR POWER PLANT
Capacity: 600MW



ALAOJI POWER PLANT
Capacity: 750MW



GEREGU II POWER PLANT
Capacity: 250MW



SAPELE OGORODE
POWER PLANT
Capacity: 500MW



OLORUNSHOGO II
POWER PLANT
Capacity: 750MW



GBARIN POWER PLANT
Capacity: 435MW



EGBEMA POWER PLANT
Capacity: 360MW



OMOTOSHO II
POWER PLANT
Capacity: 500MW



BENIN POWER PLANT
Capacity: 500MW



OMOKU POWER PLANT
Capacity: 250MW



www.ndphc.net

Nigeria's IMC industry can survive rising inflation and impending recession – Experts



The economic indices arising from the fallout of the COVID-19 global pandemic have been quite alarming in Nigeria in recent times. According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria's inflation rate rose by 12.82% (year-on-year) in July, compared to 12.56% recorded in June 2020. This was the highest rate recorded in 27 months since March 2018 when inflation hit 13.34%. Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in real terms declined by 6.10% (year-on-year) in Q2 2020, thereby ending the 3-year trend low but positive real growth rates recorded since the 2016/17 recession.

For consumers, an increase in inflation rate means that fixed income individuals have less purchasing power and their ability to afford the same quantity of goods and services has reduced significantly. For businesses, it also has the tendency to increase their wage bill. Wage inflation rises as people seek salary increase to maintain the real purchasing power of their pay. This is reflected in rising costs to businesses, which pass these on to consumers thereby generating a wage-price spiral. The effect has resonated across different sub-sectors of the economy, especially the advertising industry whose survival is largely dependent on businesses across different sectors and sub-sectors of the economy.

The recent announcement by the minister of finance that Nigeria may slide into recession, if the country does not achieve a strong Q3 economic performance, has, therefore, brought home the possibility of an imminent financial crisis across different sectors of the economy.

- For the integrated marketing communications industry, stemming the tide of declining revenue, occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, is of utmost concern. However, the recent announcement of an impending recession amid the burgeoning inflation seems to be a pointer to a fatal blow for an advertising industry still recovering from a major financial crisis. How can brand owners and agencies prepare to avert or cushion the effects of a gloomy environment for an industry that seems to be haemorrhaging already?

- Speaking to MARKETING EDGE, Dr. Rotimi Olaniyan, Marketing Consultant and Publisher of ExperientialNg, pointed

out three possible consequences of the dire economic situation on the IMC industry.

"The first consequence with the contraction of economic activities is always a reduction in consumer confidence and spending. A drastic cut in discretionary spending means that the consumers would retreat to the most basic needs, which include food, health care and education for their children. Messaging and communication are cut back to the most rational of purchase drivers; affordability, value for money and extended left of centre consumer propositions. All these imply a difficult time ahead for brand owners and their agencies as if that is not already bad enough."

He continued: "The second consequence will be the nature of competition. The question most consumer service-oriented firms must figure out is how you grow in a declining economy which is adding close to 4 million people to the poverty line every year. The simple answer to that is to pivot hard towards frugal innovation and market systems development. We need to start thinking in terms of frugal innovation and stop operating the same market curves and find new ones truly indigenous to our situation."

- "The third consequence is the attendant market and systemic risk that entrepreneurial capital now faces. It is sadly made more difficult by devaluation and the currency volatility. You can even see the consequences with the likely exit of even well capitalised firms like Shoprite. With thin operating margins and very little room to price for risk, you have no choice but to time out. The only other option is for players to consolidate assets and weather the storm together by retrenching risks and costs but with this comes all sorts of new governance approaches that most of our people, particularly our owner manager founders in 'macrons', are not used to."

- In his contribution, Bolaji Abimbola, MD Integrated Indigo, a leading PR agency, opined that the IMC being an integral part of the economy is not immune to the impending doom facing the economy. However, he differed on the notion that the agencies were bleeding. "The economy has been tough, especially with the COVID-19 situation, but agencies are adapting well by finding different ways to navigate the season through new service offerings and also adapting to cost saving methods."

- In his submission, Paul Ugoagwu, Managing Director, STB McCann, noted that the situation in the IMC sector was a cause of worry.

"I think the IMC sector is already in recession. The last quarter has witnessed negative growths and contractions. Since the biggest spenders are in the real sector, what affects them affects agencies. Ad spend has steadily declined with many clients migrating to low-spend do-it-yourself digital. Agencies have responded by sticking to remote working thereby reducing overhead. Pay cuts, furloughs, layoffs are already happening."

Commenting on the issue, Lanre Ashaolu, MD FPL Media, an OOH advertising agency, said: "Going into a recession is not a surprise at this point. Since the end of Q1, economic activities have been in a decline due to the pandemic. As I speak, the economy has not fully been re-opened for economic activities. Certain sectors like the IMC industry, sports, hospitality, education, tourism and construction have been severely affected by the pandemic."

The economist turned advertising practitioner is, however, optimistic that Q4 will witness a positive growth rate in the economy due to the re-opening of virtually all sectors. "For the IMC, it was not all gloom and doom for the entire sector during Covid-19 as electronic media received attention and due business. Agencies will have to use this period to reinvent their business model and leverage technology in their operations to be able to remain relevant in the market place. ■"

Glo marks 17 years of innovative telephony service

Glo, Nigeria's leading mobile telecommunication services provider, has celebrated its seventeen years of operations in the competitive Nigerian telephony market. The wholly indigenous telecom brand was launched on August, 29, 2003. Since it rolled out services in 2003, Globacom (Glo for short), has consistently brought innovation, quality service delivery and benefits to its subscribers.

The firm demonstrated its intention to be a big player on the continent, right from the start, with a telling vision statement, "Building Africa's biggest and best telecommunications network".

Its mission statement was equally ambitious: "To be the largest, most successful entertainment, information and telecommunications solutions provider in Nigeria and Africa".

The two statements were fashioned in the image of the company's Chairman and Founder, Dr. Mike Adenuga, Jr. Although a publicity-shy billionaire, his business accomplishments in virtually every critical sector of the economy are visible. He is known to think and dream big – a very tenacious and dogged entrepreneur who likes to grow his businesses to be the best in the sectors he operates in.

Globacom became a game changer in the telecom sector when it launched operations on Per Second Billing, which the older networks said was not possible. In doing that, Globacom made history as the first network in Africa to launch on per second billing platform. The company became a household name in Nigeria and, within nine months, it made history as the first network to amass a million subscribers in that space of time.

It also crashed the cost of SIM card from N25, 000 to N200 and reduced call tariff from N50 a minute to as low as five kobo per second. The company thus ensured massive telephone penetration in Nigeria as millions of Nigerians who hitherto had no access to telephone services were able to do so. This earned it praises from the International Telecommunication Union, an agency of the United Nations, which commended it for playing a critical role in the revolution in Nigeria's telecommunications industry.

Globacom also became known as the innovator in the industry with the launch of Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS), mobile banking, mobile Internet, vehicle tracking, prepaid roaming, in-flight roaming, Blackberry services, among others. Glo was the first operator in Africa to launch its operations on the 2.5G network which enabled the convergence of voice, data and multimedia technologies.

The introduction of the 3G Plus technology marked the second time that Globacom pioneered the latest transmission network in Nigeria, having introduced the 2.5G technology at a launch in 2003 when other operators were running on the 2G platform.

Globacom lived up to tradition when it became the first operator to launch a nationwide 4G-LTE coverage in Nigeria, thus availing its subscribers enhanced data transfer rates, unmatched mobile broadband experience and high data speeds and reliability. It has successfully done a test-run of its pilot 5G technologies in readiness for the 'Big Data' and IoT deployment.

Globacom has also contributed to boosting broadband connectivity in Nigeria by building and launching an international submarine cable, Glo 1. It was the first time a company would single-handedly implement such a massive undersea project in Africa. In addition to boosting the provision of services to telecom end users, the facility is currently providing the much-needed connectivity to vital sectors of the economy such as oil and

gas, manufacturing, banking, commerce, education and health, among others. Glo unveiled its \$800 million sub-marine optical fibre cable, Glo 1, on April 8, 2011, thereby making it the first telecommunication company to build such a high-capacity optic fibre from the United Kingdom to Nigeria. In another record-breaking move in the telecommunication sector, the second largest telecom multinational, Globacom Limited recently disclosed that it would inaugurate its second submarine optic fibre cable, Glo II Submarine Cable between the third and fourth quarters of this year.

Globacom has in recent years played a major role in the country's march to a digital future. It introduced a range of customized and community-driven voice and data connectivity solutions which help to manage complex networking systems. Globacom also provides secured as well as verticalized IT solutions such as E-Health, Smart Cognitive Learning, Smart Energy, Industrial IoT and Cloud Applications. These solutions are particularly useful for collaborations, device management, workgroup storage, information security, among others.

Globacom's fixed connectivity and voice products, such as Boost and Next Generation Bandwidth-on-Demand connectivity, SIP-based voice trunk and telephony, further enhance the company's capacity to deliver advanced connectivity and fixed voice solutions to medium and large enterprises, large wholesale carriers and ISPs in Nigeria and Africa.

As a mark of its corporate social responsibility, Glo has invested huge resources in different spheres of national life, making it one of the biggest corporate entities supporting the entertainment and sports industry in Nigeria. Glo's contribution to the entertainment industry gave impetus to the phenomenal growth recorded by Nollywood in the last one decade. It's avowed belief in local content and talents has many artistes become brand ambassadors of the iconic telecom brand in lucrative sponsorship and partnership deals. In 2005, Globacom and the Confederation of African Football (CAF) signed a partnership agreement for the sponsorship of the annual CAF Player of the Year Awards. The attendant glamour of the ceremonies organized by Globacom elevated the awards, hitherto a footnote in Africa's football calendar, to a major event in the global football chart. These, among other accomplishments of this top telecom brand has made a major force in the Nigeria telecom space.

While appreciating the several innovations Globacom has brought to the Nigerian telecoms space, among which include the crashing of voice and data prices, poverty-alleviation programmes and life-impacting promos, its over 50 million subscribers are demanding improved services, and further expansion to areas yet uncovered in the country.

A subscriber, Salawu Adewale, praised the Globacom team but urge them to do more in the area of network quality and coverage. "I want to salute the giant stride by Mike Adenuga in the communication world. However, a lot more work needs to be done on quality and coverage. Our sincere loyal patronage will forever be with the original Nigerian brand-Glo."

Another user, Anana Okwesa, who has been a Globacom subscriber for 16 years, said: "I am proud to say I have had unlimited connection on Glo for 16 years. Hurray! Up Glo!"

The Glo brand has continued to wax strong even in the face of stiff competition. Indeed, it can only get better for an innovative brand. ■



Covid-19 pandemic takes toll on Dentsu Aegis Network organic revenue in Q2



Foreign news agency report has confirmed that Covid-19 pandemic has drastically affected the business fortunes of Dentsu Aegis Network business performance with its organic revenue declining by 17.3% and operating profit plunges 39.2% in quarter two.

Specifically, latest news release by Campaign said the Japan-based agency network has continued to be battered by the impact of Covid-19 pandemic as its home and international business operations have continued to struggle for revenue growth and profitability.

The news release published last week revealed that “for April-June, it (Dentsu Aegis Network) announced that revenue, less cost of sales, declined by nearly 18% to ¥18.1bn (yuan) (\$169.5m or £128.8m), while its operating profit declined by 32.2% year on year to ¥4bn.

It stated that the international operation of Dentsu Aegis Network weighed down the results the most, with revenue less cost of sales down 21.3% year on year to ¥10.7bn (\$100.2m or £76.6m), compared with drop of 12.3% for its Japan operations.

Organic revenue for the quarter was down 17.3% across the group, 20% for Dentsu Aegis Network and 12.6% for Dentsu Japan.

In Nigeria, the affiliate agency, MediaFuse Dentsu Aegis has equally not been immune from the general cut down on media advertising budgets by clients whose businesses have not fared better due to Covid-19 pandemic that resulted in general economic lockdown.

Some of its clients have also cut-down on their retainer-ship fee leaving the agency with narrow margins.

The Asia-Pacific market fared worst. Australia, India and Thailand all saw an organic decline of more than 20%,

according to a company presentation. Germany, Russia and Switzerland are the only markets to grow in this quarter.

A look at Dentsu’s results for the first half of the year gives us a better understanding of the impact of cuts made in December 2019. Due to these cost reductions, the company’s operating profit increased by nearly 15%, even as its revenue less cost of sales dropped 9%.

In addition, operating margin increased 2.7 percentage points (up 2.4 percentage

points on a constant currency basis) year on year to 12.9%. The group is tracking ahead of the targeted 7% cost reduction against the planned financial year 2020 consolidated cost base.

Given the cloudy global economy, Dentsu declined to make a detailed guidance for FY2020 available. Instead, the network noted that “the impact from Covid-19 continues to cause a slowdown in demand for services across the industry. The timing and level of recovery is expected to vary by market – yet the overall macroeconomic trend remains uncertain”.

Instead, Dentsu stated that it expected the second half of the year to show a modest improvement in the rate of organic revenue decline versus the second quarter. The second quarter is still expected to have been the weakest quarter, but the decline in revenue will exceed the running rate of cost savings in the second half of the year.

The network expects to squeeze costs, but with no end to the pandemic in sight the downturn will continue, albeit at a reduced pace, in the second half of this year, with a slow recovery expected in 2021. Dentsu has therefore launched a comprehensive review and accelerated its transformation plan to manage its business in this environment. No more details were disclosed. ■

Lions Live to return in October to support global creative community

Following an incredible response to LIONS Live, Cannes Lions says it will be back this October, 19 – 23, with a new week of learning to support the global creative community.

According to the Managing Director of Cannes Lions, Simon Cook, this time around, people can expect a week of upskill-ing opportunities built to impact careers and drive creative and business excellence.

“Thanks once again to everyone who joined us in June. Nearly 70,000 people came together to think about the future. During the next edition of LIONS Live, we’ll show you how to apply creativity for immediate impact...from inspiration to



application.

“You can expect tools and practical insights to help us face a changed world,

across five themed days: Culture & Leadership; Creative Effectiveness; and Capabilities & Processes; as well as two days of Creativity in Action," he said.

He continued: "We spoke to the community and they told us that they'd like to experience and learn from more behind-the-scenes case studies on Lion-winning ideas. So, from 19-23 October, we'll bring

you an insider's view of creativity, with unprecedented access to the ideas, thinking and minds behind some of the world's most successful work.

"The teams behind Grand Prix and Gold Lion-winning work, including McCann Tel Aviv & IKEA's 'ThisAble', Impact BBDO Dubai's 'The Blank Edition' and Virtue Copenhagen's 'AdDress the Future', join us

at LIONS Live to share honest accounts of how their work came to light or, in some cases, almost didn't."

Cook asked the global creative community to tune in for a week of constructive advice from creative and marketing legends from across the globe, adding that LIONS Live will be available to take part in, for everyone for free. ■

Coca-Cola Amatil invests in digital payment



Coca-Cola Amatil has made an investment in the digital asset payment platform, Centrepay. The two firms are working on cryptocurrency vending machines.

Recently, Coca-Cola Amatil entered a commercial partnership with Centrepay that allows Australian and New Zealand consumers to use cryptocurrencies to pay for products across the vending network of Coca-Cola Amatil.

Commenting on the investment, Amatil X head Alix Rimington said: "We already have a commercial relationship with Centrepay and our investment further

supports our partnership with the team.

"Amatil's customers can use their Sylo Smart Wallet at any one of our 2,000+ vending machines with a QR code payment sticker.

"These are located across New Zealand and Australia and will accept payments in cryptocurrency or other digital assets with a scan of your phone's camera when Sylo Smart Wallet is installed."

Also commenting, Centrepay CEO Jerome Faury said: "Both Centrepay and Coca-Cola Amatil are committed to preserving consumers' privacy and data ownership rights, whilst increasing business

value.

"The fact that Coca-Cola Amatil has invested in Centrepay through Amatil X, shows that there is a real appetite to provide customers with new ways to engage or to exchange value."

He added: "The global money supply is evolving rapidly with new economic models and the advent of smart, programmable money. The way we exchange value is set to change dramatically. There's more change likely in the next 10 years than we've seen in the past 100."

Centrepay said it would use the new investment to fast-track the integration point of sale and payment terminals, as well as enable brands to connect more directly with their consumers and drive more innovation in payments.

Coca-Cola Amatil is a bottler and distributor of alcoholic and non-alcoholic ready-to-drink beverage in Asia-Pacific, and one of the world's largest bottlers of The Coca-Cola Company range. It has around 12,000 employees working in Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Samoa. ■

OGILVY BECOMES FIRST AGENCY BRAND TO REACH ONE MILLION FOLLOWERS ON LINKEDIN

Ogilvy has become the first agency brand to reach an impressive social media milestone – one million followers on LinkedIn.

Ogilvy's one million LinkedIn followers come from across the globe and the business spectrum. The top five nations represented in Ogilvy's LinkedIn community are the United States, India, United Kingdom, Brazil, and Spain, and its followers come from industries as varied as marketing and advertising to information technology and services, to design, higher

education and financial services.

According to a statement from the agency, "LinkedIn has become the social destination for business, employment, and company culture content. Ogilvy's global social and thought leadership strategy is a natural fit with LinkedIn. The one million follower landmark is the result of the cultivation of a community where big ideas that shape brands are shared, celebrated, and discussed."

"Our success can be attributed to the relentless pursuit of crafting compelling

content around the incredible minds and creative genius of our amazing colleagues," said John Vetrano, Ogilvy's Worldwide Social Media Manager and Community Growth Strategist. "Tapping into Ogilvy's rich heritage of creative and strategic excellence has provided the fuel that has allowed us to drive increased interest, engagements, and ultimately growth."

Ogilvy's LinkedIn following has grown rapidly. Just two years ago, Ogilvy had 500,000 followers, itself an impressive mark for an agency.

Ogilvy's strong presence on LinkedIn doesn't just benefit the agency itself, but its clients and partners as well, with their work and ideas being amplified to the agency's robust following. Ogilvy's strategy of engaging its audience on LinkedIn through relevant, entertaining and shareable content is a blueprint for any company or brand looking to grow its reach and its business. ■

DIAGEO



Diageo optimistic as markets recover from Covid-19 pandemic

Diageo Plc has expressed optimism over progressive improvement in its organic net sales and operating profit.

Recall that Diageo's net sales were down 8.7% (year ending June 30, 2020) due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to Diageo's chief executive, Ivan Menezes, the company is witnessing a successive improvement across all regions as markets start to recover from Covid-19 pandemic.

Specifically, Menezes said that the United States, Diageo's biggest market which accounts for around 39% sales, has been performing very well over the last three months, noting that the pace of recovery from Covid-19 pandemic differs by markets, particularly due to varying government restrictions.

In Europe, the company boss noted that off-trade demand remains robust, and the on-trade channel has largely reopened with the easing of lockdown measures in many countries, explaining, however, that the risk of additional restrictions remains where infection rates are worsening.

"The on-trade has also begun to re-open in Africa and other regions, and as such, we expect the pace of recovery in those markets to be more gradual, as travel retail continues to be severely impacted," he said.

Menezes is impressed with the resilience of Diageo's business and trade segment in the current challenging operating environment, and expressed confidence in the company's strategy, coupled with its long-term fundamentals. ■

PepsiCo, UEFA enter five-year Women's Football sponsorship deal



PEPSICO

PepsiCo has entered a partnership deal with UEFA Women's football. The five-year deal runs alongside current sponsorship of UEFA Champions League. As reported, the deal, which ends in summer of 2025, will see PepsiCo support women's football at all levels including UEFA Women's Champions League, UEFA Women's EURO, UEFA European Women's Under-19 and Under-17 Championships, and the UEFA Women's Futsal EURO, as well as UEFA's Together #WePlayStrong programme aimed at encouraging more girls and women to play football.

UEFA Events SA Marketing Director, Guy-Laurent Epstein, said of the deal "The popularity of, and interest in women's football is increasing with every year and this is why we are delighted to have such a trusted partner as PepsiCo join us on this exciting journey."

"Over the last five years, PepsiCo has been an innovative and influential partner of the UEFA Champions League and we are looking to draw on this energy and experience in order to take the women's game to new heights."

Also commenting on the development, PepsiCo Global Chief Commercial Officer, Ram Krishnan, added that PepsiCo was proud to unify and strengthen its global partnership with UEFA to now include UEFA Women's football.

"This is an energising moment in the evolution of the sport and for our business around the world. We look forward to helping accelerate the vibrant women's game and are committed to the future of women's football," Ram added.

"Having a major sponsor like PepsiCo sign on to UEFA Women's football is the influence and recognition women's football and its athletes and fans need and deserve," said Lieke Martens, who was voted UEFA and FIFA women's player of the year in 2017. "I've loved partnering with PepsiCo and its iconic brands like Lay's and look forward to how they'll spotlight women's football because this is not just a version of the men's game; it's a league that's all its own."



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-You First-

POST-CRISIS WORLD



Three Keys to Reset Your marketing Strategy in a Post-Crisis World
Pandemic. Lockdowns. Work from home. Rollercoaster economy. Social upheaval. Contact-free shopping. Social distancing. Masks. Take a moment and think back to the beginning of 2020, back to when “coronavirus” was a phrase most of us weren’t even thinking about, and “pandemic” was something that happened in movies and TV.

The front page of the New York Times on Monday, March 2, reserved its boldest type for an article on the Democratic primary in the upper right, and this headline was a third of the page down: “Death at Nursing Home as Virus Spreads in the U.S.” Already the country was beginning to “scramble to assess emerging risks” of the disease. The dateline on that article was Kirkland, Washington, an affluent suburb of Seattle just five miles from where my teenage daughter and her mom live. Within weeks, my daughter would attend her last day of school in a classroom for her junior year. This month, she began her senior year the same way, at home, on her computer, along with millions of other students and workers across the U.S. and the world.

Perhaps when this all began, you started to think about how you would respond as a marketer. What might you have to do differently as an advertiser? How would you rearrange your business priorities in the weeks ahead? Weeks, maybe months, of some degree of uncertainty seemed assured. Certainly, this virus was something, like our somewhat dim memories of Ebola, that would be handled and then we would be back to business as usual.

Now, midway through September, we realize that this was not business as usual at all. This crisis is truly something different, something far more fundamental. This is a distinct change, an inflection point, a shift from one time to another.

This is “The Reset.”

What has emerged from the ongoing crises—the pandemic, economic uncertainty, global political tensions, impending U.S. elections, social unrest—is something unprecedented in our lifetime; something that fundamentally rewrites many of the rules and beliefs that have carried us to this point. The Reset impacts

every sector of society, every individual, every business and institution, and every nation. Some will emerge with newfound strengths and capabilities; some will not emerge at all.

For marketers, The Reset manifests itself in several important ways: trust, values and action. Understanding each is a requirement as we build our plans. Marketers must move from an endless reactive stance to a definitive proactive one.

The successful marketer in the future will keep a close eye on rapid change as well as the newly establishing social norms—all of which are intertwined with the three key elements of The Reset:

The Trust Reset represents the lens through which marketers must think about every engagement they create, from digital to physical. Consumers around the globe have been at the center of an unprecedented and unexpected shift in how they live, work and play. Trust in brands, governments, public institutions and even other people has evaporated.

The Values Reset is the other side of trust. As consumers and businesses have their trust eroded, they also are having their values rewritten. Months of isolation have created an opportunity for individuals and families to evaluate things they have long valued. From questioning the need for certain types of clothing (who really wants to wear a jacket and tie on a video call?) to realizing that they can bake their own bread, simple values are shifting.

The Action Reset, finally, is the structure under which we begin to write our playbook for the future. Action here means the mechanisms, tools and protocols of engagement among people, businesses and social institutions. It is ultimately where marketing must lead in creating and embracing new channels, new tempos and new ideals.

The Reset presents significant challenges and opportunities for marketers to review and rewrite their playbooks. Winning in the world after ongoing crises and seismic shifts in consumer expectations requires careful planning, deep understanding of customers and revolutionary thinking in the use of digital marketing tools. Marketers must step up now and build new best practices quickly if they want their brands to survive and thrive in the new world.

Credit: Adage ■

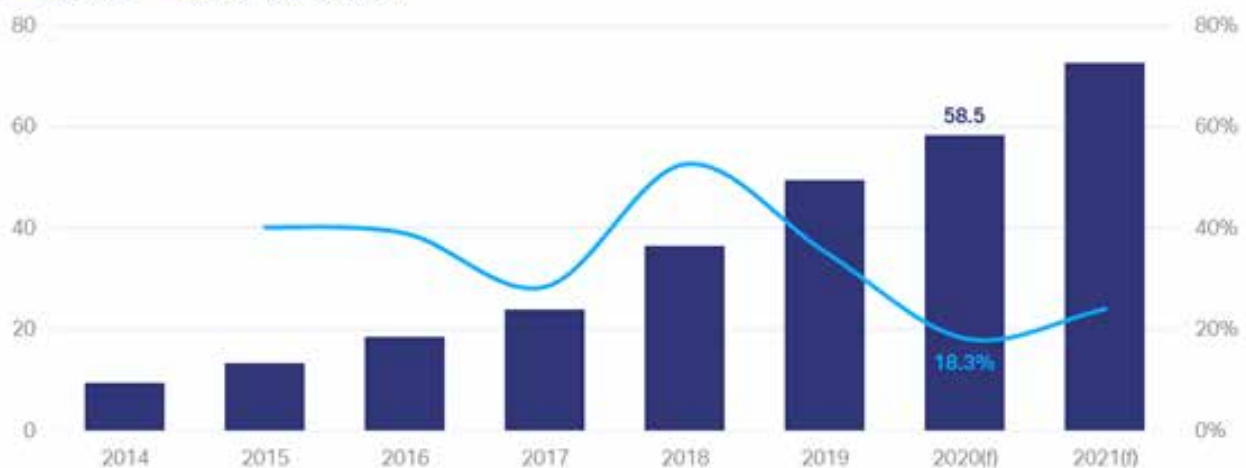
Global ad spend to hit \$59bn on e-commerce despite Covid-19, says report

Global, E-commerce advertising spend

US\$ billions and year-on-year % change

■ Adspend — Year-on-year % change

WARC
DATA



Note: Includes search, classified and display advertising (including video and audio) in an e-commerce environment, social commerce, livestreamed commerce (including product placement), and product-specific listings displayed in online, non-e-commerce environments (such as Amazon Sponsored Display ads delivered via partner sites).

SOURCE: WARC Data

Warc, the international marketing intelligence service, has released its latest Global Advertising Trends report, projecting that advertising spend on e-commerce platforms will sharply rise this year despite the global recession. Warc says ad spend will reach a total of \$58.5bn, as brands look to capitalise on the boom in online shopping as a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the report, advertising

investment across e-commerce sites such as Amazon, Tmall and Rakuten, omnichannel retailers such as Walmart and Carrefour, and social commerce on platforms such as Pinduoduo and TikTok is set to increase 18.3% worldwide, growing 30 times faster than the wider online ad market and in stark contrast to a forecast fall of -8.1% for the total advertising industry this year.

“The uptick in e-commerce advertising spend mirrors a rapid increase in online purchasing; consumers will spend an additional \$183bn online this year as a direct result of Covid-19 with total e-commerce sales set to rise by 30.4%

– \$677bn – to \$2.9trn worldwide. Brands are flocking to leverage targeted advertising across e-commerce platforms as a means of getting closer to the consumer at the point of purchase,” the report says.

Commenting on the report, James McDonald, Head of Data Content, Warc Data, and author of the research, said: “With ad investment flat or falling across most media in the wake of Covid-19, e-commerce platforms – which have seen penetration balloon – are in a strong position to capture reallocated budgets by using sales data to demonstrate ad performance during a volatile economic

climate.”

Here is a breakdown of the report:

Alibaba controls the world's third-largest ad business

Alibaba is set to make \$23.5bn from selling ad inventory across its e-commerce properties this year, giving it control of the third-largest ad business by revenue, behind only Alphabet and Facebook. Alibaba's advertising income – across e-commerce sites like Taobao, Tmall and Lazada – is set to rise 6.6% this year, though this a far slower rate of growth than its competitors.

Amazon, the fourth-largest ad seller by revenue, is among the fastest-risers this year – company filings show its ad business grew 4.5 times faster than Facebook and 63 times faster than Alphabet in the first half of 2020. Consequently, Amazon is on course to make \$18.1bn from advertising this year, up by 35.6% at a time when the wider internet ad market is flat (+0.6%).

Elsewhere, Chinese social commerce platform Pinduoduo is set to see its ad income leap 33.8% to over \$5bn, ahead of local rival JD.com on \$3.6bn. None of the e-commerce platforms monitored by Warc is expected to witness a fall in advertising revenue this year.

Consumers will spend an additional \$183bn online this year due to Covid-19

Online sales are set to rise by 30.4% to \$2.9trn worldwide this year, according to data from Edge by Ascential. This represents a forecast upgrade of 8.2 percentage points – \$183bn – since the Covid-19 outbreak began. Domestic growth rates range from +19.0% in the UK, to +22.1% in the US and +37.6% in China.

Taken together, e-commerce sales will account for 88% of global retail growth in 2020. The top five platforms will tighten their grip on the market this year, turning over an additional \$529bn combined as a result of the outbreak. E-commerce platforms Alibaba (+\$221bn), Pinduoduo (+\$122bn) and Amazon (+\$92bn) have seen the sharpest forecast upgrades since the outbreak.

Advertising spend – particularly within the FMCG sector – is moving online as a result of the shifting complexion of sales since the Covid-19 outbreak. Over 8% of Unilever's business is now done online – the company made 71% (€2.2bn) of its total 2019 e-commerce sales in just the first six months of 2020.

Livestreams are growing to account for a fifth of Chinese e-commerce while the West has been slow to capitalise on social selling

Livestreamed commerce is booming in China – it is set to more than double to a sales value of \$171bn this year. This represents 10.2% of all e-commerce sales today, a share which is set to rise to a fifth (20.3%, \$421bn) in just the next two years.

Data from Yimian, a sister company of Warc, show that the top three platforms – Taobao, TikTok and Kwai – will see over two-thirds (69.1%) of all live-streamed sales this year.

Covid-19 has pushed new consumers to the format; three in ten (30%) have spent more than they used to on products sold via live streams and intend to keep doing so. In total, live-streamed commerce has an estimated audience of 525m, equivalent to 62.8% of China's online population.

Warc's latest information across regions:

Commenting on the report, James McDonald, Head of Data Content, Warc Data, and author of the research, said:

With ad investment flat or falling across most media in the wake of Covid-19, e-commerce platforms – which have seen penetration balloon – are in a strong position to capture reallocated budgets by using sales data to demonstrate ad performance during a volatile economic climate.

Global

Sports sponsorship investment to drop 37%, TikTok reaches nearly 700m user, TVs now account for a quarter of YouTube viewing and, 65% of baby boomers now gaming due to Covid-19

Americas

Half of Americans have boycotted a brand, Canadian TV adspend to record double-digit decline this year, Financial concerns driving consumer shift to AVOD and Amazon grows quickest but Loblaw extends its lead in Canadian retail

Asia Pacific

Mobile video adspend to hit ¥300bn in Japan this year. One in three will visit the cinema less often after Covid-19, 15% of urban Indians now gaming for over four hours and, Radio advertising spend in Australia to record first decline in 11 years

Europe, Middle East and Africa

Three in five EMEA marketers have adopted a mobile-first strategy.

Gaming reach flat or falling across major European markets in July, Italian advertising spend to drop by 21.7% this year, Less than 10% of TikTok users follow brands on the platform.

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

Credit: Warc ■



Can 9mobile get back to winning ways?

By KASIM BAKARE

9mobile, Nigeria's fourth largest telecom operator, has had a chequered history of highs and lows in the highly competitive Nigerian telecom market. Originally known as Etisalat, a UAE telecom operator, 9mobile entered Nigeria through a strategic partnership with Mubadala Development Company, an investment vehicle owned by the government of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Mubadala controlled about 70 per cent of the shares in Etisalat along with Etisalat UAE mobile, with Emerging Markets Telecommunications Services (EMTS), promoted by Hakeem Bello-Osagie, who owns the remaining 30 per cent.

Etisalat became the operating partner for the Nigerian telecommunications company established by Mubadala to own and operate in Nigeria. Mubadala was granted a 15-year universal access service licence in March 2007. The licence gave it the ability to offer mobile services and also the right to provide fixed-line, voice, data services and establish an international gateway.

During the first few years of its operations, Etisalat gave other telecom operators a run for their money as it had a reasonable market share of mobile subscribers in Nigeria. Etisalat had great campaigns that resonated with millions of subscribers who were enthralled by several offerings of the Abu Dhabi owned telecom

operator.

However, Etisalat Nigeria became entangled in a serious financial mess as a result of laxity in its corporate governance. The telco obtained a \$1.2 billion foreign-backed guarantee bond in 2013 to upgrade and expand its operations, but has been unable to meet its obligations since 2016. The credit facility offered Etisalat's was provided by 13 Nigerian banks. In fact, Zenith Bank's exposure to the Etisalat loan amounted to N80bn of the total loan and this was about 3.5% of Zenith's total loan book.

In March 2017, Nigeria's telecoms regulator, pushed for talks to halt takeover attempts by Etisalat creditors and reschedule its outstanding \$1.2 billion loan. In July 2017, Etisalat withdrew from the market after its debt was not repaid or rescheduled. It was thereafter that the telecom was renamed 9mobile.

In the midst of the crisis, Mubadala, the company's largest shareholder, pulled out its investment and headed back to the UAE. At some point, there were attempts by leading telcos like MTN and Glo to buy Etisalat but it all fell through. Despite these troubles and uncertainties, there have been several efforts at repositioning and rebranding the telco for it to reclaim its lost glory.

Recently, there were reports that three telecommunication giants, Orange (French telecom group), Britain's Vodafone Group and India's Bharti Airtel were in the race to take up the investment opportunity and buy 45% of Etisalat's stake.

In a major decision to drive the rebranding and re-engineering focus of the telecom brand, however, Alan Sinfield was announced as the substantive Chief Executive Officer of 9Mobile on June, 1 2020. The company had been led, in acting capacity, by Stephane Beuvelet since November 2018 after the reshuffling of its management.

The task before the new 9mobile is a herculean one considering the ground it has lost during the hiatus. One of those challenges would be how it would increase its subscriber base and bring back old subscribers who left the network as a result of the uncertainties that hung over the telco during its crisis. As of June 2020, MTN had 79 million subscribers. Glo and Airtel followed at roughly 52 million each. 9Mobile had only 12 million, down more than at least 8 million from its peak.

Two of the biggest tasks for the new CEO are to win back subscribers while growing revenues as telecom voice services continue to suffer an expected decline.

Interestingly, the telco market globally has become a slow-growth environment. Operators are increasingly expanding to non-core businesses like media, financial and enterprise services to pursue growth.

Urgently, 9Mobile has to win customers and find ways to grow the bottomline. But in a market dominated by MTN and followed closely by the likes of Glo and Airtel, one imagines how the new 9mobile CEO will pull it off.

The 9mobile boss seems to have hit the ground running following recent media campaigns by the telco. One of such campaigns tagged "Mega Million Promo" was launched recently. The promo is designed to reward 90 lucky customers with N1 million daily. The telco also revealed its partnership with Transsion Group, manufacturers of Tecno mobile, iTel and infinix, to give out smartphones every hour for 90 days and a grand prize of N10 million at the grand finale.

To improve the financial situation of the telco, 9mobile has diversified its revenue stream by delving into financial services.

In view of the media campaigns and huge investment by 9mobile, it remains to be seen if the telco can compete for a seat at the top of the telecom industry in Nigeria in no distant future. ■



LASAA'S WAIVER ON PERMIT FEES TO OUTDOOR ADVERTISING COMPANIES: A TIMELY INTERVENTION

That the Nigerian economy and indeed other sub-sectors of the national economy have suffered greatly from the Covid-19 pandemic is a

naked fact. What of course remains to be determined for now is the degree of impacts the pandemic had caused the nation.

In one of his nationwide broadcasts announcing the lifting of lockdown, President Muhammadu Buhari had admitted the economic difficulties the pandemic and the lockdown had caused

the nation. He lamented greatly the various losses the national economy have recorded.

According to him, "many businesses have also shut down creating huge disruptions in the national economic plans and development. Similarly, in its review of the impact of COvid-19 pandemic on the core sectors, the Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) had observed that the Covid-19 pandemic has militated greatly on the general economy.

According to the body, "we see the short to medium-term outlook for the economy is bleak, as pandemic has led to an unprecedented collapse in commodity prices, Capital flight, turmoil in the capital

market, supply chain disruption across sectors and destabilization of commercial and economic activities".

For the Nigeria advertising sector, especially, the Out-of-Home advertising arm, the situation has been terribly pathetic. Not only did the advertisers cut their budgets, there were series of campaign cancellations which left industry players at their tether's end. For most part of the five months that the lockdown lasted, there was general blank out on brands advertising exposure on the out-of-home infrastructure in the country.

It was perhaps in view of the losses and downturn in business fortunes of the

industry that made the Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency announced various palliatives to cushion the adverse impact of the Covid-19 on the operations of outdoor advertising practitioners in the state.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of LASAA, Prince Adedamola Docemo, who disclosed this recently in Lagos, said “the agency has decided to waive the permit fees for outdoor practitioners spanning three months from April to June 2020, following the approval of the state governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu.” This represents 25 percent of the outdoor practitioners’ bill for the year 2020,” he said.

He added that the agency is also willing to offer a special discount to all outdoor advertising practitioners that are ready to offset their 2019 outstanding bills completely and immediately. “This will, however, be done on a case-by-case basis,” he said.

Prince Docemo explained that the revised bill for this year will be sent to all registered outdoor advertising practitioners with a letter detailing the terms and conditions attached to the rebate, adding that a major condition is the practitioners’ readiness to settle all 2019 outstanding bills as well as the outstanding payment for January to March 2020.

He expressed optimism that the initiative will go a long way to demonstrate the agency’s resolve to help the industry grow as well as cushion the negative effect of the pandemic on outdoor advertising business in the state.

Prince Docemo remarked that the palliatives have become imperative because the advertising sector and the economy at large had been badly hit by the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, particularly the outdoor advertising industry.

Looking at the LASAA’s gesture against the background of unpalatable turn of business in the Industry, the regulatory agency’s intervention cannot but be applauded as noble, novel and salutary. The gesture is indeed a great relief to the embattled sector that has been groaning long before now under the yoke of multiple taxation, over-regulation and the general lull in the national economic space.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, it was



a great set-back and an unfortunate addition to the heavy burden on the players.

The LASAA’s intervention is also emblematic of the pro-active and people-centric leadership at the helm especially with the assumption in office of a new helmsman in the person of Prince Docemo.

Since he assumed the mantle, he has left no one in doubt that he is a thorough-bred professional who has come to leadership of the agency with well-focused mission and vision. Not only has he been impacting the industry through people-centric policies, he has revolutionized the agency’s operations thereby making them digitally wired, productive and efficient.

He is one of the best agency heads that have been assembled to help the dynamic administration of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu achieve set goals and objectives. With an intervention like this, the industry can only quickly regain its rhythm and gets back quickly to the path of profitability and progress. And by that time too, LASAA, the brands owners and of course the practitioners would be the better for it. ■

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The agency has decided to waive the permit fees for outdoor practitioners spanning three months from April to June 2020, following the approval of the state governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

Why brands should retool their pre-pandemic digital strategy



The global Covid-19 pandemic has ushered in a new reality and businesses are becoming more reliant than ever on digital strategy. The economic crisis resulting from the pandemic prompted a large chunk of the world population to postpone big purchases and travel. Despite the financial downturn, experts say this is the time for businesses to boost, not cut, their digital strategy since digital is now the primary channel for many.

Mass digitisation and disruption, occasioned by the pandemic, have also meant that brands are more open to new ways of doing things. Behaviours that once seemed ingrained and impossible to change are now evolving. The same is true with organisations previously resistant to investing in digital, technology, and experimentation. At a time when a lot of traditional strategies have been upended, the pandemic has opened up a door to trying new things and evaluating brand-new approaches, value streams and delivery models.

As an organisation, is your digital roadmap solving the right challenges posed by the pandemic? How are you launching new products and nurturing relationships with prospects? There is no better time than now to take an honest look and re-prioritise your technology investments or develop newly inspired digital plans rooted in clear priorities and fresh insights. Businesses that are digital savvy must understand how they stack up against the competition, and where the urgency lies, in order to break down silos, empower agile teams, and inspire their best people.

In a year that many businesses around the world would like to forget, the coronavirus pandemic doubles as an unprecedented challenge and a tremendous catalyst for change. The positive change amid the industry-wide disruptions is the speed of digital transformation.

As things stand now, however, many clients are less open to the idea of letting agencies and other service providers walk through the door and shake their hands, and no-one really has any idea how long this will last and whether the novel corporate culture will lead to longer-term change. Digital is apparently the clear winner here, as companies, including those that did not have a Facebook page before, have moved into digital marketing, SEO and influencer-led campaigns.

On top of this, companies that are looking for new ways to spend their remaining marketing budgets still want to spend that money, and they look forward to trying something new. As they continue to witness the benefits and opportunities that digital channels can offer, this will become part of their long-term marketing contingency plans.

Businesses wanting to become more sophisticated in their use of live social platforms have already turned to Zoom, Facebook and LinkedIn Live. Previously, these are platforms they had dabbled in but never fully integrated into their marketing strategy.

It's clearer than ever that the future is digital and businesses must retool their pre-pandemic digital strategy by urgently shifting their priorities to meet the demands of a suddenly digital world. Now is the time to pivot and reset corporate goals and priorities in a way that responds to the new normal with digital channels at the core. ■

Brand Nigeria @60: The Brand, the Promise, the People

By AMOS OLADELE



The Nigeria story is a mixed bag. Interesting at times, disgusting at another. Today, it may be intriguing; and just before the dawn of tomorrow, it could be exasperatingly amazing.

Before now, precisely 2015, it was predicted and fearfully held that the country would become a failed state. And surprisingly, it escaped going apiece and still surprisingly, it trudges on as a nation, though at the verge of the precipice. Hope has been raised. Severally, it has been dashed. Promises have been made by

its generations of leaders, still promises have been failed. The people, helpless yet hopeful. Resilient, hard-working, yet poor and impoverished. It is a sorry story that continues to benumb and befuddles.

Here is a nation brand that is believed to be highly endowed in natural and human resources. But that remains just that – a mirage, as these have not been tapped; neither have they imparted or impacted on its citizens. Yet, the citizens continue to hope upon hope.

Who knows? Perhaps, tomorrow may be good. For now, the drums of war are hovering in the horizon. It has survived wars before. It is

believed there may be none again. One thing is sure, and that is that nothing is actually sure.

One of the greatest challenges facing the country is its inability to creatively and strongly position itself in the minds of its teeming nationals. In other climes, nations create or establish unique identities for themselves through strategic and deliberate designs.

This they do through nation branding. Nations do this so as to improve their standing, rating and image as well as reputation because all these can dramatically influence their economic vitality. In the emerging world, every country wants to market itself through its unique identity and selling points.

Before you begin to market your country to the outside world, how much marketing have you done to your own people? What is your citizens' perception of their country? How positive? How have these impacted on their loyalty, commitment and dedication?

How patriotic are the citizens? These and several other salient issues are fundamental to the making of a nation and in determining the level of its brand identity perception by the citizenry.

In the case of Nigeria, it is pathetic to observe that it is yet to travel this lofty road despite having existed for six decades as a sovereign nation state.

Rather than make concrete efforts at genuine nation branding and authentic identity creation, successive leaders and past governments, especially the power elites have only glorified the nation in undue sloganeering that lacks connection and resonance with the citizens.

The nation has always remained far apart from its citizens in terms of emotional or psychological connection. It is not until this nexus is resolved through genuine bonding and identity creation, the country and its citizens would remain polls apart.

Since Thursday October 1, 2020, the drums have been beating, albeit in a very subdued manner. Nigeria and Nigerians have been marking; though, not characteristically celebrating, the Diamond Jubilee of the nation's independence. And, going by the projections of the federal government, the sombre "celebration" would be on for the next one year.

Without an iota of doubt, Nigeria has been a recognized and recognizable member of the global community. Notably, too, the nation is, today, not where it was at independence in 1960. Three major factors have been responsible for these: The nation's landmass; its humongous natural resources; and very huge

population – as the most populous Black nation on earth.

Historically speaking, Nigeria got Independence from Britain on October 1, 1960, and subsequently became a federal republic in 1963. Since then, the nation has come a long way, having moved from post-Independence parliamentary democracy to the first military coup of 1966 the fallout of which resulted in the Civil War of 1967 – 1970; and the post Civil War military regimes of the 1970s.

Most adult Nigerians cannot forget in a hurry the relief, albeit short-lived, occasioned by the return to American styled presidential system of democracy in 1979 which got truncated by the military in 1983 and, of course, the ecstasy which hallmarked the birth of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999 after another 16 long years of military rule.

Quite significantly, too, Nigeria's current (Fourth) Republic during which the nation is now marking its Diamond Jubilee has recorded a first as it stands out as the longest period of unbroken democratic rule in the annals of the nation's history! Just last year, Nigeria marked 20 years of unbroken democratic rule – the first time ever. It was also during this period that Nigeria successfully transitioned from one democratically elected civilian administration to another since 2007.

In all of these, the nation has made tremendous progress in its physical, socio-political and economic development.

For instance, Nigeria is, today, listed among the "Next Eleven" economies, and is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Nigeria's economy is arguably the largest economy in Africa, and one of the fastest growing in the world.

Essentially, too, over the recent years, Nigeria has, with other nations of the world, entered into the information age which has ushered the whole world into the new era of knowledge economy. This, again, has been greatly disrupted by the digital revolution in which the whole world is now reveling.

In all of its history, till date, Nigeria parades a reasonably long list of its citizens that have excelled in virtually all fields of human endeavour – all to the pride of the nation and the applause of the international community.

Corporate Nigeria, too, has not only been avant-garde about the all world changing developments; but has also been leading the nation and its people – both governments and citizens – to bring us at

par with others across the globe. This is all thanks to the eggheads (both male and female) at the helms of affairs in various companies, institutions and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, who, with their teams, are deploying their intellectual capabilities, skills and competencies to drive their respective organizations, institutions, departments and the nation, in general, to soaring heights.

Given all of the above, there have been very exciting moments for the nation and its citizens in Nigeria's national trajectory over the past 60 years.

On the flip side, however, no one can dispute the fact that Nigeria is NOT what or where it should be. In fact, Mallam Yusuf Ali, SAN, a respected Nigerian legal luminary, in a no-holds-barred interview with this magazine on this subject matter, put it very bluntly: "Nigeria has under achieved in all parameters of development and achievement"!

Liking nations' development to a 1000-meter race, Ali said Nigeria is still at the starting block, more or less, whereas other countries that started under the same circumstances as Nigeria in 1960 have hit the 800-meter mark, at the least.

Perhaps the current mood of the celebration which has been going on "un-celebratedly" is not only confirming but it's also accentuating the submission. Indeed, for Nigerians who are old enough, the downward plunge of the nation in the actualization of its very great potentials and the very bright promises it held out at independence, has been reflected in the consistently receding mode of celebrating the independence across the decades. The way it was celebrated in the 1970s was more exciting and more accentuated than it was in the 1980s; the celebration a further dip in the 1990s; and got to its lowest ebbs in the year 2000s. As things stand, the celebration has virtually degenerated to a near no celebration level – all thanks to myriad of challenges that have been pummeling the country over the years.

Many are wont to tie the nation's "stunted growth" to the challenge of leadership. In actual fact, a political editor of one of the nation's leading newspapers in a reportorial piece on Nigeria@60, posited that "Nigeria has been plagued by a succession

of leaders who had leadership thrust on their shoulders by circumstances". Truth, however, is that followership, too, in Nigeria, is not the best it should be.

In its own patriotic effort to underscore the milestone of Nigeria's attainment of the Diamond age and signpost the epochal event for posterity, this magazine went to town to speak with some leading lights in some spheres of our national life. Their contributions are insightful and their conclusions are succinct: We should stop the blame game; forget the ethnic card that gets played, every now and then; roll up our sleeves to work for Nigeria and make Nigeria work for all of us. ■

One of the greatest challenges facing the country is its inability to creatively and strongly position itself in the minds of its teeming nationals. In other climes, nations create or establish unique identities for themselves through strategic and deliberate designs.

This they do through nation branding. Nations do this so as to improve their standing, rating and image as well as reputation because all these can dramatically influence their economic vitality.

IMAGES OF INDEPENDENCE





On Saturday, October 1, 1960, Nigeria became an independent nation.

What follows is Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's speech delivered at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos at the Independence Ceremony.

SIR ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH

T

oday is Independence Day. The first of October 1960 is a date to which for two years every Nigerian has been eagerly looking forward. At last, our great day has arrived, and Nigeria is now indeed an independent sovereign nation.

Words cannot adequately express my joy and pride at being the Nigerian citizen privileged to accept from Her Royal Highness these Constitutional Instruments which are the symbols of Nigeria's Independence. It is a unique privilege which I shall remember for ever, and it gives me strength and courage as I dedicate my life to the service of our country.

This is a wonderful day, and it is all the more wonderful because we have awaited it with increasing impatience, compelled to watch one country after another overtaking us on the road when we had so nearly reached our goal. But now we have acquired our rightful status, and I feel sure that history will show that the building of our nation proceeded at the wisest pace: it has been thorough, and Nigeria now stands well- built upon firm foundations.

Today's ceremony marks the culmination of a process which began fifteen years ago and has now reached a happy and successful conclusion. It is with justifiable pride that we claim the achievement of our Independence to be unparalleled in the annals of history. Each step of our constitutional advance has been purposefully and peacefully planned with full and open consultation, not only between representatives of all the various interests in Nigeria but in harmonious cooperation with the administering power which has today relinquished its authority.

At the time when our constitutional development entered upon its final phase, the emphasis was largely upon self-government. We, the elected representatives of the people of Nigeria, concentrated on proving that we were fully capable of managing our own affairs both internally and as a nation. However, we were not to be allowed the selfish luxury of focusing our interest on our own homes. In these days of rapid communications we cannot live in isolation, apart from the rest of the world, even if we wished to do so. All too soon it has become evident that for us Independence implies a great deal more than self-government. This great country, which has now emerged without bitterness or bloodshed, finds that she must at once be ready to deal with grave international issues.



This fact has of recent months been unhappily emphasized by the startling events which have occurred in this continent. I shall not labour the point but it would be unrealistic not to draw attention first to the awe-inspiring task confronting us at the very start of our nationhood. When this day in October 1960 was chosen for our Independence it seemed that we were destined to move with quiet dignity to place on the world stage. Recent events have changed the scene beyond recognition, so that we find ourselves today being tested to the utmost. We are called upon immediately to show that our claims to responsible government are well-founded, and having been accepted as an independent state we must at once play an active part in maintaining the peace of the world and in preserving civilisation. I promise you, we shall not fail for want of determination.

And we come to this task better-equipped than many. For this, I pay tribute to the manner in which successive British Governments have gradually transferred the burden of responsibility to our

shoulders. The assistance and unfailing encouragement which we have received from each Secretary of State for the Colonies and their intense personal interest in our development has immeasurably lightened that burden.

All our friends in the Colonial Office must today be proud of their handiwork and in the knowledge that they have helped to lay the foundations of a lasting friendship between our two nations. I have indeed every confidence that, based on the happy experience of a successful partnership, our future relations with the United Kingdom will be more cordial than ever, bound together, as we shall be in the Commonwealth, by a common allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, whom today we proudly acclaim as Queen of Nigeria and Head of the Commonwealth.

Time will not permit the individual mention of all those friends, many of them Nigerians, whose selfless labours have contributed to our Independence. Some have not lived to see the fulfilment of their hopes—on them be peace—but nevertheless they are remembered here, and the names of buildings and streets and roads and bridges throughout the country recall to our minds their achievements, some of them on a national scale. Others confined, perhaps, to a small area in one Division, are more humble but of equal value in the sum-total.

Today, we have with us representatives of those who have made Nigeria: Representatives of the Regional Governments, of former Central Governments, of the Missionary Societies, and of the Banking and Commercial enterprises, and members, both past and present, of the Public Service. We welcome you, and we rejoice that you have been able to come and share in our celebrations. We wish that it could have been possible for all of those whom you represent to be here today: Many, I know, will be disappointed to be absent, but if they are listening to me now, I say to them: 'Thank you on behalf of my Thank you for your devoted service which helped build up Nigeria into a nation. Today we are reaping the harvest which you sowed, and the quality of the harvest is equalled only by our gratitude to you. May God bless you all.

This is an occasion when our hearts are filled with conflicting emotions: we are, indeed, proud to have achieved our independence, and proud that our efforts should have contributed to this happy event. But do not mistake our pride for arrogance. It is tempered by feelings of sincere gratitude to all who have shared in the task of developing Nigeria politically, socially and economically. We are grateful to the British officers whom we have known, first as masters, and then as leaders, and finally as partners, but always as friends. And there have been countless missionaries who have laboured unceasingly in the cause of education and to whom we owe many of our medical services. We are grateful also to those who have brought modern methods of banking and of commerce, and new industries. I wish to pay tribute to all of these people and to declare our everlasting admiration of their devotion to duty.

And, finally, I must express our gratitude to Her Royal Highness the Princess Alexandra of Kent for personally bringing to us these symbols of our freedom, and especially for delivering the gracious message from Her Majesty The Queen. And so, with the words 'God Save Our Queen,' I open a new chapter in the history of Nigeria, and of the Commonwealth, and indeed of the world.



LACK OF NATIONAL RALLYING POINT, NIGERIA'S GREATEST DRAWBACK — YUSUF ALI, SAN

MALLAM YUSUF OLAOLU ALI, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, SAN, is the Principal Partner of the Ilorin, Kwara State headquartered Yusuf Ali & Co. (Ghalib Chambers), a leading law firm in Nigeria that parades lawyers with vast experience in various practice areas, all of who are dedicated legal practitioners, specialising in the practice of all aspects of corporate, commercial and financial law in the country.

Rising from a humble beginning, Ali, who attributes his foray into the Law profession as a result of a divine ordering of his life and steps by the Almighty Allah, has combined such virtues as faith (in God), hard work, passion (for the profession), integrity, honesty, humility and patience to attain the pinnacle of the profession, becoming a Senior Advocate of Nigeria in 1997.

He is, today, not only an iconic legal practitioner who is renowned and respected across Nigeria and beyond its shores, but an inspiration to present and upcoming generations of lawyers, other professionals, and even a myriad of people in the larger society whom he has touched at one time or the other and in one way or another with his philanthropic gestures that cut across creeds and communities.

Very passionate about Nigeria and yet always very blunt in his views about any aspect of the nation's continuing evolution, Ali is one very strong voice that sounds very clearly and very loudly on any subject, a voice which both the current and coming generations of Nigerians should hear and heed.

In a no-holds-barred exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE's** **AMOS OLADELE** and **KASIM BAKARE**, he looks at the nation – past, present and future – in this special edition which hallmarks the nation's Diamond Jubilee.

How do you feel as a Nigerian that Nigeria is hitting the Diamond age?

For me, as a Nigerian, it is with mixed feelings that I view our diamond anniversary. One is happy that Nigeria is still one entity in spite of all the stress, the push, the predictions of Armageddon of break-up and knowing fully well that this country has been on the precipice for so many years. Over time, the clarion call for break-up was real at various points and it culminated in the civil war between 1967 and 1970. We went through that; thereafter what we have come to know like Afenifere, Ohanaeze, Arewa Consultative Forum, are all vestiges of this lack of cohesion in the country. If you look at the evolution of these different tribal groups, they tell you clearly that we have a country made up of so many nations. That is the flip side. That we still remain one entity, in spite of all these, is, to me, one of the seven wonders of the world. Therefore, one is grateful to God because many people don't appreciate the fact that one of the greatest strengths of Nigeria is the land mass and its population. Nobody can just run over us. We are consequential

because of our numbers.

Having said that, in spite of several calls for division and dissolution of the country, ordinary Nigerians still see themselves as Nigerians in one way or the other. Their actions across the various groups, inter-marriages, joint business ownership, then, of course, each political party is an amalgam of different shapes and colours of Nigerians from different parts. So, these are among the things that have not made the doomsday prediction to become true that the country will splinter. That is the positive side for me – that we are still one.

On the reverse side, however, it is with a heavy heart that one looks at our situation. Of course, 60 years may look infinitesimal (in the life of a nation); but what tomorrow will be like, will be determined by today.

If at 60, we are still grappling with things that others have forgotten about; like power, infrastructure, good health services, problem of corruption and of course now, insecurity, insurgency, kidnapping. Many of the nations that we took off together with have left us at the starting point.

In a 1000m race, many other countries, like Malaysia, Singapore, etc, are at the

800m mark while we are still at the starting block. What accounts for that is a mixture of so many things. As such, the fact that this country has not been able to realise its potentials, both human and material, is a very saddening thing after 60 years of independence.

Looking at Nigeria as a human organism, how would you describe her growth at 60?

Nigeria has a stunted growth. Simple. In fact, we are worse than a dwarf, if you look at the achievements of other countries with the same situations and circumstances as ours.

How do you place Nigeria's growth, personally, professionally and experientially?

Nigeria is an under-achieving country. We have greatly underachieved in all parameters of human measurement of achievement.

Can you elaborate on this?

How many countries with the kind of resources that we have are unable to provide stable power for their citizens? Which other country in Nigeria's status in terms of natural

endowment is grappling with very poor public health facilities, and has no credible public transportation system? Look at any other with the kind of first-class brains that we have; people go out of Nigeria and become celebrated in Engineering, Law, Medicine, Aviation, etc, and yet, the nation is still grappling with backbreaking corruption? Tell me any other country that has the status of Nigeria and yet has no rallying point, be it human or institutional. We have never had a rallying point. In South Africa, till today, Nelson Mandela is the rallying point. We have never had a national rallying point.

I jokingly tell people that the only rallying point we have is football; but it lasts for too short a time to be enduring. When the country is playing football, nobody remembers you are Hausa, Ibo, Ibibio or Yoruba. Alas, it lasts for only 90 minutes and after the 90 minutes, we all dissolve back to our base sentiments. As such, the lack of a rallying point is part of the greatest drawbacks of our country.

Are there other areas of our national existence that we can say Nigeria is where it should be; and is our problem in our star as a nation?

The only positive thing is that we are still together. I can't see any other area. Education, we are nowhere. Our economy is a voodoo economy. It is the classical abiku or ogbanje, with respect to those who manage our economy in the past and now.

Secondly, Nigerians are the problems of Nigeria. Like I usually tell people, I have stopped blaming people in government alone. We are all corporately guilty. Most of us, only point accusing fingers when it doesn't favour us. Anything that favours us, no matter how evil, it is okay. This selfishness, this self-centredness is part of the problems of our country. And, of course, tribalism, ethnocentrism, religious bigotry are products promoted by the elite to further hold the ordinary people so that they (elite) can continue to be kings in hell rather than serve in heaven. That is the way I describe the Nigerian political elite.

Thirty years ago, Dubai was a mirage. Have you read the story of Dubai as written by Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai? He said when they wanted to start Dubai, it was hinged on 3Ts – Transportation, Trade and Tourism. Do you know that Emirates Airline was started with 2 wet-leased aircraft from Afghanistan in 1985? Today, Emirates Airline is one of the largest airlines in the world. Dubai airport is now busier than Heathrow airport in London.

Recall that when the Murtala Muhammed Airport was opened in 1979, before Obasanjo left as Head of State, the airport was one of the best in the world with Schiphol Airport



Nigeria has a stunted growth. Simple. In fact, we are worse than a dwarf., if you look at the achievements of other countries with the same situations and circumstances as ours.

in Amsterdam. That airport has remained with 2 fingers since then. Schiphol now has about 36 fingers. We just left our own to die. Today, it's a glorified shadow. The Chinese have been building another terminal for us in the place in the past fifteen years. These are things you see and you just feel like crying. In other serious countries that I know in the world, every government project has a terminal date. Usually they put the sign board, this road will be completed in 2023 and nothing will change it.

Look at the state of Lagos-Ibadan, Ilorin-Ibadan expressways. I am not aware of any serious country in the world that does inter-state road in a dual carriage way. Nobody does that anymore. You do six lanes on either side. As the Yoruba will say: "E bimo nile paanu, e lo so oruko e ni ile koriko. Se olanrewaju niyen a bi olanreyin?" meaning, "You gave birth to a child in a zinc-roofed house, you are now going to a thatched roofed house to do the christening of the child. Are you progressing or retrogressing?"

Not too long ago, when Lokoja was still part of old Kwara State, there was a high court in Lokoja, I would leave Ilorin in the morning to go and attend a court session in Lokoja. If I left by 5:30 in the morning by 8:30 am, I would be in Lokoja. I would do my case, leave by 2.30pm and latest by 7pm, I would be back in Ilorin. Now, the distance is still the same thing till tomorrow, yet, with the best of vehicles today, you can't spend less than 6 hours on the same route. Would you say that we are we making progress? Before we had our own appeal court here, in Ilorin, in 1999, I was always travelling to the appeal court in Kaduna. Sometimes I would go to Kaduna twice in a week in my Peugeot. In 4-5 hours, I would be in Kaduna. Can I try that now? Meanwhile, we are not yet talking about insecurity, we are just talking about the roads. For me, this country has a stunted growth, no thanks to all of us.

Having painted this picture, sir, we know the Nigerian founding fathers gave the country a good footing; at what point do you think we got it wrong?

Many people may not like this, but I am going to say it. Military intervention destroyed the trajectory of the country. Only God will say, "Let there be light", and there will be light. That was the impression which the military gave the people about themselves - they were playing God!

One of the things that the military did to us was to destroy the national psyche and morality. I have had to take on some people that usually say Oh the military achieved so much. The question is: At what cost? Marry what he has been able to do with what is on ground. You can't be talking in absolute terms. If you say somebody has performed, what were the resources available to him? The time they introduced that 090 telephone here was at a time it had already been phased out in Europe. It was during the military era. We knew who was the minister of communications then. They went to take a discarded technology.

During the first republic, there were vestiges of corruption, but it was not advertised. The military made corruption a national past time and they have now empowered those who have been running the country thereafter. Some of us were old enough to know what was happening then.

In 1964, I was in primary 4, though I couldn't vote, I knew when elections were held. The military actually destroyed the fabric of the country.

Talking about tribalism and ethnicity, before 1966 coup, there were efforts to make sure we were integrated. The military came and thought unity means unifying everything. It doesn't happen that way. The Nigeria Police was a product of that in 1968. Before then, we had native authority police in the North and Local government police in the South. That's what we want to go back to now in the name of community policing. The military just destroyed it and put

everything as Nigerian Police.

A country that is as big and diverse as this, how can you have one police authority? Even what we are grappling with now, petroleum pricing, the military started the problem. When we were young, up to the time of Gowon, there was what was called ordinary and super pricing of petrol at filling stations. There were differentials in the prices of petroleum products from one point to another depending on the cost of bringing it from point A to point B. The military came and said No, prices should be one. And then Nigerians started paying for the cost of bridging the gap. That's part of the problems we now have about subsidy; but Nigerians forget so easily, unfortunately for us.

A people without a history won't have a present or a future. Once you don't have history, your future is not certain and even your present is out of focus.

Obviously, we have a terrible situation on our hands; how can we salvage the situation?

I think this is the most important part of our discussion. We must go back to the basics. Let's go back to the roots. Number one: we must all invest our talents in the country. Number 2: We must stop the blame game either between the rulers and the ruled or between the different ethnic groups. Number 3: There should be proper governance provided by the leaders. Nigerians ordinarily would not mind if the president and vice president come from the same village once services are provided. Americans don't have two heads; but because whoever is the president knows that he has minimum things he must do for all the constituent parts of the U. S. And so, patronage is not tied to political support. What I am saying in essence is that there must be proper patriotism among the ruling elite. They should not think in terms of their pockets alone. We must put an end to this primitive acquisitiveness. Just for me and my family; people acquiring things for generations yet unborn when you are not even sure whether cyclone will come and wipe off everybody. A natural disaster may come and wipe us off. Then, of course, those who have access to the public till, though I don't support people stealing our money but even when they do so, let them invest it here. Let them create industries here. All these resources that you take out of Nigeria, are empowering other people elsewhere.

Then, let us promote national ethos and national integration. I have been saying it and I will continue to say it. In all serious countries of the world, citizenship is tied to residency not place of birth, local government or state of origin. What does that mean? There



One of the greatest strengths of the country is the resilience of our people. The level of elasticity to absorb things is almost unimaginable. There are things that will happen in other places and there will be implosion but we endure one way or the other here. That is why some people say that God is a Nigerian. That is one serious strength that we have.

are some influential Nigerians that are so influential that if they want citizenship for their children in any part of the country, they will get it. Then, why are we wasting our time? We must address that issue. Is it not curious or surprising that as a Nigerian man, you marry from another part of Nigeria and your wife cannot take benefits from your state? So, anytime there is an opportunity, you say she must go back to her state of origin. How do you do that when you have uprooted the woman from her place to your own place?

Thank God you are a legal luminary. The constitutional and legal sides to all of these, how do we work around it?

It is not rocket science. Just a little tweaking with the constitution. Simple and end of story. There was a time the NBA was making contributions to the amendment of the constitution and I served as chairman of that committee. It took us less than two hours to draft something that would go into

chapter 3 of the constitution bordering on citizenship to address the issue.

So, the government didn't accept the outcome of the contribution?

If they did, we will not be having this discussion. Do you know why they promote this fabled dichotomy? Many of our political elite, see it as their area of strength. And it's not necessary. Like I always jokingly tell people, nobody voted for where he comes from. So, something that was not by choice, why should that become a basis of quarrel? Who my father was, who your father was is not a matter of choice. Or, did anyone choose his father or mother? Of course, not. So, if you couldn't choose your parents, then you couldn't choose your town. So, something that just came by accident, why should that become a basis of relationship with people.

It is one question I don't ask people in my life: Where are you from? What does it matter? It was not by your choice, but that's what defines us here. Hilary Clinton is from Arkansas. She became a senator representing New York just because about a year before the end of her husband's tenure, she relocated and bought a residence in New York. She was able to fly the flag of the place and became a senator. What stops us from doing same, here?

Equally important, we must try to build a critical mass of people who are educated and know their rights. Education may not necessarily make you rich but it broadens your mind. It gives you the ability to choose between competing things. Let there be mass education. Yes, there are no jobs now. Don't worry. I usually tell people, those who have education will eventually then come and lead those who don't have. No matter how much you have, if you are not educated, you need someone who is educated to help you run the place for you, otherwise, you are going to run down the place. So, for me, education is very key.

Then, we should all know that there is no other country we can run to except here. And that is why I always discourage people from leaving Nigeria. I always tell my friends that if your children go to school abroad, they must come back here. Our forebears were forced into slavery, but we are now surrendering ourselves to slavery again, voluntarily. That's what we are doing because no matter how good you are, out there, you are a nobody. You have no class. If they say you are second class or third-class citizen, they are just being benevolent.

On a general scale, would you say there were opportunities which Nigeria embraced commendably, and what are our wasted

opportunities as a nation?

We have wasted virtually all opportunities that I can remember because if we had seized some of those opportunities, we won't be where we are today. We won't be lamenting about basic things. For instance, since we got to this office this morning, we have been on generator. If we had seized some of those opportunities, we won't be where we are today. We are retarded, economically, socially and politically. It's not all doom though. There are so many Nigerians who believe in Nigeria. I think that's a saving grace. There are a lot of Nigerians who believe in Nigeria, who believe that this country should work; that it is workable and that we should put our house in order so that we can salvage whatever can be salvaged for the next generation. For me, doing a prognosis, if we are lucky to get a few things right, in the next 60 years, this country can be a world-beater. We can join other countries that have made it.

Conversely, sir?

I don't want to think about that. The good thing about it is that in another 60 years, some of us here, today, will be far gone?

Earlier, you were trying to SWOT-analyse the nation. As a brand-focused publication, branding is in our DNA. Can you look at Nigeria as a brand from a SWOT analysis perspective?

One of the greatest strengths of the country is the resilience of our people. The level of elasticity to absorb things is almost unimaginable. There are things that will happen in other places and there will be implosion but we endure in one way or the other here. That is why some people say that God is a Nigerian. That is one serious strength that we have. As I earlier told you, our landmass and population are a major strength for us. The fact that God had endowed this country, without asking, with all sorts of unimaginable natural resources. The state of Israel, for example, has no natural resource. Nothing; but because the people were committed and with their first-class brains, the rest of the world go to Israel to learn agriculture. That place is in the arid region, exceeding arid desert. They were able to conquer their

environment.

There is this story that even America is afraid of Israel. You know why? Even when Americans sell warplanes to the Israelis, they (Israelis) would go back and dismantle the thing and change the functions. They will reconfigure it so that things that were previously working from the right would now be working from the left. As such, when you think they are going to do something from the left, you find out that they are doing it from the centre. In our own case, everything is perfect in Nigeria. We don't need to add value to most things. So much about our strengths.

Now, our weaknesses are the fault lines, which include disunity, lack of rallying point and lack of commitment to national ethos.

As for our opportunities, our population is a great opportunity for us, the resource endowment is another. The fact that there have been so many inter-marriages among us is an opportunity. So, the country is not hopeless as long as we don't lose hope.

The threats to the existence of Nigeria include ethnicism, religious bigotry, then the impunity of the elite which is a threat to all of us. If you look at insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, all of them have their roots in all these threats. We are all told that the idle hand is the devil's workshop. Most people who have encountered these kidnappers usually say some of these guys are well educated. They would say this is what Nigeria has turned us into and we have to do something. Of course, that is not a correct attitude because stealing is not a good answer for hunger. So, for me, I think we need to sit down as a people, and dialogue to renew our relationship.

Are you talking about a national conference kind of?

It may not be a national conference. I believe there should be some discussion. The problem I have with sovereign national conference is that different ethnic groups have different meanings for it. To the people in the west, it is about regionalism, to the people in the south- south, it's about resource control. So, there is no focal point even for that. For me, I just believe let's put things in place that will encourage younger elements to buy into the Nigerian project. If they do, then those who have the opportunity to serve us should be big thinkers. In this age, we shouldn't be thinking like cockroaches. We should be thinking mega. Dubai is what it is today because their leaders are big thinkers. They set out to have the tallest building in the world and it's there today. The only 7-star hotel in the world is in Dubai. Their metroline is unbelievable. If you go to Dubai and see their bus stations, they are better than government houses here. It just takes the will to move forward. There is no successful metroline that we have done in this country and we started long before them. The one in Lagos was abandoned. Ditto for the one in Port Harcourt. We just abandon things. Mr. A will start a project and Mr. B will come, and say it doesn't exist. What kind of country is that? They forget that it's the resources of the country that are being wasted. How good would it have been that you can enter a train from here (Ilorin) and in 2-3 hours you are in Maiduguri? There are trains that move as fast as 400km per hour. If you are going from one country to another in continental Europe, you don't need to board an aircraft going from London to Paris, or to Belgium, unless you want to fly. Europe is probably the best-connected

continent in the world by all means of transportation. There is no rocket science in it. Taking a cue from China as regards technology, you can steal, borrow or acquire it. In any way you do it, just have it. You are not starting from the beginning, just to lap on to what others have done and to improve it if you have the common sense to do that. That's all.

Let's come down to your own constituency, the legal sphere which actually predates Nigeria as a nation. How would you describe the evolution of the legal system in Nigeria since independence?

The Nigerian judiciary, no matter what you want to say, has been the saving grace for this country. You may disagree but that's my view. I will give you a few examples. When the crisis in the Western Region broke out in 1965 – Adegbenro vs Akintola – it was the court that saved the day for us. That case had to end up in the Privy Council. When Akintola was removed, Adegbenro was installed as premier of western region. And when elections were held in 1979, politicians were hell-bent on not allowing the military to go. It was the court that came to our rescue in that famous Awolowo vs Shagari case. People usually forget that supreme or apex courts are courts of policy. They don't just decide cases like that because they are the last courts at least on the human plane. Then, in this dispensation, in 2005, it became very interesting that people were being impeached for all sorts of funny things. Depending on whoever the federal government supported, two legislators could impeach a governor. It was the court that restored sanity in Ladoja's case.

Just imagine if there were no courts, what would have been happening among politicians? If they have no place to go to after elections, they would have been using Nigerians to kill themselves. But thank God for the courts. We should appreciate one thing: of all the three arms of government, the judiciary has been the most consistent since independence. It is the only organ that has a self-regulatory mechanism. Unfortunately, it is the most vilified of all the three arms of government. It was blamed for the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election; as if it was the court that did it. The

people in power were playing their chess games using the courts.

Why did the courts submit themselves to pressure from the people in power?

Courts are not manned by angels. They are Nigerians. That's what I always tell people; if you and I have cases and we don't pressurize the judge, it would be a mistake of the head not of the heart. But when you start to pressurize and you turn around and accuse them as well, which is a shame. That's why I want to appeal to the judges to just remain firm, and be faithful to their oath of office; and nothing will happen. Heavens won't fall. So, don't forget that the judicial and court system is also a human institution. All the malaise that afflicts the society has the tendency to infiltrate the system, if care is not taken. That the judiciary has been able to stand, up to this time, we should give kudos to them. Left to the politicians, they are like carpet baggers, they are like locusts. They go into a farm and destroy everything. That's the way I see politicians. Nothing is sacred with politicians; not even God! Don't they take oaths? Are they faithful to the oath? I believe the judicial system has proved itself worthy.

Has it also evolved as a business venture?

Only legal practice has evolved as a business venture. The world is commercial now. Isn't it? Everything in the world is commercial. So, you have to move with the times.

How do you see its evolution in that regard?

It's good. Otherwise, many of our colleagues who qualified from Law School won't have jobs to do. It has also given us the opportunity to compete with others. The world has become a global village.

Let's look at the relationship between the three arms of government, what would you say are the good, the bad and the ugly sides over the last 60 years?

The executive has remained a dominant arm to the detriment of the other two arms. The executive controls all the coercive powers of state, the military and the police. Everything that can unleash violence is in the hands of the executive. The other two arms are at their mercy when it comes to the use of force. There are also too many resources in the hands of the executive, especially the federal government. And that is why there is internecine war to be at the centre, apart from the fact that governance here is too base. It's our man that is there, that is still our mentality.

There are unbelievable powers in the hands of the executive. The legislative can bark, once in a while, and the executive will move back. The judiciary is so helpless. Even when a court gives judgement and you want to enforce it, you need the police. Imagine a judgement given against the commissioner of police. This is all because we do not appreciate the rule of law. That is part of the problems that military rule did to us. If we appreciate the nuances of the rule of law, we will know that the person who is powerful is not the one that can beat somebody but the one that restrains himself when he has all the powers to annihilate the other party; he says: No, I won't do this. That's a powerful person. It's not the person that can unleash the force but the one that restrains the force. That's how rule of law works. Imagine a Donald Trump in a third world country. Trump is a fit-for-purpose president of a third world country. He would thrive as an unrestrained dictator but look at how the US system has tamed him.

"That is why some of us have been crying: Let's have strong institutions, not strong men". Trump is a strong man, but he met a stronger institution. They put him in check. Here, we have strong men, no institution, and that is the problem we have.

Looking at lawmaking, how have we fared as a nation?

Lawmaking, you know you have to put that into perspective. Lawmaking in a military regime is a big joke. Whoever is the military president or governor, the man may just wake up and while chatting with his wife, the wife may say; "why don't you ban these other women who are doing something in the market?" The man would draft an edict, and the edict would be promulgated that same day and the people would be banned, just like that. That is why many of the laws made during military regimes are usually very hasty whereas in a democratic setting, some level of debates, discussions go into lawmaking and that's why you have this opportunity of public hearing. It won't make the law perfect, though. They are human but at least it's better thought out, not someone who just woke up on the wrong side of the bed, adjusts his head and says: "Today, I am going to deal with X and Y," and then the law is made. Therefore, no matter how you look at it, lawmaking in a democratic setting is far better than in the military. In fact, there is no basis for comparison.

Democracy moves slowly, but assuredly. Law-making in a military regime is fast but not long-lasting because most of the things are never well thought out. Look at War Against Indiscipline (W.A.I.) during Murtala Mohammed's regime. You can force people to queue with a whip but immediately you

go with your whip, they go back to their ways because it is not in their system.

If you want to do institutional changes, it has to start from the bottom. And that is what is wrong with the fight against corruption. You can't fight corruption from the top. It has to start from the bottom. And that is why they are getting it wrong. They are fighting corruption from top to bottom. It's not going to work. How many people will you put in jail? But let people repulse against it. Let it be against their conscience. We queued for six months, what happened thereafter? Look at our driving culture. People beat the light when you have the traffic light because obeying traffic light is not ingrained in them.



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What gladdens my heart about Nigeria is the resilience of all of us. We are a special people. Fela sang about it: Suffering and Smiling. For me, the fact that the unity of the country is still extant, that we still call ourselves Nigerians really gladdens my heart.

It's like walking or learning how to speak a language. You have to learn. And that was why I was talking about people behind us that if they are properly moulded, channeled, mentored or tutored, they will get it right

Let's look at our electoral system. There have been several reforms targeted at reforming our electoral system, reforms like the Uwais Electoral Reform. How would you assess our electoral system viz-a-vis these reforms?

Somebody said people's attitude determines their altitude. If we don't change our attitude, you can do reform till thy kingdom come, there will be no result. The Yoruba would say: If you throw a knife up ten times, it will always land on its side. We must change our mindset about power and service. As long as we continue to think that access to power is an opportunity to banish poverty for the individual, you can't get it right. Number two: our electoral system is too monetized. Starting from the primaries of parties that are usually compromised, with delegates being bought.

In the First Republic, how were parties run? At the ward level, if you were a party member, your name will be on the register, then they would give you a card that looked like daily collection card. So, whenever you attended the party meeting, you contributed money and your name would be marked. And that's the only way you continued to be a member. That was why it was possible in the First Republic for the ordinary party man at a party meeting to lambast the premier because it was their money that was being used to run the party and run elections.

From 1999, we now have owners of political parties. Quite naturally, he who pays the piper calls the tune. So, those are part of the things we must reform. It's very critical if we want to get democracy right. Parties should not belong to individuals as if they own houses, motor vehicles or companies. Even companies have board of directors. Now, party members expect parties to pay them. They are supposed to contribute money to run the parties. That's the way our democracy can thrive. Our attitude to power must change. We believe that once we get to power, we are made. We must insist, as citizens, too, that we would not tolerate that.

Let's look at recent developments in your constituency-Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and controversies around the last NBA conference, contentious elections and recent actions of the Attorney-General concerning the NBA. What is your take on all of these?

The NBA is just behaving like a Nigerian organisation, unfortunately. By our training, we are supposed to be natural leaders in our society. But once you suspend your training, you suspend your ethics, then you are just going to be behaving like the average Nigerian politician. If you are seeking position for service, you don't need to compromise the ethics of the profession. I want to serve you, if you say I cannot serve you, then I will go back to where I came from. So, we are behaving like the classical Nigerian politician; Fight to finish, which is not right in a professional body. We should set the template for others to see and follow. If we cannot conduct an election of an association of which we are less than 500,000 without acrimony, how do you now blame PDP and APC for elections that involve millions of people? I think we have forgotten our position in the country and our place in history. I want to say with all respect that the NBA must do a soul-searching exercise. Physician heal thyself.

On the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) issue, I think the AGF would probably not go out of his way to weaken something that was put in place to fight the scourge of fake lawyers. That was the whole essence of the stamp & seal. I have been in the executive since 1998. So, I know that was the reason we took that decision at NEC. There were many complaints of people who were not called to the bar who were practicing in many remote places in the country until they were detected. So, we said: if you put Stamp & Seal, all of us will have enrolment numbers. Once you are called to the bar, you go to the supreme court to go and enroll on the roll of lawyers; and you have your own number assigned to you. Your name and enrolment number are the things that are normally put on the stamp.

My understanding was that the AGF actually wanted to create an exemption for legal officers employed by government. Those ones can't be faked because they have employers who know them, unlike ordinary practitioners. That makes sense. Maybe, along the line, some things didn't quite go right and it became a blanket thing. I am sure the AGF will address it sooner than we think. This is the only profession we all have. We must protect it.

What gives you the greatest joy about Nigeria; and what aches your heart the most as the nation clocks 60?

What gladdens my heart about Nigeria is the resilience of all of us. We are a special people. Fela sang about it: Suffering and Smiling. For me, the fact that the unity of the country is still extant, that we still call ourselves Nigerians really gladdens my heart.

The one that gives me the most heartache is the under-performance of the country. Like I said before, we have underperformed in every area or parameter of measurement of success and progress.

In spite of this, the best place I like to be is this country because there are so many opportunities for those who are ready to engage their brains and their hands in legitimate works.

Putting all of these together, is there any cause for celebration of Nigeria @ 60?

We can clap for ourselves, at least we are here. At 60, Nigeria is still existing. We can clap for ourselves, but we should not be joyous because of all the things I have mentioned. A parent who has a five-year old child who could not walk would be happy that the child is alive but there will be no joy about the condition of the child. We should be happy and thank God that we are here. Nigeria still exists, we are patching up but we should not be joyous; not to talk of being overjoyed.

If you were to address Nigerians on this occasion, what will your message be?

A simple message: Let's start to work for Nigeria. We should start now so as to make this country answerable to its citizens. We should try now to ensure that in another ten years, there will be total turn around from all the ills that are afflicting us. It's achievable. Lee Kwan Yew, the father of modern Singapore didn't spend a lifetime. That small country that I am not sure is bigger than Oyo and Osun States, is now the third richest country in the whole world. It's possible. It's achievable. It's attainable if we put our minds to act and we are ready to work for it.

I always wonder why someone like you will not be interested in an elective office?

I don't have the talents. I can't bribe people to vote for me and I can't be lying. Nigeria is the only place I know somebody will say we are going to tar all the roads before an election and people will be clapping. They won't ask him; how much is it going to cost; and how are you going to raise the money? I can't bribe people just because I want to serve them. The kind of things Nigerian politicians do to themselves in terms of treachery, I am too naïve to get involved in such things. I like my peace of mind. ■

Let's build a country with a clear national vision – Femi Adelusi

A key player in the Media/Marketing Industry in Nigeria, Femi Adelusi has chalked up over 25 years post graduate experience in Marketing Communications.

He has an M.Sc. and an MBA from University of Benin. He is an Alumnus of the Lagos Business School, a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing UK, Ashridge Management School UK and Bocconi Strategy & Entrepreneurial School, Milan – Italy.

His early work experience included Chellarams PLC, Vigeo Limited & Tequila Nigeria.

He was the first Director of Strategy & Planning at mediaReach OMD Nigeria.

He then joined Coca-Cola Nigeria as the Media Manager overseeing Media Strategy & Implementation in Nigeria and the then NWABU region (North West African Business Unit). He was in Coca-Cola for 7 years and left as IMC Manager to Head Integrated Marketing Communication at Guinness Nigeria/Diageo, leading media strategy & agency transformation.

Femi Adelusi is the current President of the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), and also Vice President, International Advertising Association, IAA - Nigeria chapter.

He is a Full Member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and a Director on the Board of Alphabetic Media Academy (AMA) Lagos.

He is the founder of a Marketing Communication Group that comprises of BrandEye Media and BrainBox Marketing Services Limited.

Sharing his thoughts on Nigeria@60, he said:

“Let us build a country with a national

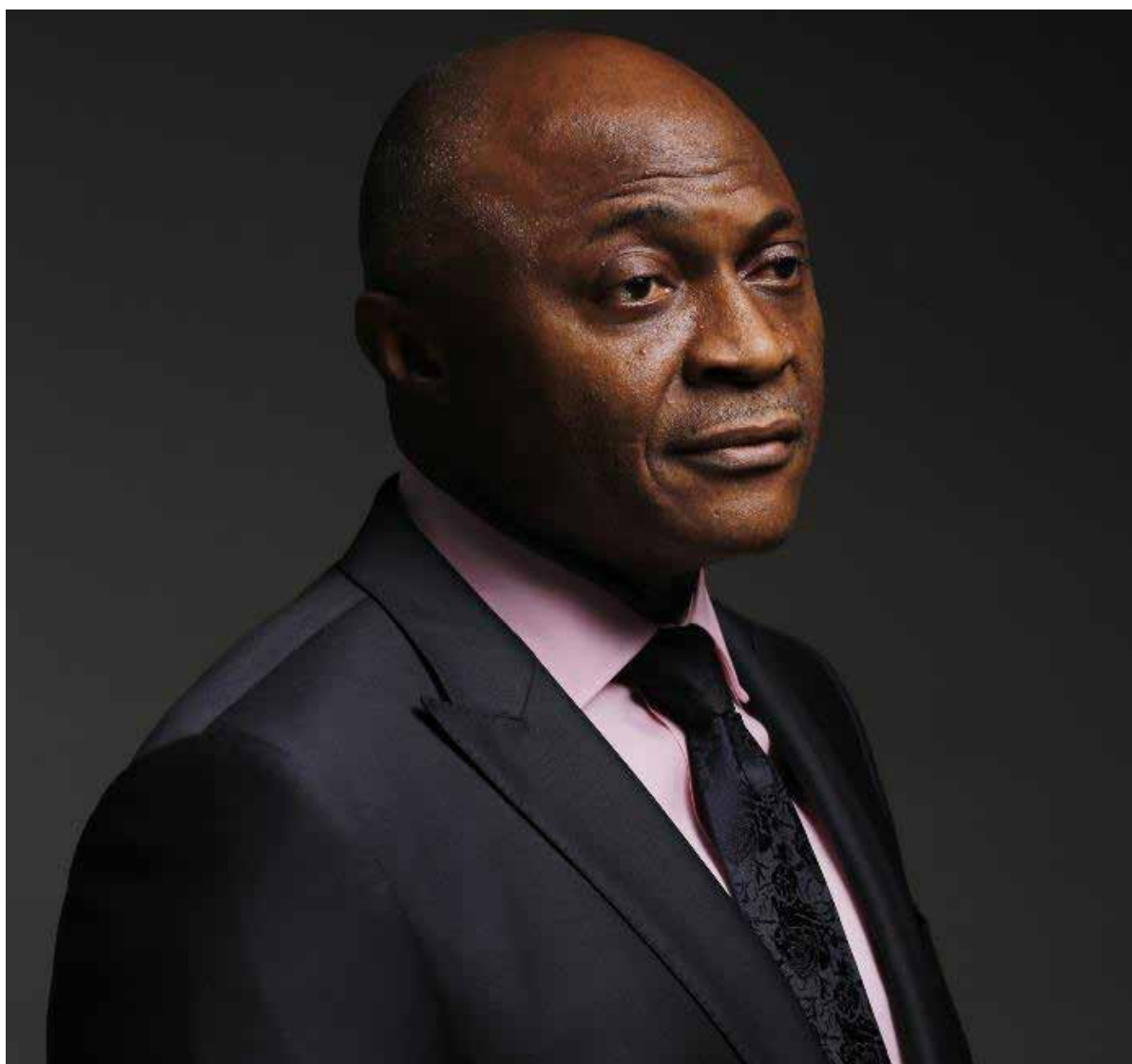


vision that is clear and where the citizens understand their constitutional rights and can freely express themselves and demand those rights; where our citizens can be proud to carry its passport and where the passport is respected around the world.

“A country that not only rewards honest work, but boldly challenges corrupt enrichment; A country where rights to human dignity, and sanctity of life is supreme and one that provides unbiased opportunities and self-determination for its citizens.

“A country where the gifted and talented can optimize their abilities and where even the not so gifted can find fulfilment, dignity and access to an enriching life.

“A country where those in authority see themselves as servant who have been given the privilege of service and thus feel accountable to its citizens, and not the other way round. ■



NIGERIA LACKS QUALITY LEADERSHIP

– KEN ONYEALI IKPE, PH.D.

Ken Onyeali Ikpe is the Group Chief Executive Officer of INSIGHT REDEFINI, Sub-Saharan Africa's renowned Marketing Communication & Advertising Group.

He holds a Ph.D. in Development Economics from the Academy of Sciences, School of African Studies Moscow Russia, an alumni of Advanced Management Programme (AMP), Lagos Business School, and also trained at the IESE Business School, Barcelona – Spain.

Dr. Ikpe is highly sought after by result driven leaders as he is renowned for visionary business transformation leadership, with over two decades of building successful brands and transforming businesses, he is a Go-To professional on leadership and policy implementation.

He is a fellow of Nigeria Institute of Marketing and the immediate past President of Nigeria's regulating body for Media Independent Practitioners (MIPAN).

In an interview with AMOS OLADELE, the cerebral corporate executive and respected thought leader, ventilates his views on Nigeria on this auspicious national occasion.

How do you feel as a Nigerian as the nation turns 60?

I feel good but not great about Nigeria and indeed curious about the whole situation.

I feel good because there is Hope. But the achievements recorded, so far, have been underwhelming. The Nation has been denied the benefits of superior and quality Leadership at all levels and that's why we talk about potentials after 60 years.

We have also not defined the "Reason for Being".

As a corporate executive, how would you describe the Nigerian business environment?

I rather see complete lack of environment. The desired situation would have been a minimum conducive environment (Safety, Stability, Security, Infrastructure and Capacity) for businesses to latch on to thrive, but what we have created is a desperate situation that rather stifles than encourage or build businesses.

What are your reflections about advertising as a profession and a business in Nigeria – past, present and future?

I think Advertising as a Profession firmly belongs to the past. The present may accommodate Marketing Communications but the future belongs to Consulting that delivers SOULUTIONING.

Design Thinking around Value Creation and Business Acceleration Skill set and Technics.

There is dire need to build capacity to redefine and reinvent the "Go to Market Approach" and move from Communication Partner to Business Partner.

How has your Group of companies fared in the Nigerian business environment?

It's been tough. Really tough and treacherous. The dynamics are completely different and the expectations have clearly shifted from what it was in the Industrial Age.

New type of Client, new type of consumer, new type of demand structure and new set of Aspirations.

We needed to adjust to address the changing and tough times by driving growth in the new age of disruption, connecting the post Industrial Age: Control the Factors of Production (Finance. Sourcing and Integration).

We have responded by building a connected marketing practice, help brands

to better connections across consumers, channels and partners. Create applications that create connected capabilities with consumer engagement as the singular aim and objective.

Create wonderful experiences that inspire, entertain and sell whilst deploying all digital platforms and channels.

Introduce and master Performance Media. Help Brands win in the moments that matter.

What are the Group's projections into the future?

The Language and culture we understand at the INSIGHT REDEFINI GROUP is that of DISRUPTION. We have since moved from the Road well-traveled to the Road least traveled.

Forecasting the Business environment on a regular and consistent basis, we have secured our dominance by restructuring to take our position as the most dominant and most sophisticated and up to date operation in Nigeria in our space.

We have infused and developed capabilities to remain consistent in creating a minimum viable product in every category of the Nigerian Market space.

We continually seek to evolve incrementally and consistently develop traction in the market place. ■

“

I feel good because there is Hope. But the achievements recorded, so far, have been underwhelming. The Nation has been denied the benefits of superior and quality Leadership at all levels and that's why we talk about potentials after 60 years.

Nigeria's continuing growth lies in its people

– **Titilola Adedeji, Amber Energy Drinks boss**

MS. TITILOLA ADEDEJI IS A SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR WITH INTERESTS IN FMCG, SERVICES, BEAUTY AND LIFESTYLE. SHE IS AN OUTSTANDING AMAZON THAT HAS WORKED HER WAY UP THE CORPORATE LADDER IN SPITE OF THE CHALLENGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT. IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH MARKETING EDGE'S KASIM BAKARE, ADEDEJI RELAYS HER PROFESSIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAJECTORY; AND PROFFERS SOLUTIONS TO CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS BEDEVILING CORPORATE NIGERIA.

As a Nigerian, how do you feel that Nigeria is 60?

First of all, it tells us that we have been able to stay together as a country for 60 years. Sixty is a big number and it's worth celebrating. As a Nigerian, I am happy for Nigeria that we have lasted for this long and we have a lot of people that are proud to be Nigerians. That is an achievement for us.

What are your personal reflections of the country's progress from your childhood?

I think we have been able to adapt and we are constantly evolving. I know when I was younger there was nothing like mobile phone or e-mail until sometime ago. I think as

Nigerians, we are willing to learn and evolve as we go along to the level we can. We are willing to get our acts together and work.

How would you assess the country's economic growth at 60?

One thing that still amazes me about Nigeria is the fact that we have so much in Nigeria. A few weeks ago, I was talking to someone about the fact that we are still recovering the Abacha loot and yet we are still standing as a nation in spite of the humongous money stolen. There is still a lot of money in Nigeria. It's very hard for a country to withstand the amount of embezzlement that has happened in Nigeria and still survive. It just shows the strength of who we are as Nigerians.

Talking about the economic growth, I think it's more of the people than actual funds. What has happened is that the people have become the source of economic growth

for Nigeria. With every mishap, it has taught the people how to grow the economy with what we have. So, even if we are given little, any time and every time, we are able to at least double it. Our best resource is our people and that is where I see the growth. Money will be valued and devalued but the people can never be devalued.

How would you assess Corporate Nigeria @ 60?

I love Nigeria. I think that the influx of people that have Western education is making it better for Nigeria. I don't think we are at our best potentials yet; and this is because Nigeria has a way of sucking people because we often celebrate mediocrity in Nigeria. Even if you come back to Nigeria with some sort of wow idea, you get into a room and they are thinking: why are you doing so much? So, it



takes someone that is willing to be different to get the best. Corporate Nigeria is getting better now because they are willing to get some sort of structure. There is still need to get much better, though.

How would you assess the Nigerian business environment?

It has the good, the bad, the beautiful and the ugly sides. As challenging as the Nigerian environment is, I do like it. It either forces you to grow or stuck you in. It has forced me to grow. There are many things I have learnt on my way up. Though I don't think I am up there yet as I am still learning. I realized that because somebody is doing this, you would know it is wrong. So, there are certain things you wouldn't take. However, if you are in a fully structured environment, it's easy to become a robot; meaning that you are not evolving or thinking of how you can do it better because you are falling into everything nice. A good example is driving. I usually say, if you can drive in Nigeria, you can drive anywhere in the world but if you can drive anywhere in the world you can't drive in Nigeria. Nigeria will teach you things which other countries can never teach you. So, I think as a business person, I love Nigeria.

How do you think government can help create an enabling environment for businesses in Nigeria?

There are so many things government can do. First things first. Everybody has always talked about government giving us roads and electricity. Secondly, investing in the average Nigerian which means education and not just schools. Nigeria will do schools and not education. It will take someone that has graduated from IT in a Nigerian school that there is not a lot that they have learnt. Are we getting the education or the schools? That is a different ball game. Once we are able to be real with ourselves and see where the problem is, then we can understand and solve it.

We have a lot of problems and they weren't created today. The most basic are good roads and constant electricity. I must confess, though, that electricity is better these days.

We also need to get support from government for entrepreneurs, not all the funny loans that they give. It's fine to give loans, but if you are giving money to someone that doesn't understand the value of the money, you are just wasting your time. It's just for show. Let's dig deep and ask: why we are doing what we are doing. Once we can answer that question in Nigeria, we have the potentials of being the real world leaders.

Now, Covid-19 has shown us something: The world can stand still and every country can provide for itself. That's what happened. Nigeria didn't collapse. People started asking questions as to how do you do what you are

doing. It means that we need to understand our strengths and harness them as opposed to looking at other people and what they do. If you keep looking at competition, you forget about what you are doing. If you look at yourself, you will do so well.

As a serial entrepreneur who runs several companies, can you give us some insight into some of these companies and what they do?

My wealth manager calls me a "Money Making Machine" (MMM) because I see opportunities in a lot of things. I have my hands in FMCG (energy drink), printing and branding, lifestyle (hair, salon, beauty), logistics, and properties. I have my hands in a few pies and this helps me to understand how to deal with different types of people. In each sector, there is a different type of clientele, a different type of style and you need to wear a different type of hat.

What challenges have you encountered in promoting the Amber brand and how were they surmounted?

The first challenge was Covid-19 which gave us a halt. It also showed us that there are many ways to an end-point. So, we had to go back to the drawing board. We had to look at the best way and the best route which actually turned out better than our initial plan.



We also had to get to the people and help them understand who we are, what we are, and what we are about and help us win over Nigerians, why we love this brand and why we are excited about the brand, and why they should love the brand

Any projections for the brand in the next five years?

It would have been a legacy name. Obviously, the way we are going, legacy is the way forward.

Who is Titilola Adedeji?

First and foremost, I am a lover of God. I am very prayerful. I am also someone very optimistic. My motto is, "Nothing is impossible". I just want to stay focused on my focus and get the job done. I love fashion, I love pretty things. I love women. That doesn't mean I date women. I love to empower women as well as men. I just feel like it's very important to see potentials and harness it in every one irrespective of their background. I love to empower and encourage people. I love travelling. I love gifts which is very hard for some people to believe.

How did you begin your journey in the competitive Nigerian corporate world?

When I came back to Nigeria, I started

working and did a bit in PR. I already had my companies abroad. So, I was working abroad. My educational background was in Nigeria, U.K and Ghana. So, I had done all of that and did a bit of work in entertainment. I was 16 when I got my first job in Nigeria. I was the Head Teacher in my aunt's school. So, at 16, I already had the thinking of being responsible even as the last child.

My journey in corporate Nigeria has opened my eyes to see the potentials in Nigeria. There is so much to be done and there is so much to change but you have to be patient and willing to do the job. There is no free lunch anywhere in the world. Sometimes, when people come to me, and say I want to go to England, Canada and get a job, or stuffs like that, I always tell them; you are going to face the same problem everywhere you go. The problem is not the country. The problem is you. So, if you cannot deal with yourself, there is a problem. The problem is just going to be wrapped in a different wrapping paper even if you go elsewhere.

A company is the staff. You then have to look at the kind of staff you are taking. Then ask yourself; can you be your own staff? If you cannot be your own staff, there is no way forward. So, I always say corporate Nigeria is dependent on the staff and this has taught me to train staff to become the best of people

they are and that is what Nigeria did for me.

Abroad, like I said, because it's so structured you might not even find your best potentials because you are plugged in to think and you might not need to think. So, they give you KPI, for instance, and they can even tell you how to deliver it. It's only now that it's easy you can say you want to think out of the box. Before, there is no box you are thinking out of. I said you are accountant and that's what you are doing. Even if you say to them; 'there is something wrong here', you might be sanctioned because that's not your job description. Nigeria helps you to see better and bigger than the position they put you. So, corporate Nigeria is beautiful once you do it right.

How did your background, training, experience and exposure prepare you for this journey?

Oh! It did. First thing, my mummy beat me a lot when I was small. And she wasn't allowed actually because my daddy didn't like kids being beaten. My mum would wait for my dad to travel, and my dad traveled a lot. When dad was in England, mum would begin to beat you for things you had done for two years and would tell you I am going to beat you before your dad comes back

But it helped a lot. For instance, I remember that when I went to university in England, I said, you know what, if mummy didn't beat me, I would have ended up in prison, or drugs, prostitution or something else; because I looked at kids that were not well brought up versus me at my age and I could see the clear difference. That also instilled some sort of values. I have values for which I still say to my mother, thank you, today. Some things I look at today and I say; how does this person think like this? I am not judgmental; I just try to imagine and I get on with life. I feel like the morals and values helped me to where I am today. All my job experiences also made their contributions to who I am. The good part is that the challenges are molding me to where I am going to. So, I am constantly learning

What is your business philosophy?

Impossible is nothing. Excuses mean nothing

Let's talk about your "new baby" Amber, how is it doing in the market, few months after its launch into the competitive energy drinks market?

Amber is doing well, in fact, better than we expected. As a company, we pride ourselves in building Nigerians. So, that has been our focus and letting Nigerians know that a Nigerian can also do well, quality-wise. We are passionate about the Nigerian and African

growth. We are going from Nigeria to other African countries. We are also looking at the quality of staff we are bringing on board. They must understand the vision and run with the vision, particularly the different people that are in the top cadres. So, if you spoke to a manager of mine, he would probably sound like me. That makes me happy. Building the Nigerians away from the stereotypical 'I don't care Nigerians' to people that understand quality and what it is to communicate quality. That baby is being well taken care of.

Do you have role models in business, in Nigeria or abroad?

I don't think I have role models. The reason why I don't take role models is because all of us have three faces. The faces I don't see behind closed doors, the faces people in your inner circle see and the faces you portray to me and outsiders. So, I try not to take role models, hook line and sinker. What I would say is that there are certain attributes I appreciate in different people that I want to have.

I remember that while growing up, I used to love Oprah, I still love her but I don't know her personal life, so I would never say she is my role model; but I like what she does. I like Jeff Bezos. I like him because he has managed to craft something out of nothing. The guy sleeps and wakes up billion dollars richer. I love that; I want that. You know I actually like Buhari. I like the fact that he believes himself strong enough to become the president of Nigeria. Same as Donald Trump. Trump may not be said to be a wise man but he is a determined man. So, I like that determination in him; this, however, doesn't mean I like him. There are different people like that that I pick things from that I would want to emulate but not their whole lifestyle. So, in that light I don't think I have a single role model, I just like attributes in some people that I want to apply to myself.

What is your advice to young and upcoming entrepreneurs or executives in Nigeria?

First thing is: Focus on your focus. I always say that every time. Some people say they are focused but they are not focused on themselves but are focused on another person's race hoping they become that person. I would like young people to see me and say I like what she is doing, not to say I want to be like her. I want to be the best of me.

So, it is important for the youths to determine who they are and run that race. Competition sometimes is a distraction. There is nothing new in the world. Everything we are doing now, I am sure that in the 17th century or even before, someone had already

done it. So, you have to just determine what you want to do.

I always give this advice: Disrupt and own. Every category is already available, the question is: what can you do to make it better and own a space. That's all you need to know. Somebody going up or down doesn't affect me. Once we can all understand that, life will be so easy.

Social media, for instance, wouldn't be so toxic because I don't feel I should do this because someone else is doing it. Every star in the sky has a space and nobody is fighting the next person.

Therefore, my advice for the youths or young entrepreneurs is: focus on your focus, find your strength, and look for where you can meet a need because the only way you can give value is by meeting needs. People don't know that. They just think money is something that falls from the sky and you

have to be wise or smart. A single need met is additional value and once people understands its value, they are willing to pay anything for value. Once you know that, you are home and dry

Any advice for Nigerians as Nigeria clocks 60?

Nigerians, just know that the government is your friend, and not your God. I like the fact that Nigeria is 60. We are still somewhat unified. If you meet a Nigerian outside this country, they want to associate with you immediately. We still have the spirit of love in us and that is so beautiful. We have the spirit of unity. We have a very competitive spirit. I don't know whether that is good or bad. I think we should all cut a cake in our houses to say, "Happy Anniversary". ■



AS CHALLENGING AS THE NIGERIAN ENVIRONMENT IS, I DO LIKE IT. IT EITHER FORCES YOU TO GROW OR STUCK YOU IN. IT HAS FORCED ME TO GROW. THERE ARE MANY THINGS I HAVE LEARNT ON MY WAY UP. THOUGH I DON'T THINK I AM UP THERE YET AS I AM STILL LEARNING. I REALIZED THAT BECAUSE SOMEBODY IS DOING THIS, YOU WOULD KNOW IT IS WRONG. SO, THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS YOU WOULDN'T TAKE. HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE IN A FULLY STRUCTURED ENVIRONMENT, IT'S EASY TO BECOME A ROBOT; MEANING THAT YOU ARE NOT EVOLVING OR THINKING OF HOW YOU CAN DO IT BETTER BECAUSE YOU ARE FALLING INTO EVERYTHING NICE. A GOOD EXAMPLE IS DRIVING. I USUALLY SAY, IF YOU CAN DRIVE IN NIGERIA, YOU CAN DRIVE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD BUT IF YOU CAN DRIVE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD YOU CAN'T DRIVE IN NIGERIA. NIGERIA WILL TEACH YOU THINGS WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES CAN NEVER TEACH YOU. SO, I THINK AS A BUSINESS PERSON, I LOVE NIGERIA.



Nigeria is too endowed and important to be allowed to fail

– John Ehiguese



John Ehiguese is the Founder/CEO of Medicraft Associates, one of Nigeria's leading Public Relations consultancy firms, and the exclusive Nigeria affiliate of the FleishmanHillard global PR network.

Before establishing Medicraft in September 2003, he worked as an Account Director at C&F Porter Novelli (Nigeria), with direct responsibility for coordinating PR support for the market roll-out of MTN, Nigeria's largest telecoms network.

In a career spanning over thirty years, Ehiguese has garnered extensive cross-functional experience in Marketing, Broadcasting, Advertising and Public Relations.

Under his supervision, Medicraft Associates has worked with several high-profile clients, including: Mastercard, Western Union, Diamond Bank, ExxonMobil, AVON HMO and Nigerian Breweries Plc (a Heineken company), Stanbic IBTC Group, Interswitch, USSEC, Interswitch Group, Olam Group, Sanofi and Truecaller.

Ehiguese holds an MBA from the Lagos Business School of the Pan Atlantic University, Lagos (2004). He is also an alumnus of the IESE Business School, University of Navarra, Barcelona, Spain and the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.

He is a member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), the PRCA (UK) and a Board Member of the International Communications Consultancy Organization (ICCO).

Ehiguese is also the Immediate Past President of the Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN), the umbrella body of practicing PR consultancy firms in Nigeria.

In a brief interview with AMOS OLADELE, he reflects on the Diamond Jubilee of Nigeria.

How does it feel for you that the Nigeria is clocking 60?

As a Nigerian, I am happy at this important milestone of our country's 60th anniversary, post-independence. It is however a bitter-sweet feeling: on the positive side, it is gratifying that the country has managed to remain as one entity, regardless of the numerous challenges we have faced. It is also important that we continue to remain strong and rich in terms of our potentials for greatness. However, we suffer a serious deficit in our ability to effectively harness our resources and potentials to build a nation where everybody is provided for, and has a sense of belonging. We can certainly do much better than we are doing now.

As a corporate executive, how would you describe the Nigerian business environment?

The Nigerian business environment is largely challenging, from the point of view of the obvious infrastructure deficit, and the ease of doing business challenges. Regardless, there are still opportunities for those who are creative, and possess the strength and resilience to pursue success.

What are your reflections about PR as a profession and a business in Nigeria – past, present and future?

PR as a profession can be exciting and fulfilling, but as business it is quite tasking. Between struggling to win and keep accounts, managing the expectations of clients, running the business and keeping it afloat, a PR business leader like me has his job pretty well cut out. But then, it also has its rewards, and frankly I am not complaining. I remain confident of a bright future for the business, and I will continue to give it my best for as long as I can.

How has your company fared in the Nigerian business environment?

Well, it has been a roller-coaster of a ride these past 17 years. We've had our fair share of highs and lows, but aggregately we have made progress. The Medicraft vision remains clear and unassailable, and we continue to pursue it with faith and commitment.

What are its projections into the future?

The future is bright and we are very hopeful that Medicraft Associates will continue to grow and ultimately take its place as the undisputed leading PR consultancy firm in Nigeria.

Any words for the nation on this occasion of it Diamond Jubilee?

I have a message of hope. As a country, we certainly could have done much better than we have in the past 60 years, post-independence, but then, the task of nation-building is perennially Work In Progress. We all have to keep working at it. Nigeria is too endowed and important to be allowed to fail. ■

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Tell a good story once
and you're a successful
storyteller...

**Tell it for so
long and you
become a
success
story.**

For nearly two decades, we have grown so
good at telling our clients' stories that we
have earned their trust and confidence as
our biggest assets

...because we know our craft!

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John Ugbe: Brand Architect as an Administrator



“Our business in life is not to get ahead of others but to get ahead of ourselves-to break our own records, to outstrip our yesterdays by our today, to do our work with more force than ever before”

STEWART B. JOHNSON

The renowned American actor and comedian, Stewart B. Johnson’s legendary quote above will remain ever-green. Reason? The quote which was made decades ago at the peak of the great actor’s career trajectory has a direct resonance and

similitude to Nigeria’s own John Ugbe as a professional and manager with class and distinction. Suave, humble and ebullient, the debonair first Nigerian serving Managing Director of Multichoice Nigeria is a study in astute management of men and resources.

His gentle and cool mien at the helm of the premier pay entertainment company is

a great inspiration to the stakeholders of the Multichoice Group.

His appointment which was neither coincidental nor an happenstance is a clear testimony to John Ugbe’s business ingenuity, managerial astuteness and ability to steer the company on the path of profitability and progress.

As the saying goes, “his appointment

is a case of round peg in a round hole". His achievements in the last three years bear eloquent testimony to his industry and impeccable leadership style.

Ugbe joined the MultiChoice Group in 1998 as a help desk analyst. Within 12 years of his joining the company, he had demonstrated his astuteness as a manager and his irrevocable commitment to personal and corporate growth. He was named Chief Executive Officer of the company on Friday, October 25, 2018, after serving as Managing Director for seven years.

Ugbe used his innovativeness to bring positive and profitable changes into the business operations of the premier pay entertainment company.

The Electrical and Electronics Engineering (Electronics and Computer Engineering Technology) graduate from the Federal University of Technology (FUTO) in Owerri, South-Eastern Nigeria, has spent the past 25 years empowering women and youth, giving minorities a voice, leading pan-African innovation, and working with internal and external teams to build one of Africa's most transformational media, entertainment and technology organizations. He also has a Master's in Business Administration, from the University of Liverpool. He is a fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Nigerian Institute of Brand Management, as well as a member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, the Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria and Nigerian Institute of Management.

Under his watch, MultiChoice rolled out owned channels in three local Nigerian languages, introduced a low-end mass focused digital terrestrial pay TV, known as Gotv which supports Nollywood, the country's film industry with annual film budgets of up to \$35M, a multi-layered talent academy, and a pan-African, Oscar-styled viewers' choice honours event – Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA). A well-praised initiative called 'Sabi Men', has seen over 10,000 youth recruited and taken off the streets, in a country where over 33% of the youth

population are unemployed.

Ugbe is exceptional in the field because of his multi-dimensional ability of spotting opportunities in the most unlikely of situations. His contributions to the growth of MultiChoice in particular, and the continent in general, continue to attract commendation in form of awards, recognitions, fellowships, and prizes.

Mr. Ugbe is the recipient of about a dozen awards and commendations personally, and under his leadership, the organisation has bagged more than 20 awards for various initiatives which include but are not limited to: Marketing World Award – Best Company in Customer Care Marketing World Award – Pay TV Brand of the Year; Brand Health – Most Trusted Pay TV Brand; Brand Journalists Association of Nigeria (BJAN) – Most Impressive Customer Service Pay TV Brand; Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Award for Excellence in Pay TV Services; Rising Global Sports Foundation Award of Excellence in Recognition of its Contribution to Sports Development in Nigeria, SERAs Award (CSR) – Most Improved Company; and MARKETING EDGE Award – Innovative Terrestrial PayTV Service of the year (GOtv)

Based on his outstanding contributions to the media, technology, and entertainment industry in Nigeria and his strong knowledge and distinguished expertise in the industry, Mr. John Ugbe is a well sought-after speaker, and advisor. He has honoured over 10 engagements in the past year alone, including the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria Women Conference, the Nigerian Entertainment Conference, Ogilvy's Lagos Business Cocktail, BrandPower – Golden Icons Awards, from which he received an award for Youth Empowerment and was named Thought Leader par excellence, joining the club of respected African leaders and captains of industry to be so decorated. In 2014, he was a delegate to the Nigeria Economic Summit.

He also has the honour of chairing and advising several committees in both public and private sectors of Nigeria and in other parts of the world, where he is regarded as a keen thought leader especially in the area of digitalization, local content, corporate governance, technology-as-a-solution, youth and women empowerment, and entrepreneurship.

Ugbe has built up proven expertise in raising awareness and the savings culture of minorities and underserved markets with a view to meeting longer term goals. He has cut across cultures, tribes, politics, and generations and made it known to many Africans and beyond that we need to act as one race or tribe in order to succeed.

MultiChoice Nigeria, which Ugbe leads launched the first digital satellite broadcasting service on November 5, 1993, and has, since then, been offering premium entertainment services consisting general entertainment, news, information, sports and education channels through DStv and GOtv.

Through these channels, subscribers are exposed to the exciting world of multichannel television, with a collection of over one hundred and forty (140) of the best international and local television and audio channels showcased with the best possible picture and sound quality.

The company has made significant investments towards the growth of the Nigerian economy to the tune of N55 billion (nearly \$350 million) through investment in the production and procurement of television content (N32.4bn), technology (N21bn) and people development (N1.7bn).

MultiChoice has also invested over N9 billion (\$58 million in outside broadcast (OB) vans and commissioned Africa's first high definition (HD) studio, training, production and broadcasting coverage. This amount excludes the over N70 million (\$450,000 spent on staff and value chain development and training and approximately N150 million (\$1 million) is also invested on training in television production skills. With these figures, it is estimated that since its inception in 1993, Multichoice has invested over N140 billion in Nigeria's economy ■

Chiedu Ugbo:

An Administrator with the Midas touch



"He is the best leader who most fully understands the nature of things, so that his plans are not doomed to ultimate failure; who possesses an active, far-ranging imagination which can see many possibilities; who has a sense of values, so that among possibilities he is able to choose the most excellent; who has a sense of order, to give form, design and program to the values and purposes he selects; who has practical sense and judgment, and so uses the most feasible means to accomplish his ends; and who has the energy and enthusiasm to carry his plans persistently toward fruition." ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Above quote by Arthur E. Morgan, an American Civil Engineer and administrator per excellence best illustrates the history and histrionics of Chiegbu Ugbo, the Managing Director of the Niger Delta Power Holding Company of Nigeria (NDPHC).

Having been in the saddle for the past four years, Ugbo was recently re-appointed for another 4-year term by President Muhammadu Buhari. His re-appointment is a testimony and reward for the remarkable

feats on a job many considered very tough. Though a trained lawyer who was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1991, Ugbo's incursion into the energy sector began in 1999 with a review of the Lagos Enron Independent Power Project (IPP), which later moved to AES, one of the world's leading power companies. His foray into the energy sector in the last two decades has seen him break new grounds and achieve remarkable feats.

In the last four years, Ugbo has brought a lot of finesse and zeal to bear at the NDPHC at a time the power sector is facing a lot of challenges. He dared where others trembled, made adventures where others pussyfooted. This has been the hallmark of his outstanding career, having worked in different challenging positions at different times of his career. His bravery and wits have brought outstanding progress and results everywhere he has worked. For someone who was used to the structured environment of the private sector, transitioning to the public service was, however, seamless for Ugbo. He has been able to navigate the landmines of public service with aplomb and élan. He always seems to have a magic wand that turns everything he touches to gold.

At the NPHDC, Chiedu, as he is simply called, became a shining light that has propelled phenomenal growth at the company. He has been the driver of the many reforms and projects going on at the power company. NDPHC under Ugbo has made invaluable marks in the generation, transmission and distribution value chains of the power sector.

In the generation value chain, NDPHC has overseen the completion of the following power plants: Olorunsogo 11 (750MW), Sapele 450MW, Geregu 11 (434MW), Omotosho 11 (450MW), Ihovbor 450MW, Alaoji 450MW, Calabar 563MW and Gbarain 225MW.

In the transmission value chain, projects like Otta 132/33kV substation expansion project; Otta-Papalantonew 132kV DC line construction project, Papalanto 132/33kV substation expansion project, Papalanto-Old Abeokuta New 132kV DC line Construction Project, Old Abeokuta 132/33kV Substation Expansion Project, Old Abeokuta-New Abeokuta 132kV DC Line Construction project; New Abeokuta 132/33kV Substation Construction Project; 330/132KV 1X150MVA Transformer Substation at Ihiala, including Turn-In-Turn-Out of the existing Alaoji-Onitsha 330kV Single Circuit line at Ihiala, are either on-going or completed. The NDPHC has also completed 2,194km of 330KV transmission lines and 809km of 132KV transmission lines; an increase of 46 per cent and 13 per cent over the pre-NIPP status of grid infrastructure.

The debonair chief executive's tenure has also witnessed the activation of many National Integrated Power Projects (NIPP) like the acquisition of gas assets. Some of NDPHC's gas stations are located in Calabar, Benin, Alaoji and Egbema.

Ugbo is a legal practitioner and 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. His specialties include Electric Power and Gas, Infrastructure, M&A, Privatisation, Public-Private Partnerships.

Prior to his appointment, he was the senior special Assistant to the president on Power Privatisation in the office of the Vice President. He was also the Acting Head of the Advisory Power team in the Vice President's office. He is an electric energy law specialist with over 28 years post call-to-bar experience. He has worked on the electricity industry reform, power project documentation and privatization. He served as an embedded legal consultant to the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) where he assisted actively in electric power reforms and negotiating and concluding several successful privatization

Jordi Bel:

Consolidating a legacy of market leadership at NBL

transactions.

He also acted as a counsel in the transaction advisory team to BPE where he actively participated and coordinated the legal work stream for the privatization of 20 successor electricity companies created out of the erstwhile utility in Power Holding Company of Nigeria Limited (PHCN). He was also involved in the corporate restructuring of the electric power plants and assets by the company.

Prior to his stint at the presidency, he was engaged under the USAID Power Africa Transaction and Reform Program (PATRP) as an embedded adviser to the Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading Plc (NBET), providing legal support on electric power agreements for different fuel sources and the related credit support documentation

Before then, he was a partner at the law firm of Benchmac & Ince, providing legal advice on Electric Power and Infrastructure Development. He also worked as a senior associate and Head of Commercial Law group at the law firm of George Ikolie & Okagbue.

This outstanding executive holds a Bachelor's degree (L.L.B) and a Masters of Law (LLM) both from the University of Lagos. He also holds a Diploma in International Law Practice from the College of Law of England and Wales; a Certificate in Electricity Industry and Restructuring from the Canadian Energy Research Institute, Calgary, Canada. He also has a professional certification as a certified regulation Specialist, from the Institute for Public-Private Partnerships, Washington, D.C, U.S.A..

Ugbo is happily married with children ■



Jordi Borrut Bel is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Breweries Plc, a Heineken Subsidiary in Nigeria.

Jordi has over 20 years' experience in business and sales, and he has spent his entire career at Heineken. He joined the Heineken N.V. group in 1997 as Sales Representative at Heineken Spain.

From 1999 to 2006, Jordi held various commercial positions at Heineken. Also before then, he held the position of Manager-Project Distribution at Heineken Slovakia, Brand Manager at Heineken France SAS and Director-Sales & Distribution at Heineken España SA.

With his appointment which took effect on January 22, 2018, Jordi succeeded Johan Doyer who had served as Managing Director/CEO on an interim basis since June 16, 2017.

After joining HEINEKEN Spain in 1997, Jordi subsequently held increasingly senior management positions in different

countries, first as Distribution Project Manager in Slovakia, Brand Manager in France and Trade Marketing Manager at the Head Office in The Netherlands. In 2006, he returned to HEINEKEN Spain where he evolved in the organisation and eventually became the On Premise and Distribution Director and a member of the Management Team.

Jordi was appointed the Managing Director of Brarudi S.A. in 2015 and had successfully led the company through a very turbulent period, strengthening the company's route-to-market and launching successful innovations.

Since he assumed office at NB Plc, Jordi has maintained his industry track record and broad experience by consistently driving Nigerian Breweries on the path of success and consolidating its leadership position in the Nigerian market.

Jordi is passionate about human capital development and has participated in many conferences focused on improving human capacity in Africa. ■

SEGUN AKANDE: Helping Businesses to digitalize their operations

Communication Infrastructure, Access Control, ERP System Implementation, 3PL Warehouse & Inventory Management System, VOIP Integrated Solutions, Smart City Innovation/e-Governance Consulting & Training, Disaster Recovery Solutions,, e-Commerce and e-Business Solutions Development, DNS and Hosting Services, Supply and installation of IT devices, Portal Development, Customization & Implementation e.g. MS SharePoint, and other internet based solutions.

With a mission to "Consistently delivering quality information technology and innovative service for people and communities"; and a vision of "Becoming Africa most Successful IT firm", the company has on its clientele, numerous SMEs as customers whose different business ideas have been helped (by the company) in Nigeria, UK and United States of America through their services and offerings.

An IT consultant cum entrepreneur with over 15 years' experience, Mr. Segun Akande is the CEO of Xown Solutions Ltd, an IT and Digital Consulting firm that helps various clients from different sectors to digitalize their business operations.

He has competence in business growth management, digital innovations, technology, management, leadership, IT security and business mentoring. He has been training people for growth in career and business since 2006.

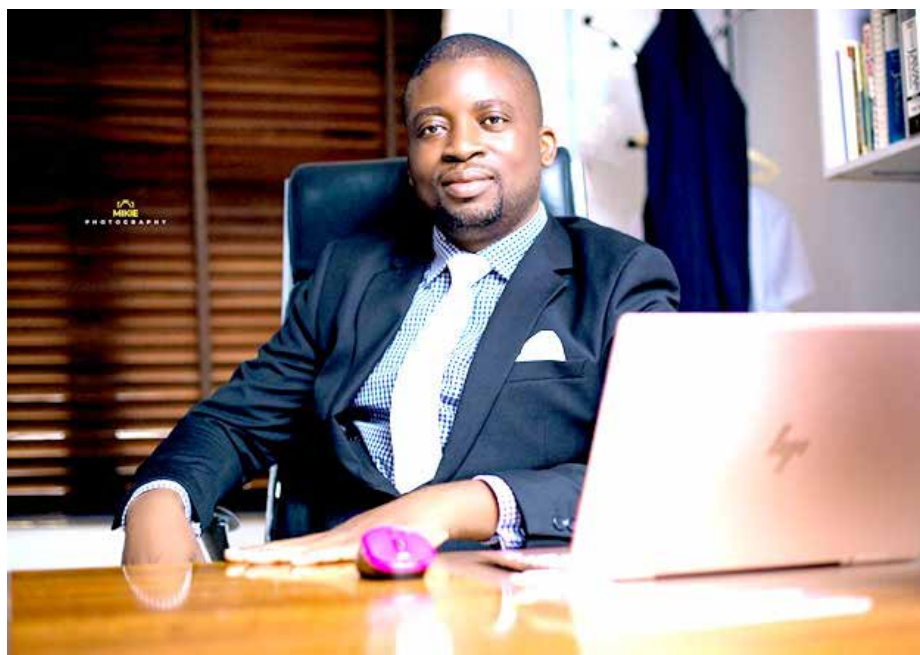
He teaches about Personal and Professional Development, Wealth Creation, Digital Innovations & Technology, Startup and Business Success, Power of Innovations, 10x Technology & Improvement, Personal & Business Goal Setting, and so on. His exciting talks is yielding immediate change and long-term results.

Segun is presently building a group of mentees popular known as Care4Change where he educates, one-on-one or as a group, young and talented individuals/ members about wealth education, startup, business success, etc.

This IT egghead started his career as a web developer in an IT firm. He also worked at Oceanic Bank now EcoBank as Electronic Fund Transfer Developer where he was part of a team that implemented the first set of Internet Banking and other internet-based platforms for customers.

Thereafter, he worked briefly at Dangote Group as the Team Lead Digital Communication after which he worked as Digital Consultant in UK for a couple of years before returning to Nigeria to start Xown Solutions Ltd in 2014.

With a background in Computer Science from Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, Nigeria, where he graduated with the



best result from his department, he holds an M.Sc. Degree from Birmingham City University UK where he studied Enterprise Management System. He has also been with Startup School, a division of Y Combinator, US where he was trained on making startup businesses very viable to generate public wealth.

Segun also attended University of Germany for SAP TERP 10 certification and he is SAP TERP 10 certified.

He is a full member of British Computer Society.

Founded in 2014, Xown Solutions Limited is an IT and Digital Consulting Firm with specialization in Digital Consulting, , IT & System Security, Website & Web Application Development , Mobile Application Development, Software Development, Hardware Solutions, Data

Xown Solutions Limited has Domain Expertise in IOT, Smart City Innovation, System Integration, Web and Mobile Application Development, Software Development, Cloud Computing, and Endpoint Security Solutions; while the industries it serves include Agriculture, E-commerce, Real Estate, NGOs, Travels and Hospitality, Education, Healthcare, Logistics, Digital Industry, Manufacturing and Financial Institutions.

And for a strong technology foundation, the company is in active partnership with active partnership with global players/OEM in IT industry. These include but are not limited to Microsoft, Kaspersky, Sophos, SAP, Vision Solutions, Sophos and Whux. ■



BOLA ATTA

Bola Atta was nominated as the Best Marketing professional in West Africa in 2017. She was also on the list of the 40 top Nigerians under 40 in 2008 and celebrated as one of the 100 most influential women in Nigeria in March 2015. A graduate of Economics with an M.B.A majoring in Marketing, she has almost 30 years of experience in diverse fields ranging from Banking, Business, Communications, Publishing, Entertainment and the Media. Approximately 20 out of her experience have been in high level management and entrepreneurship, enabling her gain advanced knowledge in each of these varied fields of work. She has worked with government agencies both in Nigeria and South Africa using her expertise in public relations and increasing her wide network within Africa. She made a mark in the Media industry on the African continent as one of the most sought after editors in West Africa. She was featured on CNN's Market Place Africa in March 2010 in a segment on African Fashion. She was Executive Producer for Africa's Next Top Model

In 2001, Atta proposed to the Board of M-Net (Electronic Media Network), that a channel be dedicated solely to the broadcast of African movies - specifically Nollywood movies. She worked on the concept, development and programming of this channel which she successfully launched in 2003. Today, The Africa Magic channel is the most watched

channel on the African continent. Atta moved on in the Naspers group to become the editor of True Love West Africa magazine. In 2005, Bola became the first Nigerian director of one of the largest publishing conglomerates in Africa. She was appointed to the board of Media24 Nigeria, an affiliate of Media24.

In 2003, she was invited by the African Leadership institute in partnership with the UNDP to work on a panel for the development of scenarios for South Africa in 2020. This week long seminar brought together young leaders from all parts of Africa to join heads in discussing the future not only of South Africa, but of the entire continent. It has now evolved into the Bishop Tutu Fellows for young African Leaders.

She founded the Life Stream Charity in order to assist under-privileged children with heart problems. Over 100 children were sent to Israel from Nigeria for corrective heart surgery by the Life Stream Charity between 1997 and 2003. Atta is currently the CEO of UBA Foundation which focuses on Education, Economic Empowerment and the Environment, bettering the lives of people across the African continent.

Bola Atta is presently the Group Director for Corporate communications for UBA (the United Bank for Africa). She is also the Executive Producer of REDTV. ■



I AM, HOPEFULLY, BUILDING AN AGENCY THAT WILL OUTLIVE ME

– Tolulope A. Medebem

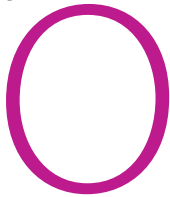
MRS. TOLULOPE MEDEBEM IS THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ASTER INTEGRATED MARKETING LIMITED (AIML), A LAGOS BASED FULL-SERVICE EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING AND EVENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY THAT IS REPUTED FOR ITS DEDICATION TO PROVIDING ITS CLIENTS WITH RESULTS-ORIENTED EXPERIENTIAL EXPERIENCES AND TOTAL MARKETING SUPPORT.

IN ITS TWO YEARS OF EXISTENCE, AIML, HAS DEMONSTRATED AN EXEMPLARY CAPACITY FOR

FOSTERING REAL CONNECTION BETWEEN BRANDS (COMPANIES) AND THEIR CONSUMERS/CUSTOMERS THROUGH THE ACTIVATION OF EMOTIVE, EXPERIENTIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORMS THAT GIVE THE RIGHT CONSUMER EXPERIENCE AT ALL TIMES.

AS A VIBRANT, RECORD BREAKING AND PACE-SETTING YOUNG CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SHE SPOKE WITH MARKETING EDGE'S **KINGSLEY OWOWO** AND **MOJISOLA OLUWA-MATESUN**. EXCERPTS:

How would you assess the experiential marketing business in this year that has been defined, to a large extent, by the coronavirus pandemic?



ur industry being an engaging one (interaction) has stopped due to the advent of COVID-19 and its attendant protocols, especially social distancing.

Obviously, every industry in Africa and the world at large has been hugely impacted by the pandemic.

I have spoken to some of my clients; and my colleagues in the industry can attest to this: what the clients want now is how they can leverage best on digital. Recently, we received a client's brief and all they wanted was how much we could showcase their brand digitally.

Thinking of all that, one would say Yes, it has greatly impacted the experiential Industry but, COVID or not, the fact remains that we have to survive because we have bills to pay - salaries and other expenses as things are generally now expensive. Unfortunately, experiential marketing is a customer-facing and customer-engaging industry; so, it (COVID-19) has really affected the industry.

On the other hand, we are also collaborating with some of our friends in the industry for partnerships e.g. someone has a virtual studio (this is one of the things we are 'selling' now) and so on.

As the country's economy continues to open up, we believe there would be more opportunities for improvement in the experiential industry.

How has experiential marketing industry fared, generally?

Last year, at the EXMAN summit, one of the speakers said that it is imperative for experiential marketers to unlearn old ways and acquire new skills because the economic realities require new look and practically different approaches. If this was said last year based on the realities in the Nigerian economy as at 2019, you can then imagine how the Integrated Marketing communications (IMC) industry would be faring now, amid COVID-19.

The challenge for us, right now, is the need to know how brands are still connecting, and if we have to survive, we need to think of ways for brands to connect. The bottom line is for us to change our mindset and try to reach out through different means.

How has Aster Integrated Marketing Limited coped?

We started easing lockdown long after the 4th of May 2020 timing (as dictated by the government); and one of the things we did for our staff was to ensure they weren't coming to work via public transport; this was

to keep our inner community safe, while also maintaining social distancing at work.

On the job side (our clients), we started speaking to our clients because they were mainly impacted; and the fact remains that once clients are impacted, we are also greatly impacted.

Recently, someone asked what our digital footprint is like and honestly this got me thinking. We are currently working on that just to ensure that we are in the face of our clients even if that is the only thing we have to do for now.

Generally speaking, Aster IML has been managing; at least we are paying our staff's salaries and we are hopefully in the face of our clients, giving them reasons to feel our presence.

Two years at the helms of Aster Integrated Marketing Limited, how has the journey been so far?

Like I do say, happiness is a choice; and it is a choice that I have personally made. It has not been easy; but it has been fun. I had run a partnership for 10years before I decided to start this; Two years down the line at Aster hasn't been very easy but then again, running a business in Nigeria is not easy. BUT, I look forward to another 10years, this train will keep moving forward and hopefully, in the right direction.

What is the competitive edge of Aster IML?

As agencies we all have our strengths and weaknesses. One of the things I said earlier on, that has worked for Aster is that we partner with most of our clients. We don't work like contract jobs, even though we are not Red Cross, it is important that our clients see us as partners, through our own expertise and competences. We also want to build a relationship that is not about how they want things to happen but how we both make things happen, and by this, I mean teamwork. The idea is to ensure we remain in the minds of our clients.

What are the challenges you have faced in the course of running this agency?

While speaking to one of my friends in the marketing industry last week, he said the reason he never got into the experiential marketing industry was because most people claim to be into experiential marketing because they know one or two persons and when they get the job and run into trouble, they begin to look for a professional to help them see it through. This essentially speaks to the low entry barrier which is one of the challenges we have been facing over the years.

That, however, is why I am thankful for the Experiential Marketing Association of Nigeria (EXMAN), the umbrella body for our sector.

We are into our 4th or 5th year and one of

the major things we stand for is self-policing of the industry. I am also excited with the appointment of a new helmsman at APCON with the prospect of reconstituting its Council becoming brighter at this time. As you know, APCON is one of the major stakeholders we have been working hand in hand with before now and we hope with time EXMAN would also become a very strong sectorial umbrella body.

On the other hand, we have also been facing challenges in financing, whereby our clients have turned us into banks, where we have to wait for x, y, z period of time before we get paid for our services. But, we are coping with all the challenges and are striving to survive.

The IMC industry was for many years, male dominated. Some women, like you, have, however, broken the glass ceiling. How did you do it?

When I started this job, nobody gave me a chance! Now, the truth is that nobody cares whether you are male or female; what greater time is open for one to break the glass ceiling? For me, it's all about equity. Everyone just has to work hard and pray to succeed. So, the industry should be about equity and not about gender equality. As some point, I used to be scared of challenges; but now, I see no reason why I should be scared of facing them. Challenges should be an avenue for the individual to grow and become better because you have to be focused on getting to your destination. As such, you need to be innovative and run with your vision, thereby doing same thing BUT in a different way.

What are your projections into the future of the agency?

Like I said earlier on, it's been two years at Aster, and I am looking at 10years and X more number of years. More than that, I actually want to run an agency that would outlive me, and I am looking forward to that. For me, I want to build an agency that would be way beyond me.

Teamwork is key; I tell my team when we fail, we fail together, when we win, we win together. I want to run a company that would outlive me; and I want to leave a legacy footprint for others to follow.

Nigeria is 60 years old as a nation, what do you wish for the country?

I love Nigeria and loving Nigeria begins with you (me); Truth, change starts with you. I wish Nigeria the very best; and I believe that every Nigerian citizen has a role to play in making Nigeria a great nation. We all are fond of saying or talking about what the government is doing or not doing to make Nigeria a better place, but the fact remains that the question should be, what are you (we) doing to make Nigeria a better place? It starts with you and I. Finally, I believe my wish is that, hopefully, we all are able to work on leaving a legacy of continued National greatness for coming generations. ■

AT QVT MEDIA, WE HAVE OUR EYES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

– BRENDA NWAGWU



MRS. BRENDA O. NWAGWU IS THE PRINCIPAL COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT/CEO OF QVT MEDIA LIMITED, A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY, MEDIA PLANNING, BUYING AND SPONSORSHIP MANAGEMENT COMPANY FOUNDED IN 2012. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH MARKETING EDGE, SHE TOOK A LOOK AT THE IMC INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA, ESPECIALLY YEAR (2020) THAT HAS BEEN LARGELY DEFINED BY THE CORONAVIRUS GLOBAL PANDEMIC.

How would you assess the integrated marketing communications business in this year that has been defined, to a large extent, by the coronavirus pandemic?

This year, though challenging, has been an invaluable learning opportunity for the industry. The situation has driven innovation in the use and deployment of communication tools and messaging, as brands battle for the minds and attention of the consumer. It has also given rise to a greater need to balance efficiency and effectiveness, with brand owners having to further justify their communication budgets, with verifiable return on investment statistics. In effect, the industry budget has shrunk considerably and impacted very negatively on many agencies' capacity to survive the pandemic and come out at the other end unscathed.

Nevertheless, I believe that as practitioners, we are learning to broaden our perspective and expertise and minimize waste,

while the digital segment has grown exponentially in use case and spend, leading to more seamlessly integrated campaigns that allocate clearly defined roles to each media class. We are actively discovering new ways of doing things and getting better at telling brand stories that resonate with our audience.

The separate parts of campaigns are coming together as fully integrated communications to deliver a greater whole than the sum of the parts; with concise, animated and consumer insight driven messaging; micro targeting to determine the best place, position and timing for delivery of these messages to reach those most interested and most likely to respond; meaningful activations and engagements that will move the consumer on their journey through the stages of the marketing funnel.

How has QVT Media coped?

That is the million-dollar question; but we are thankful to still be standing. This was achieved with the cooperation of a cohesive and united team, that pulled together to make sacrifices during this

time, as well as our loyal and supportive clients who though they suspended their campaigns during the pandemic have kept faith with us and are now activating their plans. I would say ultimately, we are here in good health and working, by the special grace of God.

How is QVT Media positioned?

QVT Media is a data driven, client focused, innovative and nimble agency, with a passion to deliver unparalleled value to the clients we represent. We strive to remain true to the brand vision and values with the ultimate goal in mind.

We believe in working with, and being led by the numbers, with a serving of common sense, plus a ship load of creativity.

The stats tell the story. They show us how consumers and customers perceive and behave towards the brand and towards different media classes and vehicles. They provide the insight we require to make informed decisions about “how”, “when”, “where” and “what” we need to communicate to our audience. Through the data all stakeholders take their cues, working in sync to deliver the best total experience; the content/communication creators respond with messages to address “the what” with the best fit for “the how”, “where” and “when” of the media; the activation partners design and implement effective engagements that will resonate with the “how”, “where” and “when” as well as complement the message and media, while media specialists deploy to reach the critical mass of the audience in “the way”, “where” and “when” they will be most receptive to the message.

Creativity on the other hand is often restricted to the visual arts and the spoken or written word, but it is all encompassing in reality. It is the art of problem solving by making the most unlikely connections between unrelated phenomena. As a business, we exist to provide solutions to our clients marketing challenges. We believe in the power of creativity and ingenuity, and we leverage on this to create the solutions that result in the achievement of marketing and business goals.

Common sense is the final element which brings all strategies and tactics into context of our local realities and allows us test the efficiency of a course of action in order to select the way that we should go.

What is its competitive edge?

Our people and processes are our edge. Clients simply expect us to deliver on agreed objectives and we work hard to do that, in addition to maintaining the excellent relationships we have cultivated

over time.

We believe in lifelong learning and continuous improvement. Our investment in building the capacity of our people is consistent and a top priority.

Our reliance on research to guide our strategy decisions is also peculiar to few in our industry. We seek to make informed decisions garnered from consumer insights and propose solutions that are backed with relevant data.

What major achievements have hallmarked the agency's evolution, to date?

We have built digital communication capacity over the past year which has resulted in the attraction and retention of a new segment of discerning multinational clients. We are also building capacity within the agency to service SME's in order to meet their peculiar needs and achieve scale.

The SME space, in particular, has witnessed exponential growth and attracted major investments in recent years. What we find though, is that most entrepreneurs work with the misconception that “if we build it, then it will come” We are working with companies in this sector to educate and demonstrate the power of effective and efficient marketing to achieve scale and deliver set ROI.

What are the major challenges you have faced in the course of running this agency?

Our major challenges have centered around discovering and retaining the best talents, as well as accessing competitively priced funding to undertake big budget campaigns that require extended credit

terms. These are ongoing challenges; but as we grow and expand our circle of influence, we look towards overcoming them.

The IMC industry was, for many years, male dominated. Some women, like you have broken the glass ceiling. How did you do it?

Creating my own space and honing my skills and expertise, have helped to remain in the game and to thrive. I will say that staying power and consistency are very important elements for success for women and anyone in general and this earns you the respect and accords one a place at the table and prepares the stage for those to come after us.

My finance background has also been a plus, as the business must run to cover its costs and make a profit. Cash is king and managing your cashflow is critical to building a going concern. These principles I apply daily in my dealings and they keep us afloat in tough times, and allow us grow in better climes.

What are your projections into the future of the agency?

Our vision is to build an agency that can grow and operate across the African continent, as a one stop shop for communication services, through our consortium partners and collaborators.

The major focus will be to grow with our clients who will be primarily African companies, building brands and solutions for the continent and beyond. While working with our partners in the Creative, PR and Activation fields to deliver best in class marketing campaigns that will achieve and exceed client expectations. ■





TEMITOPE JEMERIGBE: Game Changer at DKK

In her career trajectory, she has evolved into a titanic Amazon on the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications landscape. With well over 20 years' experience from various top agencies in Nigeria, including STB McCann, ZK Advertising, Prima Garnet Africa, and Dencil Limited, she is, today, an icon in her own right with indelible footprints on the sand of time; Mrs. Temitope Jemerigbe, the Chief Executive Officer of DKK Nigeria, one of the leading, full-fledged Integrated Marketing Communication agencies in the country.

Aside her sterling records in all the agencies she ever worked with, Jemerigbe's record at DKK has been amazing.

It is on record that when multiple awards winning Temitope Jemerigbe assumed the position of Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer at DKK in 2012, the agency, which had been founded in 1997, was barely struggling to stay afloat, having been hit by hard times.

The story, however, changed when the

game changing helmswoman got in the saddle, charged with the daunting tasking of resuscitating the agency, where she is now a partner.

This cerebral Amazon began the deliberate process of rebirth, by remodeling the agency's business and charting a new course for its future.

In this regard, the turnaround strategist led her team to reposition DKK as the Mistress, a solutions provider that is always ready to bend over backwards for its clients.

Expatriating on this repositioning, the agency surmised that it had evolved into a dynamic 21st century marketing communications company that is driven by the 'Mistress concept' which is hinged on the triple qualities of speed, accountability and nimbleness.

While reminiscing on this, in an interview with a leading national daily, Jemerigbe said, "Today, we have grown from being an alternative agency to the preferred agency.

We remain the mistress, but now, in terms of mastery, we are more of an authority at what we do, rather than merely being an alternative agency. We are where we are today because we are nimble and quick and we remain a startup in our thinking. No client is ever too small to get 100% of our attention."

Continuing, she said, "By the way we get down to business, you'll want to do one of two things: keep us on the side to satisfy your special creative needs, or just go steady with us. Whatever you settle for, it's perfectly okay because we've got only one desire: to bend over backwards to satisfy our clients.

In another interview with this magazine, Jemerigbe enthused that her agency had also overhauled its human resources by leveraging the vibrancy and creativity of youths who are versatile in Information and Communication Technology, resulting in its enhanced online capabilities.

In her words, "When we realised that today's advertising world will depend on new

ways of thinking, new technology and the vibrancy of the youths, we do not have any other option than to explore internet. What happens is that we are living a new world for new things, there is new media, there is new way of thinking and the youthful way of doing things that we bring to bear cannot be overruled. In one word – evolution! It's either you evolve or wither away. It's that simple."



Said she, **We only changed the way we do things. One of the things I think we have done is that we created the unit that does advertising, we have the unit that does PR and we also do events and sponsorship. We have deliberately kept those competencies internally. They stand alone as business units within our structure and it's what has really worked for us. We've been able to make it a standing organisation now.**



One more factor that has helped and is helping DKK, under Jemerigbe and her team is the re-structuring of the agency. According her, the agency deliberately created three units, encompassing Advertising, Public Relations and experiential/events for efficient services.

It is thus not surprising that within a few years of her captainship of the agency, DKK got back on block, becoming a daring new kid, with huge appetite for success. With its comprehensive corporate re-engineering, the agency has successfully been proving its services to array of clients in the area of advertising, Content, sponsorship, Public Relations, Events and activation; and Digital marketing.

To her credit, this corporate re-engineering has been yielding results till date, with the winning of an array of juicy accounts including MTN (a past client that shook the PR industry, when DKK won the business),

Mastercard, MainOne, Alphamead, NLPC PFA, Roche, NBA, Mobihealth, MIPAD amongst others.

Also, under her watch, the agency expanded the boundaries of its business beyond the shores of Nigeria, by going into a joint venture with GEPetrol, the National Oil Company of Equatorial Guinea to manage a major project. This joint Venture, was a first of its kind in the industry and allowed DKK to open shop in Equatorial Guinea and enjoy exclusive access to GEPetrol's marketing business.

Mrs. Temitope Jemerigbe is an alumnus of Ogun State Polytechnic from where she obtained an HND in Mass Communication/ Media Studies; and the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom, where she bagged a Master's degree in International Management.

She is a member of several organizations and currently serves on the Board of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria

(AAAN), as well as the Chairman of the Committee of Women in Advertising.

Tope, as she is simply called, is also a motivational speaker and a strong believer in building the next generation of women. She is a member of WISCAR & a member of the board of trustees for The Light House Network both organizations focused on empowering women. She is also a board member of the Sickle Cell Advocacy and Management Initiative (SAMI), among others.

Notably, she does not believe in luck or chance, but in deliberate action and strategy to gain result. This, to a large extent, informs her personal philosophy; "to drive one's innate ability with focus, no destination is too far".

In her team at DKK are such respected professionals as Folabomi Salami, the Chief Operating Officer, and Dave Chukwuji, the Chief Creative Officer, among others. ■

ROSEMARY AKPO



Quintessential manager & marketer

Rosemary Akpo is a proficient Management and Marketing professional, consultant and coach. She is vastly experienced across a range of multinational organizations, such as EXP Marketing; Suntory Beverages & Foods; GlaxoSmithKline; Coca-Cola; British American Tobacco Company; and across various emerging markets in Africa and Middle East.

A motivated, high level achiever and leader with visible senior management accountabilities, she brings to organizations the ability to significantly increase growth, efficiencies, profit and shareholder value.

With 20+ years of continuous advancement and expertise in brand and trade marketing, sales and merchandising, she has proven herself to be a performance-driven, entrepreneurial marketer; a proactive self-starter with track record of initiative, personal responsibility, ownership of work and reputation for removing obstacles and making things happen. She is, at the same time, a great team player and strong believer in the role of leadership in mentoring and development of the next generation of leaders.

Rosemary is a highly analytical thinker with demonstrated ability to scrutinize technical and financial data, propose and execute out-of-the-box yet simple workable solutions to business challenges.

She is a strong leader who effectively motivates others, mentors, coaches and directs strategic corporate initiatives and ground-breaking decisions. She is creative, dependable and an enthusiastic change agent with proven track record in improving efficiencies, reducing costs and increasing revenues.

It is worth noting that in less than two years of working in the Experiential Marketing agencies space, Rosemary has led the transformation of the fortunes of EXP Marketing,

where she holds the position of Managing Director for the group.

She transitioned into this position after nearly 18 years of working in FMCG sector across companies like Suntory Beverages & Foods; GlaxoSmithKline; Coca-Cola; British American Tobacco and across various emerging markets in Africa.

She has made the business far more attractive to marketers, having been one herself. Her understanding of the peculiar challenges faced by marketing people across the continent has led to several out-of-the-box initiatives and solutions developed and executed to address challenges that businesses face.

Before joining EXP Marketing group which includes GAP (Group Africa Production), Rosemary was Marketing Director Suntory Beverage & Foods.

Prior to this, she held a similar position at GlaxoSmithKline. Over there, she and her team of A-star marketers led to the growth of Lucozade and Ribena brands through innovative, first ever ideas such as PET UTC promo, magic price point initiatives and many others.

She began her marketing career at British America Tobacco where she held such positions as Consumer and Trade Marketing Executive; Brand Manager; Channel Representative. From there, she moved to Coca-Cola Nigeria, where she developed and led the execution of the first ever soft drinks UTC promotion based on the SMS platform with instant airtime as prizes. This promotion led to a reversal in the four-year volume decline of the brand.

Rosemary is passionate about people, hence her dogged commitment to developing the next level of leadership as well as growing the influence of the experiential marketing sector as a solution provider in Nigeria.

Her number two passion point is business which explains her very strong interest in developing and executing transformational ideas to solve business challenges.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Physics and Electronics from the University of Cross River, Calabar and a Post Graduate Diploma from Federal University of Technology, Owerri Nigeria.

A Fellow of the Institute of Management Specialists (FIMS), a membership grade reserved for accomplished professionals and a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants (FIMC), Rosemary Akpo was recently appointed the Publicity Secretary of the Experiential Marketing Agencies of Nigeria (EXMAN).

In 2018, she was awarded the "Outstanding Female Marketing Professional of the year in FMCG" by Women in Marketing & Communications (WIMCA). ■

EUNICE OLOHIRENUAN BRAIMAH – WELL ROUNDED, WELL-GROUNDED IMC AMAZON

A seasoned through the line expert, Eunice has close to 2 decades of experience in Integrated Marketing communications

cutting across Business growth and development, Experiential Marketing, Brand Management and Marketing, Behavioral Change Marketing, Trade Marketing, Event Management, Public Relations and Digital Marketing.

At the start of her career, Eunice had a stint working with the Print, Electronic Media and Creative (ATL) agencies.

She has always been passionate about growing brands and businesses and has consulted for brands across multi-sector industries: FMCG, automobile, pharmaceuticals, telecom, Fintech and NGOs. She has continued to deliver result oriented innovative solutions and Eunice has been part of the success stories of fortune 500 brands in the last couple of years.



She is a die-hard enthusiast, a go getter, highly energetic with exceptional strategic and implementation skills.

On her point of view on niche or specialized marketing, she believes in providing an end to end solution for businesses as this will help with a deeper insight and understanding of the strategic thrust of such businesses. She strongly believes in a holistic approach toward achieving excellent marketing results.

Having left EXP Marketing in 2018, she presently provides consultancy services in Integrated Marketing Communications. A Marketing Services Entrepreneur and Management advisor, She is the founder of Ideazqution Consulting, a company proffering through- the- line business solutions with focus on Experiential and Digital Marketing.

Eunice is passionate about mentoring and coaching and has been instrumental to training and leading effective and high performing Integrated Marketing and Communications teams who continue to deliver exceptional results for blue chip clients. ■



Funke Nwankwo

Professional par excellence

Funke Nwankwo is a seasoned professional with over 25 years' experience in Marketing Communications; Advertising, Media Management, Brand Strategy, Events and Public Relations.

Funke has spent most of her career years in some of the foremost Advertising Agencies in Nigeria but recently embraced the challenge of working in the public sector for a robust work experience. She is currently the Head, Communication & Public Relations at Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC) Ltd., where she brings to bear her experience in Strategic Communication & Brand Management on the overall brand image, positive outlook and reputation of the company.

Funke in her career journey, has also had a stint of running her own Marketing Communications business- Streamfield Consulting Ltd. which was focused mainly on Brand Management, Digital Marketing and Signage Communication.

With core competence in strategy and brands communications; having worked in leading Agencies such as Insight Communications, SO&U Saatchi & Saatchi, Wetherheads Advertising etc., Funke delivers an innovative approach to strategic brands management/Corporate Communications/PR and a

360-degree insight on all levels of communications efforts.

She holds a Masters degree in Industrial & Organisational Psychology from the University of Ibadan and has attended various trainings and relevant workshops both home and abroad. She has in view an Executive Master of Business Administration degree from the University of South Wales, UK.

She is a member of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN), Women in Management, Business & Public Service (WIMBIZ) & Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR). She has served on various committees; Vetting & Compliance for (APCON) and in various capacities as a member of the board of Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

Funke is passionate about impacting the lives of young people positively especially young girls by restoring lost family and societal values through mentoring programs, speeches at fora, motivational speaking / one-to-one interactions, etc. because the moral decadence among youths in our society is of great concern to her. She is very professional however loves to leave smiles on the faces of people that come in contact with her. ■

Cleanagent

Re-engineering laundry and dry-cleaning services in Nigeria

By KASIM BAKARE

Cleanagent is a global-oriented cleaning technologies provider with the mission of connecting individuals, households and businesses with affordable and quality laundry experts/dry cleaners using modern and friendly technologies. The Cleanagent business was recently launched in Lagos

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 a marketplace for laundry and dry-cleaning services. Its unique product helps to connect the laundry and dry-cleaning service providers and service users with the aid of mobile and web applications. Cleanagent 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.

Cleanagent provides 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.

Its unique selling points for service users include providing quality and affordable laundry/dry-cleaning services for individuals and businesses alike. 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.

A unique proposition by Cleanagent is that laundry and dry-cleaning service providers retain their brand while on its network. This helps in creating more brand reach and awareness and thereby improving overall market positioning of our partners in the industry. Cleanagent offers a competitive commission model on all transactions that they get through with. This helps them do business leveraging on modern technologies with less investment.

As a responsible and responsive corporate organization, Cleanagent offers customers reduced time and money on

service consumption. The fast growing has also developed an ordering to delivery process in an automated manner. Cleanagent 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 has made it the toast of its customers.

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

For service providers, Cleanagent avows to access knowledge and resources on ethical and sustainable ways to do business.

feedback system for adequate customer feedback documentation and subsequent service quality/product improvement. For the Cleanagent brand, the disruption and innovation in the laundry business is for a long haul.

"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." Says the innovative brand. ■

CLOSING THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION GAP IN NIGERIA

By **RALPH TATHAGATA**

The financial industry is continually coming up with new ways to provide products and services to the global population, and the increasing use of financial technology or fintech has provided innovative tools to address the problem of inaccessibility to financial services.

Financial inclusion, also known as inclusive finance, refers to efforts to make financial products and services accessible and affordable to all individuals and businesses, regardless of their personal net worth or company size. So, inclusive finance is designed to remove the barriers that exclude people from participating in the financial sector and using these services to improve their lives.

According to World Bank report, financial inclusion facilitates day-to-day living, and helps families and businesses plan for everything from long-term goals to unexpected emergencies. The World Bank also recently estimated that about 1.7 billion adults worldwide still lack access to even a basic bank account.

Advancements in fintech, such as digital transactions, are making financial inclusion easier to achieve. Some fintech developments have been aiding the cause of inclusion in recent years, which include the growing use of cashless digital transactions and the rise of crowd-funding and peer-to-peer (P2P) or social lending. Specifically, P2P lending has proved particularly beneficial to people in emerging markets, who may be ineligible for loans from traditional financial institutions because they lack a financial history or credit record to assess their creditworthiness.

While these innovative services have brought more participants into the financial marketplace, there is still a significant portion of the world's population that lacks such access and remains, for example, either unbanked or under-banked.

Though financial inclusion may have become a general phenomenon, its nature, form and challenges differ among countries and as such cannot be addressed by a single product or "one size fits all" approach.

A few years ago, critical challenges of low financial literacy, inadequate infrastructural facilities as well as inadequate and inefficient technology-based facilities by financial institutions, had limited the achievement of significant expansion in financial inclusion level in Nigeria. At the moment, however, the principle of financial inclusion has assumed greater level of importance due to its fundamental role as a driver of economic growth.

In other words, access to financial services that are well suited for low-income earners promote enormous capital accumulation, credit creation and investment boom, and harnessing and accumulating these resources will provide a huge source of cheap long-term investable capital.

Financial inclusion is an enabler of economic growth and poverty reduction, especially in emerging markets. In Nigeria, a few banks have been at the vanguard of financial inclusion by establishing exceptional inclusive finance footprints. However, some geo-political zones are more at risk of financial exclusion due to some elements of tradition and behaviour.



Before now, research showed that over 70 million representing about 42% of the adult population in Nigeria were financially excluded. But the sustained financial inclusion drive by major financial institutions has heightened financial literacy intervention by helping to eliminate or at least reduce financial exclusion.

Financial inclusion is on the rise globally and has proven to be a vehicle for economic development. With 22 commercial banks and over 900 microfinance banks across Nigeria, financial services can be said to be readily available. An increased opportunity has equally been created by their financial inclusion initiatives in accessing financial services, especially in the nation's rural and semi-urban communities.

In 2012, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in collaboration with stakeholders, made a strategic move to address the financial inclusion gap in Nigeria. The efforts were aimed at reducing the exclusion rate of the adult population to 20% by 2020. The exclusion rate was 53% as of 2008, which later dropped by 46.3% in 2010, and dropped further by 10.2% to 36.8% in 2019.

Industry watchers believe the players in Nigeria are moving in the right direction to fulfill the financial inclusion objectives

as defined by the World Bank which is: "To facilitate access of individuals and businesses to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs – transactions, payments, savings, credit and insurance – delivered in a responsible and sustainable way."

Digital financial inclusion involves the deployment of the cost-saving digital means to reach currently financially excluded and underserved populations with a range of formal financial services suited to their needs that are responsibly delivered at a cost affordable to customers and sustainable for providers.

In Africa, digital financial inclusion varies by region and country with East Africa, especially Kenya, in the lead. Other regions on the continent are playing catch-up. In West Africa, Nigeria recently approved guidelines for payment service banks (PSBs) for the provision of mobile money-type services, whereby telecoms companies and other non-bank firms would be allowed to provide financial services along set parameters.

In Kenya, 83% of the population is now engaged in the formal financial system, up from 27% in 2006. Mobile money, financial innovation and supportive government

policies have been acclaimed for this remarkable success. The development of Kenya's pioneering M-Pesa mobile money service, launched in 2007 and a huge factor in this remarkable feat, illustrates the telecom led model adopted in Kenya.

In Nigeria, the government through CBN has taken a consistently strong leadership role in championing financial inclusion, setting regulations, and bringing parties together to forge a shared agenda which includes the harmonisation of 3 tiered Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements, creation of an environment conducive to serving groups that are most excluded, incentivizing the adoption of cashless payment channels and establishment of the Shared Agent Network Expansion Facility (SANEF).

Interestingly, FirstBank has been in the forefront of driving financial inclusion initiatives leveraging its Agent network as an effective means of reaching the last mile, transforming lives, and building an ecosystem of financially empowered community for economic growth. FirstGem, which is its bespoke solution, is a product that is ideal for all women aged 18 years and above, whether working professionals or entrepreneurs. It comes in two variants,

savings and current accounts. Firstmonie Wallet, a unique product of the bank designed to promote financial inclusion, is an electronic wallet that allows individuals the convenience of making and accepting payments electronically with their mobile numbers. The uniqueness of these products is that it saves travel time and is readily available to customers and agents in their locality, and majority of the services are provided by a member of their community—a Firstmonie Agent.

Meanwhile, the CBN does not allow for financial service inventions to be patented by law, and as such competitors replicate

meanwhile, deliver wide distribution networks, mobile network infrastructure, and an expansive customer base.

Olufemi Awoyemi, Founder/Chairman of Proshare, a niche financial information services provider, during an exclusive interview with *MARKETING EDGE* on financial inclusion in Nigeria, stated that the rise of fintech companies has contributed immensely to improving financial inclusion in the country. He noted that the rise in fintech intervention in the domestic financial payment system has kept mainstream banks and financial service sector regulators on their toes and led to a surge in various financial products and sandboxes as regulators attempt to tighten the laws and governance guidelines around new product and service offerings through digital mobile platforms.

Proshare has a mobile app and a portal named Proshare Markets and dedicated to news, data, analysis and research on financial markets. Since its establishment in 2006, the company remains one of the most credible and reliable digital financial information hubs in Nigeria. Pointing out the convergences and divergences among banks, insurance, telecom and fintech companies on financial inclusion, Mr Awoyemi opined that there will be more collaborations than conflicts, considering the rise of financial technology in the 21st century.

He remarked that whether the road to Nigeria's financial inclusion future will be smooth or bumpy will largely be determined by the regulatory environment present at that time in the future.

A research conducted by Solafunmi Oyeneye, Senior Channels Manager and Giuliana Diasis, Senior Director, Research & Insight at ViacomCBS Networks Africa (VCNA), revealed key drivers behind the shift to a more inclusive, collaborative decision-making in the finances of households. The research conducted on children aged 6 - 14 revealed that over 60% of Nigerian kids were aware of household budgets, and about 45% were aware of how much things cost.

The study indicates that 78% of Nigerian parents want to be best friends with their kids. The study also shows that out of 25 categories tested in Nigeria, most kids are involved in at least 14 out of these 25 categories, their greatest influence being over entertainment, food and groceries, restaurants, electronics, vacation and telecommunication. It further revealed parents are also likely to spend 60% more when their kids are involved in decision-making within the household, suggesting that though parents (mums) usually make the final purchase decisions within households, the role that children play in these decisions cannot be denied. The study concluded that these influential members of the home should be treated as important by brands in determining and communicating their messages to target families for financial inclusion.

During the early part of the Covid-19 lockdown, billions of people who live and work around the world changed the way they spend and use their money. The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced in early March 2020 that bank notes may be able to carry and spread the virus, with a Mastercard study showing that 79% of global consumers used contact-less payments for reasons of safety and hygiene. In other words, the pandemic compelled a shift away from cash towards digital channels and greater financial inclusion. In Nigeria, where an estimated 45 million adult population are unbanked, this represented a significant untapped opportunity both to boost GDP and to drive progress towards the country's development goals.

At the moment, the most noticeable economic and social benefits appear to be in digital payments and savings accounts globally. It is clear that a significant shift has been made towards a cashless society in Nigeria. After Kenya in East Africa, Nigeria is showing the way for other emerging economies in West Africa on how informal communities and markets can be incorporated into the financial sector; even as the country's economy struggles to contain the fall-out from the Covid-19 pandemic. ■

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Financial inclusion is on the rise globally and has proven to be a vehicle for economic development. With 22 commercial banks and over 900 microfinance banks across Nigeria, financial services can be said to be readily available. An increased opportunity has equally been created by their financial inclusion initiatives in accessing financial services, especially in the nation's rural and semi-urban communities.

without going through the same rigors and they are saved from expending as many resources, as they have learnt from our experiences.

A tremendous transformation is taking place in the financial services sector that requires banks and telecommunications companies to use Mobile Financial Services (MFS) in order to engage customers that are embedded in mobile and social ecosystems.

He posited that on one side, banks contribute an existing financial network, infrastructure, and strong brand recognition, while contending with regulatory compliance. Telecom operators,



HOW FIRSTBANK IS COMMITTED TO ACHIEVING THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION TARGET IN NIGERIA.

Nigeria's leading financial inclusion services provider, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, recently announced

that over 17 billion naira in loans have been disbursed to several individuals and customers across the country through its digital lending platform, FirstAdvance.

The lack of formal identification documents, poor financial literacy and remote access to financial services, has left many Nigerians unbanked. As a result, rural populations have resorted to local cooperatives for savings, loans, and grants.

Over the years, FirstBank has pushed for financial inclusion through the establishment of services like the FirstMonie Agent banking spread across over 98% of the country's 774 Local Government Areas nationwide, *894# USSD banking, FFirstGem, FirstMonie Wallet, ATMs, FirstMobile and Agent Credit amongst many others, which are highly considered enablers of economic growth and poverty reduction.

Coordinated efforts to address the financial inclusion gap in Nigeria can be traced back to the launch of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy by the Central Bank (in collaboration with stakeholders) in 2012; aimed at reducing the exclusion rate of the adult population to 20% by 2020. The deployment of initiatives in this regard – like microfinance banking, agent banking, tiered Know-Your-Customer (KYC) requirements and mobile money operations, Payment Service Banks, etc., has helped remove barriers that hitherto prevented adoption of formal financial

services and access. Prior to 2012, the exclusion rate was 53% (2008) and then dropped to 46.3% (2010). As of 2019, this dropped further by 10.2% to 36.8%.

The accessibility and affordability of financial services are critical to achieving financial inclusion objectives in an emerging market like Nigeria, putting into consideration that the financial inclusion matrix seeks to address the identified challenges and ensure easy and convenient banking solutions offerings to the unbanked, under-banked and even the banked population in Nigeria.

From an assessment standpoint, financial literacy level can be classified as low, medium, or high. However, in recent time, an average Nigerian can be calibrated as medium in terms of financial literacy. Research shows that before now, over 70 million representing about 42% of the adult population in Nigeria were financially excluded. This cuts across people with no formal education, graduates of higher education learning, skilled workers, low income earners and petty traders in the market and street corners.

Some geopolitical zones are seemingly in more disadvantages and at risk of financial exclusion due to some elements of tradition and behavior, occurring as a result of their lack of financial education, personal exclusion, different needs, and varying economic circumstances. The government's strategies for financial reform aided the achievement of a 3-tiered KYC requirement, incentivizing the adoption of cashless payment channels, an environment conducive to serving the excluded groups, and the establishment of the Shared Agent Network Expansion Facility (SANEF).

With 22 commercial banks and over 900 Microfinance Banks across the country, financial services can be said to be readily available. An increased opportunity has equally been created by the financial inclusion initiative in accessing financial services especially in rural and semi-urban communities leveraging the Agent Banking scheme. Also, given that customer needs are varied – based on gender, demography and other social factors, Financial Services Providers (FSP's) have become more deliberate in understanding what customers' want and how they want it so that this can be factored into features of the products/ services offered.

On the flip side, the government's strategy on financial inclusion also had its lows and failures in some remote areas which are devoid of electricity, internet, and worse plagued by insecurity, which as a result prompted several private businesses to shy away from practicing financial inclusion in remote areas.

Rural dwellers in the developing world face deep financial exclusion, because they have oral cultures, where financial behavior is shaped by oral institutions and incentives. Evidence suggests that cash is used primarily as a medium of exchange, but not as a store of value. Unschooled men and women engage differently with cash and in transactions involving cash and may have different abilities to recognise the value of cash. In this context, financial inclusion for women and men will need to be tempered by different approaches to increase understanding and utilisation.

Interestingly, FirstBank has been the innovator of several financial inclusion schemes and products. However, these products and services are being replicated by competitors and rebranded, whereas, at the initiation and ideation of these products and services a lot of the time, finances and technology are used to bring them to life. The CBN does not allow for financial service inventions to be patented by law, and as such competitors replicate without going through the same rigors and they are saved from expending as many resources, as they have learnt from FirstBank's experiences.

To achieve meaningful convergences and divergences in financial inclusion, a tremendous transformation has to take place in the financial services sector that will require banks and telecommunications companies to use Mobile Financial Services (MFS) in order to engage customers that are embedded in mobile and social ecosystems.

As it stands, banks contribute an existing financial network, infrastructure, and strong brand recognition, while contending with regulatory compliance. Telecom operators, meanwhile, deliver wide distribution networks, mobile network infrastructure, and an expansive customer base. Fintech innovations have the potential to deliver a wide range of benefits for insurance companies- in particular, efficiency improvements, cost reductions, improved risk assessment, superior customer experience and greater financial inclusion. However, some of these innovations could also have negative implications for consumers



FirstBank
Since 1894

and the financial stability of insurance markets.

To identify the potential impact of these innovations, these three scenarios should be considered to assess the extent to which new technology firms could disrupt the insurance business model. Firstly, incumbent insurers successfully maintain their customer relationships and leverage technology firms to their own advantage. Secondly, the insurance value chain becomes fragmented as new technology-enabled players enter the market, the traditional customer relationship weakens and thirdly, incumbent and traditional insurers are completely overtaken by big tech companies.

To demonstrate its leadership position in financial inclusion, FirstBank ensures that consumer protection is activated at all times by establishing redressed mechanisms to address fraud disputes and setting SLAs, minimum standards for recourse and staff with the right skill sets and qualifications are employed to provide this service, creating controls on minimum standards security practices staff qualifications required to provide this service, creating regulations on standard minimum security practices in handling consumer data to ensure privacy, sending SMS with summary product information and ensuring customers understand terms and conditions of the services they are subscribing to. ■

Path to Purchase: The Power of Children in Determining Household Buying Decisions

By **SOLAFUNMI OYENEYE** and **GIULIANA DIAS**



The collaborative process of purchase decisions within homes can no longer be denied. Long gone are the days when there was a top-down hierarchy in households, and the decision making was the sole preserve of parents. These days, especially in homes with millennial parent's aged 25 to 35, children are more actively involved and have more influence on decisions made in households.

The research revealed four key drivers behind the shift to a more inclusive, collaborative decision making in households.

Unprecedented Tech Access – In recent times, with nearly 12 devices per household, kids have unprecedented access to information and parents are no longer the gatekeepers of information in the home. In fact, parents are more likely to leverage their children's knowledge in making more informed purchase decisions for the family; as children are likely to be more aware of brands and are able to filter that information into whether or not they want to purchase products from these brands.

Millennial Upbringing – This second key driver is attributed to the shift to a more inclusive, collaborative decision making within the home. Majority of millennials attended daycare, participated in play-groups, played organized sports, making them more accustomed to collaboration and teamwork. They infuse this into their style of parenting in their willingness to see their children as teammates in the success of the family. Young parents have reimagined the roles of kids in the family; as a result, decisions are made as a family, with kids playing a significant role in the outcome.

Financial Awareness – Millennial parents have also made it a priority to teach their kids about financial awareness, informing them on the financial situation of the family. Children are no longer shielded from the economic realities of their family. Research conducted by ViacomCBS on families with children aged 6 - 14 revealed that over 60% of the kids were aware of household budgets, and about 45% were aware of how much things cost.

With this knowledge, kids can balance the information they have of brands with the economic realities of their family in order to manage their expectations. With a collaborative effort of parents and kids, decisions can be made more easily acceptable by every member of the household.

Family Closeness – This last driver identified in the study indicates 78% of Nigerian parents saying they want to be best friends with their kids. Families are closer than ever, kids are no longer looking up to just athletes and celebrities, they're also beginning to look up to their parents. Parents are able to better connect with their children, by having more conversations that are open and sharing more amongst themselves.

Sharing ranges from health, financial and even household purchase decisions. Family sharing has become automatic and unconscious. Do children however have opinions on all categories of purchase? Out of 25 categories tested in Nigeria, most kids are involved in at least 14 out of these 25 categories. Their greatest influence being over entertainment, food and groceries, restaurants, electronics, vacation and telecommunication. This means that in households with kids, they play a significant role in the final purchasing decisions that concern any of these six categories.

The path to purchase in households has become a collaborative process of negotiations between parents and children, who are influenced more by emotional than rational factors.

Parents are influenced by how happy a purchase makes their kids, while kids are influenced by how happy they will be with a product. Both parents and kids consider if a product will enable the family to spend more time together. Parents are also likely to spend 60% more when their kids are involved in decision making within the household.

Understanding these paths to purchase will enable brands to engage and provide for different members of the family. Therefore, brands in creating their messages must reach both parents and kids, as they both play critical roles in purchase decisions. Within the TV environment we know that the best place to find parents and kids simultaneously is children's television.

Interestingly, for every one child watching any Nickelodeon channel, there are at least four females aged 25 and above watching at the same time. With over 245,000 kids (aged 7-14) on the Nickelodeon channels monthly, the majority of viewers per month are mums 25+ which are over a million viewers monthly.

Though parents (Mums) usually make the final purchase decisions within households, the role that children play in these decisions cannot be denied. These influential members of the home should be treated as important by brands in determining and communicating their message to target families.

Solafunmi Oyeneeye is Senior Channels Manager, while Giuliana Dias is Senior Director, Research & Insight, VIACOMCBS NETWORKS AFRICA (VCNA) ■

NIGERIA HAS GREAT POTENTIALS FOR GROWTH IN ITS FINANCIAL INCLUSION EFFORT

Proshare boss

Mr. Olufemi Awoyemi is the Founder/Chairman of Proshare, a niche financial information services provider in Nigeria. His deep knowledge of both the subject and the industry as well as his vast experience came in handy in this exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE on financial inclusion in Nigeria.



Could you apprise our readers of where Nigeria stands, presently, when we talk of financial inclusion?

According to the EFInA Access to Financial Services in Nigeria Survey 2018, 39.5 million adults (39.7% of the adult population) have a deposit money bank account. This represents an increase of 2.6 million adults, from 36.9 million in 2016.

In 2018, the formally included segment increased from 46.9 million adults in 2016 to 48.4 million adults in 2018. The number of adults relying on informal mechanisms ONLY increased significantly from 9.4 million in 2016 to 14.6 million in 2018.

The findings also revealed that 36.6 million adults, representing 36.8% of the adult population, are financially excluded.

What innovations have contributed to the improvement of financial inclusion in Nigeria?

The rise of fintech companies has contributed immensely to improving financial inclusion in Nigeria. The rise in fintech intervention in the domestic financial payment system has kept mainstream banks and financial service sector regulators on their toes and led to a surge in various financial products and sandboxes as regulators attempt to tighten the laws and governance guidelines.

around new product and service offerings through digital mobile platforms.

So far, we have seen innovations such as internet banking, mobile banking, agency banking, the use of shortcodes (USSD), QR Codes and Chatbots and the rise of fintech applications for lending, payments, investment and wealth management systems. These have helped to improve education, enlightenment and inclusion of financial market stakeholders and participants.

Do you see financial inclusion as a key to reducing poverty and boosting prosperity? If yes, how? If not, why not?

The answer to this is Yes. But a lot depends on the income group the country belongs to. In high and upper-middle economies poverty rates will likely reduce because citizens are empowered to take action on group-focused inclusion plans. However, for low-income economies, there may be no significant impact because people barely have enough to save to take advantage of financial opportunities when and where they emerge.

What are the challenges confronting financial inclusion in Nigeria?

The main barriers to financial inclusion remain the lack of product/service awareness, institutional exclusion, low affordability, inability to comprehend, lack of trust due to weak value proposition and low-income levels.

What are your suggested solutions to the identified problems?

Some of the solutions recommended would be the following:

- Emphasis should be placed on easy access, convenience, safety and availability of financial services and products. The customer's user interface and user experience (UI/UX) is crucial to the customer journey and must be taken seriously in product/service design and deployment.
- Financial institutions need to leverage local associations and community influences to encourage awareness of products and services while opening up opportunities for micro, small and medium-sized businesses to grow
- Service and Product suppliers must ensure that their platforms are reliable, user friendly, safe and secure
- Financial service and product suppliers must build consumer confidence through improved customer engagement at multi-levels. The interface between the service supplier and the customer must be at different levels reflecting the different customer needs and expectations.

What are your company's financial inclusion product/service offerings?

Proshare is a niche financial information service set up to meet the information needs of a vibrant, productive and growing African economy with a focus on education, enlightenment and empowerment. Currently, we have a mobile app and a portal – Proshare Markets (www.proshareng.com/market) that is dedicated to news, data, analysis and research on financial markets.

What stands your relevant products/services out?

Since its establishment in 2006, Proshare remains the most credible, timely and reliable digital financial information hub in Nigeria, and we continue to facilitate access to data-backed, independent and fact-based interventions related to business, financial markets, economy, technology, regulation, MSMEs and personal finance. Thus, bridging the gap between investors and markets, businesses and customers as well as regulators and people/business environment.

What are the convergences and divergences among banks,

insurance, telecom and Fintech companies on financial inclusion?

Before the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), financial services companies such as banks, insurance companies and investment houses were the main players in the financial services space. However, considering the rise of financial technology in the 21st century there is no doubt that we will see more of collaborations than conflicts.

According to a recent report by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) titled the State of Play, "mainstream banks who were initially slow to react to the digital era, have quickly adapted to offer apps and tools in areas like loans, while non-traditional players—including telecom companies and retailers such as supermarkets—are entering the finance space." Thus, there is potential for more collaborations and the likelihood of mainstream banks investing more in startups who continue to seek funding to scale their ideas, while telcos continue to partner with service providers and explore the use of mobile banking licences to play in the finance ecosystem.

How can financial consumers be protected at all times?

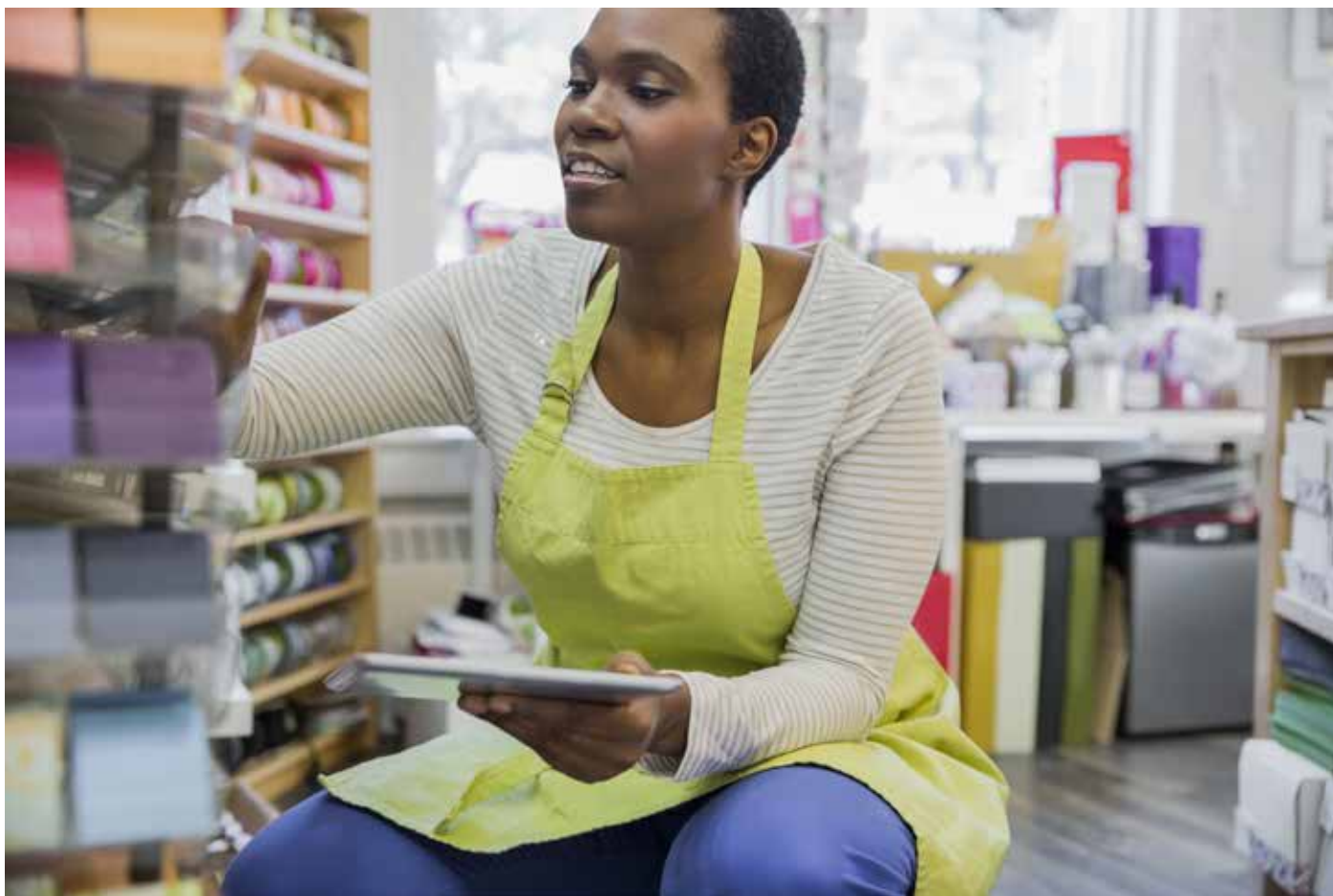
The burden of consumer protection is mainly on the service providers and regulators of the financial services industry; though consumers also have a role to play by ensuring they know their rights as well as the terms and conditions of any service they seek to consume. On the part of the service providers, they are to educate customers about the use of their products and services, intimate them about the terms, conditions and policies and have in place a complaint procedure that is seamless and efficient for customers to seek redress. Similarly, regulators such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), NAICOM and Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) ensure that there are guidelines and regulations in place to guide the activities of the service providers while they further ensure compliance and the protection of the rights of consumers of financial products and services.

Besides, associations such as the Bank Customers Association of Nigeria as well as the Consumer Advocacy Foundation of Nigeria (CAFON) have been established to help further enlighten consumers and ensure their grievances are addressed.

How smooth or bumpy is the road to the future of financial inclusion in Nigeria?

Looking at the unpredictable nature of the governance system in Nigeria where there are no collectively consensual long term and future structured blueprints to direct certain activities, sustaining policies aimed at promoting financial inclusion may be hard to achieve as each arm government who assume office may develop different strategies based on their current need and this may offset the trend that has been built by the preceding government. Thus, whether the road will be smooth or bumpy will largely be determined by the regulatory environment present at that time in the future.

However, there are potentials for growth as we continue to see the emergence of fintech and wealthtech companies who make an effort to enlighten and educate the potential and existing users of their products. Similarly, the establishment of the association like the Fintech Association of Nigeria has been instrumental in facilitating regulatory conversations and training, connecting stakeholders within the financial services industry and advocating where necessary for sustained growth in the financial landscape. Similarly, associations like the Women in Business (Wimbiz), Women in Finance (WiFng), as well as deposit money banks and other institutions focused on micro, small and medium scale enterprises continue to facilitate training and enlightenment campaigns which will, in the long run, be impactful in helping to improve financial inclusion on the country. ■



INVESTING IN DIGITIZATION WILL DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN TODAY'S NEW REALITY

POWERED BY MASTERCARD

While countries and cultures around the world may differ in many aspects, they are united in their quest for economic growth.

As we steadily shift into a post-COVID-19 world, this will become even more of a certainty. Amidst the recovery of economic activities, will be an increasing push for inclusive growth, an improved standard of living, lower unemployment and movement towards a more equal society. More than ever before, all of these causes now depend on a digital infrastructure to thrive.

Prior to this pandemic, emerging markets in particular have increasingly identified the need to digitize their payment economies, and reduce cash dependency as a way to accomplish financial inclusion and citizen wellbeing. In this context, payment digitization will not only ease many of the shortcomings of cash, but also generate paths of growth and innovation for people and businesses to thrive.

As

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A recent study conducted by Mastercard reinforces this statement. The research found that cash still epitomizes 85% to 90% of all consumer transactions internationally and it is associated with significant direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include lost tax revenues, cash production, handling and transportation. In Nigeria, less than 5% of consumer payment transactions are electronic.

Cash is also the main currency of a shadow economy and it is accompanied with indirect costs due to crime, corruption and associated law enforcement operations. A 1% decrease in the shadow economy decreases corruption by 0.81 to 1.14%. The study calculated the total cost of excessive cash usage at 3.2% to 4.5% of global GDP. Payments digitization allows businesses and citizens to thrive in an ever-changing, pressurized and complex global economy by, counter intuitively, carrying less cash.

To elaborate, when an unbanked member of the community transitions from cash transactions to digital payments to become financially included, their future starts to brighten and the whole economy begins to thrive. Take for instance farmers who can sell their produce on a marketplace app that allows their payments and receivables to be recorded digitally, thus enabling them to access credit facilities. This in turn helps them buy more seeds or land, growing their produce and business in the process.

According to a study by Moody's Analytics, higher card use in 70 countries, representing 90% of the world's GDP, contributed an additional US\$296 billion to consumption. Each 1% increase in the use of digital payments produced an average annual increase of US\$104 billion in the consumption of goods and services. This represents a 0.04% increase in GDP in developed markets and a 0.02% increase in developing ones. Every contribution will count when commercial activities resume in earnest.

Countries that prioritize digitized payment economies are better placed to mitigate the associated adverse impact of unemployment, financial exclusion, fraud, theft, cost of cash, and corruption.

Mastercard's PEDD (Payments Ecosystem Design & Development), a proprietary advisory methodology, leads to the development of the strategic initiatives required to develop cashless programs that accelerate digital innovation initiatives and modernize national payment infrastructures. It builds and deploys

solutions and digital platforms. The PEDD approach consists of five steps: size the payment flows, determine the drivers of cash, design the strategy, prioritize the initiatives, and propose an implementation plan built on public-private partnership that also advances financial inclusion.

Some of the PEDD initiatives that Mastercard has carried out include digital immunization records with Gavi The Vaccine Alliance, a digital voucher program with the World Food Programme, a digital marketplace for farmers via the Mastercard Farmers Network (MFN), and a digitized school ecosystem through the Kupaa initiative in Africa that allows parents, schools and governments to make and track school payments. These initiatives are also starting blocks for future Smart Cities as they digitize the citizen journey within the payments value chain, thereby creating a seamless experience.

Specifically, in Nigeria, we have partnered with Innovectives to create a self-onboarding digital platform, which enables Nigerian businesses to accept digital payments through optimized solutions such as Mastercard Quick Response (QR), USSD codes, contactless transactions, point-of-sale terminals and web payment gateways to grow ecommerce. Consumers also benefit from added convenience via multi-payment options.

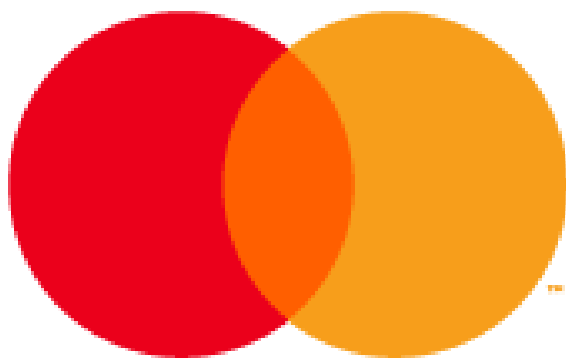
Additionally, strong performance scoring tools support access to micro-loans and credit, enabling MSMEs to grow and sustain their businesses in Nigeria. Secure digital records for their businesses make it possible for lenders to review income and cashflow history, enabling quick, informed decision making.

Payment digitization through fintech collaboration creates opportunities such as greater employment and financial inclusion, balanced gender roles, diversified industry, improved tax collection, efficient government disbursement and foreign investment through financial transparency.

Bringing unbanked and under-banked people into the financial system vastly improves livelihoods and correlates with a greater ease of doing business and improved financial literacy. In 2015, Mastercard made a commitment to reach 500 million people previously excluded from financial services by the end of 2020, thereby moving closer to a world beyond cash. Mastercard recently achieved that goal through more than 350 innovative programs across 80 countries, and has subsequently doubled down on its original commitment, pledging to include another 500 million people by 2025 to reach a total of 1 billion individuals.

A digital future provides a range of choices in a competitive society, usually leading to a happy nation. One of the choices to make is to be digitally and financially included in an economy. This gives consumers and businesses, banked or unbanked, a choice in payment methods, as well as easy ways to retrieve and view their funds. They will have better access to credit, the ability to seed capital for the launching of a small enterprise, and the opportunity to conduct business in the palm of their hands.

It is the right time to focus on digital inclusion. Through partnerships, we can achieve a digital payments economy that includes the economically disadvantaged, mitigates the costs of cash, and achieves the economic growth and well-being that we want for our societies. ■



Mastercard

– Connecting people everywhere to the digital economy

Mastercard is a global technology company in the payments industry. Our mission is to connect and power an inclusive, digital economy that benefits everyone, everywhere by making transactions safe, simple, smart and accessible. Using secure data and networks, partnerships and passion, our innovations and solutions help individuals, financial institutions, governments and businesses realize their greatest potential. With connections across more than 210 countries and territories, we are building a sustainable world that unlocks priceless possibilities for all.

In Africa, Mastercard is directly contributing to the building of robust digital payments ecosystems that support the continent's potential for economic transformation. To meet Africa's unfulfilled demands for goods and services, close infrastructural gaps, create jobs, displace cash, and decrease poverty, Mastercard is bringing together an entire ecosystem of key players at different touch points to deliver digital solutions that have a far-reaching impact.

In Nigeria, we partnered with NetPlusDotCom and to provide micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) with digital payment tools to advance their business through their self-onboarding digital platform, Merchant Digital. So far, 1 million MSMEs have been onboarded on the platform that can be accessed online by all small businesses and micro merchants in Nigeria.

We also partnered with Unilever and Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) to offer new lending models for micro-merchants in Kenya. The program offers a safe digital platform that enables KCB to provide an interest-free credit line based on the micro-merchant's purchasing history. The credit line is provided through a secure Mastercard digital payment solution, which is accessible via mobile phones and other handheld devices. This solution allows micro-merchants to buy more products, giving them access to formal credit services and therefore increasing customer traffic.

The goal is to drive Africa's digital transformation and create a digital economy that works for everyone, everywhere.



Firstmonie

FirstMonie

is a unique product from the leading financial institution deepening Financial inclusion in Nigeria-FirstBank.

Firstmonie Wallet is an electronic wallet that allows individuals the convenience of making and accepting payments electronically with their mobile numbers.

In line with global standards, Firstbank developed this unique tool used to enable individuals participate more fully in the global financial system. Firstmonie Wallet eliminates the need to carry a physical wallet by storing customers' payment information securely and compactly.

There are over 75,000 Firstmonie agent locations in all accessible local governments across the 36 states and FCT. This unique electronic wallet system offering from FirstBank has empowered unique customers in many unique ways. Through Firstmonie, the leading bank has given opportunities and access to financial services for every Nigerian and African; especially within the low-income segment of the population.

By creating easy access to financial services, FirstMonie agents across the country have helped to bridge the gap between high-tech services and low-literacy claims. In an economy where the unemployment rate has soared in the last few years, FirstMonie has provided support for the teeming unemployed population. With its unique and seamless channel, FirstMonie has provided over 210,000 indirect jobs for individuals in the last three years.

FirstMonie services are offered through dedicated agents who offer services available at the banking halls and Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). The agent locations are uniquely branded with outdoor paintings in FirstBank colours (Blue and Gold). The agents also have a FirstBank agent certificate as a mark of validation from FirstBank. The agent locations have FirstBank banners signposting the presence of the premier bank.

Customers can open a bank account at these locations. Other services offered at the FirstMonie agent locations include enrolment for bank verification Number (BVN), deposit, withdrawal and bank transfers. Customers can also pay utility bills and buy airtime through this bespoke channel offered by Nigeria's first financial institution ■

BEHOLD....



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Facilitating electronic funds transfers globally

Visa Inc. (also known as Visa, stylized as VISA) is an American multinational financial services corporation headquartered in Foster City, California, United States.

It facilitates electronic funds transfers throughout the world, most commonly through Visa-branded credit cards, debit cards and prepaid cards.

Visa does not issue cards, extend credit or set rates and fees for consumers; rather, Visa provides financial institutions with Visa-branded payment products that they then use to offer credit, debit, prepaid and cash-access programs to their customers. In 2015, the Nilson Report, a publication that tracks the credit card industry, found that Visa's global network (known as VisaNet) processed 100 billion transactions during 2014 with a total volume of US\$6.8 trillion.

It was launched in September 1958 by Bank of America (BoFA) as the BankAmericard credit card program. In response to competitor Master Charge (now Mastercard), BoFA began to license the BankAmericard program to other financial institutions in 1966. By 1970, BoFA gave up direct control of the BankAmericard program, forming a consortium with the other various BankAmericard issuer banks to take over its management. It was then renamed Visa in 1976.

Nearly all Visa transactions worldwide are processed through the company's directly operated VisaNet at one of four secure data centers, located in Ashburn, Virginia; Highlands Ranch, Colorado; London, England; and Singapore. These facilities are heavily secured against natural disasters, crime, and terrorism; can operate independently of each other and from external utilities if necessary; and can handle up to 30,000 simultaneous transactions and up to 100 billion computations every second.

Visa is the world's second-largest card payment organization (debit and credit cards combined), after being surpassed by China UnionPay in 2015, based on annual value of card payments transacted and number of issued cards.



Proudly African

Interswitch is an Africa-focused integrated digital payments and commerce company that facilitates the electronic circulation of money as well as the exchange of value between individuals and organizations on a timely and consistent basis

Interswitch was founded in 2002 by Mitchell Elegbe. It started operations as a transaction switching and electronic payment processing company that builds and manages payment infrastructure as well as deliver innovative payment products and transactional services throughout the African continent.

Interswitch uses a 'switching' infrastructure to connect the

different banks in Nigeria and provides technology for ATM cards. The company has over 11,000 ATMs on its network.

Interswitch is the owner of Verve, Nigeria's most used payment card, accounting for 18 million of the 25 million cards in circulation in the country. Verve has also been launched in Kenya.

It also owns Quickteller, an online payments platform; Retailpay, a mobile business management platform; and Smartgov, an identity management and e-payment infrastructure for state governments.

The company has also very recently acquired VANSO, a mobile-focused technology provider to banks. This new acquisition will result in VANSO's mobile banking, SMS and security business lines being fully integrated into Interswitch's digital commerce and technology operations in Nigeria, and across the Africa

To bolster its equity and strength, Interswitch sold two-third of the company's equity to a consortium led by Helios investment partners in 2010. A year later, Interswitch took a 60 per cent stake in Bankom in Uganda.

In an epoch making move, Interswitch entered into an agreement for payment processing with Discover Financial Services in 2013.

Interswitch made a bold statement in East Africa when it acquired a majority shareholding in Paynet Group, an East-African payments provider in 2014.

In the area of corporate social responsibility (CSR), Interswitch has made a huge investment in supporting science education in Nigeria. In February 2018, Interswitch unveiled its SPAK National Science Competition to promote and reward excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in Nigeria.

Earlier in 2015, Interswitch launched a \$10m investment fund for African start-ups in the payments sector. Interswitch has been at the forefront of providing innovative solutions using cutting edge technology to drive financial inclusion in the continent.



MoneyGram International, Inc.

is an American money transfer company based in the United States with headquarters in Dallas, Texas. It has an operations center in St Louis Park, Minnesota. MoneyGram has regional and local offices around the world. MoneyGram was formed in 1988 as a subsidiary of Integrated Payment Systems Inc. its businesses are divided into two categories: Global Funds Transfers and Financial Paper Products. The company provides its service to individuals and businesses through a network of agents and financial institutions. The company operates in more than 200 countries and territories with a global network of about 347,000 agent offices.

MoneyGram International is a product of merger of two businesses: Travelers Express and Denver-based Integrated Payment Systems Inc. MoneyGram was first established as a subsidiary of Integrated Payment Systems and afterwards became independent company before it was acquired by Travelers in 1998. In 2004, Travelers Express became what is known today as MoneyGram International.

The Minneapolis-based Travelers Express Co. Inc. was founded in 1940. In 1965, Travelers Express was acquired by The Greyhound Corporation (now known as Viad Corp) and became the nation's

largest provider of money orders before initiating a company reorganization plan in 1993.

Integrated Payment Systems was a subsidiary of First Data Corporation which was itself a subsidiary of American Express. In 1992, First Data was spun off from American Express and publicly traded on the New York stock Exchange First Data Corporation later merged with First Financial, the owners of rival Western Union. In order to approve the merger, the Federal Trade Commission forced First Data to sell Integrated Payment Systems.

Thomas Cook Global Foreign Exchange, under the stewardship of John Bavister, launched a re-engineered money transfer service in 1994. Branded as MoneyGram, the venture saw the partnering of the global travel giant with First Data Corp.

In 1996, Integrated Payment Systems, the nation's second largest non-bank consumer money transfer business, became its own publicly traded company and was renamed MoneyGram Payment Systems Inc. In 1997, James F. Calvano, former president of Western Union, became MoneyGram Payment Systems CEO. By the late 1990s, MoneyGram Payment Systems had served customers at over 22,000 locations in 100 countries.

Moneygram International Ltd. was established in 1997 by MoneyGram Payment Systems Inc. and Thomas Cook, a year after the company had gone public. At the time when MoneyGram International was established, MoneyGram Payment Systems owned 51 percent of the company, while the other 49 percent was owned by the Thomas Cook Group.

In April 1998, Viad Corp acquired MoneyGram Payment Systems Inc. for \$287 million. MoneyGram was then folded into Viad's Travelers Express in Minneapolis. In November 2000, the Moneygram brand and business was sold to Travelex as part of its acquisition of Thomas Cook Financial Services for £400m. In 2003, Travelers Express gained full ownership of the MoneyGram network, including MoneyGram International. Later that year, Viad spun off Travelers Express as an independent company. In January 2004, Travelers Express was renamed to MoneyGram International Inc. In June 2004, Viad sold MoneyGram and it became a publicly traded, individual entity.

By 2006, MoneyGram International had expanded internationally to include over 96,000 agents in regions such as the Asian-Pacific, Eastern Europe, and Central America. The company had also introduced additional services such as bill payment and online money transfers.

MoneyGram has an array of products designed to meet the needs of its customers. The products are segmented under Money Transfer and Financial Paper.

Its flagship product, MoneyGram Money Transfer and MoneyGram bill payment services provide customers with money transfer services. In 2014, MoneyGram became the second largest provider of money transfers in the world

MoneyGram also supplies Money Order and official cheques. MoneyGram is the second largest supplier of Money Order in the world. Its cheque outsourcing services are available to financial institutions in the United States



solved the problem of exhausting queues in banking halls and ATMS, as well as the rigorous paperwork that customers had to face.

Built with the core values of simplicity, reliability and convenience, acceptance of the digital bank has been on the rise by Nigerian Millennials. During its first year, ALAT by Wema acquired more than 250,000

customers responsible for well over NGN 1.6bn (\$4.48m) in general deposits. In 2018, the bank closed in the NGN 1bn (\$2.78m) mark in terms of deposits into savings accounts.

ALAT by Wema was recognized as the 'Best Mobile Banking App' and 'Best Digital Bank for 2017' at the World Finance Digital Banking Awards. In 2018, it was also awarded 'Best Digital Bank in Africa' at the Asian Banker Awards. The digital bank has also received other awards for its innovation in digital banking.

Today, Wema Bank has adopted ALAT by Wema as the fulcrum of its digital transformation. With the closing of its old Wema Mobile app, the bank has converged its banking services into an ALAT that has become a versatile, omnichannel platform. The convergence allows for the coexistence of digital and traditional banking platforms.



A niche financial information hub

Proshare Nigeria Limited (www.proshareng.com), founded in December 2006, is a niche financial information service hub with a key focus on markets, business, technology, regulation, MSME, personal finance and economic development.

Proshare's remit is simple: to serve as a critical bridge between investors and markets. Yet the mandate extends beyond providing credible, reliable and timely financial information on a 24-hour loop through an institutionalised network of researchers, analysts, contributors, and content owners; to being the standard bearer for governance practices, fact-based intervention, local investment data and market informatics.

The company is organised as a professional practice to provide accountability in its role of opening up the market place by complementing regulators and SRO's to shape conversations, advocate on key change imperatives, hold the system accountable in a collaborative manner and raise the bar through the way we conduct our engagements.

Its goal is to facilitate the information needs of a vibrant, productive and growing African economy.

WEMA BANK ALAT

ALAT also known as ALAT by Wema is a digital bank based in Nigeria. The bank is branchless and paperless. ALAT was launched on May 2, 2017 by Wema Bank Plc. It was designed to cater for the need of today's (digital) customers who are in dire need of a bank that understands and suites their lifestyle with respect to value for time, money and responsiveness. With its unveiling, the bank

I HAVE FOUND MY FEET IN APCON

– Dr. Lekan Fadolapo

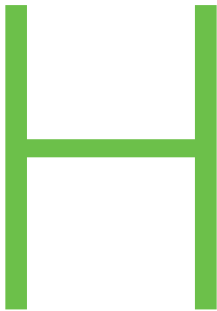


DR. OLALEKAN FADOLAPO, THE IMMEDIATE PAST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATION OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES OF NIGERIA (AAAN), WHO WAS RECENTLY APPOINTED REGISTRAR/ CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF ADVERTISING PRACTITIONERS COUNCIL OF NIGERIA (APCON) IS AN INDUSTRY MAN PER EXCELLENCE.

HAVING TRAVERSED THE NIGERIAN ADVERTISING LANDSCAPE FOR OVER TWO DECADES, HOLDING KEY INDUSTRY POSITIONS AND SERVING AS MEMBER OF DIFFERENT COMMITTEES ACROSS INDUSTRY SECTORAL GROUPS AS WELL AS REPRESENTING AAAN ON SEVERAL BODIES AND FUNCTIONS, HE HAS NO DOUBT ACQUIRED A WHOLE GAMUT OF EXPERIENCE AND A HUMONGOUS WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF APCON, THE APEX REGULATORY AGENCY OF THE NIGERIAN ADVERTISING INDUSTRY.

IN A NO-HOLDS-BARRED INTERACTIVE CHAT WITH MARKETING EDGE'S **KASIE ABONE** AND **ANIETIE UDOH**, HE DISCLOSED SURE-FOOTEDLY THAT HE IS WELL CUT OUT FOR THE TASK AHEAD AS HE HAS LONG FOUND HIS FEET ON THE BEAT AND NO LONGER A ROOKIE ON THE BLOCK. HE SPOKE GLOWINGLY ON SEVERAL ISSUES AND INDEED ON HIS VISION FOR APCON. EXCERPTS:

Congratulations on your new appointment sir.



How do you see your elevation from having been superintending over a sectoral group, the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) as Executive

Director and now as a regulator as Registrar/Chief Executive of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON)?

Obviously, this is a greater responsibility; from supervising a sectoral group to supervising the industry. Also, for me it's a call to duty. It's more to make myself available to everybody beyond my initial position at AAAN; to protect the entire advertising industry's interests as against that of a sectoral group.

Were you expecting this appointment; or did it come to you as a surprise?

It was the biggest surprise of my life! If I was told it would happen like this, I wouldn't believe it.

How was the news broken to you and how did you react to the news?

I saw the press release and I got some calls. When I got the call and saw the press release, I was wondering how could that be. I was told that the federal government was shopping for a Registrar for APCON, that was all I knew until I got a call. I had to start calling people to confirm but when people started saying "congratulations" I said 'congratulations?' And I was like is this really how it happens? I was really surprised.

Now that you are here, there has really been a gap for a long time, what do you consider your immediate priorities and how do you intend to go about them?

Strengthening the agency leg of the tripod. We have the advertiser. We have the agency and we have the media in the tripod. Now, my responsibility is the agency leg; how can I strengthen the agency leg? How can I make the industry more attractive? How can I empower advertising agencies? How can I



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Have you been consulting with your constituency, the agency in this regard?

Yes. You know my advantage is that I am coming with over two and half decades of experience in the industry. I have worked on different committees in the industry. I have worked with APCON on several projects in several capacities. I was a council member for about three years. Because of that, it's been a lot easier. I have been consulting with sectoral groups. AAAN was here. EXMAN has spoken to me; OAAN is coming. We are trying to develop a road map for the administration. And some of the things we are looking at are, number one: we need to have a standard operating manual for the advertising industry. What will regulate our relationships; relationship between agency and clients; relationship between vendors and the creative agency so that for once we can have a system that is clear about what is there and what is not there. Then, the issue of industry debt; the issue of credit policy, the issue of contract will be addressed in that manual.

How would you assess the current state of advertising and marketing industry?

I think advertising has really suffered. We move in sympathy with the economy. If the economy is buoyant people spend more money. But when there is crisis in the economy, they start cutting down on the advertising budget. Today, most agencies have suffered serious setbacks due to COVID-19 pandemic, due to unprofessional activities by the unregistered people, so, there has been series of crisis. For me, one of the focus is how do we implement advertising industry reform in such a way that the agencies will be empowered? One of the things we want to do is to start job creation. And this is part of Federal government directives to all the agencies. By the time we start implementing the advertising industry reform, the advertising industry reform has the capability of creating 5000 jobs within the first six months of its full implementation.

How soon can the reform be implemented?

We need to do some ground work; and that is what we are doing right now – engagement. We are talking to the media owners; we are talking to the Nigeria Broadcasting

Commission (NBC); we are talking to everybody that is in the advertising industry. So we may just need some time. We need to have a standard operating manual for the industry. So within three months we should be able to put this up. Hopefully by January next year (2021) the advertising industry will witness full implementation of the reform.

Are there other key issues bugging the industry that you would like to tackle side by side advertising industry reform?

The other key industry issues will always be there. For example, the business challenges can be high, can be low; movement of accounts, movement of staff. Some of them will always be there.

One of the major industry issues is debt and then the 120 days payment cycle by clients which is threatening the agency businesses; how do you intend to urgently handle this?

We are already talking to NBC. Any moment from now NBC and APCON will be signing MoU on how they want this to be. Going forward, it will be a zero tolerance for agency debt to the extent that if any agency defaults, we blacklist the agency. So we need to empower the media houses. Then if any agency is involved then we will withdraw their license. Any client that is involved we take legal action against them. And also it's going to be part of the credit policy we are going to come up with. We are studying what happens in other markets. So, we are now researching what are the global best practices and we are considering domesticating them to suit our own situation.

On the issue of 120 days, I can't say it is good and I can't say it is bad. We are researching to find out what is right. We are still going to write all the sectoral groups to send memorandum on what they think should be done.

You should understand that there is localization. We are operating in a global environment. Notwithstanding, we are in a local market. But there are global best practices and there are other best practices in some professions in the country. So, we are going to take learnings from what is happening globally, we are going to take learnings from what is happening locally and globally. So we will take all these into

consideration before we come up with what will be a standard for our local advertising industry.

What are those things you consider that industry stakeholders want you to address now?

APCON council will be constituted as soon as possible. You know we have been without a constituted council for years. And government is taking it one by one. For the government, now they have resolved the issue of APCON Registrar. I believe the same government will look into this issue and give us a council.

What is actually causing the delay in re-constituting the APCON council?

Honestly, I can't say. My own appointment, in itself, was a surprise. Nobody knew it will

happen. So, I can't tell you that tomorrow you will not wake up and see an APCON council. I don't know what is happening at the Presidency.

Do you think there could be people benefitting from the non-constitution of council?

There is no vacuum in government. If you read the APCON law very well, it says that in the absence of a council, the Minister shall act. Even when the council is there, they still get the minister's approval for so many things. The only thing we may be missing is collective deliberation of agencies whose meeting we shall commence any moment from now.

What is your take on the complaint raised regarding APCON regulation and timing vis a vis digitalizing your operations,



reducing approval time, in line with current realities?

We are looking at our total operations. Let's start from my office; you know my office what it used to be and what it is now (tastefully furnished). By the next time you come maybe you would have gone to the reception. If we must be the regulator, we must be at least a step ahead of the people we are regulating in terms of knowledge, information, technology

industry expect from you say in six months to a year?

I want to see APCON that is able to implement advertising industry reform. I want to see an APCON that will create 5000 jobs in the next six months. I want to see an APCON that will strengthen the agency leg of the advertising industry. I want to see an APCON that will play its leadership role in the advertising community. I want to see an



If we must be the regulator, we must be at least a step ahead of the people we are regulating in terms of knowledge, information, technology and facility. So, we are looking at all these things together. I am confidently sure that in the next few months, APCON will bounce back.

and facility. So, we are looking at all these things together. I am confidently sure that in the next few months, APCON will bounce back.

What aspects of the advertising practice code would you say are more frequently violated?

The code is due for review and we are working on some of these things. Do you know that the new law said that two persons can form a company? We need to review everything in line with the new laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. What we need is to strengthen APCON. We will call for a memorandum. Then we start the process.

Looking at the situation at hand, if you are asked to set a goal for yourself, what should the

APCON that is closer to the practitioners in the industry. These are some of the agenda I set for myself.

How will you assess relationship amongst the sectoral groups; talks about distrust and suspicion are rife?

I really don't know. I don't agree with that. But when I was at AAAN, there was Heads of Advertising Sectoral Group (HASG). What we do at AAAN is to see how we can bring everybody together. There is strength in unity.

Again, there is the issue of the relationship between the federal government and the advertising industry. What are you going to do to bridge that perceived gap between both parties?

Some of these things cannot be supported by research. For instance, some of these people that have been shouting that Nigeria's 60th anniversary logo has been plagiarized but they don't know what process led to that logo. I can also confirm that member agencies of AAAN were also part of that project. The issue is that, the moment some of our people are not benefitting, they will rather want to throw the baby and bathe water away, which is what we are seeing. Now, the government is trying it's best to bring people closer; we are talking to relevant government agencies to see where and how we can bring our people closer.

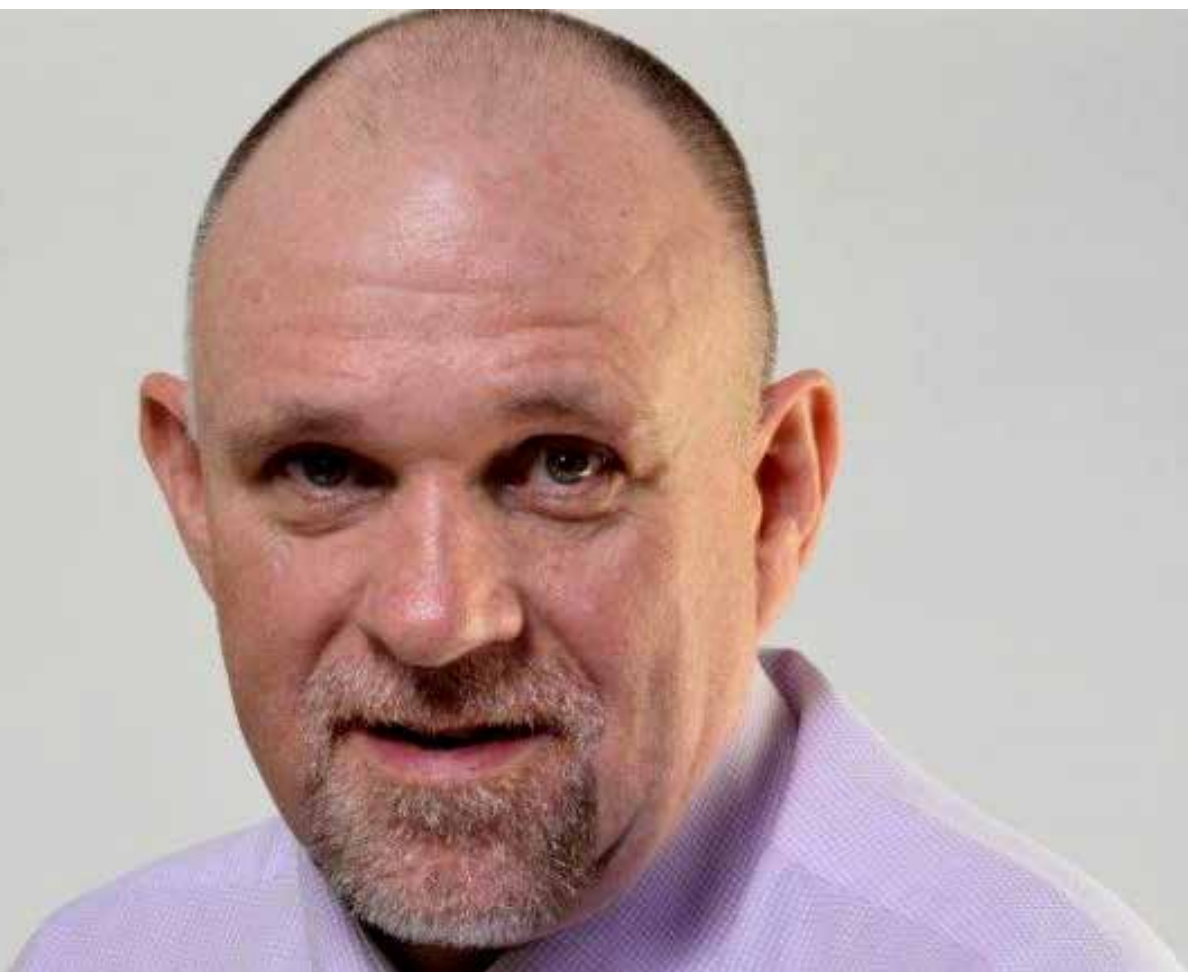
If you check the newspapers, you will find out that on assumption, we went to Nigeria Institute of Democratic and Legislative Study and what I went to do there was to talk to them about legislative branding. If all our legislators understand the importance of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), and those who are licensed to do it, I mean, in their election they will give jobs to them. They won't have problems. We will be meeting with INEC to discuss about political campaigns. Now, it's to tell them about the regulation; but the multiplier effect is that the politicians will begin to patronise APCON licensed agencies. There are so many things in the pipeline that we are working on.

How do you intend to handle the issue of incursion of foreign agencies with stronger capital and better expertise?

Like I said before, when we start the full implementation of advertising law, the law says that for anybody to practice advertising in Nigeria, the minimum of 75% shares of the business will belong to Nigerians. You can't come to Nigeria as a wholly owned foreign agency business and begin to do business. If you check the indigenization decree, advertising is number one. It's not by mistake. If you go to Brazil, there was a time that 100% of advertising business was owned by Brazilians. Like I said, we will get to that point when we fully implement the APCON law. This is part of the strategies to create jobs.

Implementation still remains a challenge considering the legal issues associated with that?

We are still talking to the lawyers. I believe that the Legislature and the Ministry of Information will support us to get our law. ■



Ferdinand Moolman:

Building the most profitable service solutions brand in Nigeria

“

The true mark of a leader is willingness to stick with a bold course of action—an unconventional business strategy, a unique product development road map, a controversial marketing campaign—even as the rest of the world wonders why you are not marching in step with the status quo. In other words, real leaders are happy to zig while others zag. They understand that in an era of hyper-competition, the only way to stand out from the crowd is to stand for something special.”

BILL TAYLOR

Above quote by William Brockenbrough Taylor Jr., an American diplomat was excerpted from one of the numerous literary works of the American Award - winning veteran warrior with the title, “Do You Pass the Leadership Test.” When Taylor wrote his classic essay, little did he know that he was speaking to the future of one of the dramatis personae that would shape and determine the growth and development of Nigeria’s telephony market

in decades to come. Today, the seemingly innocuous statement made by Taylor has become a fitting metaphor in describing the nature and quality of leadership of the man at the helm of the biggest telecoms group in Africa. He is no other person than Mr. FERDINAND MOOLMAN.

With extensive experience spanning Financial Auditing, Financial Operations and Taxation, having worked in the Telecommunications and Consulting sectors in Nigeria, Iran, England, and France, Ferdi Moolman is definitely not one of the run-of-the-mill CEOs.

Here is a man who has earned his name in gold presiding over the country’s biggest non-oil foreign direct investment. He rose to the position of CEO on December 1, 2015 after the telecommunication giant made several appointments to review.

FirstBank partners UNITY Nigeria to drive growth in Nigerian music industry



First Bank of Nigeria Limited has announced its lead sponsorship of the TV reality musical talent show, The Voice Nigeria, Season 3.

The talent show, which is organised by UNITY Nigeria, is created to discover, nurture and bring to the fore musical talents amongst the next generation of Nigerian youth.

The Voice Nigeria will be produced for the first time in Nigeria and will be aired on DSTV channel (Africa Magic) Startimes and terrestrial TV channel (AIT), amongst other leading television stations in the outside the country. Nigerians can expect to see the very best talents on stage in the course of the competition.

The musical talent hunt show would start with blind auditions to be submitted upon being shortlisted after a successful registration, then battle auditions which then move out of the rooms and straight into the arenas, with hopefuls having to perform in front of an arena audience from the start in the hope of making it through to the next stage.

The Voice Nigeria will be hosted by Nancy Isime, Toke Makinwa and the coaches are

Dare Art Alade, Folarin Falana (aka Falz), Yemi Alade and Aituaje Iruobe (aka Waje).

Interested participants are to register via the link www.thevoicenigeria.com with their FirstBank account number as a requirement. Should one not have an account with the Bank, then dial the Bank's USSD code, 8940# to be a FirstBank account holder. The audition is open to individuals within the age of 18 -50 years who are have been residing in Nigeria for 12 consecutive months. The registration for audition is open from 25 August – 19 September 2020.

There are numerous awesome prizes up for grabs. The winner of the show will be go

home with whooping ten million naira cash; a brand new car and an exciting one-year recording contract reward with Universal Music.

Speaking on the talent hunt show, Folake Ani-Mumuney, Group Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications, FirstBank, said: "We are delighted to be the lead sponsor of The Voice Nigeria, this partnership is hinged on our Brand's passion to empower and invest in our youths. FirstBank has given voice to the young and indeed all Nigerians for the past 126 years, and will continue to give voice to Nigerians by creating employment, economic empowerment in the country through our products, services and initiatives. We remain committed to strengthening the creative industry which is fast growing into a multibillion-dollar business, with potential to be a leading contributor to Nigeria's GDP in the near future."

She continued: We commend UNITY Nigeria for The Voice Nigeria as our sponsorship is in recognition of the vast talents Nigeria is blessed with which we are delighted to promote, thereby having a positive impact the Nigerian entertainment industry. We enjoy everyone to follow our social media channels for more details on the programme, whilst also staying locked on their TV screen. More details would be provided in the course of the weeks through our social media channels.

"The show promises to be engaging, full of surprises and with fun-filled excitement to our viewers."

According to research disclosed in PwC's recent Entertainment & Media Outlook report, Nigeria's entertainment is expected to rise from \$4.46 billion in 2018 to a \$10.5 billion market by the end of 2023. In addition, with this initiative and other sponsored event targeted at the youth, the premier Bank in Nigeria, FirstBank, is committed to strengthening its contribution to the development of the entertainment industry in the country. ■

FirstBank partners “Smart Money Woman”, unveils TV series of the award-winning book



FirstBank
Since 1894

First Bank of Nigeria Limited has announced its partnership with Arese Ugwu for the TV adaptation of her best seller, *Smart Money Woman*. The weekly show, in its first season, is billed to premiere on Africa Magic Showcase on Wednesday, 23rd September 2020 at 9:30pm.

The *Smart Money Woman* is a programme that shows the experiences, sacrifices, struggles and vigour of women in society as they carry out their day to day activities in spite of the gender imbalance in the society, especially in Africa. The

series is an adaptation of *Smart Money Woman* written to tackle debt, providing tips on inculcating the right savings culture of the African middle class (why don't we say – every individual – as against limiting to African middle class), the fear and misconceptions surrounding money and the lack of it, love, friendships, cultural and societal pressures and the roles they play in success.

The half hour 13-episode series, which is directed by Bunmi Ajakaiye and Co, produced by Kemi Lala Akindoju, Akin Marinho and Arcadia Tv Africa, will have viewers exposed to financial literacy nuggets. Its cast include; Osas Ighodaro, Toni Tones, Ini Dima-Okojie, Eby Eno, Eso Okolocha, Timini Egbuson, Karibi Fubara, Tope Tedela, Seun Ajayi and Temisan Emmanuel.

According to the Author and Executive Producer, Smart Tribe Media, Arese Ugwu, “The *Smart Money Woman* is a love letter to every modern and upwardly mobile African women who are exploring life opportunities and experiences to find that right balance in their day to day activities especially in their career, friendship, relationship and of course, family”.

“We thank First Bank of Nigeria Limited for being the first corporate sponsor to believe in my dream and take a chance on a first-time producer. This is a partnership we are pleased to reckon with, whilst we recognise how they have successfully empowered women across the geo-political zones in Nigeria through its various initiatives, especially the FirstGem product. They have provided mentoring, support and capacity building opportunities for all to create a new generation of financially literate women thereby contributing to the continued growth and development of the country.”

Speaking on the TV show, Folake Ani-Mumuney, the Group Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, said: “FirstBank has been at the forefront of promoting female empowerment and we understand the role financial literacy plays in deepening financial inclusion, whilst promoting female independence.

“The essence of the TV programme is to raise financial awareness to inspire every individual in the society, especially women, to make informed choices and take effective actions for their financial wellbeing. ■

FCMB gives Nigerians easy access to quality healthcare

With over 6 million customers as well as over 200 branches spread across Nigeria, First City Monument Bank (FCMB) has launched a Health Advisory Service, an on-demand health information service in collaboration with Wellvis.org, to give Nigerians easy access to quality healthcare from the convenience of their homes.

The initiative, themed: ‘Dream Team’, which recognises the importance of teamwork in providing outstanding services to customers amid the Covid-19 pandemic, was launched to commemorate this year’s international Customer Service Week.

In a statement, the 38-year-old leading financial institution reassured its commitment to providing the very best of service delivery and value-added offerings that will consistently enhance the experience of its teeming customers at every touch point.

The statement added that FCMB will continue to leverage its solid business models, highly professional staff, innovation, bespoke solutions and technology to turn the aspirations of customers to life-changing opportunities.

“Several exciting activities to make this year’s Customer Service Week memorable, including a customer appreciation drive whereby customers who buy airtime worth N500 and above via the Bank’s *329# USSD channel get a 10% bonus add-on all through the week, have been lined up.

“There is also a virtual question and answer session between customers and the Divisional Head, Service Management & Technology. In addition, cakes will be delivered to children who operate kiddies account with FCMB and whose birthdays fall within the customer service week,” the statement said.

Speaking about the event, Oluwakayode



Adigun, Divisional Head of Service Management & Technology for FCMB, said: “This year’s Customer Service Week resonates deeply with us, because we pride ourselves as an institution that is made up of world-class professionals driven by a culture of excellence. In addition, we consistently go the extra mile to develop and offer solutions that align with the lifestyle and aspirations of the various segments of the population we serve.

“For all of these, we are again using the opportunity of the Customer Service Week to express our appreciation to our stakeholders.” ■

FITC partners FINTECH Nigeria to host programme on FinTech ecosystem

In a continuous and proven stride to lead proactive transformation and business growth within organisations, FITC, a world-class, innovation-led and knowledge-driven professional firm in collaboration with FINTECH Association of Nigeria, will deliver an edition of the FITC Executive Programme with the theme: “Innovation and Disruption in the FINTECH ecosystem: Reimagining Growth in Changing Times”. The event is scheduled for September 29 – 30, 2020.

According to a statement from the organisers, the programme is designed to enable participants navigate through the ever demanding innovative and disruptive FinTech ecosystem, to enable them make strategic decisions to continuously position their organisations for growth. They added that it is intended to ensure participants develop deeper understanding of the frictions that FinTech aims to address, discover ways to overcome adoption barriers and quickly scale-up their businesses, and learn how to manage disruptive threats posed by agile and data-driven competitors.

“The programme will also cover core financial technology areas like, including Dynamics, Operations and Global Business Strategy of the Leading FinTech Innovations, Frontiers of Fintech Ecosystem in Evolution of financial system for Growth and Sustainability, Models, Trends, Business Upscaling Implications and Consequences for FinTech innovations adoption, Optimizing Opportunities in FinTech Innovations for Financial Inclusion and System Stability, Emerging Opportunities and Business Consequences in Asset Management & Real Estate through FinTech Innovations and Developments, Hurdles and Opportunities for InsurTech Business Landscape in Africa.”

The statement specifically noted: “The programme is designed for business/start-ups owners, C-suite executives and senior managers of organisations whose operations are relevant to financial services space (insurance, financial technology companies, Telecommunications organisations, computer and data scientists, and some engineering firms, property, technology,

innovation, etc).’

Globally today, Blockchain, machine learning, big data, artificial intelligence, and other innovations in FinTech are revolutionising the finance industry and creating new challenges for both start-ups and incumbent firms that are competing for market share. To succeed in this environment, start-ups must build, fund, and grow an innovative operation that can outperform larger companies, while incumbent firms must rethink their offerings and digital capabilities to safeguard against disruption.

To withstand the myriads of pressure and competitions in the marketplace, and innovatively brace-up to the reimagined consequences to businesses and projected growth at this unsettling time, organisations need to reinvigorate their operational resiliency, consider latest breakthroughs in FinTech, and reappraise their game plan, as

businesses recover from the crisis.

The event has lined up internationally acclaimed technology experts from diverse sectors. Deputy Governor, Operations Directorate, CBN, Adebisi F. Shonubi will deliver the Keynote paper, while other Faculty members include Dr. Segun Aina, OFR, Chairman, Fintech Associates Limited, Dr. Andrew S. Nevin, PHD, Partner-FS Leader and Chief Economist, PwC, West Africa, Mr. Femi Adeoti, MD/CEO, Inlaks Nigeria, Mrs. Christabel Onyejekwe, Executive Director, Business Development, NIBSS Plc, Mr. Aderemi Atanda, Executive Director & Fintech Expert, SystemSpecs Group, Mr. Musa I. Jimoh, Director, Payment System Management, CBN, Ms. Patience Ugboajah, Executive Director, Operations, Zenith General Insurance Limited and Mr. Niyi Toluwaope, Managing Director/ CEO, eTranzact International Plc. ■



INNOVATION AND DISRUPTION IN THE FINTECH ECOSYSTEM: REIMAGINING GROWTH IN CHANGING TIMES

FACULTY

KEYNOTE

Adebisi F. Shonubi
Deputy Governor,
Operations Directorate, CBN



Chizor Malize
Managing Director/CEO,
FITC



Dr. Segun Aina, OFR,
Chairman,
Fintech Associates Ltd



Dr. Andrew S. Nevin, PhD,
Partner-FS Leader and
Chief Economist, PwC, West Africa



Mr. Femi Adeoti
MD/CEO, Inlaks Nigeria



Mrs. Christabel Onyejekwe
Executive Director,
Business Development,
NIBSS Plc



Mr. Aderemi Atanda
Executive Director &
Fintech Expert,
SystemSpecs Group



Mr. Musa I. Jimoh
Director,
Payment System Management,
CBN



Ms. Patience Ugboajah
Executive Director, Operations,
Zenith General Insurance Limited



Mr. Niyi Toluwaope
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FOR COURSE DETAILS AND REGISTRATION VISIT:
<https://bit.ly/FITCSeptExecEd>

SEPT 29-30 10:00am Virtual

fitc @fitcnigeria



MTN trains 10,000 SMEs on smart marketing, partners Facebook on digital

MTN Nigeria has equipped locally owned small businesses with skills on sales and marketing in a training session featuring leading industry experts, as part of the ongoing The Revv Programme.

Using a four-pronged approach, including masterclasses, access to market, productivity tools support and advisory initiatives, the programme aims to reach and support 10,000 small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) across Nigeria.

A total of nine masterclass sessions will be delivered by MTN executives and industry experts after which 200 SMEs will be selected to join MTN's Yello 200 accelerator programme, giving them exclusive access to a broad range of technology-driven tools and services.

At the last edition of the Revv Programme masterclass themed: "Smart Marketing & Sales – Your Customers are out there", which held virtually on Wednesday, September 9, 2020, industry experts showed the SME owners in attendance how to navigate the murky waters of effective sales and marketing especially when digital is their only avenue.

Panelists included the Chief Marketing Officer, MTN Nigeria, Rahul De, Chief Sales & Distribution Officer, MTN Nigeria, Adekunle Adebisi, Founder, BTDTHUB, Dipo Awojide, Founder, Trainquarters, Stephanie Obi, Founder and CEO, Terragon Group, Elochukwu Umeh and Country Sales Director, JCDecaux, Opeoluwa Filani

Rahul De has been the Chief Marketing Officer of MTN Nigeria since 2015. Prior to that, he was the Chief Marketing Officer at MTN Ghana and has occupied senior roles across Asia and Africa. In his wealth of marketing knowledge, he shared that building trust is key and every product must fill a gap if they want to achieve that cutting edge marketing they require. "As SMEs, we need to understand the gap areas we are filling. Once this is identified, the SME owner can proceed to build trust with customers," Rahul said.

Also speaking during the masterclass, Chief Sales and Distribution Officer, MTN Nigeria, Adekunle Adebisi, shared that the most important thing to look at is the product and the ease of accessing it. According to him, "apart from coming up with innovative ideas to make the product

better, you need to expand your base by taking the product to where the customers are".

While moderating the masterclass, Josephine Sarouk, General Manager, Regional Operations, Lagos & South West, shared that MTN has partnered with Facebook to offer Digital Marketing training sessions to the small business owners participating in the Revv Programme masterclasses. "We are also partnering with Facebook and we will be offering Revv Programme Digital Marketing training sessions and invites will be shared with all participants," Josephine said.

The Revv Program was created to help small business owners rethink and retool their operations to enable them withstand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is not the first of this kind of intervention by the telecommunication giant. In 2018, MTN launched the "Man In The Box" campaign to support small businesses with technology solutions and create awareness for them by showcasing their businesses in MTN LED "Boxes" for 24 hours to the entire world. ■

Telecom operators record 800% increase in data, voice calls during pandemic – *Danbatta*



Executive Vice Chairman and Chief executive Officer (EVC/CEO) of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, has said some telecom operators and platforms reported demand spike, especially in data usage and volume of calls, as high as 800 per cent since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Danbatta, citing an International Telecommunications Union (ITU) report noted, however, that despite the increase in demand for data and voice services, the commission took some critical regulatory actions to mitigate Covid-19 impact on quality of service (QoS) delivery by the networks to telecom consumers.

In a statement signed by the Commissions Director, Public Affairs, Dr. Ikechukwu Adinde, Danbatta enumerated these measures while speaking at the first edition of the Virtual Telecom Consumer

Parliament (V-TCP) hosted by the Commission in Abuja with the theme: “Impact of Covid-19 on Telecoms Service Delivery”.

Danbatta said the NCC, in conjunction with the supervising ministry developed e-platforms to handle all requests from the licensees to ensure that regulatory services were provided to sustain service delivery to subscribers. These were in line with the commitment to playing their roles in sustaining quality of service delivery and quality of experience by the consumers who are critical stakeholders in the telecom industry.

In addition, “the Commission approved and encouraged resource sharing among network operators and secured Right of Passage (RoP) for all telecommunications companies and suppliers for easy movement during the lockdown. These measures enabled the operators to service their base

stations and ensured seamless services for telecom consumers who increasingly relied on the networks during the pandemic.

Danbatta further averred that NCC, working with the ministry, is resolving the problem of high cost of Right of Way (RoW) with the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF), adding that through such engagements, the state governors have lent their support for a robust broadband infrastructure.

“The Commission is hopeful that with the reduction in RoW, which will automatically result in reduction in capital expenditure (CAPEX) by the network operators, telecom companies will sooner than later reciprocate the gesture by making their services more affordable to Nigerians,” he said.

Danbatta maintained that these regulatory efforts had resulted in a presidential approval directing security agencies to protect Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and telecom facilities as critical national assets, adding that such measures had helped to safeguard telecom infrastructure for the greater role telecom has to play with the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

He charged the service providers to constantly upgrade and expand their network capacity in order to deliver top-notch QoS to their consumers.

Earlier in a presentation, the Executive Commissioner, Stakeholder Management (ECSM), Barr. Adeleke Adewolu, showed the various Quality of Service (QoS) indicators for the second quarter of the year across the networks and how the consumer Quality of Experience compared with the parameters based on the voice of the consumer survey (VoxPop) conducted by the Commission.

He highlighted the challenges facing operators, which impact negatively on quality of service to include fibre cuts, vandalism and theft of telecommunications site equipment. ■



L-R: Head, Social Performance and Investment, Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCo), Hope Nuka; the traditional head of Ogijo town in Ogun State, Oba Kazeem Gbadamosi; Chairman Sagamu Local Government, Olugbenga Banjo; Director of Primary Healthcare Services in the Local Government, Dr. Mayomi. Oyedele; and the Chief Nursing Officer, Susannah Ogunfolaji on Wednesday at the inauguration of Ogijo Medical Centre, built, furnished and equipped by NNPC/SNEPCo

Shell donates ultramodern medical centre to Ogun community

The government of Ogun State and leaders of Ogijo community in Sagamu Local Government area of the state have described the 20-bed ultramodern medical centre donated to the community as a model of primary health care facility worthy of replication across the state.

Ogun State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Tomi Coker, who took delivery of the facility in a virtual ceremony recently said the donation was timely, coming at a time that the state was struggling with the dearth of facilities to manage the increasing cases infection of the novel coronavirus in the state, adding that the state government alone could not bear the burden of public healthcare delivery.

The medical centre, with doctors' quarters, alternative power system, water treatment plant and a medical ambulance was built, equipped and furnished by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited (SNEPCo) in partnership with SNEPCo's co-venture

partners.

"We're very appreciative to NNPC and SNEPCo. This medical centre could not have come at a better time as it will go a long way in strengthening the state's primary healthcare delivery system," said Coker.

According to Coker, NNPC and SNEPCo had supported Ogun State for more than eight years during which the companies had trained over 200 state health workers. "With this state-of-the-art medical centre, I am sure that the people of Ogijo would have the qualitative, affordable and accessible healthcare that the governor promised all the citizens of Ogun State."

The traditional head of Ogijo, Oba Kazeem Gbadamosi, noted that the facility was not just a pride for Ogijo but for Ogun State. "This is the best of its kind in Ogun State and we're so excited to have this delivered to our community by NNPC and SNEPCo."

Managing Director of SNEPCo, Bayo Ojulari, who handed over the facility to the

state government noted that the focus of the social investment policy of the company was on health and education, and that SNEPCo would continue to strengthen its relationship with governments across Nigeria for better healthcare and education systems. "Our health intervention programmes have been delivered in many states and our secondary school and university scholarships are continuing to grow. With the support of NNPC and our co-venture partners, we will not relent."

General Manager of the National Petroleum Investment Management Services, an NNPC subsidiary, Bala Wunti, who was represented by NNPC's General Manager, Services, Yahaya Yunusa, charged the state and Ogijo community to provide effective management of the facility in a manner that will provide the required healthcare services to the people. "Sustainability should be paramount in the management system to ensure that the facility serves the purpose for which it is meant."

The facility was the second of its type donated by SNEPCo in recent times. The company had recently rehabilitated and equipped the Casualty and Trauma sections of the General Hospital Odan, Marina in Lagos State with state-of-the-art medical emergency equipment, and also donated fully equipped custom-made ambulances for easy access different parts of the state. ■



Sahara Energy, Petroci seal \$43m LPG facility deal

Sahara Energy Logistics Holding Limited, an arm of Sahara Group of Companies, Société Nationale d'Opérations Pétrolières de la Côte d'Ivoire, National Oil Company of Côte d'Ivoire, and Petroci Holding have signed a Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) to facilitate the construction of a 12,000 metric tonnes Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage facility to guarantee LPG supply security in the country.

According to Sahara Group's spokesman, Bethel Obioma, the cost of the project is estimated at \$43 million and will be executed in two phases, with

inauguration scheduled for November, next year and October 2022.

Incorporated as SAPET Energy S.A., the JV company will handle the construction, operation, and maintenance of the LPG storage terminal. Upon completion, the facility will become the largest of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa, and more importantly, support the government's efforts to meet Côte d'Ivoire's growing LPG demand.

Speaking during the signing of the agreement, Dr. Ibrahima Diaby, director-general, Petroci, said: "This joint venture project is the first of its kind in Côte d'Ivoire and will serve as a model for other projects in the energy sector. It is a historic

event that will pave the way for a robust and seamless storage, distribution, and supply of LPG. This translates to more clean energy, growth, and productivity in Côte d'Ivoire. We are delighted and look forward to more collaboration with Sahara Energy."

Country Manager, Sahara Energy, Olayemi Odutola, said the project was in tandem with Sahara Group's commitment to promoting clean energy in Africa through investments, new technology, and collaboration with regional and global institutions. He stated that the partnership with Petroci further reiterated Sahara Group's support and commitment to enhancing economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire and contributing to the UN SDG7 goal which aims at ensuring access to affordable and clean energy.

"We are excited about the project and the huge opportunity it will confer on Côte d'Ivoire as the leading LPG hub in the sub-region. Sahara Energy continues to support the energy value chain in the nation as a foremost partner. Sahara Group remains unwavering in its commitment to enhance capacity, productivity, reliability, safety, profitability, competitiveness, and sustainability in Africa's energy sector. We will continue to explore other investment and partnership opportunities to replicate similar projects across the continent," he said. ■

The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Dispute relieves Nigeria of a \$1.5bn liability



The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Dispute (ICSID), based in the United States of America, has ordered Interocean Oil Development Company and Interocean Oil Exploration Company, to pay a sum of \$660,129.87 to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr Abubakar Malami (SAN), on Wednesday, said: "The tribunal that was led by Professor William Park, also relieved Nigeria of \$1.5 billion

liability." The ruling which followed an arbitration case the multinational oil firm issued against Nigeria in 2013 was bordered on an alleged breach of contract in an oil exploration and production joint venture.

Mr. Malami, in a statement signed by his media aide, Dr Umar Gwandu, explained that the tribunal also absolved the Federal Government of Nigeria from any liability, noting that the tribunal found Nigeria did not breach any of its obligations in the contract agreement with Interocean Development Company and Interocean Oil Exploration Company.

"The oil companies that has among its legal team, Mr Olasupo Shasore, SAN requested, among others, relief from the Tribunal directing the Federal Government of Nigeria, its relevant privies and instrumentalities to pay aggravated damages in an amount to be proven during these arbitral proceedings which the Claimants estimate at being in excess of

US \$1.5 billion (One Billion Five hundred Million United States Dollars).

"The Tribunal finds no liability on the part of Respondent in connection with Claimants' loss of control over their investment, Pan Ocean..." the Judgment read.

Mr. Malami further described the judgment as an addition to multiple success stories the Federal Ministry of Justice has recorded in international litigations.

The AGF said he is committed to patriotically and relentlessly discharging his constitutional mandates in the best interest of the nation and general public. He buttressed his point, saying "gone was such an era of connivance to deprive the nation of its resources for gratifying ulterior motives of vested interest at the expense of the Nigeria populace."

The Tribunal awarded \$660,000 as reimbursement to Nigeria to cover the cost it incurred in the arbitration proceedings. ■



TVC Communications Partner with P&G to Commemorate 2020 Child Health Day

...Donates Baby Diapers to Nigeria's Biggest Maternity Hospital in Lagos, Nigeria

To commemorate the 2020 Child Health Day, Africa's foremost media company, TVC Communications; owners of TVC, TVC News, Max FM (Lagos & Abuja) & Adaba FM in partnership with Procter & Gamble recently donated Pampers Baby Diapers to post-natal mothers at Nigeria's biggest Maternity Hospital in Lagos; Ayinke House Maternity Hospital, Ikeja Lagos, Nigeria.

Giving insight about the donation, the Chief Executive Officer of TVC Communications, Andrew Hanlon, said the commemoration of the Child Health Day is in line with the company's commitment to ensure that it reaches the underprivileged in the society and create awareness on the need to promote child development and growth.

He urged mothers across the country to look into the welfare and inherent potential of their children by paying keen attention to their health as they remain the hope of the future.

Andrew Halon says "Our commemoration of the Child Health Day and donation to post-natal mothers at Ayinke House Maternity Hospital is one of the various CSR activities that we are using

to drive community impact while also raising awareness about how to support families in our communities with a happy, healthy, and safe experience for all children."

Receiving the TVC Communications delegates during the visit to Ayinke House, Chief Medical Director of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, (LASUTH), Prof. Tokunmbo Fabanwo commended TVC Communications for the initiative. He said "This show of corporate responsibility is rare amongst corporate organizations. According to our protocols here at the hospital, the CMD only receives important guests and I am glad to receive all delegates of TVC Communications. We appreciate your company for coming together to donate to our postnatal mothers here at the maternity hospital."

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Andrew Halon says "Our commemoration of the Child Health Day and donation to post-natal mothers at Ayinke House Maternity Hospital is one of the various CSR activities that we are using to drive community impact while also raising awareness about how to support families in our communities with a happy, healthy, and safe experience for all children."

Receiving the TVC Communications delegates during the visit to Ayinke House, Chief Medical Director of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, (LASUTH),

Prof. Tokunbo Fabanwo commended TVC Communications for the initiative. He said "This show of corporate responsibility is rare amongst corporate organizations. According to our protocols here at the hospital, the CMD only receives important guests and I am glad to receive all delegates of TVC Communications. We appreciate your company for coming together to donate to our postnatal mothers here at the maternity hospital." TVC Communications is a privately owned, multi-platform, national and international full service media organization established in 2007 and headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria. Employing

over 500 staff with offices spread across Lagos, Abuja & Akure Nigeria.

TVC wholly owns and operates a free to air general entertainment TV channel, a 24 hour DTH national news channel and three local FM radio stations in Lagos, Abuja and Ondo state. TVC has a combined audience of over 10million listeners and viewers everyday.

TVC Communications is one of the largest broadcasting companies in Africa. The company also operate a suite of channel web sites and mobile phone applications. ■



COCA-COLA FOUNDATION EMPOWERS OVER 600 WOMEN

The Coca-Cola Foundation in partnership with the Karis and Eleos Hand of Hope Foundation, brought immeasurable joy to the women of Sangotedo on Friday, October 2, 2020 as they graduated a total of 612 women who participated in a free vocational skills acquisition training program called “Catalyst for Change”.

The aim of the one-month intensive training program is to aid economic recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The graduation ceremony which took place at the Sangotedo Primary School witnessed the presence of prominent members of the host community, Coca-Cola and Karis and Eleos Hand of Hope Foundation.

Some of those present include; the Baale of Sangotedo, Chief Rafiu Lawal Ajakaiye, represented by Mr. Raman Suleman; Women leader of Eti-Osa East LCDA, Hon Oyedemi Folashade Olarotimi; the NULGE Chairman and HOD Education, Eti Osa East, Comrade Omojole Olabode; the CCO to the head teacher at Sangotedo Primary School, Mr Haruna Abulwakin Public Affairs Communication and sustainability Manager at Coca-Cola Nigeria, Mrs Nwamaka Onyemelukwe; Founder, Karis and Eleos Hand of Hope Foundation, Mrs Bukola Bamiduro; ED, RecyclePoints, Mr. Taiwo Adewole and many others.

The vocational skills that the students learned include; baking, sewing, wig making, tie and dye, shoe and bag making, soap and household items production. 100 students out of the 612 graduates were presented with start-up kits for their different areas of interest.

The Valedictorian, Ekhatior Esther Clara, profusely thanked the Coca-Cola Foundation, as well as the Karis and Eleos Foundation for providing them with this invaluable experience. According to her, beyond the vocational skills that were taught, they were also equipped with soft skills like personal branding, use of social media for business, financial literacy and networking, to mention a few. She also encouraged her fellow participants and graduates not to have a limiting mindset.

According to the Public Affairs, Communication and sustainability Manager, Coca-Cola Nigeria, Nwamaka Onyemelukwe, “Women are not only essential to building thriving communities – we truly believe they represent one of the biggest accelerators to economic growth globally”.

That is why Coca-Cola has been committed to economically empowering women over the past 10 years to build sustainable communities. She thanked the leadership of the community profusely for their support in making the vision a reality, while urging the graduating students to ensure that they remain good ambassadors of the Coca-Cola ‘Catalyst for Change’ initiative.

The founder of Karis and Eleos foundation admonished the students to engage in continuous self-development even as they graduate from the vocational school. She urged them to never compromise on quality and emphasized the importance of saving.

The Women leader of Eti-Osa East LCDA, Hon. Folashade Olarotimi, who was also one of the graduating students expressed her deep appreciation to Coca-Cola and Karis and Eleos Foundations for their commitment to building human capacity and empowering lives. She advised the graduating students to make great use of all the skills learnt and ensure that they add value to the society.

The Baale of Sangotedo, Chief Rafiu Lawal Ajakaiye, represented by Mr. Raman Suleman expressed the community’s gratitude and joy. He stated that this empowerment program will no doubt go a long way in alleviating the economic hardship caused by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ceremony ended with immense gratitude and joy from the community leaders and graduates who expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Coca-Cola foundation as well as the Karis and Eleos foundation for their support. ■

Shell’s gas to boost industrialisation in Oyo State

Shell Nigeria Gas (SNG) is to facilitate domestic gas infrastructure development in Oyo State following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the state government last week. The pact targets the distribution of cleaner and more reliable gas energy to industries in the state through a distribution network with potential for around 50 million standard cubic feet of gas per day, starting from the state capital, Ibadan, as the point of first entry.

The MoU set out broad terms and conditions to guide co-operation between the two parties for the project development and delivery, and it was signed at the Oyo State Government House last Wednesday by Managing Director of SNG, Ed Ubong and the state governor, Oluseyi Makinde.



Standing from right – state Attorney General/Commissioner for Justice Professor Oyewo Oyelowo; state Head of Service Mrs. Amidat Olofade Agboola; Secretary to State Government, Mrs. Banwo Adeosun; SNG MD, Mr. Ed Ubong; Oyo state Governor, Engr Seyi Makinde; Oyo state Deputy Governor Engineer Rafiu Olaniyan; state Commissioner for Energy & Mineral Resources, Barrister Seun Ashamu; and SNG External Relations Manager, Mr. Tunde Olaleke. Standing in the back row from right – state Deputy Chief of Staff, Hon Abdul Majeed Mogbonjubola; Chief of Staff to the Governor, Chief Bisi Ilaka; SNG Business Development Manager, Mr. Yemi Solar; and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy & Mineral Resources Mr. Joel Ajagbe.

The governor described the agreement with SNG as critical in the state's efforts to boost industrialisation and enhance economic development while improving access to power for both residential and industrial areas in the state. "We believe that the agreed terms in the MoU will lead to the signing of the Build-Operate-Own-and Transfer agreement so that businesses can begin to reap the benefits of a steady source of energy."

SNG's Managing Director, Ed Ubong said, "The partnership is an opportunity to further improve domestic gas utilisation in Nigeria, enabling local industries to thrive and create employment opportunities for Nigerians."

In another development, SNG has commissioned an indigenous contractor, Gredor Nigeria Limited, to begin the construction of the gas pipeline infrastructure to deliver gas to the Nigeria Content Development and Monitoring Board Industrial Park in Polaku, Bayelsa State. SNG had earlier in the year acquired the lease of one hectare of land in Polaku for the gas project which will supply gas for industries in the park and the environs. The project is expected to be delivered within six months.

Ubong said the Polaku project would boost industrialisation in Bayelsa State and provide employment opportunity for skilled and unskilled local population in addition to directly improving internally generated revenues in the state.

He said, "The project will increase the over 150 industrial and commercial customers in Nigeria who currently receive SNG's supply of natural gas through gas infrastructure that we have built with our partners and local stakeholders."

Responding to the rapid expansion of SNG as distribution network, Country Chair, Shell Companies in Nigeria, Osagie Okunbor said Shell was positioned to continue to optimise its onshore footprint while investing in gas. "For more than 50 years, Shell has been in the forefront of the campaign to develop and monetise Nigeria's huge gas resources. SNG continues to demonstrate leadership in this space, growing the domestic gas market and also helping to improve lives in every state it operates."

SNG recently completed 20 kilometres domestic gas pipeline expansion project in Abia State, connecting Agbor Hill, Osisioma and Ariaria industrial zones. The expansion project has enabled the supply of pipeline gas to Ariaria Market Energy Solutions Limited, the Independent Power Project (IPP) consortium that provides electricity to the popular Ariaria market in Abia State. Ariaria International Market is one of the largest leather shoe-making and open stall markets in West Africa, with over 37,000 shops and an estimated one million traders. ■



Amber takes empowerment campaign to radio stations

Amber Energy Drinks Limited, makers of premium energy drink, Amber, has taken its empowerment campaign to radio stations in Lagos. Recently, the company launched a scheme tagged Amber Empowerment Scheme (AES) with a view to improving the standard of

living of Nigerians, especially at this critical period of Covid-19 pandemic.

The Amber team visited the following radio stations, including Nigeria Info, Wazobia FM, Cool FM (members of the AIM group), Traffic Radio, and City FM to sensitize Nigerians on the empowerment programme.

Speaking on the rationale for the empowerment programme, General Manager, Amber Energy Drinks limited, Ms. Titola Adediji, said: "With the current economic situation, Amber Drinks found it necessary to alleviate the pain of the average Nigerian, providing Nigerians the opportunity to own and grow their businesses through soft loans and business support initiatives.

"We decided to give trade loans in the form of N100, 000 worth of products to start-up beneficiaries and watch them grow. Every quarter, we want to empower 400 applicants in the start-up loan program and 200 applicants in the Business Support loan program."

Speaking on the modalities and qualifications by applicants for the scheme, Amber Energy Drinks Head of

Sales, Mrs. Temitope Adetiba, said the company has put in place arrangements to make the exercise a seamless one for applicants.

"The application process is very simple and seamless. Applicants are required to provide two guarantors and provide basic identification means for documentation. They are then taken through some training before the products are given to them," she said.

With a below-market interest rate of 5% flat, the Amber start-up loan offers the beneficiaries N100, 000 and a 4 months repayment plan with the first 30 days interest-free. The business support features rent-to-own recharge spots which will cater to individuals and small-time beverage retailers that need support to grow. Applicants will be given branded recharge spots on payment in instalments. More so, the company would open an account for beneficiaries and each person will be credited with one-hundred thousand naira only.

This will then be debited automatically with 20 cartons of Amber Energy Drink which would be traded in for repayment by the beneficiaries.

To join the Amber Drinks Empowerment Programme, interested persons can apply online: log onto www.amberenergydrink.com/empowerment and follow through the prompts or simply text Amber<> your full name<> location<> to 34778 and they will receive an auto-response to follow-through. Successful applicants would be invited for a short training and onboarding session.

The training programme for beneficiaries will run every Tuesday through the month of September for at least one hundred participants

Mercedes carves out plan to go green



Mercedes-Benz AG took the wraps off what it is calling a “new strategic course,” pursuing “profitable growth in the luxury segment and target leadership in EVs and car software.”

Ola Källenius, Daimler AG and Mercedes-Benz AG chairman of the board of management said that while Mercedes has recently been doing many things right, including design, product engineering, brand rejuvenation, and sales growth, the company has not yet lived up to its full potential in terms of turning volume success into profit growth.

“We intend to build the world’s most desirable cars,” Källenius said. “It’s about leveraging our strengths as a luxury brand to grow economic value and enhancing

the mix and positioning of our product portfolio. We will unlock the full potential of our unique sub-brands—AMG, Maybach, G and EQ.”

He said the company will cut costs by avoiding “non-core activities to focus on winning where it matters: dedicated electric vehicles and proprietary car software.”

“With this new strategy we are announcing our clear commitment to the full electrification of our product portfolio and our determination to ensure the business is fully carbon-neutral, in line with our Ambition 2039 target,” he said.

Benz’s plan to lead in EVs and car software includes some ambitious product-development and technology targets. The company announced four new EVs based on its upcoming large-car Electric Vehicle

Architecture (EVA). The EQS sedan comes first, hitting showrooms next year with about a 435-mile range target and level 3 autonomy. The EQE, EQS-SUV and EQE-SUV follow.

Mercedes is expanding the AMG, Maybach and the G sub brands to include EVs, and starting in 2025, more models will be added to Mercedes’ EV portfolio on the second dedicated EV platform, the Modular Architecture (MMA) designed for compact and medium-sized cars. Mercedes calls MMA a “no compromise” platform and says it is going to be the “longest-range EV ever.”

The company also announced the Vision EQXX technology program, designed to build a new EV “with spectacular efficiency and range.” The Vision EQXX is going to be developed by an engineering group in Stuttgart and engineers from the company’s F1 program in the U.K., who bring eMotors expertise along with quicker development. While Vision EQXX is a technology program, the company explained, it is expected to result in innovations that will make their way into series production cars, and quickly. Mercedes said it is developing the next-gen eMotors in house with what it calls “key strategic partners” CATL, Farasis and Sila Nano. New materials and production processes will increase range, reduce charging time and cost, the company said.

Mercedes officials also said its break-even point is too high and it is going to take “significant new steps to reduce costs” more than 20% by 2025, including non-EV R&D and personnel. ■

Toyota-Panasonic JV to build lithium ion batteries for hybrids

Toyota and Panasonic will produce lithium ion batteries for hybrid cars through its joint battery venture, TOKYO, at a plant in western Japan starting 2022 to satisfy the growing demand for electrified vehicles.

“The global electric vehicle market is expected to continue growing rapidly,” the company said in a recent statement.

Panasonic, one of the world’s biggest EV battery makers, is currently faced with

intense competition as a battery supplier to global automakers, including Tesla. The leading competitions include South Korean and Chinese makers such as Samsung SDI, LG Chem and CATL.

The joint venture, Prime Planet Energy & Solutions, said: “The production line at a Panasonic factory in Tokushima prefecture will have enough capacity to build batteries for around 500,000 vehicles a year.”

Prime Planet Energy, which was



established in April 2020, is 51 percent owned by Toyota with Panasonic holding the remaining stake. The venture reflects the drive of both companies to become bigger global players in an industry vital for the development of affordable EVs.

Toyota expects its annual sales of electrified vehicles to reach 5.5 million in 2025, five years earlier than initially planned. ■



Mercedes, Volvo partner Circulor's Blockchain Technology for transparency

Mercedes-Benz is currently working with Circulor to track climate-related gas emissions and the amount of secondary material along the complex supply chains of battery cell manufacturers. The company says it is targeting a fleet of new carbon-neutral passenger cars in less than 20 years.

According to the global auto maker, blockchain technology offers many advantages for documenting product and contract data. It links digital data records through encodings and cannot be changed without notice. All actors in the supply chain are able to trace the integration, transmission and confirmation of information at any time. Simultaneously, confidential information remains protected, which is relevant for complex and dynamic global supply chains, especially in the production of battery cells.

In 2019, Mercedes commissioned the development of a blockchain prototype for the supply chain. The aim was consistent and transparent documentation of contracts at all levels. The prototype creates confidence in the integrity of the supply chain by disclosing information related

to viability, without revealing important competitive information. If one of the subcontractors should fault contractual obligations, it becomes visible in the blockchain.

Mercedes-Benz is the first manufacturer to use blockchain technology to map CO2 emissions in the global battery cell supply chain

On the other hand, Volvo Cars, owned by Zhejiang Geely Holding, says it's also working with Circulor. Circulor's blockchain technology is used throughout Volvo Cars' battery supply chain, which it claims will allow 100% traceability of the cobalt used in the XC40 Recharge P8, its first fully electric car. Production of the XC40 Recharge P8 will begin later this year in Ghent, Belgium.

Volvo reached an agreement with two of its global battery suppliers, CATL and LG Chem, the world's leading blockchain technology companies in terms of implementing cobalt traceability. The agreements between Volvo Cars, CATL and LG Chem cover the supply of batteries over the next decade for the new generation Volvo and Polestar models, including the

XC40 Recharge. In this particular case, the blockchain data includes the origin of the cobalt, attributes such as weight and size, chain of custody, and information establishing that participant behavior is in line with supply chain guidelines. .

The company expects to see an expansion beyond cobalt by seeking to increase the traceability of mica, a mineral used as an insulation material in the battery of electric Volvos. Also, in collaboration with Circulor, they are exploring the possibility of expanding their cooperation in blockchain technology to other areas, for example tracking and reducing CO2 footprints, helping Circulor potentially set ethical sourcing standards in the automotive industry and other industries.

Circulor is a private network, governed by a single entity. It asserts that complex business logic is coded and is supported by machine learning algorithms to verify chain of custody, as well as other information needed to handle responsible sourcing requirements, and support sustainability goals. The system collects and verifies that material flows follow rules set by its customers – for example, sustainability or ethical sourcing.

Each party has access only to authorised information; every computer in the blockchain network has its own copy of the blockchain. However, the idea is to create a highly transparent system with zero transaction costs between the two parties creating a block.

Supply chain visibility has become an increasing issue for companies looking to attenuate risk and ensure regulatory compliance. Progressively, automotive companies are utilising blockchain technology to gain transparency on supply chain issues such as CO2 emissions and the source of cobalt.

A blockchain-based system charts the material production flow and the connected CO2 emissions. Continuously, Mercedes-Benz pursues the goal of a circular economy and strives to close material cycles - material flow mapping also records the amount of recycled material in the supply chain. In addition, the network displays whether Mercedes' sustainability requirements in terms of working conditions, human rights, environmental protection, safety, business ethics and compliance are communicated to all the companies involved.

FirstBank announces appointment of Oluwande Muoyo as non-Executive Director



First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier and leading financial inclusion services provider, today announced the appointment of Mrs. Oluwande Muoyo as a Non-Executive Director. Mrs. Muoyo joined the board of FirstBank from FBN Holdings Plc., the parent company of First Bank of Nigeria Limited.

Speaking on her appointment, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, CEO, FirstBank said: "We are excited to welcome Mrs. Oluwande Muoyo to the FirstBank Board. She

brings to the Board her depth of experience which spans over three decades in various leadership and strategic positions across the private and public sectors. I am assured that these rich experiences will have an immediate impact in the board which will transcend the activities of the Bank as a whole."

"On behalf of the board, management and staff of FirstBank, I congratulate Mrs Muoyo and look forward to working with her," he concluded.

Oluwande Muoyo was appointed to the Board of First Bank of Nigeria Limited in 2020. She is a Chartered Accountant, Banker and former Honourable Commissioner for Budget and Planning in Ogun State.

Prior to being appointed an Honourable Commissioner, Oluwande worked with Stanbic IBTC Bank for over 22 years in various parts of the bank, including Financial Control, Treasury and Financial Services, Trade Finance and Corporate Banking. She holds a BSc degree in Accounting from the University of Lagos. She started her professional career with the international firm Price Waterhouse (now PriceWaterhouseCoopers). A Fellow of both the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria and the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, Oluwande has, over the years, acquired competencies and skills in public financial management, policy formulation, business development, banking, budgeting, planning, auditing and taxation.

Her past Directorships include the Governing Board of the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics and FBN Holdings Plc. Oluwande has attended many training programmes including Strategic Marketing Management at Harvard Business School, Advanced Strategy at INSEAD and Advanced Management Programme at the Lagos Business School. Oluwande is married with children and enjoys reading and swimming.



African Alliance appoints Olabisi Adekola Acting MD

African Alliance Insurance Plc, one of Nigeria's foremost insurance companies, has announced the appointment of Mrs. Olabisi Adekola as the new acting Managing Director/CEO of the company, effective 1 September, 2020.

Her appointment followed the exit of Mrs. Funmilayo Omo effective August 31, 2020. Omo was appointed in March 2017. She led the company's first corporate rebranding exercise in over five decades of its existence and successfully cemented its position as a top player in the Nigerian insurance industry before her exit.

Mrs. Adekola is a financial analyst, investment manager and proven business continuity leader with over 25 years' experience in financial management, internal audit and accounting.

She began her career at Nigerian Hoechst in the mid 1990s before joining African Alliance in 1997 as assistant superintendent in the finance department.

She rose through the ranks across various finance/audit functions to head the Finance department as an Assistant General Manager, Finance and Investment in 2010. She was promoted to the position of Executive Director, Finance in 2012 capping a brilliant lateral growth in the company.

Mrs. Adekola holds an MBA in Financial Management from the Lagos State University and is a Fellow of both the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (FCA) and Association of Investment Advisors and Portfolio Managers (FIAPM); an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (ACTI), Nigerian Institute of Management and Business Continuity Professional, Disaster Recovery International. A brilliant mind, she is an alumnus of the Lagos Business School.



9mobile appoints Stjepan Udovicic as new CCO

The Board of Directors of Emerging Markets Telecommunication Services Limited (EMTS), trading as 9mobile, has appointed Stjepan Udovicic as Chief Commercial Officer of 9mobile.

A LinkedIn statement from 9mobile noted that Stjepan possesses vast international experience working in the telecoms, technology and service sectors in Asia, Europe, and the USA, with extensive management and leadership experience in different markets and diverse cultural contexts, having led various multinational teams in Cambodia, Croatia, Indonesia, Slovenia, Romania, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the USA.

“His product development expertise traverses competitive insight, user acceptance testing, product design, product pricing and customer relationship management with an emphasis on product delivery and propagation into target touch-point ecosystems, including physical and digital interfaces.

“Stjepan arrives at 9mobile from Axiata Group Berhad and its operating company in Cambodia (Smart). Before joining Axiata Group, he was engaged at Orange Romania as Marketing Director, in charge of products and services, digital, brand, and pricing,” the statement said.

The new 9mobile CCO had also worked with Etisalat as Customer Experience Director, spending time in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Stakeholders hail Fadolapo's appointment as APCON boss



Stakeholders in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) industry have applauded the recent federal government appointment of Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo as the new Registrar/CEO of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), noting that the appointment, albeit long overdue, was fair and square.

Recall that for long, APCON has remained without a governing Council or board. Concerns had been raised in the

past, with practitioners in the sub-sector raising alarm about the sensitive and pivotal role the Council plays in contributing to the growth and economic well-being of the country, especially the advertising industry.

However, the well-deserved appointment of the soft-spoken advertising impresario seems to have assuaged the misgivings of many on the issue considering the personality of the newly appointed helmsman of APCON. The appointment has been described by many as the most cheering news in the industry in a year headlined by the outbreak of Covid-19 global pandemic and its attendant effects on the advertising industry.

Having worked in the advertising and the extended marketing industry for over 20 years, including serving as the Executive Director/CEO of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Fadolapo is very knowledgeable about the practice of integrated marketing communications. While his unbroken years of service to AAAN greatly prepared him for the APCON top job, his appointment did not also come to industry watchers and players as a surprise considering his invaluable contribution to the profession and the industry at large.

Speaking to MARKETING EDGE on the appointment, Dr. Rotimi Olaniyan, a Marketing Consultant and Publisher of *ExperientialNg*, described Fadolapo as the best man for the job, especially at this critical period. “He is best suited for job. He knows all the routes to the market square as well as the doors into the palace, including a few he constructed himself. So, I do not expect him to have any surprises.”

Olaniyan believes Fadolapo's professional and educational experience will give him a global perspective on how to re-invent the wheel at APCON.

He continued: “Given his years of scholarship to the doctoral level, his major challenge would be on how to modernise the profession and the ecosystem. Old traditional models are dead, and the Covid-19 public health challenge has shown that asynchronous systems of communication that are digitally-driven are the new ways of delivering value. He has been a humble, unassuming practitioner and, as a regulator, I believe he will have the ears of trusted key players.”

Speaking in the same vein, Paul Ugoagwu, M.D STB Mcann, said: “Fadolapo has a lot going for him, including the extensive goodwill and experience to succeed at the job. He can leverage his goodwill and experience to unite the industry and resolve perennial industry problems in order to move it forward.”

Also commenting on the appointment, Lanre Ashaolu, M.D, FPL Media, an avant-garde OOH advertising agency, believes the appointment holds a lot for the hitherto conservative regulatory agency.

“This is a well-deserved appointment that is long over-due. Having an experienced person at the helm of APCON portends a good time devoid of the ubiquitous operator-regulator squabbles.”

Ashaolu strongly looks forward to a better working relationship between OAAN and APCON as the new helmsman takes charge.

Also speaking on the appointment, Bolaji Abimbola, MD Integrated Indigo, a foremost Public Relations agency, stated: “The appointment is a welcome development. He is a round peg in a round hole. I want to believe that the industry will be better for it. He understands the key issues facing the Advertising sector and he should be able to bring his experience to bear and move the industry forward. I join every well-meaning practitioner in congratulating him and wish him all the best.”

He continued: “I will also like to commend President Muhammadu Buhari-led government for making a good choice in the person of Dr. Fadolapo to lead APCON at this critical time.”

Fadolapo is a graduate of Economics, Ogun State University (OSU). He acquired Msc, Marketing from Babcock University, MBA, Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), ACA Institute of Chartered Accountant of Nigeria (ICAN), arpa (APCON) and a Master degree In Legal Studies (MLS) at Lagos State University (LASU). He also belongs to several professional bodies.



Ogilvy appoints Groenewald, former Unilever Africa Director as new South Africa Group CEO

Ogilvy has appointed Enver Groenewald as the new Group CEO of Ogilvy South Africa, effective 1 October 2020.

Groenewald, who has experience in more than 25 markets across Africa, including most SADC countries as well as Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, joins the agency from Unilever where he has been Africa Director and served on their Africa Leadership Team for the past five years.

As the incoming CEO, Groenewald will continue to drive Ogilvy's commitment to transformation, which is embedded in the agency's business objectives and agency culture.

"Enver is a highly experienced, widely networked business leader with a 20-year career in senior and executive management in blue-chip South African and global organisations," said Paul O'Donnell, Chief Executive, Europe, Middle-East and Africa, and Executive Partner for The Ogilvy Group.

"His breadth and depth of experience across industries will further strengthen our team's ability to drive growth for our clients' businesses. And, as a majority black-owned agency reflecting the aspirations of the country, he will continue driving Ogilvy SA's transformation objectives of advancing black talent in operations and management."

Groenewald has deep expertise in multiple sectors, having worked in consulting, advisory and operations roles across FMCG, financial services, marketing, media and the public sector.

Groenewald spent time at Ogilvy early in his career, before moving on to successful spells at Times Media, Omnicom and Unilever.

"I'm thrilled to be back at Ogilvy," said Groenewald. "While my leadership approach is very focused on consultation and collaboration, my business philosophy is based on creating economic and social benefit through Purpose, People and Creativity. I can't think of a better place than Ogilvy where these three elements intersect so powerfully. And, I am very excited to work alongside the group's depth and breadth of industry talent as well as with the leading brands that Ogilvy helps grow."

Groenewald plays the piano, reads extensively and is married with two daughters.

Source: Bizcommunity

Coca-Cola appoints Alfredo Rivera as North America Unit President

Coca-Cola North America division has named Alfredo Rivera as new president with immediate effect. Rivera takes over from James L. "Jim" Dinkins who has led the division since 2018. Dinkins who also served as senior vice president of Coca-Cola retires after more than three decades. He will serve as a senior advisor until his retirement on Feb. 28, 2021.

Rivera, 59, is a 23 year veteran who recently served as president of the company's Latin America group which includes 40 countries.

He joined Coca-Cola in 1997 in the Central America and Caribbean division as a district manager for Guatemala and El Salvador. He held various senior positions at the company before heading the company's Latin America group in 2016.

Prior to joining the company, Rivera worked for two independent Coca-Cola bottlers in Honduras and El Salvador.

Chairman and CEO of The Coca Cola Company, James Quincey said of his appointment: "Alfredo has had a remarkable career in Latin America, which is made up of a large number of highly complex and diverse markets."

He added: "Alfredo has built a networked organisation that is positioning our business to emerge stronger from the current pandemic. He is a strong successor for the top role in our flagship North America market, where he will build on the great progress we've seen under Jim's leadership. I thank Jim for his many years of service to the company and countless contributions to our business."

Coca-Cola North America is the company's largest operating unit, generating nearly 32% of its revenues last year. It includes approximately 70 bottlers throughout North America, approximately 8,000 employees and includes the company's operations in the United States, U.S. territories and Canada.

Rivera, in his new position, will report to President and Chief Operating Officer, Brian Smith.



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