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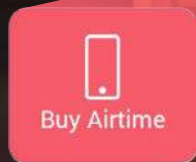
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### 8 Local News

### 34 NEWS FEATURE

Nigerian agencies to leverage in-game advertising

### 40 FOREIGN NEWS

Global alcoholic beverages market to hit \$1.6tn in 2025

### 76 PERSONALITY INTERVIEW

**We are committed to an inclusive industry reform -Dr. Fadolapo**

## 84 Top of the Market



The new APCON  
bares its fangs

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# The beauty of marketing in a post-pandemic era

The global outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may have disrupted the global marketplace, but it has also stimulated a tremendous evolution within the marketing landscape. The lingering and mutative nature of the virus is forcing marketers across industries to reevaluate long-term marketing strategies, everyday processes and technologies to keep up with the rapid changes in consumer behaviour. With marketing evolving to an essential service, today's marketers are hard-pressed to keep up with pivotal changes and maintain relevance.

As the world rides in this roller coaster of a COVID-19-induced crisis, marketing as we once knew it is over, and pre-COVID plans are out of the window. For many marketers, this may end up being a good thing. A shake-up of this scale can equally force marketers to go down a path they should have been following all along - that is, letting go of the instincts and hunches that drive so much marketing and listening to the signal in their data.

What's more, the beauty of branding and marketing is that the field is never stagnant. It allows for creativity and innovation no matter the challenges and circumstances. Therefore, contributing to marketing and branding innovation requires marketers and brand builders whose thirst for learning stops at no circumstance. How then can marketers and brand custodians continue to provide assurance, commitment and a sense of community to loyal consumers in a persistent atmosphere of uncertainty?

With customer data, marketers can focus on separating the signal from the noise. The best way to approach the changes that are already here is to have the infrastructure in place to detect the signal from the noise. As information becomes increasingly accessible and new technologies emerge to help marketers interpret and act upon data, marketers will be able to pick up on the signals that an audience is sending through their actions. But the first step is to make use of the data that they already have at their fingertips today. As a marketer, if you're feeling at all paralyzed or overwhelmed by the current situation, then this is a mandate to get your data into a place that demands action. If there ever was a time to question/doubt your instincts, it is now!

The world as we knew it may have changed, but brands and products in the market have not changed. As the world changes, it is the marketer's job to understand the aspects of a product that best fit the current moment and then craft the branding message in a way that resonates.

Changes in behaviour and technology have always brought with them a changing of the guard, but despite the impact of today's global crisis, most of the underlying needs that marketers serve remain intact. Moments like this require that marketers strategically revisit assumptions about their audience and the value they derive from their products, and if a marketer has not been utilising rapid testing and iteration, now is the time to start.

Despite the seismic changes sweeping through the world, industry watchers opine that pandemic changes to consumer

behaviour will no doubt prove temporary. But the mutation of COVID-19 variants is currently creating an atmosphere of contradiction and the continued uncertainty is impacting consumers' needs and general mentality, even as the global marketplace continues to be in flux with periods of relative ease preceding new restrictions and new threats.

Amidst all this, there are always opportunities for savvy marketers. While the changes represent challenges for some marketers who live with decreased targeting capabilities, savvy marketers are finding creative approaches to appeal to a wider audience, while still driving action, crafting campaigns that have broad appeal but also feel personal to the consumer.

Many prognostications were made over the 2020 pandemic year, and many recent trends and reports have emerged as surprises.

Warc, the international marketing intelligence service carried out a study on the Global Advertising Trends for 2020 where it found that advertising spend on e-commerce platforms sharply rose despite the global recession. Warc said adspend reached a total of \$58.5bn, as brands looked to capitalise on the boom in online shopping as a result of the global 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 increased 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.

In Nigeria, the total advertising expenditure in the country is currently put at over N162 billion annually. This, according to industry stakeholders, does not represent the potential of the industry. They are of the opinion that the industry's contribution to the nation's gross domestic product has yet to reflect its image as the biggest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

According to Statista.com, between 2018 and 2020 the majority of advertising dollars in Nigeria were devoted to TV and video promotion. The report equally added that, in developed markets, internet advertising expenditures surpassed TV. However, in Nigeria, TV advertising is and will remain strong in the near future. The second most popular ad medium in the country is Out-of-Home, which is also projected to grow in the next three years. The Internet is ranked third based on advertising spending. With the available information from the calculations, total internet advertising revenue in Nigeria would grow from 73 million USD in 2018 to 133 million in 2020.

With the foregoing report, regardless of the IMC industry sub-sector you are in, the last year has completely changed the game for marketers. As marketing practitioners ride in the roller coaster train of the post-pandemic and the mutative COVID-19 era, they should continue to look for creative opportunities to lean into, both digitally and traditionally.



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# Cocoa beverage brands battle over market share

By Abimbola Mohammed

**N**igeria's growing population coupled with its increasing urban concentration makes it a primary market for cocoa beverages. Nigeria is also a major player in the production of cocoa globally, although most of the players in the cocoa powder segment of the market depend largely on importation for their raw materials.

According to statistics, Nigeria is the fourth largest global producer of cocoa, just behind Ivory Coast, Indonesia and Ghana. In 2016, the largest exporter of cocoa beans was Côte d'Ivoire (USD 3.9 billion), followed by Ghana (USD 2.5 billion) and Nigeria (USD 0.8 billion). The largest importers were the Netherlands (USD 2.6 billion), Germany (USD 1.5 billion) and the United States (USD 1.3 billion).

Sadly, despite the huge availability of cocoa in Nigeria, major players in the cocoa beverage market are largely foreign companies, while local producers continue to play on the fringes.

Cocoa powder is made from cocoa beans, which come from the plant *Theobroma cacao* L. Cocoa beans are the primary ingredients in chocolate, but they can also be ground into cocoa powder. The powder provides many potential health benefits.

Cocoa powder provides tons of benefits, especially if the powder used to mix some drinks is at least 72% cocoa. Cocoa powder contains iron, zinc, and selenium. These minerals help the body to function and give the immune system a boost.

Apart from its immense health benefits, cocoa has other benefits along its value chain. The cocoa bean seed is used to produce cocoa butter and in turn converted into chocolate which when grounded is regarded as the cocoa beverage.

The cocoa sector is an important source of livelihoods, providing revenue for 40 to 50 million people, mostly in developing countries and including 16 Low Human Development Countries (LHDCs).

Over time, the Nigerian market has become a colony of activities for makers of cocoa drinks around the world. This is partly due to an increase of the young population in the country. Though the recent economic contraction has reduced the purchasing power of many consumers,



the volume of sales is gradually heading north again with recession gradually easing.

In Nigeria, some of the cocoa beverage brands that are still doing well in the market and are also at the top of consumers' list include Milo, Bournvita, Ovaltine, Cowbell Choco and Twisco.

A special intelligence market survey by **MARKETING EDGE**, the leading brands and advertising focused magazine, has revealed that the choice of consumers differs based on how and what they feel; each mentioning the cocoa brand they add to their diets.

Speaking with **MARKETING EDGE**, Mrs. Olabisi from Ikorodu, a retiree from the ministry of works and housing, said she prefers Ovaltine. "I prefer Ovaltine to any other brand of cocoa drink because the taste is unique and it also dissolves instantly in water."

She, however, said she only opts for other cocoa brands when they come as gift items.

Mrs. Enitan, a teacher from Amos Nursery and Primary School, Victoria Island, Lagos, said she believes Ovaltine is better than every other brand of cocoa powder.

A retailer at Ketu market, Alhaja Sekinat said she sells more of Bournvita than she sells any other product.

Also Mr. Timothy from Omole Estate, a banker said he prefers Bournvita. His words: "I prefer the taste of Bournvita because it also gives the same taste either in cold or hot water. Bournvita is satisfying."

For Mrs. Juliet Alero from Ojokoro, Milo is her preferred cocoa beverage. "It's sweet and creamy and already with milk. The only beverage allowed for nursing mothers because it makes you sleep."

For Jennifer from Ikeja, Computer Village, Lagos, it's Cadbury Bournvita. "It's

sweet, creamy and more economical. There is no disappointment so far; I'm always satisfied with it."

Miss Debola Davis from Festac town has this to say: "I prefer Bournvita any time, any day because it dissolves instantly in hot or cold water. I drink it when I want to add weight."

However, an online research on Google Form revealed Milo to be more accepted by many Nigerian consumers. Here are the questions and responses from individuals:

Questions: What is your preferred choice of cocoa beverages among these – Milo, Bournvita, Suco, Ovaltine, Cowbell Choco, Cadbury Choco, Twisco, Horlicks? Why do you prefer one over another? What was your experience like after taking the above mentioned beverage? Would you recommend your choice of cocoa drink to anyone?

Answers: Suco because it dissolves quickly in both cold and hot water.

I prefer Milo because of the smooth grind and taste, especially when I take it with milk.

I like Twisco because it's well processed and refreshing.

I prefer Milo because it is richer in vitamins, and makes me feel relished and relaxed.

I prefer Milo because it is easily accessible and it relaxes my body too.

Milo is my favourite cocoa drink because of its quality. It is nourishing and very reliable.

Milo does the cocoa drink magic for me. I like the refreshing taste.

Without a doubt, Bournvita from the production line of Cadbury Nigeria Plc, and Milo, manufactured by Nestlé Nigeria Plc are undoubtedly the biggest players in Nigeria's cocoa beverage market.



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# APCON indicts multinationals over ad industry reform revolt

By Oghale Mafuru



The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) has indicted multinational companies and conglomerates over rebellion by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) on the Advertising Industry Standards of Practice (AISOP).

Declaring its position and faulting the rejection of AISOP by ADVAN, APCON stated that formulation of AISOP followed all constitutional requirements and due consultation with all stakeholders.

The advertising regulator in a press statement signed by the Registrar, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, noted that AISOP was instituted to revolutionize the advertising industry in Nigeria and set it at par with international standards, adding that the industry standard of practice is aimed at eliminating sharp practices and unethical behaviours that stifle the growth of the industry and the country at large.

According to the statement, "AISOP is in line with the Federal Government's reformatory plans aimed at accelerating the pace of economic recovery post-pandemic era, enhancing gainful employment, attracting talents and

investment into the industry as well as overhauling the business regulatory framework of the Nigerian advertising industry. AISOP seeks to improve mutual respect, eradicate unfair advantage, unethical competition and inequitable engagement terms among stakeholders in the marketing communication sector of the country."

The regulator disclosed that AISOP is a product of a committee constituted to formulate the necessary guidelines, terms of engagement and other business protocols and that all sectoral groups, including ADVAN were equitably represented.

"Each sectoral group's views and points were discussed and APCON moderated a win-win situation in line with best practices and the Federal Government Policies. All other sectoral groups made concessions based on the maxim of equity, fair play and government effort aimed at growing the economy. The document was later presented to the Hon. Minister of Information and Culture for approval in line with the APCON 's establishment Act," Dr. Fadolapo said.

The APCON helmsman, who

asserted that the reaction of ADVAN negates the principle of fairness and equity, affirmed that ADVAN's rejection of AISOP is against the Federal Government's agenda to stimulate growth in the economy especially in the SME sector.

It will be recalled that APCON officially unveiled the new AISOP on October 6, 2021 and it was immediately endorsed by AAAN, EXMAN, OAAN and others who described it as a step in the right direction.

Pledging his support for the new advertising guideline, President of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), Emmanuel Ajufo said: "OAAN is happy that AISOP has come to life, because we have been pioneering this for a very long time. It is going to benefit the industry ultimately and also impact positively on our businesses."

Speaking in solidarity with the new provisions stated in AISOP, President of the Media Independent Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), Femi Adelusì urged members to comply with the new guidelines and notify their clients accordingly.

The MIPAN boss, who reiterated his support for the new standard of practice, said: "We (MIPAN) played a key role in putting AISOP together along with other sectoral groups, and we have the responsibility to abide by it."

On his part, President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Steve Babaeko, while applauding the initiative, stated that "It is a good one coming from APCON; I think it is long overdue. As the president of AAAN, these are some of the things that keep me awake, where members complain on some of these issues that the law has tackled. I am looking forward to the enforcement and execution of the laws."

However, ADVAN had announced its rejection of AISOP after the official presentation, citing a breach in constitutional procedure and claiming that the new guideline is opposed to the rights and interest of ADVAN.



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– Ernest Oforah

(Wristwatches wholesaler in Lagos, Nigeria)

## TVC Communications wins Great Place to Work Certification for Best Workplace for the second consecutive year



**T**VC Communications, one of Africa's leading multimedia companies, is proud to announce that it has officially been certified as a Great Place to Work company in Nigeria, for the second consecutive year, by the global authority on workplace culture, The Great Place To Work Institute of the USA.

The announcement was made at the Great Place to Work 2021 Awards ceremony which took place in Lagos, Nigeria on Friday, 3rd December, 2021 where TVC Communications won the following awards:

- Best Company in Maximizing Human Potential
- Best Company in Delivering Organizational Ethics
- Best Workplaces to Work in Nigeria

Speaking on the certification and awards, TVC Communications CEO, Andrew Hanlon said: "We are absolutely delighted to receive this certification for the second year in a row, particularly after such an extremely challenging 2021. These awards are about trust between management and staff, something we never take for granted, and which we continually strive to improve through open and honest communication, enhancing staff benefits and conditions, and providing a safe, respectful, fun, and happy place to work. Great Place To work recognition keeps the pressure on our management team to consistently work harder

every year to do the right thing for our 550 employees. We remain the only broadcasting and multi-media company to receive this accolade, not just in Nigeria, but throughout continental Africa. Thank you to all our team for this great vote of confidence."

"We also congratulate our other Nigerian corporate colleagues who received Great Place To Work approval this year including: Sterling Bank Plc, Nigeria Breweries Plc, SC Johnson and Son Nigeria Limited, FBN Holdings Plc, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Novartis Nigeria, Teleperformance Nigeria, DHL Express, FBN Quest Merchant Bank, and DHL Global Forwarding Nigeria."

Great Place to Work Institute is a global research and consulting firm that helps organizations identify, create, and sustain great workplaces through the development of high-trust workplace cultures. The accreditation process is based on direct feedback from employees, provided as part of an extensive and anonymous trust-index survey about the workplace experience.



## Noah's Ark wins at 2021 Loeries, emerges only West African agency awarded

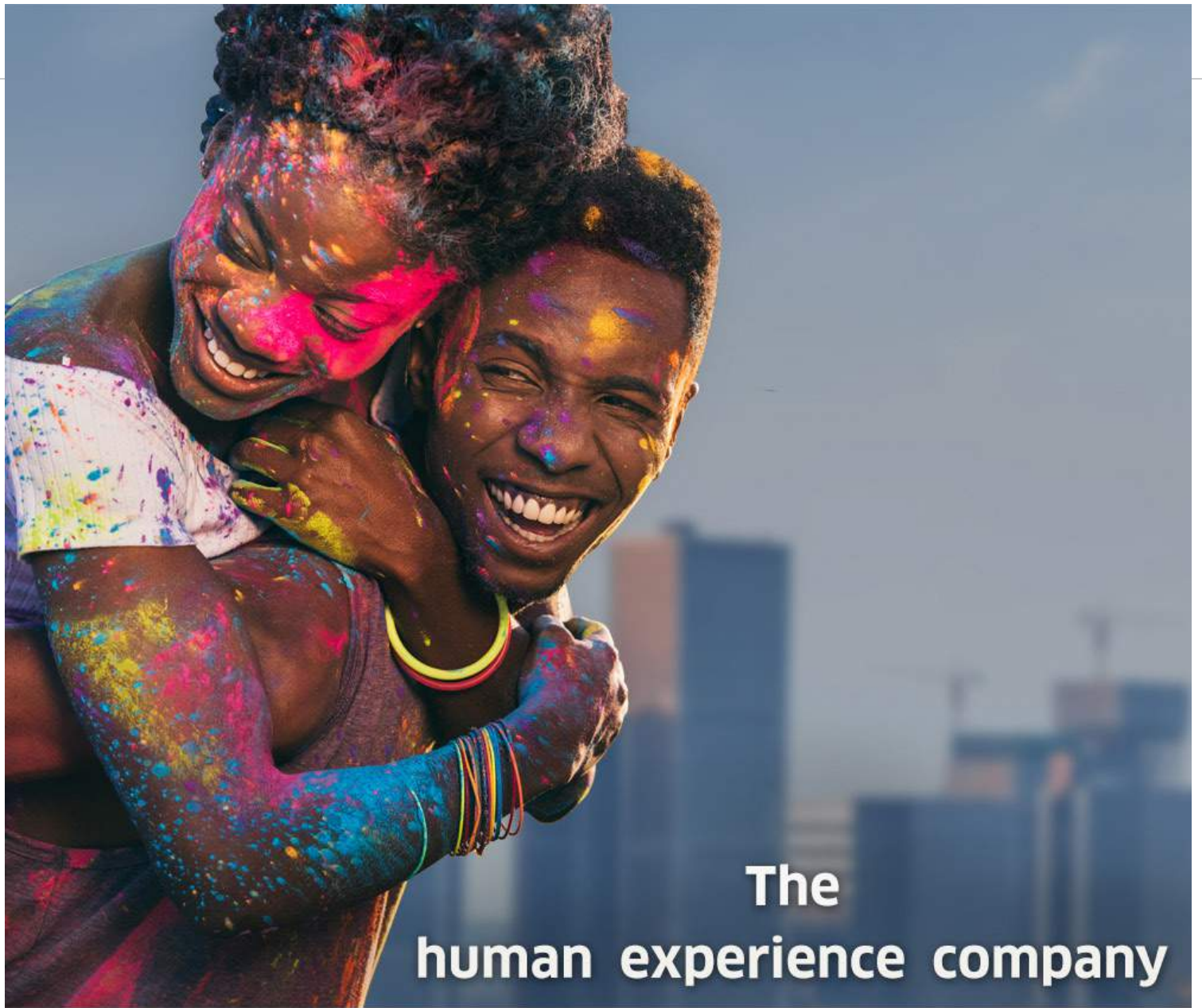
**O**ne of Nigeria's leading creative advertising agencies, Noah's Ark Communications Limited, has once again proven its mettle as arguably one of the best creative agencies in this subregion by emerging the only West African agency to win an award at the recently concluded Loeries Creative Week 2021; the most coveted award event across Africa and the Middle-East.

The Loeries, a proudly not-for-profit company, promotes and supports creativity by helping marketers, agencies and consumers appreciate the value of fresh thinking, innovative ideas and outstanding execution. As Africa and the Middle East's premier award that recognises, rewards, inspires and fosters creative excellence in the advertising and brand communications industry, winning a Loerie is the highest accolade for creativity and innovation across our region; and is definitely not regarded as an easy feat.

Noah's Ark Communications was awarded a Bronze in the Print category for a campaign called 'The StopCut Project' for Hacey, an NGO. An audacious campaign, considering its objective of tackling the age-old cultural practice, by creating awareness about the existence and harm of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and by extension, trying to enlighten the enablers, perpetrators, and sympathisers of the act about its consequences; both from the perspective of the mental and health effects for the victims as well as from the







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legal consequences for the enablers and perpetrators.

The print series likened the FGM culture to the act of rape, showcasing the similarities of both acts in robbing victims of their innocence. The 4 print ads called out the enablers and perpetrators who typically tend to be relatives or close family friends and as a result tend to believe their act is being done for the good of the girl child. This view is primarily due to cultural beliefs that have been held over generations that these close relations are reluctant to see ended in their time, thus ensuring that the act persists.

Visually, the prints tried to capture the barbaric nature of the FGM act showing the perpetrators pinning the girl child down and performing the act under the guise of knowing what's best for her, albeit robbing her of her innocence; similar to being raped.

According to the Loeries CEO, Preetesh Sewraj, "the brand communications industry, across Africa and the Middle East, faced strong headwinds over the past year, but the finalists are a testament to the power of creativity to prevail against the strongest challenges," as he recognised the finalists of the Loeries awards for their hard work.

The Loeries Creative Week 2021, which held in Cape Town had hundreds of creative minds from across Africa and the Middle East converging to enjoy a programme of Loeries Creative Hour, Live masterclasses and the Loeries Cinematic Experience; with various agencies across the region entering their works for the chance to win awards.

Speaking on the award, the Chief Executive Officer/CCO of Noah's Ark Communications, Mr. Lanre Adisa, commended the resilient spirit of the team for bringing home one of the most prestigious creative awards in Africa and the Middle-East.

Adisa added that the Agency will not rest in its quest to continue to put the Nigerian creative industry on the global map by continuing to create great creative ideas that not only give the brands in the Agency's portfolio an invaluable edge over their competitors, but also elicit conversations and effectively pass the communication messages to their target audience.



## ADVAN rejects AISOP

**T**he Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) rejects the implementation of the new Advertising Industry Standards of Practice (AISOP) as it makes an unconstitutional attempt to infringe on the rights of private entities to determine their contractual terms.

ADVAN is very supportive of the plan to create a Standard of Practice for the advertising industry, a key objective of ADVAN is to facilitate and support progress in the advertising and marketing communications industry. ADVAN is excited to be a part of any initiative towards the development of industry best practice which will facilitate business and economic growth.

The Supreme Court has in many decisions, pronounced that the rationale for freedom of contract is founded on public policy: i.e., parties of full age and competent understanding are deemed to have the utmost liberty of contracting, and that their contracts when entered freely and voluntarily must be held sacred and be enforced by courts of law,

Furthermore, as principal benefactors of Advertising services our role and input with regards to this AISOP has not been fully on-boarded, the current AISOP is void of critical elements that protect the rights and interest of the ADVAN community.

It is the submission of ADVAN and all its members, that the current AISOP does not serve collective interest, but rather permits unfair authority of certain parties over others and creates an unfriendly business framework. It portrays

a clear indication of discriminatory standards where the AISOP document in section 5 sub section b (Discounts and Commissions) states that "No party will unilaterally dictate or impose rates on another party except as may be mutually agreed by upon by the parties" however in the summary submitted to the press there is a clause that states "Media rates may be increased at any time provided that at least 30 days' notice is given prior to implementation". Latter of which was not included on original documents, further portraying an inconsistency in expectation.

ADVAN requests that in all instances, the condition of a mutually agreed terms by both parties be upheld and not only as it applies to expectations from Advertisers.

Government has a specific and critical role in supporting industry development by providing fair and enabling legislation and guidelines for ethical business practices, this involvement however, should not overrule the constitutional rights of business entities to conduct legitimate business activities.

The perception of a discriminatory regulatory system will be counterproductive to the collective objective of creating a conducive business environment.

Consequently, in the interest of creating an inclusive free, fair, and transparent industry standard of practice, ADVAN has sent in a clear representation of expectation. ADVAN is on standby for the acknowledgment of this position and further engagement on a standard of practice framework that is in the mutual interest of all.



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# X3M Ideas, DentsuMCGarryBowen, Insight Publicis, Noah's Ark win big at 2021 LAIF Awards



## ...X3M Ideas Named Agency of the Year

It was a night of honour, glitz, glamour, and celebration of creative excellence at the 2021 edition of the Lagos Advertising and Ideas Festival (LAIF) Awards by the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) as X3M Marketing Ideas Limited, DentsuMCGarryBowen Limited, Insight Publicis Limited and Noah's Ark Communications Limited win big at the event.

The award ceremony, which was held on Saturday, November 20, 2021, at the Landmark Event Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos saw the Steve Babaeko-led X3M Marketing Ideas Limited emerge as the topmost ranked agency with 9 Gold, 16 Silver, and 8 Bronze. The Agency was also named the 2021 Agency of the Year.

DentsuMCGarryBowen came second on the medals table carting home 2 Gold, 14 Silver, and 12 Bronze while Insight Publicis and Noah's Ark emerged third and fourth respectively. Insight Publicis won 3 Gold, 5 Silver, and 4 Bronze while Noah's Ark Communications won 4 Gold, 6 Silver, and 6 Bronze.

Delivering his remarks at the event, the Special Guest of Honour, the Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu who was represented by the Commissioner



for Establishment, Training, and Pensions, Lagos State, Mrs. Ajibola Ponle, commended the organizers for consistently making the event a reality.

While assuring AAAN of his administration's commitment and support toward the success of the industry, Sanwo-Olunoted that the advertising industry, by their creative works, has contributed immensely in putting not only Lagos state but Nigeria on the global map.

In his welcome remarks, the President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria(AAAN), Mr. Babaeko, noted that the LAIF Awards remain the biggest

platform to recognize and reward creativity in Nigeria.

Also speaking at the occasion, Chairman of the LAIF Awards Management Board, Mr. Lanre Adisa, explained that the 2021 edition of the award which is the 16th edition of the Festival received over 350 entries from a total of 21 Agencies. He disclosed that the entries submitted are creative works of the Agencies on 40 brands while about 28 jurors worked on the entries to determine the best works for the honours.

Adisa noted that despite the challenging period occasioned by the impact of the COVID-19 virus, many creative agencies demonstrated a great spirit of resilience by churning out works that could compete favourably with works from their counterparts in other countries or continents.

The highpoint of the event came when Noah's Ark Communications Limited and Ogilvy Nigeria won the Authentic Africa Story and Viewers' Choice Award categories, respectively.

While Noah's Ark Communications won the category with the Airtel Nigeria's 'Rainmaker' ad, Ogilvy Nigeria was crowned for its Cadbury's 'Hot Chocolate Indulgence' campaign.

Another key highlight of the event was the induction of a renowned and celebrated Amazon in the advertising industry, Julia Oku-Jacks, into the Lagos Advertising and Ideas Festival (LAIF) Awards Hall of Fame.

Two viral content creators and a non-governmental organization namely, Ikorodu Bois, Josh2 Funny ,and Slum2School were equally given special awards and recognitions for their contribution in advancing the cause of creativity.

Photo caption: L-R: The President, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Steve Babaeko; the Chief Executive Officer, TreeWater Retreats Limited, Julia Oku-Jacks; the Chairman, Lagos Advertising and Ideas Festival (LAIF) Awards Management Board, Lanre Adisa and Vice-Chairman, LAIF Management Board, Temitope Jemerigbe during the 2021 LAIF Awards held recently.





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# Oil industry key to Africa Free Trade Agreement

## – Wabote

Technological advancements in the African oil and gas industry and proceeds from operations will play significant roles in industrializing the continent and actualizing the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote has said.

Speaking at the Real News Magazine 9th Anniversary Lecture, he said that Africa's industrialization agenda is at the heart of AfCFTA and oil and gas remains a key part of the energy mix required for industrializing the continent and revenues



obtained from selling the resources constitute key drivers of the economies of the African oil and gas producing countries.

The Executive Secretary's presentation was titled "Nigeria in the Unfolding Integration of African Market: The Oil and Gas Sector Perspective," and he explained that (AfCFTA) took effect from 1st of January 2021 and the agreement had turned Africa into the world's largest free trade area, connecting 1.3billion people with a combined GDP of about \$3.4trillion. He added that AfCFTA was meant to address the low intra-regional trade in Africa estimated at 17 percent, compared to 69 percent obtainable in Europe and 59 percent obtainable in Asia.

Dwelling on the opportunities that could be realized by the Nigerian oil and gas industry against the AfCFTA

agreement, he stated that the African oil and gas landscape provides huge opportunities for cross-border infrastructure to unlock development of stranded assets or bring energy closer to the people and such infrastructure also leads to lower unit development costs.

According to him, infrastructure like the West Africa Gas Pipeline (WAGP) and ongoing AKK gas transmission infrastructure can serve regional markets in West Africa and the Sahel region, while the SHI-MCI yard in Lagos can serve the wider African market being the only FPSO integration yard infrastructure in Africa.

Wabote also clarified that Local Content was not opposed to trade liberalization, stressing that no nation is blessed with the full list of natural resources, and can produce every product it requires. He added that "a country must be allowed to protect its areas of comparative advantage so that it can be utilized to trade for what it lacks.

Discouraging local content laws and practice in the name of free trade is like fostering one-way trading which is not sustainable."

He also confirmed that Nigeria had established collaborations with countries like Angola, Ghana, Siera Leone, Senegal, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger Republic, Uganda in furtherance of Local Content development in the countries.

Dwelling on energy transition and the threat that investments on hydrocarbon development projects could be withdrawn, the Executive Secretary described it as a challenge for oil producing countries to address.

He hinted that AfCFTA provided a platform for member countries to collaborate and provide funding and the technology to operate and develop hydrocarbon projects.



## Q3 2021: NB PLC records N309.22 billion revenue, declares N8.47b as profit

Nigerian Breweries Plc, the foremost brewer and leading beverage company in Nigeria has announced its figures for the 3rd quarter of 2021, delivering N309.22 billion in revenues for the third quarter of the 2021 financial year. The revenue represents an increase of 32.1% from N234.02billion recorded in the corresponding period in 2020.

Further breakdown of the audited result showed that profit for the company in the third quarter of the financial year also grew from N7.1billion to 8.47billion, representing a 20.1% rise.

Cost of Sales rose significantly by 37.9% from N144.1Billion in 2020 to N198.74billion in the period under review in 2021, while Marketing, Distribution, and Administration Expenses also grew by 27.2% from N67.86Billion in 2020 to N86.32Billion in 2021.

The board of directors of the company has approved an interim dividend of N3.23billion payable to shareholders at 40kobo each per ordinary share of 40k.

A statement signed by the Company Secretary/Legal Director, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Uaboi Agbebaku revealed that the company remains committed to its strategy to deliver improved growth as it continues to monitor the business environment and remain dynamic in its response to challenges confronting the business as well as that of the economy, particularly in the face of COVID-19 pandemic.

Agbebaku explained that the company would continue to deploy cost-efficient measures to keep the balance sheet strong and healthy while ensuring that the health, safety and welfare of its employees, customers and partners are protected.





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# Algorithm Media grabs multi-billion naira Coca-Cola business

In 2020, The Coca-Cola Company evolved its agency model, meaning its \$2.5 billion worldwide media spending was up for grabs.

Following the development, Algorithm Media, a 360° specialist media communications and advertising agency, has been appointed for the multi-billion naira Coca-Cola media buying business in Nigeria, after a hotly contested pitch.

This appointment is a testament to the strong global relationship between Algorithm Media and GroupM, the global powerhouse which ensures that the agency delivers an unparalleled advantage to its clients in the market. Algorithm Media's 'sister company', Ogilvy Nigeria also offers a wide array of WPP offerings.

It would be recalled that **MARKETING EDGE**, Nigeria's foremost marketing & advertising publications, had a renowned global strategist and CEO of Ogilvy Africa, Vikas Mehta as its Guest Speaker for the 2021 Virtual Summit in August this year.

It would also be recalled that Media Fuse Dentsu Aegis Network's Dentsu Coca-Cola Community (DCCC), a bespoke brand of Carat, was the agency driving all media planning and buying for Coca-Cola

in Nigeria before now.

Though launched in partnership with WPP in 2016, Algorithm Media is unarguably one of Nigeria's leading agencies with a combination of pioneering research tools, cutting edge technology and global expertise. The agency has a record of delivering disruptive media solutions to its clients. Within just five years of its establishment, Algorithm Media has developed cutting-edge solutions for brands, with tangible bottom-line impact. This has translated it into the top echelon of the media buying sub-sector in Nigeria, in a record time.

## About Algorithm Media

In partnership with WPP, Algorithm Media was launched in the Nigerian market in 2016. In 2018, Algorithm Media undertook the next step and launched Mindshare and MediaCom as its media agency brands into the Nigerian market.

Algorithm Media is a 360° specialist media communications and advertising agency. We have attracted the best talent from within and outside Nigeria and complemented this with best practices and strategies to connect brands with their



audience. By this, we help them achieve their business goals & gain a competitive advantage in their industry.

GroupM, the global powerhouse ensures that we deliver an unparalleled advantage to our Clients in the market by bringing together the best of a global and regional trading advantage and a systems-driven agency underpinned at its heart by data and people that are passionate and deeply rooted in the insights that drive the local market. This, we firmly believe, is an unbeatable combination.

Algorithm Media's sister company, Ogilvy Nigeria offers a wide array of WPP offerings which include: Advertising, Brand strategy development and localization, Below-The-Line activations, Digital service and PR & Creative development.



## MARKETING EDGE partners Lagos on AOT Lagos 3.0

bringing together key technology industry stakeholders, policy makers, government officials, venture capitals, product designers, software engineers, creative architects, innovators, tech enthusiasts and principal conversation shapers to drive innovations that will pave way for the evolution of a smarter, digital, more efficient and more competitive Lagos”.

As media partners to AOT Lagos 3.0, **MARKETING EDGE** will provide media coverage and amplification for the conference, before, during and after the event to give it the mileage it deserves. Marketing Edge will also drive conversations about AOT Lagos 3.0 across platforms.

Meanwhile, the Lagos Tech conference

is in its third year now. AOT1.0 led to the development of Lagos Innovation Masterplan; an innovation strategy and tactic that sought to transform Lagos into a smart city through technology. AOT 2.0 saw the launch of Startup Lagos and Eko Opensource, an innovative information portal that sought to deliver critical insights into the technology startup ecosystem and a platform that serves as a ridge for private sector developers to solve some of the governmental technology challenges.

AOT 3.0 therefore is expected to spotlight the growing opportunities within Lagos and across the continent with a focus on investment readiness, regulations, policy and other contributory factors to industry success.

**M**ARKETING EDGE has been appointed media partner to the Art of Technology (AOT Lagos 3.0). This is a technology conference being promoted by the Eko Innovation centre in partnership with Lagos State government.

According to the Lagos State Government, “Art of Technology Lagos is an annual tech conference curated by Eko Innovation Centre and powered by the Lagos State government aimed at



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## “Quality Standards certification is a good testament for us”



L-R: Dr. Oladele Ajayi, MD/CEO, UAC Foods LTD receiving the Halal certification for the company's flagship sausage roll brand, Gala, from Abdulazeez Ajala, Lead Auditor, Halal Certification Authority in Nigeria



L-R: Oluitan Mofiyin, Brand Manager, Snacks, UAC Foods; Adebola Williams, General Manager, Marketing, UAC Foods; Abdulazeez Ajala, Lead Auditor, Halal Certification Authority; Dr Oladele Ajayi, MD/CEO UAC Foods Ltd; and Chris Towoju, General Manager Sales, UAC Foods, after the company was awarded the Halal Certification in Lagos.

UAC Foods Limited, makers of Gala, has received HALAL certification, an internationally recognised standard which guarantees that products are safe for consumption by both domestic and foreign consumers.

This has made Gala the first and only sausage roll in Nigeria to receive endorsement from the HALAL Certification Authority on its compliance with global practices on food safety.

The certification was presented to

the management of UAC Foods Limited recently, after an extensive evaluation and audit of the manufacturing process for the company's flagship brand, Gala Classic Sausage Roll, and the exciting new variant - Gala Spicy, further enriching the Nigerian snacking experience on the go.

Abdulazeez Ajala, Lead Auditor, Halal Certification Authority, stated that “All consumers within Nigeria, can be assured they are consuming a Halal compliant product that is safe and beneficial to

their health”. He further emphasised the authority's endorsement of UAC Foods Limited for its adequate compliance with all standard practices while also encouraging continuity.

The process of certification comprised an assessment of the company's beef vendors across the federation, including a review of the process of preparation and packaging of the beef for the sausage rolls, as well as an audit of material documentation.

While commenting on the receipt of the certification, UAC Quality Assurance Manager, Adaku Umeizu said, “UAC Foods Limited is very delighted to have received this certification after an extensive evaluation by the Halal Certification Authority of Nigeria. As the first sausage roll manufacturer in Nigeria to receive this endorsement, it is evident our commitment to quality is non-negotiable and second-to-none. I am certain that our consumers will be more confident in our brands as they enjoy the tasty experience of our Gala variants - Gala Spicy and Gala Classic”.

Gala beef sausage roll remains a leader in the sausage roll category in Nigeria and is trusted by millions of Nigerians to provide the fuel required to keep going through the day, at great value for money.

Currently, offered in the Standard and Cocktail ranges, Gala continues to win the hearts of all, irrespective of income or age. The sausage roll is packed with nutritional wheat and beef to enrich its fans' nutritional experiences.

## Again, industrialists bemoan high cost of trade in real sector

By Oghale Mafuru



Players in the manufacturing sector have raised concerns over the high cost of trade which hampers the level of productivity and growth of the economy.

Chairman, Sona Group of companies, Arjan Mirchandani added his voice to the many who have decried the high cost of manufacturing in Nigeria and its effects on investment.

The Sona Group boss said: “Manufacturing is difficult in Nigeria. Many people told me I am crazy for setting up this kind of investment.”

According to the business tycoon, “The cost of manufacturing is growing every day. Most times, to get a container from Tincan Island or Apapa seaport and so on, you have to pay #1.2m for one container each.”



Similarly, Shopper/Customer manager, Beiersdorf Nivea, Olukayode Faizal, expressed concerns over inaccessibility to Forex.

He said: "A lot of our raw materials are still imported and that means we need to source foreign exchange. A lot of these materials that are used for personal care products are not on the exclusive list to source foreign exchange from the CBN."

He added: "So it means that manufacturers like us have to source Forex to buy some of these raw materials. Forex has been a major challenge to us. We just have to keep running and ensure that we continue to stay in business."

Urging the government to match intent with action, Mr. Olukayode said: "sometimes, government intent is very good and noble but the way and manner the policies are executed might actually create some infractions on the operations of the manufacturers which is where a lot of focus needs to be put to ensure that the execution of these policies are seamless as much as possible and it does not have negative impact on manufacturers."

According to the World Bank-ESCAP trade costs for 2019, trade costs for African countries are on the average equivalent of a 304% tariff and for Nigeria, it's even slightly higher at 306%.

Recently, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and former finance minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in a virtual address at a two-day Mid-term Ministerial performance review retreat organized by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, decried the high cost of trade in the country warning that it will discourage investment in the country.

The WTO DG emphasised the need to improve security to attract foreign and domestic investments. She urged the country not only to slash trade costs but also infrastructure cost, linkage cost, regulatory cost, customs cost, and all costs associated with moving goods from the factory to the final consumer to complement investment facilitation.

According to her, congestion, capacity constraints and high costs at Nigerian ports do not encourage investment as they make it difficult to build supply chain operations in the country.

# Ekiti leads the pack at NAFEST 2021

By Zion Rufus



**E**kiti State, a foremost state in South West has led the pack amongst the 36 states of the federation by emerging overall best winner in the just concluded National Festival of Arts and Culture held in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital.

The state was closely followed in the number two position by Rivers State in the hotly competitive one-week national fiesta.

Now in its 34th edition, the National Festival of Arts and Culture which is usually rotated among the states of the federation, was introduced in 1970 to fulfill the purpose of cultural integration, unity, and economic development as it showcases the peculiar arts and crafts of various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

This year, the renowned annual cultural fiesta hosted by Ekiti State was all glitz and glamour as tourists, visitors, and delegates from across the 36 states of the federation colorfully represented and displayed their diverse cultures at the Ekiti Parapo Pavilion in Ado-Ekiti.

According to the Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism, Prof. Rasaki Ojo Bakare, hosting of NAFEST by Ekiti State is a milestone because "for the

first time such a huge event would be coming to Ekiti land whose resources are very low compared to other states in the South West of the country."

Ekiti State constitutes one of the largest Yoruba sub-group in Nigeria. Culturally homogenous in nature, Ekiti State is highly rich with numerous natural resources, phenomenal land formations, and luxuriant vegetation amongst other unique features.

In 2020, Ekiti State emerged second place at the NAFEST 2020 which held in Jos, Plateau State. Similarly, the State was also named the Overall Best State at the International Arts and Crafts Expo (INAC 2020) even as it bagged all the first position prizes at the same event.

Another event worthy of note is the Ekiti State Festival of Arts and Culture. Launched in 2012, EKIFEST is a programme designed to stimulate Arts and Cultural activities in the state. The festival has also positively impacted the state's economy by creating a market for local arts and crafts industries.

Other winners at the NAFEST 2021 include Bayslsa and Benue States in third place, Nasarawa at the 4th, and Lagos, Ogun and FCT at the 5th.

Amongst other notable personalities, some of the dignitaries at the event were: Speaker Ekiti State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Funminiyi Afuye; Deputy Governor, Otunba Bisi Egbeyemi; First Lady, Erelu Bisi Fayemi; Director General, National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), Otunba Olusegun Runsewe; Deputy Governor, Bisi Egbeyemi; Speaker of Ekiti State House of Assembly, Funminiyi Afuye; Secretary to the State Government, Biodun Oyebanji; Head of Service, Peju Babafemi; and Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Tourism, Rasak Ojo Bakare amongst many others.

# MultiChoice announces discount offer on DStv, GOtv Decoders

Leading video entertainment company, MultiChoice Nigeria, has announced a discount bundle offer ahead of the festive season for new customers to get access to its wide range of entertainment on their DStv and GOtv platforms.

The entertainment giant will be offering the DStv HD decoder for a discount fee of N13,900 with a dish kit and a one-month DStv Compact package, while the GOtv decoder will go for N7,900 with a GOtenna and a one-month GOtv Max package. This festive offer will be available from Monday, 29 November 2021 for a limited time only.

Chief Executive Officer, MultiChoice Nigeria, John Ugbe, commenting on the discount offer revealed that the goal was to ensure many Nigerians have access to the rich variety of local and international entertainment lined up for DStv and GOtv customers during the festive season.

"We understand the times we are in and the need for Nigerians to get value for every naira they spend, which is why we are giving more entertainment options to choose from at a more affordable price. This festive season, new and existing customers will enjoy a great serving of new channels including a special holiday pop-up channel featuring some of the biggest music concert this season and fresh local and international content together with our innovative products and value-added services" he said.

This offer comes on the backdrop of the recent launch of a new GOtv package, GOtv Supa, which focuses on an extensive catalogue of general entertainment channels available on



DStv such as Honey, Africa Magic Urban, WWE, TLNovelas, Novela Magic, ROK, KIX, Nick Jr and NickToons - worth N5,500.

The company also recently unveiled its content package for customers ahead of the festive season. This wide range of added entertainment includes a dedicated Holiday channel, which will show, among others, live broadcasts of 'The Experience', an annual gospel music concert on Friday, 3 December, 'Unusual Praise', a night of powerful music holding on 10 December, 'Akwa Ibom Christmas Carol' on 17 December and 'The Lituation Concert Experience' on Boxing Day.

DStv and GOtv customers also get access to great shows such as 'Turn Up Friday', 'AM Owambe Saturday', 'Gulder Ultimate Search' and much more as well as thrilling football action from Premier League, La Liga, Serie A, amongst others.

In addition, DStv customers get to watch a wide selection of international programming such as 'The Real Housewives' (starting with The Real Housewives of Atlanta), the 'Godfather of Harlem', 'Clarice', 'Flight Attendant' and much more with the brand new channel 'ME'. They also get to experience the new Add-Movies functionality, which allows customers on lower packages to select premium movie channels to their existing DStv packages at a fraction of the price.

To find out more information on the festive offer as well as other products and services, visit [www.dstvafrica.com](http://www.dstvafrica.com) and [www.gotvafrica.com](http://www.gotvafrica.com). You can also follow the verified DStv and GOtv social media pages on Instagram: @DStvNigeria @GOtvNg and Facebook: @GOtvNg @DStvNG. The following hashtags can be used to keep track of other offerings during the festive season - #ChooseJoy (DStv) and #SupaFestive (GOtv).

## Why advertisers will spend more on media – experts

By Abimbola Mohammed



Experts in the Nigerian media buying and planning sub-sector of the economy have called for a rethink on how agencies relate with their clients in order to gain trust and give value for their investments.

This call was made in separate interviews with MARKETING EDGE, Nigeria's foremost marketing and advertising magazine. The experts highlighted on how agencies should relate

with clients by making sure their points of view and vision are in tune.

Advising media agencies on how advertisers can be motivated to increase media advertising expenditures in year 2022, the gurus stated that innovation, value and providing solutions to problems are the next steps to take.

Speaking on the issue, Jude Odia, Managing Director of Starcom Media Perspectives shared his opinion, urging





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agencies to look in the same direction as advertisers by understanding what their problems are and providing solutions.

His words: "I think agencies should look at where the advertisers are looking, understand their pain point. As an agency we need to know what the advertisers KPI's are and address it. We need to help them solve real problems and the only way to solve real problems is to first identify what the problem is, then you can grow higher capabilities that will solve the problems and solve them on a consistent basis."

"Once we can do that and once there are pies in terms of market share, and the value share keeps increasing, they will be encouraged to do business with us. So, it's about when we help them solve their problems – of course, they will see us as partners in progress and will want to work more and more with us."

On his part, Eki Aduzeh, the Executive Secretary, Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), opined that if agencies can give value for investments and also do something unique from what other agencies are doing, then investment will increase.

Hear him: "The greatest motivation will be to show value for their money. If the advertisers are giving you money, you show that the money is well invested and then of course do something outside of the normal thing. If they see increase in value, they will definitely increase their revenue."

However, Austin Efenamokwu, CEO Ubiquity Media Holding, is of the view that getting accurate data, content, creativity and innovation is the way to go.

"The biggest challenge in the industry is lack of innovation and data for us to grow. We need to have reliable data that we can work with, we need to be innovative, we need to look for things that are not already available that will keep content growing.

"Nigeria is the biggest market in Africa in terms of GDP, in terms of population and in terms of content. If these already exist then there is potential for us to improve on creativity and also on innovation. If we can get this right we will be on the part of greatness. Clients are looking for value and value doesn't necessary mean money – maybe in terms of creativity and innovation you are bringing to them that will lead to transformational business value. That is where we should be looking at – think audience first and think digital first – you will get there."

# APCON gathers experts on possibilities of local creative production

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

**T**he Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) recently gathered some experts in the industry to deliberate on the possible ways of developing local commercial production in the country.

The event, with "Producing Advertisement and Commercial in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges" as its theme, had Femi Odugbemi Founder/CEO Zuri24 Media as the keynote speaker, Olumide Olowole, CEO/MD Yellow Brick Road, Onyeka Okoli, marketing manager group portfolio, Jotna Nigeria plc and Yinka Oduniyi, ITPAN President, as panelists.

While presenting, Mr. Odugbemi said: "We have to be intentional in the national interest, if we have learnt anything from the lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. We know that it is a huge security risk for any country not to be sufficient in the supply chain of its most critical industries.

"In fact, the creative industry of every nation must recognize that a new future awaits it based on how it does business budget on commercial production. The impact per higher insurance cost and travel time for cruise are going to be longer. Carrying some production equipment will continue to rise without a doubt and Covid-19 protocols will complicate more production processes everywhere in the world for quite a bit of time to come."

He further said: "That may be our call to invest now in developing our own capacity. We must be deliberate; the development in any sector means productivity and growth of local content, training and retraining of human resource capacity and being careful with capital intensive projects in the economy.

"Nigeria economy will soon make outsourcing of products abroad prohibited budget wise. The negative trending naira against dollar will inevitably continue as long as we produce nothing locally. We must begin the necessary steps to redeem resources and empower human capital that will upscale the quality of outcome from



# APCON

Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria  
(Established by Act No 55 of 1988)

our locally produced commercials – the best time to do it is now."

He continued: "In many ways, we have embraced technology and the opportunities that it brings to connect our creativity and imagination on many levels across borders into the Diaspora, and that is happening in the music industry and Nollywood as well. So many TVCs have been licensed and commissioned by global platforms like Netflix, Amazon, African Magic etc. not to speak of thousands of Nigerian youth who are running YouTube channels and aggregating massive numbers of subscribers.

"Technology is doing a lot of good in terms of giving access to as many of our young people as possible to create and to tell their stories using their talent."

Commenting on technical qualities, Mr. Odugbemi said young people have been impressive, especially in the areas of animation and design, while advising agencies to be at the forefront of appropriating the best talents in storytellers from all industries and making them globally competitive on merits.

Also speaking, Olumide Olowole mentioned some of the limitations of local production as equipment, skill and the quality of actors that are being used in the local production, among others.

Yinka Oduniyi, on his part, suggested that more opportunities should be given to local production for better output.

In the same vein, Onyeka Okoli tasked practitioners to encourage and have confidence in themselves, noting that things will change for good over time.



# SEVENTY HEARTY CHEERS TO OUR ROLE MODEL

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*SAN, OFR, LLD, D.Litt, FCI Arb, FNIALS*

Former President of the Nigerian Bar Association, NBA, and the Asiwaju of Ikere-Ekiti On the occasion of his 70th birthday.

Sir, as you join the revered class of the Septuagenarians, we thank God for blessing you with such a bright, beautiful, blessed and highly impactful life with very indelible footprints on the sand of time.

We are both glad and proud to have had you as our iconic role model and pillar of support over the years.

It is our very earnest prayer that the Almighty God will bless you with many more years of service to Him and humanity.

*Hearty congratulations Sir!*

Signed:

**John Ajayi**, fnimn, NGE  
Publisher/CEO

**MARKETING EDGE**



# The Coca-Cola Company

## investments in Nigeria gross US\$1.7 billion in ten years

Facts have emerged that The Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company's investments in Nigeria in the last one decade have exceeded over 1.7 billion US dollars.

The company has also given assurance that it is even more committed to further boosting its investment portfolio in the years ahead with a view to promoting the nation's economic growth through sustained investments and improved capacity utilization.

Board Chairman, Nigeria Bottling Company, NBC Limited, Mr. Segun Apata disclosed this in Lagos during a media chat. He said that the iconic brand has contributed to the nation's economy in the last 70 years, noting that the business has expanded tremendously into other aspects of production which has impacted

significantly on the economy.

In his words: "We are the only manufacturer with hot-fill line in the country. What is most impressive is the US\$1.7 billion investment that our Parent Company, Coca-Cola Hellenic poured into the country in the last ten years (2011-2021). Before the investment that is in 2010, we produced about 180 million unit cases and nine years later, with the investment, we closed out 2020 with over 300 million unit cases."

Mr. Apata who reaffirmed the company's determination to increase investment in Nigeria revealed that the company has moved from one line plant and two line plants to huge plants in different parts of the country.

He said, "The Minister of the Federal capital Territory has just commissioned

the 5th line in our Abuja plant which is the fastest line and the line with the biggest capacity in plant. It produces 42 thousand bottles per hour. The same achievement has been recorded in Benin, Port Harcourt, Kano, Owerri and Asejire. We are also expanding our Maiduguri plant."

Mr. Apata revealed that plans to increase the production capacity of all the plants is in top gear noting that Ikeja plant being the largest plant in Africa may soon be surpassed by other plants as a result of the expansion work.

Speaking about how the company has fared in the northern part of the country in the wake of rising insecurity, the company helmsman stated that the company remained resolute in serving the Nigerian populace in spite of the challenges.

According to him, "We have never closed down in spite of the challenges in that part of the country. We are the only manufacturer in Maiduguri which has never closed down operations. Maiduguri is special, expansion of Maiduguri commenced three years ago and we are poised to accelerate it".

The NBC boss explained that as part of efforts to improve on human capacity, the company will also focus on human development as the training of its personnel is vital to the success of the business.

## Increased Privacy: Marketing is about to get more expensive for digital marketers - Oti Ukubeyinje

By Zion Rufus



The past year has seen an increased focus on user privacy across all platforms. On its part, Apple has been announcing industry-stirring privacy policies to the horror of digital marketers and advertisers who rely on third party data and cookies for their ad tracking and targeting.

Similarly, Google's third-party cookies phaseout hinders gathering of tracking data. Where Apple sternly sees

privacy as a fundamental human right, Google believes that preserving privacy and performance will protect the future of advertising. These increasing privacy policies will impact how well digital advertising performs. Amongst other worries, advertisers will no longer be able to deliver personalized ads and track the effectiveness of their ad campaigns without users' consent.

"The impact of the push for privacy means that marketing will become more expensive and more difficult for marketers and advertisers from an awareness and



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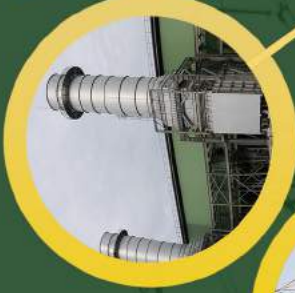
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acquisition perspective because as your access to data drops, your intelligence reduces and you are likely going to have to start expanding the number of people you reach again and this will cost more money," says Oti Ukubehinje, VP, Product Marketing and Growth, Terragon.

"What this means is that if not properly handled and creatively addressed, digital marketing will start to lose its effectiveness in a short time, businesses that don't understand what exactly is happening will start to measure apples for apples and get convinced that traditional marketing after all is better than digital marketing in an ROI perspective and they may just start to move funds back into more traditional approaches like they were doing before prior to the emergence of data driven marketing," the tech guru explained.

Apple presented a new App Tracking Transparency (ATT) policy which requires developers to ask for permission when they collect certain information (known as IDFA) from other companies' apps and websites for advertising purposes. Google doubled its privacy policy by halting the measurement of IDFA altogether.

The ATT privacy update prompts iPhone and iPad users to opt in or out of data tracking across apps and websites, which can have major implications for retailers advertising across Google. iOS app developers who are using the IDFA, such as Google, Facebook, retailers, and many other organizations.

"Today, a lot of businesses and marketers rely on third party data and cookies to make informed marketing and advertising decisions, they work with second party data companies and third party data companies to have access to data and make marketing decisions sometimes in real time, sometimes over a period of time," Oti said.

He advised: "The push for privacy does not necessarily mean that marketing has to stop or data driven marketing has to stop, it means that marketers and advertisers just need to become more intelligent and creative in how they go about collecting data in the most consented and compliant way from consumers. So it brings about the need for businesses to invest in their first party data strategy so that you would build your arsenal of consumer data that you have collected through a value exchange process thereby establishing a relationship that allows you to engage with customers better. This ushers us into an era where the value of the customer will automatically increase."

# Jude Odia tasks agencies on influencer marketing for growth

By Oghale Mafuru



As part of efforts to break into the new dispensation of marketing communication, the Managing Director of Starcom Media Perspectives, Jude Odia, has charged agencies to expand their tentacles to embrace influencer marketing as an avenue for growth and resource optimization.

The advertising juggernaut, who emphasized the need for agencies to embrace partnership and collaboration, noted that influencer marketing has not been fully harnessed by practitioners.

In the same breath, the advertising professional said that competition must be re-defined to allow collaboration and partnerships to exist.

He said, "So we must re-define competition really because sometimes where you really need help, it is those people you perceive as competition that comes to help. It is about understanding how to innovate and know that the person you compete with today is not necessarily your enemy tomorrow."

The IMC expert opined that competition has taken a new dimension and asserted that influencer marketing holds a huge potential for revenue

generation as clients are now moving budget in that direction.

In his words, "We are seeing ourselves operating in a wider ecosystem that is not just marketing communication. For example, influencer marketing; the more we distance ourselves from that space, the more they eat our pie because budget is not growing. Budget is shrinking and also has been re-directed."

Mr. Odia, who affirmed that the influencer marketing ecosystem in Nigeria is untapped, advised agencies to develop requisite skills to operate in that space as it is crucial to the maximization of the opportunities inherent therein.

"It has not been fully optimized. People are paying millions of dollars for endorsements. They are developing robotics influencers. So we are just starting in that space and we can grow it. But to grow it, it requires expertise, which also requires partnerships."

He challenged practitioners to collaborate with the existing players in that sphere to enhance their value offering and revenue generation channels, noting that clients are more interested in the solutions agencies provide for them.



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# Nigerian agencies to leverage in-game advertising

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



**I**n-game advertising is the practice of using games, particularly web-based games, to promote an organization's brand, product, or even the launch of a new one. To date, in-game advertising has been classified as a subset of digital advertising. Advertisers are beginning to incorporate it into their media buying strategy to capitalize on the reach that gaming offers.

According to App Annie's 2021 state of mobile report, mobile gaming grew by 20% year over year in 2020 in both users and total consumer spends. Also according to analytics collated by Reportlinker, the In-Game Advertising market in the U.S. is estimated at US\$873.3 million in the year 2020. In China, the world's second largest economy, in-game advertising is forecast to reach a projected market size of US\$1.3 Billion by the year 2027 trailing a CAGR of 13.4% over the analysis period from 2020 to 2027. Among the other noteworthy geographic markets are Japan and Canada, each forecast to grow at 7.3% and 8.8% respectively over the 2020-2027 period. Within Europe, Germany is forecast to grow at approximately 8% CAGR.

While in-game continues to drive growth in some countries, some media professionals continue to hold stereotypical misconceptions of who mobile gamers are, the type of games that are popular, and which ad formats work best. This is particularly true among those advertisers who have never run in-game campaigns.

Interestingly, a global agency like Dentsu is already in the business. In a report, Dentsu said: "Gaming's ever-increasing influence on culture, coupled with the promise of the metaverse has created limitless opportunities for marketers and advertisers. Gaming has moved from individual play to spectator involvement with the meteoric rise of e-sports and streaming platforms. Gaming platforms are now a primary channel for social interactions and self-expression."

Following the latest global marketing trend, **MARKETING EDGE**, Nigeria's leading brand and marketing publication sought expert views among Marketing Communication practitioners on why some agencies in Nigeria are yet to explore in-game advertising as a means of reaching target audience and measuring ROI. Acknowledging that it's a new channel, they said they are diving into in-game advertising already, while asking clients to expect more reach from it as it has proven to be an effective means of reaching large audiences.

Jude Oda, Managing Director of Starcom Media Perspectives, while responding to questions, said he would refer to in-game as a new frontier in Nigerian market but not globally, because it has already been tapped and explored by global agencies.

His words: "I will call it a new frontier for this market, but it is not a new frontier in Europe. It's also not in America where they have already tapped and explored it. If you do a little research on e-games, you will see that it's growing and it's bigger than entertainment if you look at it in real time, considering the size. However, it is a new space that the agencies in Nigeria are beginning to look into now."

He hinted that he is part of a team that is looking into exploring the opportunity the medium will bring to the table in the Nigerian market.

Hear him: "I am part of a team/project that is looking at how to take advantage of that. The time people are playing games is a captive moment when their attention is really focused on the game. Calculating the retentive index at the time you are playing a game is higher than most of our traditional media. So, it is about understanding that space and, to a large extent, by codifying it in such a way that we can bring out value from it. We should think about how we can use it, as it were, to meet brand objectives such as awareness, consideration, trial or conversion. We need to codify it in such a way that people will see the value and we can begin to monetize it."

Also lending his view on the trending development, Femi Adelusi, President, Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), referred to e-game advertising as a new imagined media opportunity in Nigeria, while noting that, with time, it's going to be the natural option for brand strategists and brand managers.

"Like every new thing, sometimes the level of adoption and the time it takes to drive understanding on the agency side and also on the client side takes a process. Sometimes it requires being able to show that this can deliver on your KPI's, brand growth objective, consumer growth engagement to be able to show the result and justify from an ROI stand point. So that is what will transform it."

Commenting further, he explained that gaming in general is a platform that is certainly going to grow over the years because of the opportunity that it gives to engage from a content standpoint. "Yes it's early days, it's early start in this market, but the moment you are able to show results, case studies and show consumer insight that indicates it's a path to follow, then you begin to see more clients engage in it. Leave in-game and look at platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. Instagram has grown in terms of usage in the last five years, but today also snapchat and TikTok are growing at faster pace. So everything in its own time and season of adoption will grow based on knowledge and based on ability to show that it's working. With time it's going to be the natural option for brand strategists and brand managers."

On his part, Austin Efenamokwu, CEO Ubiquity Media Holding, said his agency is new, but gaming is part of its five years plan.

"Our agency is about a year old and in terms of our 5 years plan, gaming is a way to go. Although it may not be where we want to be right away, but I think it is a concept that the industry needs to look at. Big agencies like Dentsu have invested significantly and globally into it, and I think it makes sense for Dentsu to integrate what I will call media neutral platforms and continuously engage consumers. It creates a different layer of engagement with the consumers through gaming and it also depends on layers of gaming you are looking into – football, movies and the rest.

"The future of media will fit on the more you consistently engage with the consumer on that platform to increase their engagement time beyond three hours. It is good for the industry."





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# What brands need to know about Out-of-Home going into 2022



By RALPH TATHAGATA

Streets of major cities around the world are teeming with traffic, cinemas are humming, and restaurant crowds are spilling over into the streets with consumers at every table inside and out. The outdoor energy is once again palpable.

While consumers are out and about in droves and driving around at, or flying above pre-pandemic levels, COVID-19 has permanently shifted consumer behaviours, and brands must shift how they are planning and allocating media, too. Advertisers must also take a more agile approach to their media investments and look even closer at the delivery of their ads.

Out-of-Home (OOH) advertising, though the worst hit during the pandemic lockdown, is back on its feet, offering brands massive reach and measurable solutions that help them connect with audiences in unique ways that truly influence outcomes?

As the global economy rebounds, brands need to know and do more about OOH to enhance their customers' experience going into 2022. Because OOH builds a bridge between physical and digital worlds, brands need to leverage it to build connections with consumers.

The pandemic has radically altered consumers' typical daily journeys. So, what does this mean for brands? Even though they are on different journeys, brands still can reach consumers wherever they are via OOH, because it offers a 360-brand experience where consumers drive, walk or fly.

What's more, brands are now integrating OOH with

social media to create capturable moments and the result is hugely effective. OOH is the only medium that is considered shareable, and marketers should develop the kind of experiential and visually stunning campaigns that entice a wide array of consumer groups to be sure their brands are seen with their ad campaigns.

With the digital revolution accelerated by Covid-19, OOH is now more data-driven which allows for highly customized solutions to measure, plan and optimize campaigns as a part of the media mix. Therefore, going into 2022, Out-of-Home practitioners must constantly evolve their solutions to meet the ever-changing needs of advertisers. This will continuously empower advertisers with the data they need to improve the effectiveness of their campaigns while helping brands elevate the consumer experience.

Ultimately, in 2022, programmatic digital OOH (pDOOH) should be part of every brand's digital advertising plan. pDOOH can be activated similarly to digital programmatic buys, including real-time biddability, data-driven targeting and audience-focused buying. Put simply, it's everything advertisers know and love about OOH just bought in a new way. It offers the scale, reach and creativity that make OOH advertising so popular and enduring, and advertisers can purchase pDOOH across most OOH formats whether it's billboards, airport digital networks or massive OOH screens.





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# 6 biggest trends expected to shape digital transformation in 2022

By Zion Rufus

One important lesson which the world has learnt since COVID-19 launched us into a new normal is “BE PREPARED”. The pandemic forced countless businesses to learn very hard lessons about how quickly things can change. Innovations that were initially projected for 2025 were fast tracked to 2020.

Amongst other notable transformations, the pandemic also ensured an accelerated rate of digitization and virtualization of businesses and society as 10 years worth of growth in e-commerce was compressed into just three months in late 2019, according to McKinsey & Company.

Looking ahead to 2022, it is expected that some of the digital transformations and tech innovations that

dominated industries in 2020 and 2021, will still set the pace through 2022 and beyond.

## **The year of convergence**

Since the advent of COVID, we have seen a lot of conferences and events going digital. Although 2021 brought the hybrid experience that is a combination of physical and virtual, 2022 will most probably see more of virtual.

“When work-from-home became the new normal, employees realized it was more convenient and output increased, organizations began to respond by delivering digital first and connected experiences to drive productivity and retain talent. As businesses are evolving, remote working will continue to rise in 2022 and it will usher in



innovative advancements especially in the area of software development. We will begin to see more businesses buying into the idea of hybrid models for team management and workforce collaboration,” predicted Lanre Basamta, Group Head, mobile financial services, Interswitch.

## Welcome to Web 3.0

Apparently, one of the biggest industrial revolutions to ever hit the world is near.

Basamta said: “We are moving past the internet into the future and the future is more exciting. It’s called web 3.0 where it is not only interactive communications, it is an immersive experience. The future is bright and there is a whole lot more it can do, though it may take a while.”

Web 3.0, which has been tagged “the next big trend”, comprises AI-driven services, decentralized data architectures and edge computing. Web 3.0 has been described as the next stage of the web evolution that would make the internet more intelligent or process information with near-human-like intelligence through the power of AI systems that could run smart programs to assist users.

## Deepening of social messaging

With over 2 billion users on WhatsApp, 1.3 billion users on Facebook Messenger, and 1.2 billion users on WeChat, a lot of brands have begun to leverage social messaging platforms to boost customer engagement by integrating them into their social media and customer care strategies.

The acceleration of digital transformation propelled by the pandemic also fueled the social messaging phenomenon as people spent more time online than offline.

“For the last few years we have seen social media evolve and become the dominant places. We are seeing a lot more being done in social messaging rather than on social media. There are also less restrictions on social messaging compared to social media, so a lot of people are migrating to communities on these social messaging platforms. Many of the blogs, social groups, are now more on social messaging sites than on social media. This means that we will see a growing use and adoption of social messaging compared to social media,” Basamta projected.

## Radical Evolution of Video as a primary means of communication

Brands, marketers, advertisers, and influencers all have one thing in common when it comes to social media marketing, VIDEO. Viral videos are rapidly redefining all aspects of social media influencing as businesses communicate with old customers and prospect new ones through video skits and campaigns to co-create experiences, improve customer intimacy, and as well earn the trust of their consumers.

Basamta explained: “Today we see video as the number one channel for communication. Many years ago it was difficult to create videos on your mobile phone. To upload videos online was slow, inefficient and expensive, as well as time consuming. Today we have seen with many platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook that there are a lot more

use cases for video. So we are going to see a continuous adoption and evolution and radicalization of videos as videos are going to become more mainstream. Many years ago, first it was audio, then the world shifted to textual, then graphics, selfies, and now we are in the age of videos going viral.”

Video has become valuable as an engagement tool, and offers some limited analytics. Businesses can also measure the number of views, length of view, and compare the appeal of one video with another.

## Advertising Spend goes to digital

Ad giant Dentsu in its latest ad spend report for the global advertising sector stated that ad spend is expected to surge 10.4% to \$634bn this year, and it makes it better for 2022, with total spending now expected to exceed pre-pandemic levels a full year earlier than originally anticipated.

Basamta broke it down: “From an ad spend, execution and adoption perspective, we are seeing a lot more people putting money in digital. Today people spend more time online and in the digital space than offline. So the implication of that is that the advertising budget will continue to go to digital at the expense of traditional platforms.”

The expert predicted: “We are going to see less engagement on Tv, and outdoor and see more digital penetration. One of the major things we saw this year and will continue to see is the rapid acceleration of digital content. We have some movie producers who are fully satisfied with producing movie series for YouTube and Facebook because they get more engagement and their sponsors and partners are happy to sponsor and partner with them there. They think that TVs are too expensive to put their shows on. So this shows that people are increasingly getting more.”

## Straight into The Metaverse

The Metaverse is hoping to bring the world together; Organizations, brands, individuals, marketers, advertisers, and publics across sectors.

The metaverse was first coined in Neal Stephenson’s 1992 sci-fi novel Snow Crash and described as a blending of digital and physical existence. Others, including Tech giants like Facebook and Microsoft have collectively identified it as an expansive network of persistent, real-time rendered 3D worlds and simulations that support continuity of identity, objects, history, payments, and entitlements, and can be experienced synchronously by an effectively unlimited number of users, each with an individual sense of presence. Although it doesn’t yet exist, as tech giants are working and investing tirelessly to make it a reality, eventually people will be able to completely immerse themselves in the Metaverse, and Marketing and communications professionals have been advised to pay attention to the metaverse because it is the “next frontier for online interaction”. Just like social media revolutionized the online marketing landscape, so too will the metaverse. ♦

## Global alcoholic beverages market to hit \$1.6tn in 2025



The global alcoholic beverages market is expected to hit \$1,684 trillion by 2025, registering a CAGR of 2.0% according to reports from market research company, Allied Market Research.

The alcoholic beverages market is segmented into beer, wine, brandy and spirits. Major players operating in this field include Anheuser-Busch InBev SA/NV, Bacardi Limited, Beam Suntory Inc., Constellation Brands Inc., Diageo Plc, Heineken Holding NV, Molson Coors Brewing Co., Pernod Ricard SA, SABMiller Ltd., and Carlsberg group.

The growth of the global alcoholic beverages market is driven by increase in global young-adult demographic, surge in disposable income, and rise in consumer demand for premium products.

However, the report added that high cost of premium products and escalation of nonalcoholic beverages market, owing to increase in health concerns are expected to restrict the market growth in the near future.

The alcoholic beverages market consists of sales of alcoholic beverages by companies that produce alcoholic beverages through the fermentation process and that produce distilled alcoholic beverages. The companies in the alcoholic beverages industry process raw materials into alcoholic beverages, package and distribute them through various distribution channels to both individual customers and commercial establishments.

## AB InBev introduces Beer Garage Africa Innovation Challenge, \$5,000 grant capital

Global brewer, AB InBev has introduced the Beer Garage Africa Innovation Challenge, a pan-Africa challenge to identify hi-tech, high potential startups and founders building innovative solutions across Africa.

Beer Garage is one of the global innovation hubs at AB InBev with the objective of driving innovation by building a strong community of ecosystem stakeholders. The team works with business units to find novel solutions for their business problems by leveraging the vibrant Fintech, Africa, and APAC startup ecosystems. At Beer Garage, innovation is the cornerstone to building a sustainable business that improve lives in communities across the world.

According to the company, the multi-sector challenge will be open to startups across the following 5 themes: Digital Sales, Digital Supply Chain, Sustainability, 3P Lending, and Alternative Payments. The winning startup tsands to win \$5,000 in grant capital.

10 high-potential founders will be selected for the 3-week venture building mentorship and leadership development bootcamp which will be delivered by successful founders, industry leaders, domain experts and investors; alongside leaders from AB InBev, and Hindsight Ventures's global network.

In a blogpost, AB InBev announced that the Venture Bootcamp which will hold from 15th November 2021- 21st December 2021 will culminate with an international demo day, wherein the cohort will pitch to a global audience comprising investors and corporates. Prior to the demo day, the cohort will be ably coached by pitch coaches, to ensure that each pitch is succinct and conveys a compelling story.

"In addition, we sincerely hope that the international demo day will attract venture investors to take a serious look at the cohort, and many will get investor interest."





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# Facebook's new update to address ads planning and measurement, performance reporting

By Zion Rufus



Facebook has disclosed plans to consider unlinked Instagram and Facebook accounts as separate people for ads planning and measurement.

The tech giant introduced Accounts Center in 2020, a control setting which allows cross-posting for users to share the same story or post on both Instagram and Facebook. By using the Accounts Center, users can share a story to Instagram and Facebook at the same time, or use their Facebook account to log into Instagram; setting up the Accounts Center allows users to control connected experiences that work across all Facebook's stitched

apps. For improved ads planning and measurement, Facebook is using the Accounts Center setting to determine how people may want their accounts connected or unconnected. According to the big tech, the update aligns with trends of offering people more control over how their information is used for ads and is consistent with evolving advertising, privacy and regulatory environments.

Facebook said in a blogpost: "In June, we started sharing our plans with advertisers for how we will count people for ads, which included in-product notifications. Then, last week, we began running additional in-product notifications and reached out to our partners directly. Starting today, if someone does not have their Facebook and Instagram accounts linked in Accounts

Center, we will consider those accounts as separate people for ads planning and measurement. Facebook and Instagram accounts that are connected in Accounts Center will continue to be counted collectively as a single person. This change will roll out over the next few weeks." Facebook noted that with the new update, advertisers may see an impact to campaign planning estimates and performance reporting for unique metrics. There will be increases in pre-campaign estimates such as estimated audience size.

"Previously, we counted someone with multiple accounts as one person for ads purposes if they linked their Facebook and Instagram accounts via those apps, or if we believed that the accounts were owned by the same person. For example, if someone used the same email address across their Facebook and Instagram accounts or accessed both platforms from the same device, we counted them as one person when they interacted with ads."

In 2019, the company integrated its three social network and messaging services — WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook Messenger, disclosing that each service will continue to operate as stand-alone apps, but their underlying technical infrastructure will be unified.



In a bid to further enhance its offerings, creative transformation company, WPP has acquired British tech company, Cloud Commerce Group.

Following the acquisition, Cloud Commerce— an e-commerce software provider, will merge with Wunderman Thompson's global network offering, Wunderman Thompson Commerce, a platform that aims to support brands

## WPP expands offerings, acquires e-commerce software provider CCG

across the ecommerce journey including the connection of customer acquisition and multi-platform commerce with inventory, warehousing and partnerships.

In a statement, Mark Read, CEO of WPP, said: "Clients look to WPP to help them market, sell and fulfill across multiple ecommerce channels and marketplaces. With over £1 billion revenue transacting through its platform, CCG already has demonstrable scale and success in managing the complex omnichannel

commerce needs of global brands. I'm excited about how CCG's expertise will further strengthen the breadth and depth of our commerce offering to deliver growth for our clients."

Cloud Commerce also provides software to retailers, allowing them to market and sell products through several marketplaces including Amazon, Etsy and eBay, while also managing stock control, warehouse inventory and shipping.





## ViacomCBS, Twitter unveil global partnership on digital offerings

**M**ultinational mass media company ViacomCBS Inc. has announced a global agreement with social networking platform Twitter to stream digital content across its portfolio.

The deal covers live events, hit shows and iconic franchises from the ViacomCBS' leading portfolio of entertainment, news and sports brands, including BET, CBS Television Network, CBS News, CBS Sports, Channel 5, CMT, Comedy Central, MTV, Network 10, Nickelodeon, Paramount Network and Telefe. Paramount+ will also host three Twitter

Watch Parties, in partnership with Twitter, to bring fans together, fuel conversation and build community around select highly anticipated original series.

SVP, Distribution & Business Development-Streaming at ViacomCBS, Andrea Wolinetz said: "We're thrilled to extend our long-standing relationship with Twitter in this expansive global deal that brings together the full ViacomCBS portfolio and magnifies the scale and scope of our valued partnership. Twitter is the digital water cooler for trending topics and fandom worldwide, and we're excited

to provide front-row access to innovative digital content experiences and culture-defining moments across the best of entertainment, news and sports for Twitter users everywhere."

In recent months, Twitter and ViacomCBS have partnered on select live events, including the 2021 MTV Music Video Awards, which aired its live pre-show on Twitter, and the BET Awards, which livestreamed from the red carpet to Twitter. It's likely that under the new agreement, Twitter users will gain continued access to these types of events. As for which other properties and programs will be featured on Twitter in the months ahead, ViacomCBS would not say.

Jennifer Prince, Head of Global Content Partnerships, Twitter stated: "We're excited to take our strong partnership to a new level, offering premium content across entertainment, news and sports and giving brands the opportunity to align with ViacomCBS' entire portfolio on a global scale. Through highlights, Twitter Moments, innovative formats and Paramount+ watch parties, Twitter will put users at the center of the biggest moments happening around the world."

While the new agreement is focused on hosting digital content, it will also involve Twitter's marketing support. The ViacomCBS programs will be eligible for both marketing support and brand sponsorship sales through Twitter's Amplify program, which connects ViacomCBS' video with Twitter's paid reach and targeting, the company said. ViacomCBS will also leverage other marketing features around live video, real-time highlights and Twitter Moments.

## The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity returns to Cannes, France, June 2022



**P**hilip Thomas, Chairman, LIONS, said, "We can't wait to reunite the industry and bring the community together once again. For over 67 years, Cannes Lions has served as a convening force for the global creative community. As the world continues to shift and change we know that our role

as conveners needs to evolve. Building Cannes Lions as a hybrid Festival will allow us to continue to reach our expanded creative community who we have welcomed through our digital initiatives over the last 18 months. It provides us with an opportunity to democratise, innovate and reinvent the Festival for the future."

Plans for the Festival, which will build on LIONS Membership, the subscription-based, digital offering launched in March 2020 and which now has more than 10,000 members, are being developed to offer the global community even more flexibility and

easier access to the home of creativity.

Simon Cook, Managing Director, LIONS, said, “We are putting the foundations in place to build a purposeful Festival that allows our community to come together in a meaningful way. Through highly curated content, community networking opportunities and agenda setting initiatives Cannes Lions will provide an annual forum for the global industry to address the most pressing issues the industry and world are facing today. In doing this, sustainability is top of mind for us – as it is for the industry – and we’ve committed to putting a sustainability agenda in place. Together with a number of partners, we are striving to deliver our most sustainable Festival in history.”

Recently, LIONS opened its annual State of Creativity Study. Designed to uncover the industry’s attitudes and approaches towards creativity, and paint an accurate picture of what will impact the creative economy tomorrow. The results of the study will form the LIONS 2022 editorial agenda across all of its platforms and events. Cannes Lions will open its call for content in January.

Speaking about the 2022 Cannes Lions juries, Susie Walker, VP, Awards & Insight, said, “Returning the Festival to Cannes means that we can once again bring our jurors together in person. Our unique judging technology allows us to carry out the initial judging stages remotely but we’re delighted to be bringing the jurors back to Cannes to complete the final stages and award the Lions – as they have done since 1954. We can’t wait to hear the discussions and insights as our juries deep-dive into the work and set the global benchmark in creative excellence.”

Over the last 18 months, Cannes Lions, together with owners Ascential, has developed a health and safety standard that delivers industry best practice at live events. The Festival will adhere to the latest health guidelines leading up to and at the event. Cannes Lions will open for entries and registrations on 20 January 2022.

The LIONS Membership platform is the year-round home of creativity. For access to exclusive content, resources, training and networking find out more [here](#).



## MarketingWeek holds webinar; explore how marketers can tap into their most trusted asset – their first party data set

By Abimbola Mohammed

**M**arketingWeek, in conjunction with Criteo, held a webinar recently in the United Kingdom (UK) on unlocking the secrets of your first party data strategy. The insightful conversation was between Joshua Koran, Criteo’s EVP of Data & Policy and Natalie Firth, Head of Agency UK, and they both explore how marketers can tap into their most trusted asset – their first party data set.

The session debunks the future of addressability and data, and teaches why first party cookies are the key to the future of marketing and show how brands can take action now to get ahead of the changing their marketing landscape.

While speaking on what brands can do to continue to find effectively address their multiple audiences out there in a world without third party cookies, Firth explained the difference between first party cookie and third party cookies saying:

“Cookie is an empty text file that often stores an identifier, marketers use these identifiers to accomplish most of their marketing tasks. They can use the identifiers for frequency capping; they can use the same identifiers to do attribution when they want to figure out the value of the media they use on different websites. The first party cookie is not based in law, if we look at the law of privacy status they are focused on data controllers and data processors for the responsible use of personal data in digital advertising and any other industry.”

He added that identifiers help marketers to match their content to people across sites while measuring their effectiveness and media spend. Adding that marketers often use their first party cookie information to figure out what describes their best customers so they can do a better job of attracting their next best customers which they don’t yet know and have relationships with.

Koran also said in order for an ecosystem to function there has to be an exchange which means the commonality of interruptible information that links the buy side and the sell side together.

His words: “If marketers were to throw money over the wall and hope that it works they probably will not get a good return. This is where the measurement is one of the important uses of all these identifiers and addressable information. The important piece is to understand not just how we are doing the addressable medium but how we are going to optimize it in real time. So feedback is incredibly important for marketers because if we look at tactics we can focus on say conceptual often products attention solution replacement.



It is a fantastic engagement unique but it doesn't help with measurement, moreover it doesn't help with optimization if you are to target the same contacts from two different publishers or two contacts on one publisher how would you know which one is working better and how can you read the allocated budget to get a return on your advertising spend."

Speaking on why marketers need the addressable identifiers to understand what is working and what is not so that they can get a better return.

"The bucket of these really break down to commerce data knowing that these are your best customers whether they have spent a lot of money with your brand or not frequently. Marketers don't need to keep bombarding the customers with too many ads, they need to keep it simple so as not to irritate the consumers.

Because a lot of time users may have seen the ad before or may have purchased the product before or don't just like the ad but for whatever reason a consumer wants to see an ad it is a waste of their media spend trying to continue exposing the users. That users don't want to see an ad is the end of the relationship with the marketer whether they are a current customer or merely a prospect. It is okay for users to say I am okay for now and will rather see a different content."

While speaking on what brands can do to now continue to find prospective addressable audiences for their marketing campaigns in a world without a third party cookie, Koran has this to say.

"We've always known it's really important to understand our most valuable customers. It's just kind of got more important now given these changes and that kind of not losing this deadline or making sure that we are right on top of our first party data to know how we can use it properly.

As a marker if you want to ensure that you're not overexposed to the same audience and getting a much better value for your limited budget, one of the benefits of the open web is that we can control our ads across all of the different websites.

By doing a better job of enabling consumers to signal their preferences, without having to remind them of their product on every site they visit, not everyone is comfortable with, say, personalized marketing and we as the industry people should honour those preferences."

# Unilever posts 2.5 percent growth in Q3

Unilever, the Fast moving consumer Goods (FMCG) multinational, in spite of the volatile operating environment in all its markets, has posted a 2.5 percent sales growth in the third quarter of year 2021. This was contained in a release by the company recently.

The release stated in part: "We announced our results for the third quarter of 2021 with underlying sales growth of 2.5%. The combination of our strategic choices and focus on operational excellence continue to drive competitive growth. Underlying sales growth is now at 4.4% for the year to date and we are confident that we will be well within our multi-year framework of 3–5% for the full year."

Speaking on the development, Alan Jope, CEO, Unilever said: "We have delivered a good quarter against strong comparators, with underlying sales growth of 2.5%. The combination of our strategic choices and focus on operational excellence continue to drive competitive growth. Underlying sales growth is now at 4.4% for the year to date and we are confident that we will be well within our multi-year framework of 3–5% for the full year.

"Our strategic choices are having a positive impact on our growth and business momentum:

**Priority markets:** we have delivered good growth across our three priority markets of the US, China and India. South East Asia continues to be impacted by Covid-19, and was the main source of volume decline in the quarter.

**Channel:** e-commerce grew 38% and is now 12% of our sales

**Portfolio:** our high-growth new businesses, Prestige Beauty and Functional Nutrition, each grew double digit and we completed the acquisition of



digitally-native skin care brand Paula's Choice.

**Brands and innovation:** our focus on impactful innovation has led to a step up on measured product superiority and average innovation project size.

**Organisation and culture:** our organisational agility has allowed us to take rapid pricing actions in response to unprecedented cost inflation.

"Cost inflation remains at strongly elevated levels, and this will continue into next year. We have and will continue to respond across our categories and markets, taking appropriate pricing action and implementing a range of productivity measures to offset increased costs. We continue to expect that we will deliver in line with our margin guidance of around flat for the full year."

Meanwhile, the sales growth may have been driven by performance in the company's three priority markets of the US, India and China. According to the release, strong growth was witnessed in these markets. "In the US our food solutions, functional nutrition and Prestige Beauty businesses all contributed to growth, whilst in-home food and ice cream declined. We are continuing to see a trend of increased eating away from home and greater offline shopping. China grew high single digit led."

# From tech giant to metaverse company, Facebook emerges 'Meta'

By Zion Rufus

**T**ech giant, Facebook is finally achieving its age-long mission of becoming a metaverse company as it announced a global rebrand of its company name to "Meta" and a new logo to further define its new positioning.

Though it is still in the works, Facebook is one of the biggest tech companies investing heavily in creating a Metaverse. The Metaverse is an alternative virtual world that blends aspects of digital technologies including video-conferencing, immersive games, cryptocurrencies, email, virtual reality, social media, and live-streaming.

The tech giant announced that it is investing \$50 million and creating 10,000 new jobs across the European Union to help make the building of the Metaverse a reality. In addition, the big tech is investing \$150 million in AR/VR training and resources to help learners, creators and developers build new skills, access technologies and unlock opportunities in the metaverse.

In its blogpost, Facebook said: "The metaverse is the next evolution of social



connection. Our company's vision is to help bring the metaverse to life, so we are changing our name to reflect our commitment to this future. 3D spaces in the metaverse will let you socialize, learn, collaborate and play in ways that go beyond what we can imagine. We're already developing exciting new technologies that will help people connect and explore in the Metaverse. Connection is evolving, and so we are."

According to Facebook, the metaverse will be a collective project that goes beyond a single company. It will be created by people all over the world, and open to everyone.

Facebook disclosed its metaverse ambitions in September when the company announced: "We are at the start of a journey to help build the next computing platform. Working with others,

we're developing what is often referred to as the metaverse — a new phase of interconnected virtual experiences using technologies like virtual and augmented reality. At its heart is the idea that by creating a greater sense of "virtual presence", interacting online can become much closer to the experience of interacting in person. The metaverse has the potential to help unlock access to new creative, social and economic opportunities."

The Metaverse has also been described as an expansive network of persistent, real-time rendered 3D worlds and simulations that support continuity of identity, objects, history, payments, and entitlements, and can be experienced synchronously by an effectively unlimited number of users, each with an individual sense of presence.

## "The CMA is taking a leading role in setting out how we can work with the most powerful tech firms"

**T**he collaboration comes in response to the CMA's announcement in January that it would be formally investigating Google's proposals, which involve using AI to bundle users together into anonymised groups to target them with ads (you can read more about the proposals here). Google's new approach is intended as a more privacy-orientated alternative to

tracking cookies, which the company intends to phase out of its Chrome browser over the next year.

However, concerns have been raised that Google's Privacy Sandbox could harm competition, and concentrate yet more power in the hands of the search giant. There have also been concerns raised about whether the proposals are compatible with Europe's tough GDPR data

protection regulation. Meanwhile, the plans are also facing antitrust scrutiny in the US.

Google has made a series of commitments to the UK regulator about how it will develop and implement the changes. It says it will develop the plans transparently, in a way that doesn't give itself an unfair advantage, or discriminate against its rivals. It's also making a commitment to not combine user data from Chrome browsing histories or Google Analytics with its ad products.

For its part, the CMA says these commitments address its concerns, but it's opening up a public consultation to help it decide whether to accept them. If accepted, the commitments would become legally binding.



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# Dentsu names global product lead for media



**D**entsu International has announced Rohan Philips as new president of global product for its media service line.

Philips will take on responsibility for

developing the 2025 product strategy and roadmap for Dentsu clients worldwide, with rollouts through its network of global media agencies: Carat, iProspect and Dentsu X.

Prior to his new appointment, he was the global chief product officer at iProspect, and before that he held a positions within GroupM and Publicis Groupe.

This appointment follows the July announcement of Doug Ray as Dentsu's first global chief product officer, responsible for the media business. Philips will report to Ray.

Speaking on the appointment in a press release Ray said: "Rohan has a strong presence and a holistic understanding of data and technology and how it applies to media. His approach to client challenges and his ability to identify and solve these not only in isolation, but as a transferable benefit for all is truly exceptional and really raises the bar on what we are able to offer out of Dentsu."

Philips said that the whole media industry is at a "turning point" with "myriad factors" influencing agency and client decisions, including sustainability, privacy, the emergence of new platforms and the "departure of established tracking norms".

"It has never been more critical to map, plan and build the right tools and product needed to navigate this change for us and our clients to thrive into the future," he added.

## JPMorgan sues Tesla for \$162m over warrant deal



**J**PMorgan Chase & Co has instituted a suit against electric car maker, Tesla Inc. for \$162.2 million. In the suit, the banking giant accused Elon Musk's electric car company of "flagrantly" breaching a contract agreement in 2014 relating to warrants Tesla sold to the bank.

"We have provided Tesla multiple opportunities to fulfill its contractual obligations, so it is unfortunate that they have forced this issue into litigation,"

a spokesperson for JPMorgan said in a statement.

According to the complaint, Tesla in 2014 sold warrants to JPMorgan that would pay off if their "strike" price was below Tesla's share price when the warrants expired in June and July 2021.

JPMorgan said the warrants contained standard provisions that allowed it to adjust their price to protect both parties against the economic effects of "significant corporate transactions involving Tesla," such as an announcement the company was going private.

Tesla is, however, yet to respond to the charges.

It should be recalled that on August 7, 2018, Musk tweeted that he might take Tesla private at \$420 per share and had "funding secured". His subsequent

announcement 17 days later that he was abandoning the plan, created significant volatility in the share price, the bank said. On both occasions, JPMorgan adjusted the strike price "to maintain the same fair market value" as prior to the tweets.

Tesla's share price rose approximately 10-fold by the time the warrants expired this year, and JPMorgan said this required Tesla under its contract to hand over shares of its stock or cash. The bank said Tesla's failure to do that amounted to a default.

"Though JPMorgan's adjustments were appropriate and contractually required," the complaint said, "Tesla has flagrantly ignored its clear contractual obligation to pay JPMorgan in full," the bank said.

Warrants give the holder the right to buy a company's stock at a set "strike" price and date. The suit, filed in a Manhattan federal court, centers on a dispute over how JPMorgan re-priced its Tesla warrants as a result of Musk's notorious 2018 tweet that he was considering taking the carmaker private.



# Unilever hands over global tea division in \$5.1 billion deal



Following a year-long review, FMCG giant, Unilever is finally selling off its global tea business Ekaterra to private equity and investment advisory firm—CVC Capital Partners in a \$5.1 billion.

According to Unilever, Ekaterra which hosts a portfolio of 34 tea brands including Lipton, PG Tips, Pukka Herbs and TAZO will be sold to CVC's Capital Fund VIII on a cash and debt free basis in a process that is expected to conclude in the second half of 2022.

Alan Jope, CEO of Unilever said: "The evolution of our portfolio into higher growth spaces is an important part of our growth strategy for Unilever. Our decision to sell ekaterra demonstrates further progress in delivering against our plans."

"We are proud of the place that our Tea business has in our company's history. We

look forward to seeing ekaterra, with its strong brands and global footprint, prosper under CVC's ownership. I would like to thank our Tea colleagues around the world for their passion and commitment to our Tea business and wish them well for the future."

Earlier in 2020, Unilever global headquarters had announced a strategic review of the global tea business. The review, according to Unilever, prompted the decision to retain the tea businesses in India and Indonesia, as well as the partnership interests in the ready-to drink joint venture, while noting that the tea business potential can best be achieved as a separate entity.

In January, Unilever also notified The Nigerian Stock Exchange and esteemed shareholders of its plan to separate the Unilever Nigeria Plc tea business into a separate legal entity.

The consumer goods giant noted that the planned separation which is expected to be concluded by the end of this year will go through the normal approval process.

# Diageo to promote responsible drinking with Know When To Stop campaign



Brewery giant, Diageo has unveiled "Know When to Stop", a global campaign designed to promote responsible drinking during the festive period.

The campaign which is rolled out across the brewer's social channels, is part

of the company's commitment to reach one billion people with dedicated responsible drinking messages by 2030 and to educate people on the risks of the harmful use of alcohol as part of its 10-year action plan.

Speaking on the initiative, Global Director of Diageo in Society, Kate

Gibson said: "We know the holidays are an important time of year for people to be getting together and celebrating. This campaign is a fun, festive reminder that there's a happy limit to everything and the holidays are best enjoyed in moderation, be that drinking, eating, or binge-watching."

The global campaign has been designed to signpost adults to DRINKiQ – a global resource to help people make responsible choices about drinking, or not drinking. DRINKiQ is available in 16 languages and 35 country sites and is a dedicated responsible drinking website that provides training, information and practical advice on alcohol and its impact on the body, along with a range of resources to encourage moderate consumption.

Speaking on the online resource, Kate Gibson added, "DRINKiQ is a great place for people to go to find out more about alcohol, the impact it can have on their bodies, and the importance of drinking in moderation."

## VCCP launches first work for Honda

**H**onda Motorcycles has launched a 360-degree pan-European integrated campaign designed to drive the emotional connection between the brand and its consumers.

Honda's "Power of Dreams" line has had many iterations, and the latest — a pan-European effort from VCCP — aims to move away from product-focused marketing and build a connection with consumers.

The strategy is sound, and the result is a mixed bag of motorcycle scenarios and motivational quotes, which probably covers most people who might be in the market for a Honda, from boy racers to nature-lovers and classic bike fans.

It's almost a year since VCCP won the account, and this campaign, led by VCCP Madrid, will be a hard working one, running for a full six months across the big European markets, backing a series of new product roll outs during that time, and with media by UM.

Andrew Saxon, head of European marketing Honda Motor Europe's motorcycle division, said: "At Honda Motorcycles, our riders are very much at the heart of our brand. The beauty of a Honda motorcycle is that they facilitate incredible journeys and wonderful memories that stay with us forever, and this has been the case since the very beginnings of the brand back in 1948. In order to create a new brand platform it was critical that we placed our riders at the very core of this campaign."

Beto Nahmad, executive creative director at VCCP Madrid, said: "Honda Motorcycles is a world famous brand, and it's a true honour to be tasked with the responsibility of spearheading its European brand relaunch. Together with VCCP London, 'The Power of Dreams' has been a complete joy to work on, and a real embodiment of our attitude as a challenger agency, with an international footprint that delivers world class creative. 'The Power of Dreams' encapsulates what Honda Motorcycles is about — a brand which is passionate about its riders and about making dreams come true".



## ExxonMobil pledges \$15b for greenhouse gas emissions reduction

**E**xxonMobil has increased its financial commitment to greenhouse emission from \$3 billion to \$15 billion over the next six years. The US super major said it is now working on more aggressive reduction plans, which will be accelerated from an increase in the company's investment into its low-carbon initiatives.

Much of the spending is directed toward its Low Carbon Solutions business, which works to lower emissions in hard-to-decarbonise sectors like heavy industry, commercial transportation and power generation.

The first project announced by the low-carbon solutions business is a carbon capture and storage (CCS) hub at the Houston Ship Channel.

By 2040, the hub plans to capture and store 100 million tonnes per annum of carbon dioxide from a variety of facilities in the area. Eleven companies have expressed interest in participating in the hub.

During a recent congressional inquiry that put oil and gas executives on the stand, ExxonMobil chief executive Darren Woods said the price on carbon required for the hub is \$100 per tonne but may differ project to project. Earlier this year, a

lobbyist for ExxonMobil told Greenpeace activists pretending to be headhunters that the company's ostensible support for a carbon tax was merely a talking point, but that a policy change in the US would be a "nonstarter".

While ExxonMobil did not initially announce what carbon price would be needed for its Houston project, it publicly supported national carbon pricing, and later clarified that there is some market hesitancy to a national carbon tax.

But other carbon-pricing options focus on market-based mechanisms, and ExxonMobil said scaling up low-carbon programmes will give the market a better idea of the costs, and therefore preferred prices of carbon.

Last week, ExxonMobil signed a memorandum of understanding with national oil company Pertamina to evaluate the potential for the large-scale deployment of low-carbon technologies in Indonesia.

Under the MoU, the companies will identify potential subsurface CO<sub>2</sub> storage locations and will examine the feasibility of transporting CO<sub>2</sub> in Southeast Asia.



# Cannes Lions announces updates to the 2022 Awards



Cannes Lions has announced changes to the 2022 Awards which include the launch of the Creative B2B Lion and an evolved Creative Commerce Lion. The awards, which each year set the global benchmark for creative excellence in branded communications, will open for entries on 20 January with judging and awarding taking place in Cannes in June.

The newly launched Creative B2B Lion will celebrate game-changing creativity and effectiveness in work for products and services that are purchased by professionals on behalf of businesses. Philip Thomas, Chairman, LIONS, said it was a Lion that had been “several years in the making.” He added, “We first started discussing a Lion that recognises B2B work way back in 2013, but we always try to get the timing right, so that our Awards are reflective of the industry and in line with its needs. Having seen a rise in B2B work winning across the Lions, and with many in the industry believing that a specialist Lion in this area will raise the creative bar and elevate the discipline, we think that now is B2B’s moment to have its own spotlight on the global creative stage.”

The Creative B2B Lion has been developed with input and research from industry experts and is supported by the B2B Institute, a LinkedIn Think Tank and strategic thought partner. About the Lion, Jann Martin Schwarz, Global Head of the B2B Institute at LinkedIn said, “Businesses that deliver products and services to professionals are among the fastest growing industries globally. There is a new generation of high-growth B2B players who are rewriting the rules on B2B brand-building because they understand that effectiveness is all about the work. The launch of a Creative B2B Lion is an incredible initiative that will act as a catalyst for creativity and effectiveness. LinkedIn and The B2B Institute are proud to support this new benchmark and champion these efforts.”

In another update to the Awards, the Creative Commerce Lions have been evolved from the Creative eCommerce Lions to celebrate the innovative and creative approach to online and offline commerce, payment solutions and transactional journeys. Simon Cook, Managing Director, LIONS, said, “We’ve broadened

this Lion to reflect the different emerging areas of commerce. There was a noticeable shift across the work this year, commerce related entries were up 18%, and our juries identified emerging trends around ‘distributed commerce’, ‘equitable commerce’, and the proliferation of commerce more generally. Evolving the Commerce Lion is about keeping it relevant and in-line with a rapidly shifting landscape.”

Beth Ann Kaminkow, Global CEO, VLMY&R Commerce, CEO NY VMLY&R, has been announced as the Creative Commerce Lions Jury President, about the Lions she said, “Cannes Lions reimagination of the ecommerce category recognizes the disruptive power in commerce channels. What used to be considered below-the-line or thought of as lower-funnel, is quickly becoming the next great canvas for creativity and careers. As all channels collide around shopping

and buying, and online merges with offline, creativity in commerce is now essential to delivering consumer experience, brand promise, and memorable engagement. I am truly honored to serve as the Creative Commerce jury president.”

Additionally, the Media Lions have also had a refresh to reflect the evolving industry and ensure that the jury are in the best position to award creative media ideas rather than pure creative ideas. Susie Walker, VP Awards & Insight, LIONS, said, “We’ve added an explicit reference to media in the description of the overall Lion to make it clear that we are rewarding creative media ideas, and changes like altering the weighting structure that we give to the jury so that the majority of the weighting sits across the media craft areas, as well as updates throughout the categories reinforce the really clear focus of celebrating media ideas and creativity.”

Daryl Lee, Global CEO, IPG Mediabrands, who has been confirmed as the 2022 Media Lions Jury President said about the Lions, “There has never been more opportunity for innovation in media. Media today presents a vast creative canvas with which to grab the attention of fleeting audiences. By updating the category to emphasize the role media plays in creativity, the Media Lions are recognizing how the scope and impact of media has broadened. As this coming year’s Jury president, I am eager to showcase the powerful alchemy that media-led insight & ingenuity can unleash for brands and for society.”

The Lions will be judged by over 400 global experts. In 2022 the jurors will complete initial judging remotely before being brought together in Cannes to discuss and award the Lions. Walker said, “We can’t wait to hear the discussions and insights as our juries deep-dive into the work and set the global benchmark in creative excellence.”

The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity will take place from 20-24 June, in Cannes, France. The Lions will be judged, announced and honoured throughout the week. Further information on the Awards and Lions can be found at [canneslions.com](http://canneslions.com).



## Integrating with business partners

**A**n industry colleague once observed that some people are uncomfortable shopping for insurance because the product category itself reminds them of their own vulnerability. One way insurers can address this is through non-traditional selling relationships. In *Forces* shaping insurance distribution, we highlighted efforts by P&C companies to embed their products in the new car and home sales processes. This can make the buying process virtually seamless, downplaying associations with potential loss.

But this trend is driven by data, not psychology, and it's one more reminder of why the growth of the digital economy is one of the brightest spots in the current outlook for our economy.

To support the alternative business models of the future, you'll need to open your technology architecture to integrate differently, as is happening today with car manufacturers, home builders and a wide range of other businesses. Similarly, you'll need to work far more effectively in one or more ecosystems, with the ability to share information in real-time with other product providers, channel partners and customers. They'll also need to be prepared to ingest massive amounts of sensor data that are key to UBI and BBI coverage.

The key to effective underwriting is understanding behaviour. With access to sensors that give information about how and when a driver uses a vehicle and how a homeowner uses and protects

building systems, insurers can make far more informed decisions about risk. We're seeing similar developments in the LAGR and small commercial P&C markets, where innovative insurers have teamed with payroll services providers and other business services companies.

This represents a big shift in the sector as many insurers prepare for new ways of designing and distributing products that their legacy systems just can't handle. The issue is cultural as much as technical. Traditionally, insurers felt that they could engineer all the capabilities they might need to serve their customers. Now we're in a much more rapidly changing environment, where even the largest carriers may not have enough money or time to build a closed system with the kinds of capabilities they need to serve customers before markets have moved on.

A time of adaptation and selection

There's an argument that the insurance industry changes through a process known as punctuated equilibrium. This idea, borrowed from evolutionary biology, assumes that the way business is done is relatively stable for long periods of time. Then, in a burst of activity, there's a period of relationships being broken up and natural selection taking place.

Punctuated equilibrium is apt here. Concepts like UBI and life insurers pursuing investment management aren't new. But we now have a particular combination of enablers—new capital sources, redesigned products, tech platforms built for interactivity and different ways of thinking about

talent—that wasn't present until very recently. Taken together, these represent a threat to legacy industry participants—and a rare opportunity.

We've presented several different strategic paths that insurers might consider based on their sector, culture, core capabilities and resources. Just as 2020 served as an unexpected catalyst to some large changes to the way we work, more unpredictable disruption is inevitable. For insurers to thrive, they'll need to cultivate the capability to assess, pivot, partner, connect and reinvent themselves.

As the industry experiments with new business models, you'll want to quickly prioritize and explore the options that are most promising for your organization. You'll need to free up capital to invest in new directions. You'll want to explore different marketing messages so you learn what aspects of new product design will be most relevant to buyers. In other words, there's a lot to do and not a lot of time to do it.

At a time when private equity capital is flooding into the industry and InsurTechs keep honing their offerings, legacy players are feeling the pressure. But we're also seeing signs that leaders are preparing for this reinvention. Insurers have the domain expertise, the brands and many of the capabilities that give them the power to win. If they can build the flexibility to adapt to alternate business models, they'll help new generations of businesses and families manage risk and pursue opportunity

*Excerpt from PwC.*



**P**ortfolio-alignment tools will help financial institutions chart more scientifically robust, realistic, and profitable climate strategies.

To achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and restrict further increase in global average temperatures to well below 2°C, human society needs to reach net-zero emissions of long-lived greenhouse gases by midcentury. To keep average global temperatures from rising more than 2°C between now and then, we will have to limit cumulative carbon emissions on the path to net zero to fewer than 1,000 gigatons; to prevent a rise of more than 1.5°C, no more than 400 gigatons can be emitted. Both targets require substantial near-term reductions in emissions levels, which are around 40 gigatons annually. To reach the 1.5°C target, the world must cut present emissions levels by two-thirds over the course of the next decade.

This great transformation will only be possible if we replace, at scale, the global

economy's productive asset base with non-emissive technologies. Financial institutions understand that the capital needs for this historic undertaking are enormous. Success in the transition to a net-zero society depends on the ability to keep capital flowing to emissive industries engaged in decarbonizing activities while redirecting funding away from activities that do not support the 1.5°C ambition.

The financial sector consequently needs appropriate tools and metrics to set climate targets and measure progress against them. In cooperation with leading financial institutions, McKinsey joined the Portfolio Alignment Team, set up by Mark Carney in his capacity as the UN special envoy for climate and finance. Our collective purpose has been to enable measurement of the relative alignment of investor and lender portfolios with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. We emphasize that these technical supports are being designed in ways that engage with counterparties and facilitate their transition. Only through

engagement, rather than divestment, can we ensure the transition to a 1.5°C future.

The financed-emissions approach and its challenges

Today, the tool most widely used to measure climate impact across the global financial sector is the calculation of financed emissions. The concept of financed emissions is fairly straightforward. It begins when a financial institution invests in, lends to, or insures a company. That company goes on to produce emissions. The financial institution then accounts for a proportional fraction of that company's emissions in its own carbon footprint. The climate impact of a financial institution can be measured as the sum of the emissions it finances across all the companies in its lending book, investment portfolio, or insurance portfolio.

The financed-emissions calculations are an important and useful tool. The bulk of climate commitments made by financial institutions—now representing nearly \$100 trillion in assets under management—is

## The importance of building a data-driven organization



**T**oday's brands have more access to data than ever before. While the benefits of customer data are clear, this abundance of information also comes with a unique set of challenges, including figuring out which data points derive the most impactful insights. At Adweek's Digital Shift event, innovative marketing leaders from Hyundai, The Kellogg Company and Condé Nast had a panel discussion on exploring the tools, techniques and formulas for growth and what it means to be a data-driven company.

Creating a culture around data

By now, every brand understands the vital importance of data. Where the lines get blurry is, fully comprehending what it

means to be a data-driven organization—and how to get there. "First of all, you need to have the tools and technology," said Julie Bowerman, chief global digital consumer and customer experience officer, The Kellogg Company. "Also, there has to be alignment across all functions that your data is your single source of truth."

In order to successfully integrate and use data, Bowerman says that brands should view becoming a data-driven organization as a cultural shift. "We're having to think much more in a test-and-learn, agile kind of mindset versus typically we plan months out for a promotion and we wait and see what happens," said Bowerman.

Demystifying the data to put it to work

From the household goods industry to the car industry and everywhere in between, marketers are quickly learning that brands can no longer afford to ignore data to stay ahead in today's market. "We used to use leads as this indicator to sales," explained Angela Zepeda, chief marketing officer, Hyundai Motor America. "It was a big metric for us for a long time. But, the truth is, you can buy leads." Zepeda says that through executive sponsorship, Hyundai's focus on data helped them figure out a more effective strategy and shifted their focus from leads to searches.

Navigating endless amounts of data

Data is virtually limitless. While this is a significant benefit for brands as they fine-tune their strategies to connect with their audience, there is also such a thing as too much data. This is why every team should lean on a data expert (or team of experts) to help them navigate through the noise and pinpoint the data that's going to be the most valuable.

"You need somebody who has a laser focus on data fidelity, in terms of the consistent, accurate, accessible data; someone to make sure you have a strong infrastructure to promote accessibility and a data dictionary," explained Ainul Huda, SVP, global head of audience development, analytics, and social, Condé Nast. "From that angle, I think there is a strong case to be made that there is a need for a data sponsor, whether you call it 'chief data officer,' 'chief analyst officer,' it just depends on the industry that you are in."

Since data is the future of marketing, brands need strong data-driven teams to put the data to work in the most effective way.

Source: Adsense.

# Dangote emerges Most Valuable, MTN, Most Popular Brand in Nigeria 2021



For the fourth time in a row, Dangote Group, a fully integrated Conglomerate and proudly Nigeria brand again emerged as the most Valuable brand in Nigeria. In the same vein, MTN Nigeria emerged as the Most Popular through a Top of the Mind (TOM) survey conducted among corporate executives in the country.

The ratings were made public, over the weekend, at the annual top corporate brand evaluation report, TOP 50 BRANDS NIGERIA.

The annual top brands league table which has become like a report card with which top corporate brands have a feel of their ranking in the market is done with a special purpose model, the Brand Strength Measurement (BSM Index), a model that tests a brand's ability deliver on its promise to its consumers from the consumer's points of view. It is a qualitative, non-financial evaluation of top corporate brands in the country which is done annually.

Taiwo Oluboyede, the brand consulting firm's CEO in his address said, without any doubt, the subject of brand and branding has become central in every corporate setting. And regardless of the sounds of the time, the brand drives and determines corporate placement, particularly at an unprecedented time like these.

He said: "We are glad once again that a Nigerian brand emerged as the Most Valuable for the year. This says a lot about our tenacity and resilience as a people and our businesses, regardless of the situations around us. Even though overall, we have more multinationals, the homegrown brands gave an impressive performance. For example, 6 of the top 10 in the league table are Nigerian, most of which have also spread to other countries across Africa and other continents of the world.

Globacom another proudly Nigerian brand emerged in the third place, followed closely by Coca-Cola Nigeria who enjoys a lot of its global brand appeal.

Others in the top 10 in this annual ranking are GTBank, Airtel, Access Bank, Zenith Bank, First Bank, and Dufil Prima Foods in that order.

6 brands among the top 10 have maintained top 10 positions for 6 years consecutively-they are Dangote, MTN, Globacom, FirstBank, GTBank, and Coca-Cola. The Banking and Financial Services category had the highest number of entries among the top 10 with 4 brands. This is followed by the telecoms with 3 brands.

Airtel Nigeria recorded the highest gainer among the top 10, moving 5 places to emerge on the 6th position."

Commenting on the top brands ranking, Femi Awoyemi, a financial analyst, said: "With the thorough evaluation process and degree of attention to detail evident in the report, the list indeed provides a true and fair representation of top brands by strength, popularity and potentials in Nigeria...This edition of BRANDNIGERIA's Top50 Brands in Nigeria highlighted brands that have demonstrated strong resilience and adaptive capacity to the new normal in growing or maintaining their brands. These brands have been able to maintain consumers' confidence and market shares as observed by professionals and analysts..."

Chief Corporate Communications and Branding Officer of Dangote Group, Anthony Chiejina said: "Dangote's emergence did not come as a surprise to industry watchers. The brand has steadily increased its influence in many African nations through establishment of cement factories. It operates in about 13 African nations making it one of the most visible, recognized and admired brands in Africa."





# Brands and celebrity **scandal**

By RALPH TATHAGATA

**T**he world may have slowed down following the crisis occasioned by COVID-19 pandemic, but marketing has definitely not. Instead, brands have amplified their marketing efforts through digital, thereby increasing the need for celebrities and influencers to help create considerable awareness.

According to Charles Atkin and Martin Block in their seminal work, “Effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsers” (Journal of Advertising Research 1983), celebrity endorsements are a popular way for marketers to promote their brands, products, and services. By transferring the positive image and characteristics of a celebrity onto the brand, marketers aim to trigger consumers’ intent to purchase or use the endorsed product or service.

However, despite the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, only a few celebrities are squeaky clean. From salacious stories to rape to drug to stealing and fisticuffs, research has shown that firms tend to suffer financially when a celebrity endorser becomes mired in scandal. But how companies react when an endorser is caught up in a scandal determines the success or failure of their brands. Companies that engage with a situation and handle it well don’t just curtail the bleeding; they come out ahead.

Recently, one of Africa’s A-list celebrities publicly confessed and apologized to her teeming fans following the release of her sex tape, which she hinted in an interview that it was being used to blackmail her. Meanwhile, no official statement has been issued by any of the brands she endorses in or outside Nigeria.

This evokes a fundamental question: How much do Nigerian brands worry about endorser scandals? Understandably, established brands tend to evaluate a crisis by seeking advice from the marketing team, ad agencies, insurance carriers, and lawyers before taking a decision on an endorser – to avoid a rush to judgment.

Before now, A-list celebrities had an aura of invincibility. Social media has changed things pretty quickly? It makes bad news travel more quickly. Consequently, advertisers look differently at the endorsement genre. Morals clauses for new endorsers have gone from being very general, if they existed at all, to being highly detailed.

Although different events affect brands differently, marketers now perform much more due diligence when selecting celebrities, to minimize the risk of crisis. An extramarital affair might not be as damaging as a criminal offense. In fact, some brands such as Nike are known for hiring controversial celebrities, and when something happens with one, it’s much more patient, while others are much more likely to cut and run. For example, after a photo of the swimmer Michael Phelps smoking marijuana went viral, Visa publicly supported him, Kellogg let his contract expire, and some other companies stayed silent.

In all, the best approach is to invest in the selection process of a celebrity or influencer and then draw up a contract with a very strong morals clause and the ability to exit quickly if necessary.



*Merry  
Christmas*

**MARKETING** **EDGE**

Promoting the brand idea



# DOZIE MBANEFO:

## Advertising Czar as an empire builder *...Adding value accross industries*

By Ralph Tathagata

**F**or many Out-of-Home agencies, marketing their expertise to a specific industry is the most logical step. Clients want to work with outdoor agencies that understand the unique challenges in their industry.

Since its inception as an outdoor advertising company in 2000, New Crystal Communications has quickly risen to lead the market with its innovative approach, introducing a number of world-class products and services to the Nigerian market and earning itself a prestigious position within the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN).

With over twenty years of extensive experience in the outdoor advertising field and using cutting-edge technology at its disposal, New Crystal Communications' achievement and success story cannot be told at a glance. It boasts the most dazzling examples of outdoor, ambient and billboard advertising. The agency has continued to demonstrate ingenious and unexpected ways to capture eyeballs and deliver clients' messages in the best possible manner.

The agency's feat can further be validated through its array of awards, including but not limited to: Pan-African Awards, Africa Best-Rated Outdoor Personality, Nigeria Brand Award, MARKETING EDGE Brands and Advertising Excellence Awards, and Best Technology-driven OOH Agency CEO Award, Outdoor Agency of the Year, Distinguished Achievement, Industry Influencer and many more.

Interestingly, the man behind these amazing success stories is Sir. Dozie Mbanefo, a trained engineer with impeccable track record of outstanding performance in his chosen field.

Mbanefo, who has put behind him over



two decades of dynamic and admirable creativity in the industry, is an empire builder of no mean repute. He is like the proverbial rover whose entrepreneurial footprints are on all paths and, accross various sectors and industries leading the markets, setting the pace and adding values. A proud holder of MBA and has done a lot of courses in Advertising and Engineering in Nigeria, UK and United States of America.

Some of the other companies that are in the same group of company with New Crystal Communications Limited which signpost Sir. Engr. Chidozie Mbanefo entrepreneurial acumen and business audacity are; DLK Clothing Signatures: A homegrown brand, setting the bar for Nigeria's clothing & footwear industry, DLK Oil and Gas Ltd. an environmental service company, DLK Engineering Ltd and Farms.

# DLK Clothing Signatures: A homegrown brand, setting the bar for Nigeria's clothing & footwear industry

*"Naked people have little or no influence in society."*  
– Mark Twain

**F**or centuries and millenniums, the runway of human evolution and culture has been shaped by clothes and accessories. Fashion has been as crucial to the development of the modern human as music and dance, art and humour, sport and language. Put simply, without fashion, we would not be human at all.

This ageless, profound role in human evolution and culture has created a giant. The global fashion industry is conservatively estimated to be over \$2.5 trillion, with Africa's share estimated at less than 1% of that total. A recent report from Euromonitor suggests that the Sub-Saharan fashion market is worth \$31 billion, with Nigeria accounting for 15% of the \$31 billion (\$4.7 billion).

## How DLK Fashion is building an authentic brand and crafting a fashion vocabulary that every Nigerian is going to be speaking

Located at Lugbe, along Airport Road, FCT, Abuja, DLK Clothing Signatures Ltd is a leading garment and footwear manufacturing company specializing in manufacture of boots, converse, office & school shoes, and assorted accessories and brands, also in production of school uniforms, sportswear, professional and service uniforms (police, military, organizations, NYSC), The world-class facility is a designer's choice for a host of aspiring labels.

"We make bags, bedsheets, sandals

shoes, slippers, and PPEs. It is a one-stop shop. Our goal is to make the best homegrown fashion in Nigerians," Raphael

told **MARKETING EDGE** during a factory tour.

Raphael and his team at DLK Fashion





are so attuned to the makings of quality and authentic PPEs clothing and footwear that they're the kind of people who walk into DLK's Abuja showroom and find themselves critiquing stitches or techniques, and improving upon existing excellence. It's not that they've not done an excellent job; it's just that they've logged countless hours training and re-training themselves to pay attention to the tiniest details.

The brand and its products exist by the name, DLK. But the company's business model is not just to sell the DLK brand; it's a designers' haven. According to the GM, designers from Nigeria do not need to run to contact the manufacturers in China and other parts of the world with their quotations. They can come to DLK Clothing & Footwear.

There is no gainsaying that this is an age where fast fashion reigns supreme. Stepping out of the DLK's showroom, Raphael led our team into the DLK's shoe department. At the DLK shoe factory's various departments, each performs different stages of the production process.

### Discouraging Nigerian fashion entrepreneurs from going offshore

Nigerian fashion entrepreneurs and dealers rely heavily on importation, and have continued to bring in a myriad of products ranging from the most inferior to the best quality, while passing the volatile foreign exchange cost to the end-users.

"My goal is not to compete with that man that goes outside to import; my goal is to make him my customer. I am basically competing with the man he is going to produce with outside there. These guys go out there to buy from factories like us, but I am telling them, 'you don't have to go to that guy - I am here - buy from me,'" Raphael said.

In the clothing and footwear segment, there are different market categories. For example, school shoes and children's shoes. Importers who normally import these shoes from outside do so because they believe there are no local factories that can produce the same quality and standard. What's more, different markets affect the way that designers design, the way that models look, the way that beauty is defined, and the way people understand power through fashion.

Aba is roughly estimated to produce about 50,000 pairs of shoes a day and Raphael believes that if DLK produces authentic soles in that region, it can at least

take 30% care of the shoe sole market. And the same can apply to the Kano and Lagos markets, as the two cities have a large population.

According to the company's GM, DLK safety boots have been evaluated and approved by the Nigeria Army. Most of its products on display in the showroom have been certified by the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), including its face masks and PPEs which have NAFDAC approval.

"They (SON) have been here; checked out our factory and even taken samples to their lab for verification, and we have been given certifications for all of them. More so, one of the biggest client segments we are looking at is the government. We have exported to countries like Senegal and Guinea.

### Quality control

One job that still requires a human eye despite cutting-edge machinery is quality control, and DLK isn't compromising that either. From the procurement to the production, to the branding, marketing, research and development, the fashion firm is equal to the task. It also keeps itself abreast of the latest things happening outside its immediate environment, because it is aware that it is competing with international players.

For DLK Clothing Signatures Ltd, aside from increasing bottom line and building an enviable brand, its ultimate goal is to get Nigerians interested in brands that are created on their domestic soil. And one of those brand is DLK.







## Oil spills in Niger-Delta

# How DLK Oil & Gas is restoring the soil ecosystem

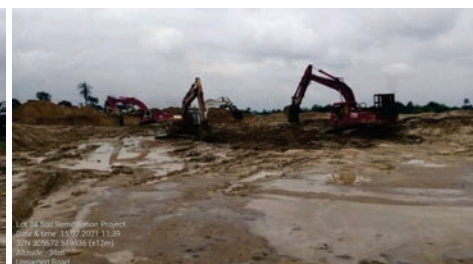
The time is 10:25 A.M., Kisi Melubari, a thirty-nine-year-old farmer from Khana, Ogoniland, enthusiastically picks corn on her farm of about 300 square metres. It's harvest time, the silk of many corn ears has turned brown, but the husks are still green. The time is right for fresh and milky harvest, and each stalk has at least one ear near the top. Having harvested only as much as her family could eat for the day, she peels the husks off a handful of ears exposing how fresh and thick the white grains, finely set in rows on the cobs, are.

“Our crop yields got poorer each time we planted until no crop, not even grass, could grow on this soil. But since that company down there (pointing in the direction of DLK Oil & Gas Limited site) worked on this portion of our farmland, the soil has become much healthier. That’s why we’re enjoying a good harvest and my husband and I can now support our family of six sufficiently,” Mrs. Melubari enthused.

After many years of lingering degradation, Alera Baridilo is one of the few farmers in this once ruined and fallow area of Ogoniland to trial maize and cassava on the recently treated soil. She is in her farm to pick fresh corn, but wants to make sure they are in the milk stage. She partially peels the husks off a corn ear and punctures a kernel to confirm the milky liquid inside.

### Destruction of the soil ecosystem

Oil spills are common events in Nigeria, specifically in the Niger-Delta. According to an oil industry report, half of all spills





occur due to pipeline and tanker accidents (50%). Other causes include sabotage (28%) and oil production operations (21%), with 1% of the spills being accounted for by inadequate or non-functional production equipment.

Oil spills occur frequently. For instance, there were 5,848 incidents resulting in the spillage of about 169,691 barrels of oil between 2010 and 2018. Spills occur in all parts of the oil producing region, the Niger Delta; resulting in its being commonly described as the most polluted area of the planet. The impact of spills is usually enduring because many spill sites are either not cleaned or cleaned ineffectively.

### Touring DLK Oil & Gas clean-up site

Driving a few kilometers down the bush path from the corn and cassava farms, MARKETING EDGE team arrived at a vast clean-up site where DLK Oil & Gas Ltd maintains a dominant working presence among other vendors. Heavy machinery, including Pug mills, bulldozers, compactors, excavators and some of the most expensive construction equipment that can help with efficiency, safety and achieve quality were all engaged in earthwork operations. All the site workers were fully kitted and constructively carrying out their assigned tasks for the day. Upon enquiry, our team was made to understand that lots of the workforce is local.

Chike Umunna, the company's Director of Logistics, who introduced our team to Okechukwu Obiegbo, DLK's Senior Geologist on the site, noted that when it comes to choosing equipment, DLK Oil & Gas has a perfect set of machinery to get the job done no matter how tough the terrain is. The number of machinery on the site attests to that.

Mr. Obiegbo said the company was contracted to treat a land mass of about 7,306sqm and is also tasking itself to go down to about 5 metres below the soil surface. "So, the total volume we are treating is about 40,500 cubic metres of soil.

**Explaining the process of cleaning, the geologist said that there are basically different techniques to clean up the soil. He stated that as a clean-up company, DLK's task is to clean up the soil and bring it back to the native state. According to the expert, the best way to clean an environment is not to allow pollution to occur**

**again, as prevention is the best way of treatment. "But, whenever the soil is polluted, DLK comes in to clean up the soil. Currently, we are using a remediation technique called bio-remediation. Obviously from the word bio, it means we are using natural applications. We make use of nutrients, additives, amendments which are available. Our remediation techniques leave the soil in a very good condition and enhance the micro organisms that help break down the contaminants."**

The oil spill on Ogoni soil also affects the ground water because, according to the geologist, the geology of the area is at an average of 3meters. So, obviously since DLK's remediation technique digs as deep as 5 meters, it cleans up the water as well. "We are using different techniques. We are also using containment booms and absorbent parts to retrieve the oil sheens and the crude phase of the oils we encounter."

Khana, one of the local government areas with a large collection of villages, is one of the most polluted sites. Some pipelines that pass through the fishing and farming community have been the subject of spills for years. Rights groups said that millions of barrels of crude have leaked out across the Niger-Delta region over the years.

DLK Oil & Gas is currently working for HYPREP as its client. Before now, the reputable company with strong technical skills had worked for Shell. Geologist Obiegbo revealed that his company has worked under remediation for Shell within Rivers and Bayelsa States as well. "This is not the first time we are undertaking remediation services. We have done many huge projects for Shell and Agip. Our capabilities have been proven severally. And we have the financial backing to ensure that our projects are executed and on time. We are open to business and we encourage other oil and gas companies to contact us."

Interestingly, at the end of our brief tour through the land, MARKETING EDGE felt the privilege of being able to witness a massive clean-up exercise that is restoring hope to the locals. With the expansive and effective soil remediation done by DLK Oil & Gas, the Khana people will sure have vast healthy farmlands in the next planting season where they can cultivate and harvest enough to eat.



**D**LK Farms Ltd is one of the biggest modern integrated poultry farms in Nigeria and West Africa. The poultry farm is seated on a 72 hectare land located in Anambra state. The farm was conceived and built to bridge the poultry needs of Nigerians.

The farm is fully equipped with German automated closed houses comprising of 3 complete layers houses with each layer house, housing about 95,000 birds, 3 broiler houses, a feed mill, massive slaughter house and a rearing house.

The farm is known to produce high quality poultry products and ranks as one of the best poultry farms.



Layer Production Houses 1 - 3



Rearing House



Slaughter House A



Broiler Production House 1 - 3B



# Fifteen years of outdoor advertising excellence



Established in July 2006, Plural Media came into Nigeria's advertising landscape with a clear perspective of challenging the status-quo in the delivery of OOH media communications.

After deployment of her first digital OOH in Nigeria's oil rich Garden City, Port-Harcourt, the company quickly extended its tentacles to the center of excellence Lagos and since then has not rested on its oars in delivering communication value to her teeming clients, pan-Nigeria.

The agency is registered with the Lagos State Signage & Advertisement Agency (LASAA), Oyo State Signage & Advertising Agency (OYSAA) and is an active member company of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN). Furthermore, Plural Media has registered with South African National Signage Association (SANSA) since 2008.

With a mission to "enhance visibility and deliver measureable out-of-home communication value to her customers through the provision and management of strategic media apertures" and a vision "to be the leading provider" of innovative advertising media platform that meet the yearning of her customers in Africa, Plural Media is not just another provider of display media for advertising but an end-to-end solution provider.

The company turned 15 recently; and in the pages below, the agency's Founder/Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Uduak Basse and his top management team members reflect on the journey-so-far of the agency and take a peek into its future.



BOWLESTUDIOS



# Ours is a success story in creativity and innovation

## –Uduak Basse

*Uduak John Basse is the visionary and experienced entrepreneur behind the revolutionary Outdoor Advertising agency, Plural Media which in the last fifteen years has grown into a group of companies (in marketing, advertising, media, edutech and entertainment sectors) with footprints across Nigeria and beyond the shores of this country. Interestingly, he has built each of the phenomenally thriving and hugely successful businesses from the ground up.*

*This has been made possible by the fact that this cerebral professional cum entrepreneur is constantly driven by the passion to contribute innovative, sustainable, long-term, value-adding ideas; he is adept at trying new things with cheerful optimism, learning new things and an unflinching quest for discovery of how to make life better for his generation.*

*A man of humble mien, soft spoken, easy going and very unassuming, Basse, as he is simply called, granted an exclusive interview to MARKETING EDGE on the 15th anniversary of his flagship company, Plural Media Limited, reflecting on the trajectory of the award-winning agency from its past to its future. He spoke to the MARKETING EDGE trio of AMOS OLADELE, ABIMBOLA MOHAMMED and OLADUNNI OLAIFA.*

### **I**s it your person or your training that has made it possible for your team to be here for so long?

First of all, let me on behalf of my team appreciate Marketing Edge for the privilege of this interview and spotlight.... Then to answer your question I think that one thing that I believe so very strongly is that team work makes the dream work; if you have a dream and you don't have a team it is possible that you may not go far. As it is often said, if you want to go fast go alone; but if you want to go far you need to have people that believe in and are committed to your vision. That philosophy has contributed to what you are seeing. I also believe when people and their contributions are valued then high personnel turnover can be mitigated

### **What informed the unique name, Plural Media, which your company bears?**

I expected that question, actually. I think in several instances I have been asked that question...The simple answer is - at the time we were coming into the OOH space it was clear that we were coming with something that was different and so we needed a name that would help to drive

our value proposition in the marketplace... "Plural" or Plural Media simply speaks to the 'amplification effect' of the media aperture we were birthing.

### **By way of reminiscence, could you recall what the situation was and what changes you envisioned your organization to bring about?**

At the time we started operations what was common in the Out Of Home media space was predominantly static panels; and with the benefit of foresight and exposure, (and I say this with every sense of modesty), I can tell you that we (at Plural Media) contributed immensely to the birthing of digital out of home media platforms that is ubiquitous today. The gap that we saw was that there were no digital billboards; so we trail-blazingly filled that gap; and we are happy that we did.

### **What philosophy was behind the business name?**

In one word I will tell you, it's innovation! It was clear that we needed to come up with something different. And, like I said, that philosophy of innovation underpinned what we did, then; and, in all honesty,

innovation is still at the heart of everything we do, today. If we didn't come up with something different we probably would not have any chance of surviving. So, innovation is the only word I can use to describe how we operate and how we were able to find a space in marketplace.

### **What brand positioning did you create, project and develop for Plural Media in the market?**

In terms of brand positioning, I will say that we are a value driver. What I mean by this is that the solution we offer to the market clearly distinguished the way brands communicate with their audiences. For instance, before now, when a brand needed to deploy a campaign pan Nigeria, it used to take days to go fully LIVE across the country on the predominant static panels...; but with our digital platforms we were able to activate campaigns within minutes, if not seconds, courtesy of the technology that we came into the market with. People could then see that they could do things within seconds; they could have copy changes, etc. We were very clear about what we were coming into the space with. Even creative agencies didn't have the solutions that were digital billboards friendly...

At inception, we had an in-house team that reworked the creatives which clients provided. This was because most of the time what they brought for display on our digital billboards were TV commercials because they probably had the impression that these boards were big TVs on the streets.... We did a lot of work to convince them that they didn't have to bring in a full TV commercial for digital billboards exposure. A lot of them would insist and we then have to re-work those TV commercials to create sub-titles for them so that the audience can even understand the message. That was the tough work that we did and the value they saw us offering; and which then helped them to develop competencies that enabled them to address the needs of a mobile audience, especially in the out of home space. But thankfully this is no longer the case as the industry has evolved with clear understanding of best practices and what works.

### **How has your brand positioning resonated with your various target audience over the years?**

Our brand positioning has resonated very well with our various target audience as we are trusted to "deliver visible happiness" on our media platforms which positively impacts their top line and bottom line.

Of course winning their confidence and trust was not a walk in the park .

At inception ,when we pitched our platforms to clients, they were afraid to commit for the long term at that time because of power uncertainty.

One of the ways we doused the initial doubts was to ensure 99percent uptime of the digital billboards despite the fact that public power supply was and is still a huge challenge. Our business model is that every of our billboards is run the same way the telecom companies are running their cell sites; what that means is that all our Digital Billboard sites are not dependent on public power supply. We ensure that there are two generators running in specific hours interchangeably to ensure that those who had doubts could wake up in the morning as they're going to work the board is on, in the afternoon it's on and in the evening it is on. That way, we created the kind of credibility that media buyers wanted to see and they started believing in this medium; and today you see brands buying into this platform for a year or more knowing fully well that the boards will be on.

We have also helped other companies who were deploying digital billboards for the first time with what I call 'our play-book' to ensure they succeed as well because we believe a candle will not lose its shine by lighting other candles.

### **It's like Plural Media came to challenge the status quo, back then, is there any status quo that the agency is challenging as we speak?**

Yes, we came to challenge the status quo and the solution which we offered (and still offer) speaks to that eloquently. Even now, we are not resting our oars. For instance, one of the things which we also did was to ensure that we run all our assets/platforms from the clouds. With our mobile phones we are able to control and regulate what happens on any of our sites from anywhere in the world. When a client wants to see their campaign in real-time we can just share a web link and they'll access it... even when they request for playlog reports, we generate same in real-time.

We are able to engender accountability and transparency in what we are doing because we realized that if you (as a client) are able to see that if you invest your one naira on our platforms you can see and measure value throughput in real time, you can see that I am not just pulling a wool over your face, you'll be more at ease. Of course, every time a client wants to part with money they want to see value. By our innovation, people are now able to buy into our billboards by the hour, even by the minute and by the second.

You know one of the deliverables with OOH media is big stature effect for any brand; Even renowned online giants like Google, Apple, etc, for instance, still leverage out-of-home media to build their stature in the minds of their audience. The Coca-Colas, the MTNs, the NB Plcs and Diageo Groups of this world, all of them understand that the stature you need to build, the perception you need to create, you can only achieve that by using billboards and out-of-home media.

Now, when it comes to delivering that kind of stature you find out that most SME's will naturally believe that you need to have tons of money to be able to achieve that objective. As a company, however, we have changed that narrative... We have now made it easy for everyone who understands the value of outdoor advertising to use our platform and pay per hour, per minute and per second as it were. This is seamless because we have the technology to drive that; we have intelligent software that we use in delivering schedules on our billboard sites. In a nutshell, we have created what is called day-part buying of our digital billboards - by the day, by the hour, by the minute/seconds... So, we are still challenging the status quo.

**A**s a company, however, we have changed that narrative...

We have now made it easy for everyone who understands the value of outdoor advertising to use our platform and pay per hour, per minute and per second as it were. This is seamless because we have the technology to drive that; we have intelligent software that we use in delivering schedules on our billboard sites. In a nutshell, we have created what is called day-part buying of our digital billboards - by the day, by the hour, by the minute/seconds... So, we are still challenging the status quo.

### **In what positive and negative ways is the industry responding to the Plural Media challenge?**

It's quite natural in any other industry, that once you have enjoyed the first mover advantage with any innovation competition sets in....and that cuts across all segments in the entire Nigerian economy.

For instance, somebody innovated with the sachet water (pure water) and before you knew what was happening there was bandwagon effect; then, somebody





innovated around what is called bottled water (Ragolis) and before you could say Jack, there was a bandwagon effect.; and with the recent COVID-19 pandemic it has thrown up incredible demand for hand sanitizers and all of that; and there is a bandwagon effect in that space.

To bring it back home, we are happy to take first mover advantage because in so doing we have helped other companies to embrace change in the industry.

I would say, therefore, that the response of the industry has been positive; and it simply means that we are catalyzing positive change; it also means that we must be doing something right and we are proud of it.

### **There are no negative responses to the Plural Media challenge?**

I see those copy responses as positive because it means that the industry saw value and the industry embraced that value.

### **There is something which the agency calls the Plural Media Charter?**

I'm sure that you saw that on our website. Every organization is defined by its culture. I decided deliberately to make you speak to my team leaders, first, before this interview; I wanted you to have a direct feel with members of my team and the reason was simply because when you go back (after this interview) to look at the Plural Media Charter, the first thing on that charter is that we are a company founded by God's grace and powered by passionate professionals. There are 12 or so items on that Charter and it speaks of our culture, our way of doing things, our business ethics, how we compete, what we believe in, what we stand for, the things that drive us, the things that make us to wake up every day and look forward to

being at work, etc. I will only speak to one of them which is that 'we are a company founded by God's grace and powered by passionate professionals.'

It is really actually the grace of God, for us to be here, up to this number of years; and to tell you that I make no boast in what we have been able to achieve; I can only give God all the glory.

### **What is your clientele like, as we speak?**

To the glory of God we have clients across different sphere and segments – multinationals and SMEs; and like I mentioned before we have even developed an inclusive pricing of our offerings that appeals to even startups, where a startup company comes to us and says look I don't have so much money and I want to be able to reach out to my target audience; and we are able to give them a voice on our platforms. So from multinational companies to SME's and even startups our solution for our clientele cuts across all segments. I don't want to mention names; but it cuts across.

### **I was wondering if the relationship with your clients has been enduring as it has been with your team members?**

Absolutely! We have clients that have been with us back-to-back, and of course, you know that circumstances could change, strategy on the client's side could change. One of our first clients that started with us was Coca-Cola. You know that Coca-Cola understands the value of advertising and as I speak, if you drive by our billboard you will see Coca-Cola campaigns there. So, sometimes they (clients) go away but they still come back as it were. And so, I will say that Coca-Cola was one of the companies that started with us and right now (as we are having this interview) they are still with

us. There are several others as well.

### **Will you share some of your experiences in the South African market with us?**

Well, we registered with South African National Signage Association, SANSA, when we were starting out; but we are not doing business in South Africa at the moment. However, we have an affiliation with a South African company through our BTL agency; and so we drive most of their brand activations in the West African Sub-region.

### **What great strides have signposted the company's evolution in this market in the last 15 years?**

I will talk about our greatest challenge and I will also talk about what I will say was our greatest break. As you have checked on our profile, we began our operations in the oil rich city of Port Harcourt; that was where we deployed our first digital billboard; but we quickly extended our tentacles to other cities including Lagos – the Centre of Excellence. Incidentally, at the time we were coming into the Lagos Market the OOH environment was very hostile but by the grace of God we were able to have a share of voice and mind in the Lagos market.

We also had a very terrible set back in 2013 when one of our billboards was gutted by fire and it was really bad and, sadly, everything was razed by fire. That was one of our greatest challenge. But to the glory of God we were able to recover all and turn around the same location with something bigger and better than what the fire incident consumed.

### **Let's look at the sector in general; how do you see the OOH sector in the advertising mainstream from both professional and entrepreneurial perspectives?**

Maybe, I need to ask you this question, you said how do I see it or how is it doing which one?

### **Your own personal perspective on the sector both from professional and entrepreneur angles**

Alright, the OOH sector I will say is a vibrant sector. Vibrant in the sense that a lot of professionals are coming into the space, a lot of bright young minds are coming into the space and that has also deepened the engagements. Before now agencies used to engage carpenters

to construct billboards; aesthetics was completely missing! But now, we see practitioners being part of ideation and strategy as well as execution, practitioners in this space are holding their own, offering strategic insights into what works and what will not work, such that the clients are now seeing practitioners as valuable and indispensable, even when planning, and not just at the point of implementation... they don't just call you only when they are ready to implement. As a company, we have been involved in campaign planning to shape narratives; to shape client's strategy before getting to the point of execution.

Also, like any other industry, we also see a lot of quacks as well. You see a lot of people that have no business here being there... So many briefcase companies are in this space; and those are the same people that give the industry a bad name.

It is interesting that the regulators as well as the sectoral groups have come together to identify those kinds of quacks and make sure that they do not thrive.

**In your view how has COVID-19 impacted on the OOH ecosystem in Nigeria?**

If there is any industry in the integrated marketing communication space that has been impacted the most by COVID your guess is as good as mine; and the reason is simple: what we offer is on the streets and during the lockdown who will you find on the streets? One of the things that happened to us as an agency was we were just receiving calls "stop my campaign"; and the reason was simple, we couldn't blame them because people were locked up in their homes. But as you know, one man's meat is another man's poison, as out of home media was being starved, TV was doing fantastically well. Those who are playing in the digital marketing space were doing excellently well. But as the lock down began to ease, the brands are coming back to OOH. I just hope that the news we are hearing about the Delta variant doesn't get more serious but, in reality, I will tell you that the impact of COVID was severe on OOH. But the brands are coming back because, OOH delivers more reach as it were. Yes, COVID impacted us negatively; we hope it doesn't come back again in the third wave as we are hearing, but as at today the brands are coming back to embrace what works and that is OOH.

**How has Plural Media been coping at this period?**

Well, I will be pretending if I tell you that we weren't badly hit. We were badly hit.



**Is Nigerian OOH (practice and business) globally competitive?**

Absolutely! as a tourist if you travel into this country today and you also have the opportunity to visit some other cities in the world, you will see that there are some formats that our market can boast of in terms of size that other cities don't have; If you drive round Lagos and Abuja in particular, for instance, you will see the kind of formats and billboard sizes that will make you marvel. So, I think we are very competitive.

Like Jack Ma, the founder Alibaba said, "If there is any achievement you have in 2020 it is not how many billions you made, it is that you are alive". That is the greatest breakthrough! So, for us as a company, that we didn't lose anybody to the pandemic, I think that is the most important thing because the holy book says there is a hope for a tree, when it is cut down because it can grow back at the scent of water...not even water touching it, but the scent of water!

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**You did mention some specific locations in some countries that by virtue of OOH displays those locations are tourist attractions; we don't have such yet in Nigeria?**

I think the Lagos signage and advertisement agency, LASAA, at some point was thinking of those kinds of places somewhere in Marina, Victoria Island, and Ikeja. I think those possibilities are not ruled out.

**How would you define the future of OOH in Nigeria?**

Very bright, because you either see a glass of water as half-empty or half-full. One thing about me is that I always see the positive side of anything. So, the future of OOH is very bright. Creative destinations that could become tourist attractions leveraging only on the sheer impact of out of home advertising using technology, is a bright prospect for the future; and we will be happy to be part of it,

**What factor will undergird OOH practice and business in that future that is bright?**



Simply speaking, it is technology. Making sure that we use the right technology and the right enabling environment. Sometimes we have the best of intentions, the best of ideas but the environment is not enabling, it can even die with the person. An enabling environment will allow OOH business to thrive, both from regulatory perspective as well infrastructure perspective. I will tell you, for instance, that the cost of running business in Nigeria is very high, and for all the things that I have told you about, our greatest challenge comes from unavailability of reliable power supply. That is a huge problem. I am sure that if we have 24/7 reliable power supply, the cost pressures we suffer to generate our own electricity would have been eliminated and that certainly will benefit everybody in the value-chain.

### **How is Plural media positioning itself for that future of the sector?**

Simply by not resting on our oars. We have identified a couple of expected developments in that future, and one of the things that we are doing is to put resources together to play in that future.

### **The issues of affiliation, acquisition, collaboration and the rest of them; which one are you involved with in the sector?**

Coming into this space as a company, we tried a couple of things. We have tried to do business with other companies, we tried collaboration, and even joint ventures. We are yet to do merger and acquisition. We actually tried to do acquisition of another company at one point in time but it didn't quite work out and the reason was very simple – the mindset of the people in the industry. You see somebody that just wants to own that one billboard and doesn't want to see how that one billboard can give him more by just being acquired by another company. However, as a company, we have done projects with other companies. But we also found out the mindset of certain individuals in the industry. They don't believe that if you build business you can actually sell it. The mindset is different for someone who will think of running the business until he dies and his children will come and continue from where he stopped without any regard for whether or not the children have interest in or passion for the business. If you have those two kinds of individuals on the table do you think they will arrive at a reasonable decision?

For us as a company, we will be happy to see collaborations, more acquisitions and mergers as well. The way I am seeing

it, maybe regulatory-induced mergers may be foisted on the industry because as we speak today, I am told that in Lagos alone, we have over 200 OOH businesses in this space. What that means is that a time will come when mergers and acquisitions will become inevitable, like it happened in the banking sector. To answer your question directly, therefore, we are not opposed to this kind of thing because we believe that the bigger the better.

### **Would you like to shed light on your other businesses, and how they are faring?**

We are involved in experiential marketing; but lately we focused more on what we call experiential education using VR technology and it is doing well. We have used the VR technology to deliver impressive gaming experiences across points of social convergence, especially in shopping malls and leisure destinations.

We now use the same VR technology for immersive learning in what we call experiential learning and teaching; and we are doing a fantastic job in that space. Lots of schools, government institutions and education technology enthusiasts are keying into it;

### **What are your projection for this year and the future?**

One of the things that we set out to do this year is to ensure that we win back most of our clients that we lost due to COVID; and God is helping us to do that. The future holds bright prospects for us. What I can confidently say is that it can only get better.

### **Are there expansion plans?**

As a matter of fact, one of the things we do continuously is to be mindful of our mission and every day we try to make sure that we contribute to that mission which is: to be a leading provider of media apertures that meet the yearnings of our customers.

So we begin with the customer in mind; whatever we are bringing to the market we make sure that it will meet the yearnings of our customers. As such, if you ask what our future plans are, we will tell you clearly that whatever we are bringing to the market will always be customer-centric.

### **What would you want our readers to know about you, what is your own personal business administrative or managerial philosophy?**

I believe in teamwork; I believe that team work makes the dream work; and I think if there is any glory, if there is any achievement, if there is anything worthy

of celebration, the credit will first and foremost be for the people I work with who believed and still believe in my leadership and vision. You must have spoken to some of my management team, God has given me people that I could trust and to whom I can delegate. We are not a company that every time you call for a meeting it's only the CEO that you see. They (my lieutenants) have the same latitude to make decisions. I know that they have been properly trained to know what we stand for and whatever decisions they make follow certain internalized principles.

### **Do you have role models?**

Yes, I do. In this industry, I will tell you, quite frankly, the founder of Insight Communications, Dr. Shobanjo, is someone I see as a good role model. I look at the passion with which he has driven his many business visions; he is an inspiration to some of us. I have never had the opportunity of working with his Agency but from afar I can see what he has done and I am happy that he has been able to pen them down in a book which we all can read.

### **I want you to speak with the youths of this nation from the perspective of your own professional cum entrepreneurial odyssey.**

My advice for the youth is very simple: They should not be driven by the desire to 'blow' by all means!

The means or 'process used in blowing' should justify their 'blow' ...but unfortunately most of them just want to blow anyhow! and the means doesn't seem to matter to them; they just believe that the end will justify their means. I believe the means should matter as much as the end itself. Therefore, my advice to our youths is that the means to an end is as important as the end itself. The proven values of dedication, perseverance, patience and commitment to their chosen endeavor will pay off in due season.

# We've kept our head high despite challenges – Charles Ovie-Obi



*Charles Ovie-Obi is the pioneer director overseeing the Admin and Finance department of Plural Media. A member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON, he; attended Lagos State University for his first degree and later bagged a Master's degree at the University of Lagos. He goes down memory lane on the 15-year trajectory of the leading OOH Company.*

**A**s someone that has been opportune to oversee the admin and the finance department of the agency for 15 years now, how will you see the evolution of the organization administratively and financially in the next fifteen years?

As a company we have evolved in the last fifteen years, we had our teething problems and have managed to surmount them by the grace of God ...we have had our fair share of struggles, we have tried (and are trying) as much as possible to keep our head high, not minding challenges which have characterized the various phases of our business evolution. Our expectations is that the next 15 years will only be better administratively and financially by the grace of God.

**Administratively speaking, how do you see the issues of talent and personnel in the OOH sector and the entire industry; as we speak do we have the right talents?**

There is no doubt that there is a growing interest in marketing/mass communications going by the number

of graduates being churned out by both public and private universities in the country. As human resources managers, one of our major duties is identifying the right talents that will be needed for particular positions in the organization. Personally, I can say that there are so many talents out there, it's just for the HR managers in OOH companies to source for the right ones and put them in the right spaces; and you see that the company will be better for it. It is like putting a square peg in a square hole. Get the right talents and put them in the right positions and every other thing will fall in place.

**From administrative point of view, what skill sets do you think will be required for accelerated success in the OOH sector in this age of new normal?**

Speaking of accelerated success in OOH sector, I'd rather say better regulations; The regulatory bodies have not been really consistent. But, let me not divert into that; probably my MD would say something about that. I will just leave the answer the way it is.

**So you mean the regulation can take care of the skill sets that will be required in the industry?**

Yes, from the point of view of accelerated growth of OOH sector that you asked; it's just like what APCON has been able to do by trying to make advertising, as it were, more professional, just like the legal profession. You know that if you don't go through a University course of study in Law for four years, followed by a year at the Law School, and becoming a member of the NBA you cannot practice Law. APCON, too, has been able to regulate that if you don't pass through the process of relevant study and certification you cannot be an advertising practitioner. This has helped the industry to a large extent by ensuring the right talents with requisite skill-sets are available to meet the manpower needs of the industry.

**Now that life is returning to normal, businesses are returning to normal (after COVID-19 pandemic) how is this reflecting in the fortunes of an OOH business like yours?**

The question is, is life really returning to normal? ...because there is a third spike now, that started last week (before this interview) and we are being apprehensive. So, I can't really say that we are back to where we were before and even if life is returning to normal, it is going to take time for things to get back to the way they were before COVID.. My opinion is that as at today putting together what is going on all over the world in terms of COVID-19, it is going to take a long time for us to get back to normal and as a business our experience is that clients are gradually coming back.

**On a final note what are your own projections for the company in the next say fifteen year?**

Plural Media is a dynamic company that never says die. We are blessed with a hard working leader who will never say never; and he believes in hard work as the only way you can achieve success; he believes in doing more with less and that has been our principle. Again, to us, the most important thing is putting God first. All of those, combined with the value that we create in the industry, makes the future of the company to be bright. Very bright.





## Operationally, we have an eye for very strategic locations – Jimmy Okorie

*Jimmy Okorie is Director of Operations at Plural Media. He, too, has been with the agency since inception. He reminisces on the journey so far of the agency and takes a peek into its future.*

**H**ow has it been for Plural Media, fifteen years on? I must start by giving all the glory to God. When you start up something it will not be that easy at the onset; but what sets you apart always is the passion you have for starting that thing and that keeps you going no matter the waves; and, like every other business environment, it has not been very easy; but having God and people like our MD who always pushes and encourages us...., you just see yourself going and moving ahead. He (our MD) is one man who will always act passionately on what he believes - that inspires us; and (to me), by his actions he is better than the motivational speakers.

**From operational perspective are there stages that you can identify in the evolution of the company in the last fifteen years; if yes, what are those stages in terms of the growth of the operations of the company?**

Starting up, it wasn't that easy; because you had to identify spots; having done that you had to go through the normal process of securing approvals. From there, you'd

**Don't forget that we are in the vanguard of the LED evolution. Plural Media was one of the organizations that started the LED revolution in Nigeria; and my MD, each time we have a meeting, usually tells us that we have to be quick or we would be dead. He tells us that the Nigerian market is such that as you are thinking here, someone, somewhere else, is thinking about the same or a similar thing; so it is therefore either you are fast or you are dead**

take it up to construction and with that done, you'd hand over to the next people to begin to play their own part. For us, we have a team that goes out to sort these things out; but we do that in synergy with other departments like marketing. They (marketing team) tell you what they want because you can't just go out and then get anything. When they tell you what they want and, in so doing, you do make their own job easy.

On our part, what we do is try to get compelling sites that would be very difficult for anyone buying into it to say no. We always have an eye for very good sites.

**Typically, if you have a project or a campaign to run what will the overall operations of the campaign be like here?**

Number one is that we always put the client at the centre of everything we do because they are really the reason we are in business. As such, the turnaround time is always what we consider as the main thing. What we do, then, is try to meet up with their demand in very good time with high quality job, right from the time of construction to the time of display of material. And, then, we render daily, weekly, monthly reports which the account management team is always privy to and which they in turn, forward to the client.

**What are the typical challenges that the operations face in an OOH entity?**

It is nothing different from what it has always been which includes the landlords and by the landlords I mean the area boys. Till today, they are still there as a challenge. What you do is you try to make them your friend if you want to get it right; otherwise, your effort will be sabotaged. Hence, making friends with them, have an agreement with them minimizes glitches. If they are not there somehow the job will be a bit easier. You must also have an agreement with the fabricators, especially regarding the time of deployment and the time they will deliver to you what you are asking them for. Even they (fabricators) would ask if you have settled the landlords before they get to site.

**Apart from the "landlords" are there other challenges that the operations face?**

Like I said earlier, you have to go through the process of locating saleable sites, doing the needful and then securing regulatory approval which from our experience over the years is not a walk in the park as there is no predictable timelines even after meeting all criteria.

**In the next fifteen years what are you projecting for Plural Media?**

Well, I am not God; every organization prays for growth as you evolve; you try very hard to stay afloat even though when the economy is not smiling you try very hard to be dynamic, looking at new things that are coming up and how to make them count for you so that you can have

continuing success.

In a clime like ours in Nigeria, there is no stability in the economy; so at times it is very difficult to predict what it will be like. For instance, nobody ever thought that things would be the way they are presently in the country. Yeah, some said it was going to be bad but we never knew it would be as bad as it is; but it has really given us an idea that because of what it is today, you have to be very wise for tomorrow. I personally believe so much in God helping one out; otherwise you can't really say this is what it is going to be like; just take one step at a time.

**The OOH is now LED and digital-led; what operational implications does that have for your business?**

As you know, that development is no longer new; it was new when we started. The challenges were there but somehow we have been able to surmount those and, in-house, we have been able to train our people to be able to really meet up with any challenge that comes their way.

Don't forget that we are in the vanguard of the LED evolution. Plural Media was one of the organizations that started the LED revolution in Nigeria; and my MD, each time we have a meeting, usually tells us that we have to be quick or we would be dead. He tells us that the Nigerian market is such that as you are thinking here, someone, somewhere else, is thinking about the same or a similar thing; so it is therefore either you are fast or you are dead; you may be thinking of an idea now and before you know it someone else is already doing it.

What he then did was to make sure that our people were trained by the manufacturers of the LEDs. So, from time to time they go for special courses and then read up some other stuffs. That is exactly what has really kept us going. And I can tell you that till today, the relationship we have kept with the manufacturers is such that anything that comes out, we are always the first to know. He sets it out that way like a man of vision that he is. He knew ahead what it was going to be. And, if you look at Lagos state now LED is everywhere, which was not like that before. I am personally so happy because I know no matter what the situation is or what it will be tomorrow, Plural Media will always hold its own.

# At Plural Media, we deliver visible happiness to clients, consumers and the public – Rilwan Ajiferuke

*Rilwan Ajiferuke, is the General Manager at Plural Media. He has been with the company for more than 10 years. Having been with the company for more than a decade, he reviews the company as a brand and its offerings and its people.*

**How will you describe Plural Media as a brand?**

Plural Media as a brand is simply one that delivers 'visible happiness' to clients.

**How far has it gone in doing that?**

I am sure if we are in a position to blow our trumpet. I would say we have worked with several high profile brands and we are also working with new brands that have also become household names in Nigeria; and I am sure if they talk about the history of their brands, as far as out- of- home is concerned, our partnership with them in growing their brands will be mentioned and applauded.

**As the General Manager of the company, what excites you the most about this organization and its approaches?**

The most exciting things, here, are the people. I am sure no single person could have been able to make this happen. We have had great people within the system who continually yearn to learn more and to do things differently; and, to that extent, I am sure it has helped a great deal in ensuring the visible happiness we promised brands is made a reality.

**Would you like to talk about one or two of such brands and how you have made that brand enjoy the visible happiness with its target audience over the years?**

It will be unfair to start mentioning names of brands because I am sure we won't be able to mention all of them as we speak. Mentioning some and not others would be unfair to the latter. What I can say is that considering all the brands in our portfolio. I am not sure that there is any category that we haven't served, be it in the fast moving consumer goods segment, the financial sector or telecoms... We have served high profile brands and we are still working with them and to start mentioning names will be unfair to some of these brands because I won't be able to call on them as we speak.

**Do you deliver happiness through your structures or the contents of your messages; your graphics or pictorial representations?**





As you know, we are not a creative agency; what we work with are, most times, finished works; it is in some cases that we have reasons to rub minds with some brand owners who don't just see us as the last bus stop for execution. It has been more of let us work together to make things more achievable. But, clearly, in terms of delivering visible happiness part of what we do as a brand is we start with working with the mindset of our clients; and what that means basically is that whatever it is in terms of site, or platform we set out for is usually informed by what the clients are yearning for. It is not a case of we sitting down here and thinking for the clients. No. We engage our clients and ask them what are the things they are looking out for.

But, again, you know that our environment is a peculiar one; it is not everything you see out there that you can easily bring in here and run with it. We have been privileged to work with some companies out of this country and they always want us to do something new; but in doing something new we also know that will always need to be mindful of what is peculiar to all environments. Clearly, what we have seen in this industry is that, yes we always want to innovate but you have to do so within what your environment allows you to do. As such, the visible happiness (that we deliver) starts from that point where we engage our clients with the new idea(s) that we are toying with; we talk about it, what is their perception about it; we also don't leave out the ultimate targets, the audience, who such things are meant for because without them whatever you are putting out on the streets may just not achieve the purpose which it is meant for.

So, for us, it's a two-way thing in terms of delivering visible happiness that we talk about. We on the one hand working with those who buy into our platforms and, on the other hand, the audience on the streets.

### **Obviously feedback is crucial in your assignment**

### **of delivering visible happiness; how do you get your feedbacks and what feedbacks are you getting from the efforts that you make?**

We do research; there are some that we commission some institutions to do, because we do know that third party delivery is essential when you are doing research; you can't sit down here and be doing the research, chances are that people are likely to fault it. But if I engage any research outfit to do it and I am presenting that to a would-be customer it makes it easier for them to ask questions because those who conducted the research have their names at stake; they can be easily reached to find things out.

That goes for the traffic count that we do; we have reasons to engage the ministry of transport when it comes to those statistics. Working with them makes it a lot easier for us. Aside the Lagos State ministry of transport we also commission some other agencies who are involved in some of these researches and they come back to us with their findings which, of course, we don't just keep to ourselves. We need to put it out there to the public, especially our customers who obviously will need them to guide them in their decision making process.

### **One thing that is implied in some of the things that you have said is the fact that there are challenges in this environment; would you like to talk about some of the challenges?**

I am not sure there is any human endeavor that won't have challenges. From our experience it is even part of the reason why we chose to be in this field because we do know that it is about providing solutions. Certainly, providing solutions implies that there is a problem that needs to be solved. The challenges are there. They come in form of clientele: what they want, how they want it; challenges come from the angle of the regulator which increasingly is tasking and which, on the one hand is helping the industry, and, on the other hand, may be strangulating in the way they go about it. But, interestingly in recent times, we have seen some changes in their body language as regards the way they go about it and they are beginning to see it more as partnership because at the end of the day whatever it is you are regulating, I am not sure you are regulating to kill the industry; rather, you regulate to see that the industry prospers. It is when the industry prospers that you also will meet (or surpass) your revenue targets.

In a nutshell, therefore, there have been challenges from different angles; but that is why we are there to ensure that we work around them and work with different stakeholders to surmount the challenges to the benefit of all.

### **Looking forward, what are your own personal projections for this organization in the coming, say fifteen years from now?**

We are talking about fifteen years of Plural Media's existence and within those fifteen years there have been several milestones, even though we have chosen to be quiet about them.

In reality, I am sure that when you come back here, again, God willing, we shall have fresh stories to tell, new songs to sing, and new footprints on the sand – as it has consistently been all through the first fifteen years that we are celebrating now.

Presently we have presence in key cities of this country and we are not stopping at that; we still have a whole lot that we intend to do. We do believe that the industry will get better and bigger because for every innovation or technology as it is changing, our industry is being impacted in a positive manner. So, our future is bright.

# TECNO has succeeded in translating advanced technology into superior localized products

## – Vincent Uzoegbu

*Vincent Chukwudi Jr. Uzoegbu is the PR, Communications and Media Manager for TECNO, a leading and highly innovative mobile phone brand in Nigeria; and one of the Top 6 brands on the African continent. In this exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE, he speaks extensively about the brand and its innovative credentials, both in the now and going into the future.*

**T**ECNO Mobile recently emerged, for the fifth consecutive year, among the Top 6 brands on the African continent. How does this feel?

It feels very great to see that our efforts are making the right impression on our fans and the world as a whole. It has always been a dream for the TECNO team – to give consumers their heart desires, that is, innovative, yet targeted product line-ups. This recognition just proves that we are on the right track; the little wins tell us we are doing well.

**What factors were responsible for this laudably consistent feat?**

TECNO has always operated through the spirit of being relentless in our pursuit of excellence. This has reflected in TECNO's continuous global footprint in recent years. TECNO has also not relented in constantly upgrading product designs, which is increasingly fashionable, energetic, and constantly pioneering. You notice that our new slogan says "Stop at Nothing"; it is not just meant for the consumers but also reflects our unwavering determination to keep on moving, because we "Stop at Nothing" to bring consumers the best.

**What informed the TECNO brand's strategic decision to focus on Africa, right from its inception?**

When TECNO first came to the African market back in 2006, mobile phone penetration was low, mainly because the market and continent was ignored by global mobile phone manufacturers. Our core strategy was to focus on sub-Saharan Africa and offer mobile phone devices that would suit African consumers and improve the lives of as many people as possible. At the time, the main challenges consumers faced included the availability of mobile phones with long lasting batteries and the possibility of owning a device that offers you more in one package. The TECNO brand resolved these issues by providing long lasting battery packed mobile phones and the continent's first dual SIM card phones. Creating products that suited the African consumers and made their lives better and easier was the focal point of our products. We thereby created a product that bridged the digital gap through our technology and innovation and have continually revolutionized our innovative processes.

**How is the brand positioned in Nigeria, in particular?**

Prior to its entry into the Nigerian market, the mobile phone market was saturated with other smartphone brands that were either too expensive or were limited in their functionalities. Having identified this gap in the mobile phone industry, TECNO launched itself by offering innovative, premium and high-quality devices at affordable prices; smartphone brand dedicated to producing high quality smart devices. By understanding the uniqueness of the Nigerian market, the brand stayed true to the maxim "Think globally, act locally," thereby achieving great success in translating advanced technology into superior localized products.

**How is that positioning resonating with its target audience in this market?**

TECNO brand has become a household name, by leveraging its accurate brand positioning, the sophisticated, innovative

features of its products and its consistent commitment to providing satisfactory mobile communications solutions.

**We'd like you to shed some light on TECNO's exploits in mobile phone technology; and how is this reflected in its various product series?**

TECNO is recognized as one of the few brands that have made breakthroughs in AI-enhanced mobile photography and videography. TECNO's excellent photographic performance also earned the brand distinctions in the Guinness World Records 2020, with the largest flip book shot by its photography pioneer CAMON product line. The brand was also recognized with the IFA (Internationale Funkausstellung Berlin) with "Camera Technology Innovation Smartphone Gold Award 2020". The brand's portfolio of smartphone devices is known for the technology innovation, stylish design detailed with elegance, professional photography experience, as well as their worldwide partner network.

Taking a look back from where we started, the results of our exploits speak for themselves.

**Prior to its entry into the Nigerian market, the mobile phone market was saturated with other smartphone brands that were either too expensive or were limited in their functionalities. Having identified this gap in the mobile phone industry, TECNO launched itself by offering innovative, premium and high-quality devices at affordable prices; smartphone brand dedicated to producing high quality smart devices.**





In Africa, we have set numerous records that have actually been some of the defining moments of the brand's existence and have brought us a good level of success and popularity.

Over a decade ago, TECNO was the first brand to launch dual SIM card phones in Africa and the goal was to solve expensive data-roaming problems and the complexity of telecom service providers.

Another notable achievement which cannot be over-emphasized was that we were the first to develop longer-lasting batteries that provided as much as 72 hours of battery life to help mitigate power supply issues. These 2 innovations, as simple as they may sound now, were important to TECNO's successes. The realities of those times are still very much around us till now, thus making these solutions very relevant today. To photography on smartphones, TECNO pioneered a solution that enabled smartphone cameras bring out the beauty of dark-skins when taking photos, prior to that phone brands were mostly creating one-tone skin Cameras. This camera solution by TECNO remains recognized globally, thus putting TECNO on the global map.

### **What would you say is the current state of the smart phone market in Nigeria?**

According to the International Data Corporation (IDC), Nigeria's overall mobile phone market will continue to grow as

demands for devices to specifically suit the consumers' needs, rises. The market is extremely competitive, particularly with the influx of new brands and new devices from existing brands. This poses a challenge for the OEM industry. The only way for a brand to survive in this market conditions is to continually be innovative and ensure to stand out - a good thing for TECNO, as we are not about to stop re-inventing the locally and globally smartphone industry.

### **In what ways did the Coronavirus global pandemic, which defined the whole of last year, impact on the mobile phone market, in general, and the TECNO brand, in particular?**

During the pandemic, we kept eyes on the world and on the actual needs of our consumers. We came to realize the urgent and growing needs of people to stay connected with their loved ones through mobile phones. So, we began to focus on innovating our mobile technology and product matrix. From our smartphone series – the CAMON, SPARK, POVA and PHANTOM to our smart audio devices and wearables, and even our local operations, we have had to adapt to the new ways of life and consumer habits brought about by Covid-19.

We also understand that the evolution of our products and technology is closely

related to societal changes, courtesy of COVID and social media. Let's take the CAMON 18 short film competition we've just introduced, for example. The world has shifted permanently due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the creation of digital content has increased drastically with people wanting to tell their stories and show their skills. Hence the creation of the "no shaking, ever steady camera", with which content creators can produce contents without worrying about the quality of their outputs. On one hand, we keep building our capabilities to bring new features and the latest in camera performance, while on the other hand, we're calling out for the public to use these mobile devices in a positive way. By doing so, they are putting Nigeria and by extension, Africa, on the global map for creativity.

### **What are some of the brand's COVID-19 related investments in Nigeria?**

TECNO has rolled out a number of initiatives, preventive measures, materials and economical support, aimed at helping local communities to maintain safety and wellbeing. We partnered with the NCDC to provide material aids during Covid-19. We also joined hands with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to support its global education program, Educate A Child (EAC), to provide quality education to thousands of refugee children.

### **What are the brand's projections for this year; and the future?**

The future holds great promise for TECNO as more exhilarating steps are anticipated. Our Consumers will remain the center of everything we do. With our offerings, we will continue to partner with them to achieve a better, smarter digitally connected life and uncover a world of possibilities.

We are focusing on emerging markets and that has been our core strategy ab initio, and we will maintain our commitment to helping consumers in emerging markets connect with the world, and to pursue better lives through the many ways new innovations in mobile technology allow.

Also, we always look towards the future to tackle the challenges presented by current and future societal and technology trends. We hope to simply ride on these trends and keep our momentum toward further globalization. These will translate to new product innovations and technology progression, our artistic excellence, and also very importantly taking more responsibility to giving back to local communities and serving our consumers well for the future. The customer is always the very center of everything we do, and we desire to inspire them to be unstoppable in their pursuit of excellence, to achieve a better and smarter digitally connected life and also uncover a world of possibilities for themselves. We are optimistic about the future. ♦

# Financial inclusion requires a pan Nigeria integrated financial literacy campaign – Priscilla Iyari

Priscilla Iyari, an astute Corporate Communications, Brand, and Consumer Marketing professional, is Head, Marketing and Communications at Advans Nigeria, a member of Advans Group that provides trusted and innovative financial services to over 1.5million individual and MSME clients in 10 countries. With a decade's worth of experience with local and international brands across various industries which include Financial Services, Technology, Sustainability, FMCG, and Sports, this alumnus of the prestigious Cannes Young Lions Award brilliantly reflects her wealth of experience in answering MARKETING EDGE's questions in the interview below.

## **H**ow can financial inclusion stimulate growth, wealth creation, employment creation, amongst others?

Financial inclusion is simply the provision of quality financial services readily available, accessible and affordable to all individuals and businesses, irrespective of tribe, gender, location, and socio-economic class, for the improvement of the general economy. The impact of financial inclusion to economic development, and wealth creation cannot be overemphasized. It is the singular factor that differentiates the Global North from the Global South.

Provision of financial products and services such as banking, pensions, credit services, micro-insurance, etc facilitates domestic and international transactions, which, in turn, broadens the availability of credit for individuals/households and players in the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) segment of the economy. This sector, according to a PWC survey, accounts for 96% of businesses and 84% of employment in Nigeria, in addition to contributing 48% of national GDP.

Financial inclusion is no doubt a powerful agent for inclusive growth, reducing poverty level, wealth creation and employment opportunities when individuals, families and businesses are financially empowered to cultivate economic opportunities.

## **How can the government help operators and players in your market to achieve your objectives as well as overcome obstacles and challenges?**

Promoting Financial Inclusion is a collective responsibility that cannot be achieved in isolation. As financial institutions such as Advans Nigeria continue to innovate through provision of technologically driven financial products and services, it would help a great deal if the government continues to create an enabling environment.

Identified obstacles to financial inclusion will be surmounted if the government continues to conduct regular research, and update existing regulatory and institutional framework on financial inclusion, such as the CBN's National Financial Inclusion Strategy. In fact, based on the ever-changing needs of the market, it may become imperative to design new policies as responses to every new barrier that may come to play.

Technology plays a pivotal role in reducing the operating cost of financial services. As such, the government must ensure cohesion through favorable policies among regulators, payment platforms, mobile money operators, Payment Terminal Service Providers (PTSP) and digital banks such as our Adspire by Advans.

## **What do you consider as major requirements in the country to boost and deepen the knowledge of financial inclusion?**

According to the EfinA Report of 2020, 35.9% of the Nigerian population is still financially excluded. And majority of these financially excluded and undeserved individuals are located in remote areas, characterized by low levels of education, social infrastructure, and overall low standard of living.

Here are two factors that I think will help to deepen financial inclusion in Nigeria:

- First of all, we need to engage in a pan Nigeria-integrated financial literacy campaign especially in the rural areas. A campaign that will involve the use of local knowledge and language in communicating the benefits of financial inclusion. Maybe, we need to look at incorporating this in our educational curriculum so that students start to learn about personal finance from a young age.
- Secondly, a general improvement in social infrastructure will go a long way in deepening financial inclusion. These rural areas have to be easily accessible by road, at the very least. There





also needs to be an aggressive expansion in mobile broadband and internet coverage to support communication. This will be a platform on which Fintech innovation can further help deepen uptake of financial products and services.

### **How would microfinance institutions respond to current changes in the global market?**

Current changes in today's global market entail the gradual adjustments, and recoveries from the impact of Covid-19 pandemic across different sectors.

The changes highlight the need for urgent action to cushion the pandemic's economic consequences on the finances of households and businesses. This brings to the fore, the role and response of microfinance institutions as economic stimulators and cornerstone for financial inclusion and financial literacy especially in the developing world like Nigeria.

Asides the funding pressures MFIs need to deal with in addition to maintaining a healthy Portfolio at Risk, they are expected to respond by initiating tech-driven initiatives that limit physical presence. In coming years, we will see more MFIs developing their own digital banks.

In the area of loan recovery where some of the customers are still struggling to repay their loans, MFIs are expected to be strategic in their loan recovery processes, or like we did in Advans, provide a better grace period for repayment for the clients. MFIs will have the option of restructuring loans for its top borrowers and writing off credits in-form of interest, fees and penalties for those adversely affected by the pandemic while retaining these set of customers.

What are different Impact assessment methodologies Advans La Fayette has put in place for financial assistance in Nigeria?

Insights are key to delivering tailor-made products and services for our clients. At Advans, we conduct periodic impact assessment to immerse and understand our customers. Our impact assessment methodologies range from focus group discussion, sample surveys and case studies. One of the most recent of them is the impact survey conducted on our customers to understand how the Covid-19 pandemic affected their business, as well as identify areas of improvement in order to continue responding to clients' needs in the best possible way.

The ensuing action from us was to adapt our existing products, and in some cases,

develop new ones, to help existing and potential clients to achieve their financial goals.

### **What would you say were the opportunities gained and lost in 2020, courtesy of COVID-19?**

Opportunities gained in 2020 include: growth in our digital alternative platforms and resulting high volume of transactions. There was also an increase in demand for business credit. Year 2020 also gave us an opportunity to better safeguard our tech infrastructure, thereby better securing our clients' funds, and providing a good base for our new tech-enabled products. We love the general growth in FINTECHs that we have seen in our industry too.

Opportunities lost were some of the potential partnerships and support initiatives initially scheduled with some of our top clients and customers which had to be either rescheduled or cancelled.

### **What major paradigm shift should we expect from micro finance banks in coping with the new normal?**

We expect to see more partnerships with Fintechs in order to grow revenue and launch innovative retail products. Increased adoption of digital alternatives is another thing to expect. More micro-finance banks may be coming up with their digital banking apps. For MFBs who still have tons of liabilities to settle in addition to the impact of the Covid pandemic and NAICOM's possible decision to share a new deadline for recapitalization, we may be experiencing another round of liquidation, mergers and acquisition in the sub sector.

### **What are the marketing imperatives your company has put into place for the new normal?**

Some of our marketing essentials in the wake of the new normal include, but are not limited to: carrying out more customer experience surveys, monitoring industry trends to better understand the need and concerns of the market. We will also continue to adapt our existing products and create new products suited to the needs of the market. We will continue our network expansion drive across Nigeria, while ramping up our digital and agency banking offers so that everyone everywhere can have access to quality financial services.

*\*Read the full text of this interview at [www.marketingedge.com.ng](http://www.marketingedge.com.ng).*



classified into two. We have the problem of the practice of advertising and the problem of the business of advertising. So for me, I looked at these issues basically from those two standpoints and I felt that we need to do things that will strengthen the practice of the industry from those two areas. At least, if we are able to get those right, we will have a stronger industry.

### **What were the steps you took in mitigating these challenges you just enumerated?**

Before now, most of the concentration of APCON had been more on the practice of advertising. If you check the advertising code, it is more of the practice of advertising, which include: what is the watershed? Who should advertise this? What are the procedures for you to advertise? What is the framework for every advertisement, in terms of legality, truthfulness, superlative roles and all those things? So we have a framework on the ground.

Now, when it comes to the business of advertising, it has been mostly auto-run and that has been a major challenge. If we don't look at the business of advertising and you concentrate more on the practice of advertising, then, there is going to be a major challenge. This has created a lot of gaps and a big issue for practitioners or operators within the industry

So, coming to this seat, I felt like since most efforts have been concentrated on the practice of advertising. We just had to look at what we have on ground, and how we can up that. Then, in the business of advertising, we need to start afresh. This was what led to some of the new initiatives that we are pushing

# **We are committed to an inclusive industry reform -Dr. Fadolapo**

*Dr. Lekan Fadolapo, Registrar, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), is a professional and stickler for rules and decorum. His enthusiasm and commitment to emplacing global best practices that will elevate the Council and ring it at par with its global counterparts is infectious and palpable. In this one-on-one interview with MARKETING EDGE, Dr. Fadolapo iterates how these paradigm shifts will translate to huge investment for the practitioners.*

as a regulator.

### **What is your assessment of the advertising industry this year?**

Well, the industry has really not been buoyant in terms of advertising spend and basically if you ask me, I will tell you that this year and last year were a lot lower in terms of advertising spend. In the last 5 years, the industry has not witnessed advertising spend growth, but there has been a shift in the spend from the traditional media to digital media. The advertisers are moving more to the new digital space. That has also shrunk the spend on the traditional media and has also reduced the income to the traditional media space owners.

### **What would you say is the turning point for your Council this year?**

The turning point for us is the Advertising Industry Standards of Practice (AISOP). Basically, when I assumed duty, one of the few things I did was to speak to all the sectoral groups, asking them, 'what do you guys want us to do, and how do you think we can

**A**s the regulator of the advertising industry, what would you identify as some of the challenges that you have encountered?

When I assumed duty, the problem facing the industry could be



up the trade and provide the healthy environment just like every other regulator?’, and the common denominator is: ‘Help us look at the terms of trade, engagement, the business leg of this whole conversation so that we can have a better industry.’

So we set up a committee, headed by Mr. Funmi Onabulu. Fortunately, this advertising industry reform is not new in the plate - the first time that the Governing Council of APCON made a pronouncement or proclamation of the advertising industry reform was in 2012. After that, there was the issue of dissolution and reconstitution of the Council, and the industry reform was left where it was. When I came up, I wrote to the Honourable Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, telling him the challenge we are facing as an industry, and the need to implement the AISOP. To cut the chase, we got the approval of the honourable minister to go ahead and implement the reform.

This reform is in phases, but the general focus is how we develop our industry. For the leg that has to do with the practice of advertising, that is the review of advertising code, we set up a committee which was asked to look at the Code. We wrote to all the sectoral groups to send us representatives which they did, so we set up a committee to look at the current Code. The last time the fifth Code was reviewed was nine years ago. Between that time and now, so many things have happened. For example, ten years ago, the outdoor sub-sector was static. In the current dispensation, technology has changed the face of out-of-home to the extent that, Surface-conduction Electron-emitter Display (SED) now shows animated and un-animated motion and all those things.

So, as a regulator, we must be ahead of those we are regulating and our code must align with new realities. We set up a committee to look at the Code and come up with recommendations. We also set up a committee to look at the business because the business leg has always been on auto-run. We also wrote to all the sectoral groups and they sent their representatives. We inaugurated the committee and they came up with their proposal, which we presented to the honourable minister. With consultation after consultations and, in fact, additional consultations, the minister approved the proposal. After the approval, the next thing was for us to make the announcement. So, the report of the Committee on the AISOP came before the report of the Code Review Committee. We then made a pronouncement after we got the approval of the honourable minister to introduce the AISOP. Recently, we were also able to get the approval of the honourable minister for us to implement the revised Code which we have already done.

**There has been a sort of push back by some stakeholders who are not quite comfortable with your stand in terms of the business angle of advertising that you just talked about. What will be your response to those sets of stakeholders?**

I think we need to look at this critically and objectively. Number one, looking at the AISOP, does it align with Federal Government policy, and the answer is yes. There was a directive from the Federal

Government to all the ministries, departments and agencies that speaks to strengthening the economy post-COVID. If you check the recent executive orders signed by the president, if I am right, I think executive order number ten has to do with encouraging local production, engaging local engineers and local experts and encouraging the development of each sector using the local facilities.

Now the second thing is, does the AISOP breach any part of the constitution? The answer is also no. If you look at it in the best interest of the public, is it in the best interest of the public? Does it promote equity and fairness? And the answer, once again, is yes. Well, let me state here that all the sectoral groups aligned with AISOP, except for the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN).

And AISOP is just to promote equity, to ensure that all unethical practices in the industry are minimised to the barest minimum and to ensure that there is fairness in the field. AISOP is not targeted at anybody. It is targeted at growing the advertising industry in Nigeria.

I am not surprised that there is a push back but as a regulator, we will continue to engage all the sectoral groups.

**You have been at the helm of affairs at APCON, how would you describe the apex advertising regulator before and now?**

We have not been moving at the speed the industry was expecting us to. While the industry’s expectations are geometrical, our speed is arithmetical. However, there is the agreement that we have made progress in the last 12 months. When I assumed duty as the 4th registrar of APCON, there were only 15 offices nationwide. The last time enforcement was carried out in Bayelsa State was

like three years ago, likewise in Delta State and Abeokuta, Ogun State.

In the last 12 months, however, we have re-established our presence in all the states. We have opened 16 new offices across the nation. Out of that 16, what we did was to first unbundle Lagos. Lagos State is a very big market, and without mincing words, the state is responsible for not less than 40%, if not more of the entire advert spend of the country. We created 6 new offices within Lagos. We then expanded our operations in all those states that we consider strategic to the advertising business. We have offices in Bayelsa now, Akure, Abeokuta, Delta and Calaba. We have pushed the frontier to ensure that we have our presence in additional states.

When I assumed duty, the operations of APCON were built around analogue. It means that if anything happens, the entire system will be down. In the last 12 months, it has been a very tedious journey for us. We have not really been able to achieve what we set out to do, but we have been able to move around our operations. If not fully digitalised, we have been able to start the process of moving our operations from analogue to digital. Within the next few months, all things being equal, practitioners will be able to access their profiles online. It will reduce human contact as you won’t need to come to our office. These are some of the things that we are doing. We are building an enterprise website that can

generate your RRI, make payment and update your profile.

However, we have some huge challenges. Operationally, we don't have cars in these new states that we have opened up, where we need to squeeze the current staff. We had 15 before, and we have additional 16; that means we need more staff. You know the process of civil service. You can't just go and employ like the private service. You need to write to the minister, get approval, write to the head of service, get their approval, get a waiver, you know all those protocols. But we are still following all those things to ensure that we have the approved personnel for us. Again, one of the few things I also want to mention is that if the AISOP is properly implemented, it will create jobs directly and indirectly for the advertising industry. These are also some of the challenges that we face operationally. Even the site of our office currently is a major challenge to our performance. We can't do all these without first getting our acts right. We are doing so much and we are going to review with the honourable minister by the end of the day. When we will be presenting our plan for next year, these are some of the things we will include in our presentation, so that we can get approval and move to the next level.

### **What are your takeaways from 2021 and how has it prepared you for the coming year?**

Number one, I have been in this industry for over two and a half decades and this has made it a lot easier for me to settle down. I have been a member of Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups (HASG), I served as Executive Director of AAAN; I have been part of these processes. This year for me has been a very challenging year, we have so many projects that we are trying to work on, that we have not really been able to.

For me, this year, the AISOP provides the learning and it is completely a new thing in our entire industry. I just don't want to start adding more things to it, if I should, I will tell you that some countries have reached out to us as APCON. They requested for a copy of the AISOP because they said they needed to study it and see how they can also follow suit and implement in their own market. It is something that we need to build. Let me also say that the AISOP, as it is, is not cast in stone. We will continue to develop it, add new things to it to ensure that we have a stronger industry. At the end of the day, everybody should be able to look back and say: We have a stronger industry.

My takeaway from this year is that there are so many learning points for us and social media is playing a major role in this whole conversation. If I am telling you that there is a major shift from advertising spends from the traditional media to the new media, it means that we need to be where that conversation is. As a regulator, we must not only be regulating from our office, we must be part of that conversation.

We must be ahead of those operators in terms of knowledge, skills, currency of the technology as well as the market. We don't want to just sit down and say we are the regulator. When they are talking intellectually, we should also be part of that conversation. For me, those are some of the areas that we are looking at as the takeaway from this year. We are trying to see how we can build capacity for next year so that we can be stronger when it comes to regulatory framework. I have said this in different interviews. The things that AISOP is promoting include:

The regulation of media rate, training policy and agencies and advertisers cannot owe media houses beyond 45 days. If this happens and the money becomes controversial, the media houses and service providers can also link up with APCON to see what can be done. This will start attracting interest rate. We are trying to promote a policy called localisation. This is one of the things we

are promoting now. The world has become a global village, so you can hear things like global procurement policy and that is what we are doing

Within globalisation, we need to have a space for localisation, as much as we are a global community. Our local elements must play a role in advertising and resonate with the community. It must promote religion, culture and recognise the people for who and what they are. We have so many things that we want to do. Advertising industry reform is not AISOP alone; it is a whole lot of process. We are still getting to the point of imported advertisements. In other climes for example, modeling is a huge industry; now, what happens to our own modeling industry? In other climes, voice over is a big business for voice over artistes, but what happens to our own sector?

If you look back at the industry, how many local production houses do we have? We believe strongly that in promoting the localisation policy by APCON; that means we need to encourage all the service providers, the value added people within the advertising ecosystem, and bring them up. They need to add value, as much as they are adding value, they should be getting remunerated to the value they are bringing in. If all regulators align with the Federal Government policy, and we are able to develop our own sector, then you can imagine the implication of that to Nigeria. With what we have done now, even those offices that we created, that means we have created jobs.

Number two, as APCON, there is no state that we will enter and such a state will not attract advertisement investment. AISOP itself will attract investment. Look at the ability to develop the modeling sector for example, or our ability to develop the voice-over artiste sector, that means we will create jobs from that sector. This whole thing is targeted at the Federal Government policy of inclusive growth for the economy. The thing for us is that we need to continue to be focused. We need to understand the fact that the advertising agencies play within the SMEs sectors which means, we need to encourage inclusive growth. We need to ensure that, we as their regulator will continue to support them to see how we can engage every other people to have a win-win situation.

### **What will be your advice to operators and stakeholders in the industry?**

My appeal and advice to them is, let us come together. You see, it is not a good thing for us. We have experienced banter, claim and counter claims, accusation and counter accusation, and if you ask me as a regulator, every sector in the industry is guilty. I am not taking part, and I am not promoting disagreement or unethical practice. At least, if we have realised that we were not doing it right, let us sit down and reason a new way forward. My advice is, let us embrace regulation, let us embrace the new AISOP, and let us see how we can develop the industry. We are not regulating to strangle, we are regulating for the development of the industry. They need some of the policies we are reeling out now. They may look at it and say, 'what is it all about?' But as we make progress, it will be clear to them. We are doing this for the best interest of their business, in the best interest of the economy, and that of the larger society. It may be very challenging for them to see the need now, however, in the next few months, everybody will be happy with this reform.

Next year is going to be a challenging year because we need to encourage more players into the industry and attract investment. This is the only way we can grow the industry. I want to appeal to stakeholders to continuously support APCON, and ensure that it succeeds, because if it succeeds, it means that everybody in the industry has succeeded.





# CHIEF WOLE OLANIPEKUN:

## Tribute to an Iconic Silk @70

By **John Ajayi**

**I**n today's Nigeria, Chief Wole Olanipekun, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), is one man who has spent the last 70 years of his existence to affirm one thing; that there is reward in hard work and dedication to God. Besides, Chief, as he is fondly called, has, in over four

decades, advanced the understanding of the word 'loyalty'. He is loyal to God, senior colleagues, friends and the authority. No wonder in almost all the newspapers and online platforms, Nigerians have dedicated over a week for the celebration of this man who has successfully applied Law as an instrument of social justice and a strong catalyst

for nation building.

In appreciating Chief Olanipekun as a loyal friend, one must but refer to how he refused to buy a house he so much loved in Lagos when he learnt, after bargaining that the building in question belonged to one Alhaji Akanbi Oniyangi, a man who was at different times former Nigeria's Minister for



Defence, Minister of Industry and Minister of Communication. Chief Olanipekun had his tutelage in Ilorin under Chief Oniyangi in the 70s.

A man of immense grace, the finger of God had directed the path of this quintessential Ekiti man to Chief Oniyangi after he was called to the Bar in 1976. He was posted to Ilorin for his National Youth Service, and before proceeding to his place of primary assignment, Mr. Kanmi Osobu, a firebrand lawyer, had assured him of a place at his firm anytime he finished. The late Chief Gani Fawehinmi had also assured him a place in his Chambers. Of course, he was so eager to go to either of them, but a week before he passed out of the NYSC camp, a lady colleague of his, Bridget Odeh - they finished together at the University of Lagos - told him: "An old lawyer in town wants a junior and has asked me to help him look for a good one, and your name readily came to my mind."

Pronto! They went to meet the "old lawyer", and it turned out to be Alhaji Akanbi Oniyangi, who, later, at various times, became Nigeria's Minister for Defence, Minister of Industry and Minister of Communication. Chief Oniyangi dissuaded young Olanipekun from returning to Lagos, and in so doing, persuaded him to remain

in Ilorin to work with him. "My friends, especially those who left Lagos together with me to serve in Ilorin, made fun of me by saying: "Wole has chosen to be laidback. He is staying back in rural Ilorin instead of coming to Lagos where the action is", Chief Olanipekun had said in an interview.

He took the gamble, but again, the hand of God was at work guiding his footsteps. Among those of them who left Law School in 1976, he was the first to take the Silk, doing so in 1991, and he has consistently admitted that his being in Ilorin when many of his colleagues returned to Lagos was one of the best early decisions he made in life because it prepared him well for the task ahead.

According to him: "When I look back, I ask myself: If I had moved to Lagos as at the time I remained in Ilorin, would I be where I am in the legal profession today? The answer, in all honesty, is I do not think so! Not that I did not deserve it, but when I look back, law practice in Ilorin was tough, rugged and competitive. This ruggedness was not restricted to the Bar alone, the Judiciary in Ilorin also projected these characteristics - the Judex in Ilorin were also hardworking, very honest and industrious. What else do you expect when Justice Saidu Kawu was the Chief Judge of Kwara State? He later

retired as a Justice of the Supreme Court, and died aged 85 on 25th December, 2013. Just like a typical Englishman, not in your wildest imagination will you think of corruption on the Bench under his watch. No way! When you go to court, your case will be called and decided within two months. The turnover was high."

A hardworking man, Chief Olanipekun started appearing at the Supreme Court himself - not with anyone leading him - in 1982/83. As at that time, he was about seven years old at the Bar. According to him, he was making appearances at the apex court so frequently that every Justice of the Supreme Court knew and addressed him by his first name, Wole.

A man of integrity any day, Chief Olanipekun's watchword is, without mincing words, 'integrity'. This perhaps explains why he excels in anything he puts his hands on and for which he has remained unblemished. As a result of this attribute and his commitment and dedication to Law as a profession, this legal icon is often mentioned in the same breath as other forensic advocates and titans like Chief F. R. A. Williams, SAN and Chief G. O. K. Ajayi, SAN, both of blessed memories.

A prolific, seasoned and consummate writer, Chief Wole Olanipekun is often inundated with invitations to deliver and present lectures from institutions, organisations, companies, etc, from within and outside the country. In the past twenty years, Chief Wole Olanipekun has written and presented over 250 papers on diverse topics in law, politics, economics, education, religion, amongst others. He has also contributed several chapters to a host of law publications and journals. He is the author of the book titled: "The Voice of Law and Social Change", published in two volumes. Chief Wole Olanipekun, on 28th February, 2019 delivered the Keynote Address titled: Electoral Law, Election Petitions and the future of democracy In Nigeria" at the Nigeria in Transition workshop organized by the African Studies Centre, Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, University Of Oxford, United Kingdom. The lecture has been adjudged as one of the most profound interventions in Nigeria's socio-political sphere. On 3rd November, 2021, he delivered the 13th Convocation Lecture of Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State titled: "Beyond the Pandemic: Creating an



Evolving New Normal”.

As one individual who has always respected and regarded Chief Olanipekun as a role model par excellence, I cherish his exploits in Law but beyond Law, I cannot but marvel at his contribution to humanity, his commitment to human empowerment and his service to the body of Christ. It will interest many Nigerians to know that even as a Lawyer; Chief Olanipekun uses his noble profession to serve God and humanity.

Looking back at how he started and where he is today, one can clearly see the hand of God in all his doings. This is a man, who at the beginning, because of parental influence, tried to run away from Law but God as the Author put His agents in place and His will was done. The rest, as they say, is history. Of course, Chief Olanipekun has told the story and retold it countless times - the story of how he veered into Law. It's obvious there is a spiritual dimension, nay, a God-factor to his choosing the path of Law. It started as a tug of war between reading Law or Mass Communication, and a lot of factors militated against him electing to study Law.

As this elder statesman clocks 70, it is indisputable that Chief Olanipekun is perhaps one of the leading lights in the Law profession, who has not only raised the bar but has opened new chapters for practice. As admitted by many people who have come across Chief Olanipekun, more than any other person, he has set the pace in many areas in the legal field and unraveled unimaginable legal difficulties by cutting the Gordian knot in many areas of the law.

His exploits in election petitions, especially in the popular case of Inakoju v. Adeleke is often referred to as pacesetting. In the case which made it possible for Rasidi Ladoja to return to power after he was illegally impeached by the politicians loyal to the then Chief Lamidi Adedibu, now late, Chief Olanipekun became a Lawyer to watch. For the first time in Nigeria, the court agreed that the issue of impeachment of a governor can be looked at and overturned if it fails to strictly comply with the law as regards procedure. Former Oyo State Governor, Rasidi Adewolu Ladoja was a beneficiary of that legal breakthrough. He also led the team of lawyers who retrieved the mandate of former Governor Adams Oshiomole in Edo State, Olusegun Mimiko in Ondo and has led the legal team

for three presidential election petitions and won in all. No Lawyer in Nigeria has had such a rare opportunity or privilege. Besides, he played vital roles in the retrieval of Governor Kayode Fayemi's mandate by constituting a solid legal team and acting in advisory capacity to them.

From any angle one chooses to look at it, Chief Olanipekun belongs to the school of thought that enjoins a lawyer to be humane in his dealings with his immediate community and junior colleagues. Over the years, this former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has nurtured his juniors intellectually, practically and as much as he could afford in terms of welfare. In explaining the need for young Lawyers to always prepare like their senior colleagues, Chief Olanipekun had, in a personal encounter with this writer, likened law practice to a football team consisting of eleven players where one have the strikers, the midfielders, defenders and the goal keeper, with all of them working to make a success out of any football match. According to him, if the senior Lawyer is the striker, the juniors

who constitute the midfielders, defence and man the goalpost, must also be rugged, with each person bearing his weight.

Yes, Lawyers are not taught about community relevance in Law School, or that if fortune smiles your way, you have to remember several things, including your God, humanity, your immediate environment, the son of whom you are and the larger community but all these are included in Chief Olanipekun's kitty as a complete elder statesman.

Chief Olanipekun was also in the news for the good reason in 2007, when former President Olusegun Obasanjo unilaterally announced the sacking of the then Vice President Abubakar Atiku. This legal titan challenged what he called a coup on the constitution and got the Supreme Court to nullify such arbitrary use of power by saying Atiku couldn't be sacked so casually without recourse to the constitution. He also saved Atiku like many others in the hands of Code of Conduct in what appeared like mere persecution and victimisation. Succinctly speaking, Chief Olanipekun is a Lawyer's

**According to him: “When I look back, I ask myself: If I had moved to Lagos as at the time I remained in Ilorin, would I be where I am in the legal profession today? The answer, in all honesty, is I do not think so! Not that I did not deserve it, but when I look back, law practice in Ilorin was tough, rugged and competitive. This ruggedness was not restricted to the Bar alone, the Judiciary in Ilorin also projected these characteristics - the Judex in Ilorin were also hardworking, very honest and industrious. What else do you expect when Justice Saidu Kawu was the Chief Judge of Kwara State? He later retired as a Justice of the Supreme Court, and died aged 85 on 25th December, 2013. Just like a typical Englishman, not in your wildest imagination will you think of corruption on the Bench under his watch. No way! When you go to court, your case will be called and decided within two months. The turnover was high.”**



Lawyer any day because he is believed to be at home with law, its technical procedure and implications for the improvement of his teeming clients' cases.

As the events and the tone of tributes in the last one week suggest, law is obviously not the only thing that defines Chief Olanipekun. This enigmatic Ekiti man is a philanthropist and a man of God. In the last 10 years, he has been in the forefront of humanitarian services and philanthropy. He has consistently invested in humanity through interventional projects in education, health, information technology and the law profession.

Before and after his call to the Bar, Olanipekun hasn't only kept to his promise to always stand with Christ, he has remained steadfast in his determination to keep up the tempo in the Anglican family like his father. In practical terms, it is unlikely if there is any individual who has given back to community development than Chief Olanipekun in Nigeria. The first seed he sowed in this direction was at St. Peter's Anglican Church, Ikere Ekiti, in 2012, where Chief Olanipekun built, furnished and donated a modern vicarage named after Pa Isaac Olanipekun. In March 2014, he, in continuation and furtherance of his philanthropic initiatives and gestures, built and donated to the Nigerian Bar Association, Ikere Branch, a 350-capacity Bar Centre. He was back in the same church last year when he led the incumbent Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, the then Primate and Archbishop Metropolitan of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Most Revd. (Dr.) Nicholas Okoh and six state governors to the inauguration and handing over of an ultramodern church auditorium, with world class facilities that can accommodate at least 1,700 worshipers, to complement the existing structure in the church.

Today, the ancient church has suddenly become 'the bride' of the community. Earlier, in 2015, this legal luminary had built, equipped and donated to the State Specialist Hospital, Ikere, in November, 2015, an ultra-modern and state-of-the-art Amenity Ward (the Iya Aafin Bosede Olanipekun Amenity Ward), in memory of his beloved late mother, Bosede Olanipekun. He also procured for the Amenity Ward, a modern and fully equipped ambulance. Beyond the Church, Chief Olanipekun has in the last 13 years, intervened and contributed to Ikere Ekiti development, through various other legacy projects. They include New Cruise 92.7 FM, an ICT Centre within the premises of Amoye Grammar School, which was built to mark the school's 50th anniversary in 2009.

In 1996, he instituted the Wole Olanipekun Scholarship Scheme for the purpose of awarding scholarships to brilliant, but indigent students and since then, the scheme has, true to the intention of its originator, produced numerous talented beneficiaries, some of whom are now doctors, lawyers, engineers, pharmacists,

accountants, educationists and professionals in other fields. As Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council of the University of Ibadan, he initiated and established another Scholarship Scheme to assist five students per session from each of the faculties of Law, Technology (Computer) and the College of Medicine.

As part of his contributions to the provision of an enabling environment for learning, he built, equipped, furnished and donated a 420-seater Auditorium to the Faculty of Law of the University of Ibadan. In July 2011, he initiated an Endowment Fund for junior Lawyers, particularly in the Lagos and Ilorin Branches of the NBA. Seven Junior Lawyers from the NBA, Ilorin Branch were beneficiaries of cars given to them by the Branch from the proceeds of the Endowment Fund, while over one hundred (100) Young Lawyers from the Lagos Branch were beneficiaries of lap-tops and flash drives distributed to them from the proceeds of the Endowment.

In Oyo, Chief Olanipekun and his dear wife, Princess Omolara, built, furnished and donated an ultra-modern Vice-Chancellor's Lodge to Ajayi Crowther University. Also, on 20th August, 2019, he donated a 16-seater brand new Nissan Bus to the Nigerian Bar Association, Ikere Branch, Ekiti State. As the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Ajayi Crowther University, he paid in September, 2019, the full tuition/fees of fifteen seminar-ians from affiliate seminaries of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) to pursue postgraduate studies at the university.

Chief Olanipekun, through his Foundation (Wole Olanipekun Foundation), on the occasion of its maiden award ceremony on 24th April, 2021, financially empowered 100 widows/ aged persons (Widows and Aged Empowerment Programme) and 100 youths (SMEs/ Youth Empowerment Programme) at his hometown, Ikere, Ekiti State. At the second edition of the legal luminary, Foundation Award Ceremony, which took place on 9th October, 2021, Chief Wole Olanipekun, again, financially empowered 100 widows/ aged persons and 100 youths at his native Ikere, Ekiti State. A total of 400 beneficiaries have so far benefited from the Foundation.

He was the Pro-Chancellor & Chairman of the Council, University of Ibadan between 2009 and 2013, and during which time he also doubled as the Chairman, Court of Governors of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan. Throughout his tenure in these two positions, he did not receive or collect a dime as allowance or even for transport reimbursement; rather, he not only gave all the allowances due to him back to the university, but also made available more funds to the university for the purpose of awarding scholarships to students. In November 2014, the Proprietor of Ajayi Crowther University, comprising of all the Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in the Supra Diocesan Board West, unanimously called upon Chief Olanipekun to 'come to the Anglican Church's Macedonia' to assume office as the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council of the 16-year old Anglican University – Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo State, with a charge that he should replicate the milestones previously achieved at the University of Ibadan, at the Anglican Church's coveted university. He has since then assumed office as the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Council of ACU. To the Glory of God, the university is presently growing in leaps and bounds to the satisfaction of not only the Proprietor, but also to all and sundry.

In February 2021, Chief Wole Olanipekun was appointed as the pioneer Chancellor of the newly established Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere, Ekiti State, in recognition of his noteworthy contribution(s) to the advancement of education in Nigeria.

Chief Olanipekun was called to the Nigerian Bar in July, 1976. He became a Notary Public in 1987, and attained the rank of Senior



Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in July, 1991 in recognition of his forensic contributions to the advancement of the legal profession in Nigeria. Between 1992 and 1993, he served as the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice in the old Ondo State. He was elected the 20th President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) in August, 2002. His tenure as the NBA President has been associated with remarkable success and adjudged one of the best in the annals of NBA history. In March, 2021, he was elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Body of Benchers. At different times, he has served as a member of the National Judicial Council (NJC), Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee (LPPC), Council of Legal Education, Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee, General Council of the Bar and the Ondo State Judicial Service Commission. He was also, at a point in time, the Acting Chairman of the Council of Legal Education. He became a life member of the Body of Benchers in 2004, and he is also a life member of the National Executive Committee of the NBA. While he is still an active member of the International Bar Association (IBA), Commonwealth Lawyers' Association (CLA), Pan African Lawyers' Union (PALU), and West African Bar Association (WABA), he was, between 2002 - 2005, a member of Council of each of the international law bodies.

On 28th October, 2016, Chief Wole Olanipekun was appointed the Chairman of the Visitation Panel of the Ladoko Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomosho, Oyo State, which was inaugurated on 28th October, 2016 to look into the affairs of the university and recommend solutions to the problems which engulfed the university and crippled its academic activities. His panel's all-encompassing report and recommendations contained therein led to the immediate reopening of the university which had been shut down for over a session.

Chief Wole Olanipekun is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCI Arb.), Fellow, Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (FICMC), Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (FNIALS) and Fellow, College of Education, Ikere (FCEI). He was awarded with the degree of Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa (LL.D) by the University of Ibadan in November, 2014 and on 4th November, 2021, he was conferred with the degree of Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) by Redeemers University, Ede, Osun State. He holds the National Honour of Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (OFR).

He has, at different times, been conferred with the distinguished alumnus award of Amoye Grammar School, Ikere; Ilesa Grammar School, Ilesa; and the University of Lagos. When the Federal Government of Nigeria, under the watch of President Goodluck Jonathan, attempted to change the name of the University of Lagos in 2012, he not only led the large team of Senior Advocates and other counsel who challenged the action at the Federal High Court then sitting at Ikeja, but also substantially made funds available for the prosecution of the cases filed by both the alumni association and the students. The legal team obtained an injunction against the Federal Government, restraining it from implementing the name change.

A stickler for excellence, Chief Olanipekun is the Principal Partner of the law firm of Wole Olanipekun & Co., with offices in Lagos and Abuja; with legal practice covering diverse areas and fields, both nationally and internationally, including but not limited to Land Law, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, Labour Law, Maritime, Arbitration and Dispute Resolution, Admiralty, Banking, Insurance, Election Matters, Aviation, Telecommunications, Chieftaincy and Intellectual Property.

Chief Olanipekun, within and outside Nigeria, has mentored hundreds of Lawyers who see him as a teacher, counsellor, role model, father and shepherd. Several Lawyers have also passed through his chambers, starting from 1982 to date, and a good number of them occupy high and vintage positions at the Bar, the Bench, in politics and the corporate world. Ten distinguished learned colleagues who cut their legal teeth under him, including his two sons, Dr. Dapo Olanipekun and Bode Olanipekun have both attained the prestigious rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria.

This legal potentate and respected citizen of Nigeria is happily married to Princess Omolara Olanipekun (Erelu), and the marriage is blessed with four children who are all lawyers; two boys and two girls, all of whom are also happily married. Like their illustrious father, they are members of the learned and noble profession of law. His two sons, like their industrious father, are also Senior Advocates of Nigeria.

May Chief Olanipekun find himself surrounded by all of the love, service and care he has been giving to humanity in the last 70 years. As the legal luminary looks back on 70 years well lived, may he remember all the joy and laughter he has given. ♦

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**prolific, seasoned and consummate writer, Chief Wole Olanipekun is often inundated with invitations to deliver and present lectures from institutions, organisations, companies, etc, from within and outside the country. In the past twenty years, Chief Wole Olanipekun has written and presented over 250 papers on diverse topics in law, politics, economics, education, religion, amongst others. He has also contributed several chapters to a host of law publications and journals. He is the author of the book titled: "The Voice of Law and Social Change", published in two volumes.**



# The new APCON bares its fangs

## ...as ADVAN fights dirty

### Genesis

**F**irst it was held as a rumor. Later, it turned out to be a gist in hushed tones.

Today, the latest reality in the Nigerian Marketing Communications sector, most especially in the Nigerian advertising regulatory ecosystem, is that there is a new Sheriff in town as the head honcho of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), a regulatory agency of the Federal Government. Before now, APCON, established by the Legislative Act No 55 of 1988 of the Federal Government to control and regulate the practice of advertising and advertising practice in all aspects and ramifications, had been largely seen as a “toothless bulldog”. The new APCON with a new Sheriff in the person of Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, a thorough-bred advertising professional with decades’ old cognate experience in the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) sector, has taken charge of the voyage and the sail appears to be getting quite distinctly different.

While the storms continue to rise, Dr. Fadolapo, a scholar of immense appetite for learning, is demonstrating an unmatched hunger for reform in

panel-beating the Nigerian advertising sub-sector into shape after several years of half-hearted attempts with unmitigated failures and disastrous results. Before the advent of the Igbomina, Kwara-born



Fadolapo, APCON had been regarded and perceived by the public as a “toothless bulldog” in discharging its primary responsibilities. Today, the narrative has changed as the new helmsman is not in any way ready to be a “robot”. Rather, he is ready and ever willing to break all odds by achieving results where several others have failed.

Since he assumed the APCON mantle of leadership almost a year ago, he has

continued to strive with a difference. He has approached this new office with confidence like somebody operating on a very familiar turf and terrain, he has so far exuded the audacious determination of a war general called to arbitrate in his own village inter-tribal war. Trust the judgment that follows in this type of situation. This is exactly the scene and scenario playing out before the eyes of all of us since the dawn of Advertising Industry Standard Reform. Upon assumption of duties earlier this year Dr. Fadolapo, who has been Executive Secretary of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) for several years and a front-line Committee member of APCON on all strategic committees, has left no one in doubt about his hands-on experience in bequeathing to the nation an advertising industry worthy of its calling and nomenclature.

### Heart of the Matter

He had at a welcome reception organized in his honour in March this year hinted at his vision of a reformed industry when he told his audience comprising mostly professionals in the IMC sector that it would no longer be business as usual. He





had stated at the occasion that “APCON was working on how to bring the sectoral groups to working together in order to have an industry everyone could be proud of. The industry reform has been a major challenge. The industry reform can create jobs and improve the internally generated revenue of APCON and the government. It will help us stabilize our industry. I spoke to president of all the sectoral groups and they all agreed we need to go ahead with the industry reform.”

He charged his guests further that, “APCON is here to regulate and not to kill the industry. “We are not regulating to strangulate, we are regulating to bring the best out of every one of us,” Dr. Fadolapo assured.

The APCON Registrar made real his pledge recently as the Advertising Industry Standard of Practice (AISOP) was presented to the general public on 6th October 2021, at a well-attended media event held in the cosy ambience of Sheraton Hotels, Ikeja Lagos.

According to Dr. Fadolapo, in preparation for the conception of the AISOP, the Council thought it wise to set up an all-inclusive committee made up of all sectoral groups in the industry to produce a suitable framework that defines a minimum standard, in order to have equal and fairly representative opinions that will form the guidelines of the entire advertising ecosystem. The committee was set up in April, 2021 and was chaired by former AAAN President Mr. Funmi Onabolu, which after a thorough joint brainstorming, in collaboration with APCON, presented a minimum acceptable standard of practice framework that is suitable and is globally acceptable.

The APCON boss stated that the apex regulatory Council has resolved to run a vibrant industry with well-articulated framework all geared towards promoting ethical practices.

His words: “AISOP was specifically set up to provide the regulatory framework in all critical areas of concern for the stakeholders in areas such as Engagement policy, Payment terms and conditions, numeration model, media rates and commissions, disengagement protocols, credit policy, return on advertisement investment and measurement, peaceful resolution and other regulatory industry protocols. It is expected that with the implementation of this guideline, the Council will be placed among the most progressive advertising and marketing communications industries across the globe.”

The Council umpire implored key industry players to support the iconic transition of the reform to ensure its success, adding that its success will not only grow the business of advertising and marketing communications, but will also help to create other numerous jobs opportunities either directly or indirectly for Nigerians.

“We are confident that the guideline serves to dictate the best interest of Nigeria advertising industry in particular and in general practice. APCON is committed to constantly improving the practice of advertising industry. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you, the Advertising Industry Standard of Practice (AISOP), which takes its effect from today, the 6th of October, 2021, and so it shall become enforceable henceforth,” he proclaimed.

He revealed other guidelines that must be conformed to by the practitioners, which include terms of engagement. “All contracts of advertisement must be formally declared between the parties involved, in writing before appealing to APCON for intervention. Henceforth, the whole days of payment is for 45 days, anyone that exceeds this, will attract CBN’s interest rate.”

This development came to most sectoral heads of advertising as the needed fillip and elixir to grow the industry as well as rescue advertising agency business from its death bed. They specifically commended the Council for the giant strides recorded by the present leadership of APCON. President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Steve Babaeko, while applauding the Council, noted that he can now heave a sigh of relief, adding that it is long overdue.



**APCON was working on how to bring the sectoral groups to working together in order to have an industry everyone could be proud of. The industry reform has been a major challenge. The industry reform can create jobs and improve the internally generated revenue of APCON and the government. It will help us stabilize our industry. I spoke to president of all the sectoral groups and they all agreed we need to go ahead with the industry reform.”**

“It is a good one coming from APCON; I think it is long overdue. As the president of AAAN, these are some of the things that keep me awake, where members complain on some of these issues that the law has tackled. I am looking forward to the enforcement and execution of the laws.”

In a swift response, the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) rejected the implementation of the new AISOP saying that it makes an unconstitutional attempt to infringe on the rights of private entities to determine their contractual terms.

## Objection

In a statement, ADVAN noted that it has been very supportive of the plan to create a Standard of Practice for the advertising industry. “A key objective of ADVAN is to facilitate and support progress in the advertising and marketing communications industry. ADVAN is excited to be a part of any initiative towards the development of industry best practice which will facilitate business and economic growth.”

The advertisers body said the Supreme Court has, in many decisions, pronounced that the rationale for freedom of contract is founded on public policy: i.e., parties of full age and competent understanding are deemed to have the utmost liberty of contracting, and that their contracts when entered freely and voluntarily must be held sacred and be enforced by courts of law.

“Furthermore, as principal benefactors of advertising services, ADVAN’s role and input with regards to the AISOP have not been fully onboarded, the current AISOP is void of critical elements that protect the rights and interest of the ADVAN community.

“It is the submission of ADVAN and all its members, that the current AISOP does not serve collective interest, but rather permits unfair authority of certain parties over others and creates an unfriendly business framework. It stated that AISOP portrays a clear indication of discriminatory standards where the AISOP document in section 5 sub section b (Discounts and Commissions) states that “No party will unilaterally dictate or impose rates on another party except as may be mutually agreed by upon by the parties” however in the summary submitted to the press there is a clause that states “Media rates may be increased at any time provided that at least 30 days’ notice is given prior to implementation”. Latter



**It observed that government has a specific and critical role in supporting industry development by providing fair and enabling legislation and guidelines for ethical business practices, this involvement, however, it explained should not overrule the constitutional rights of business entities to conduct legitimate business activities. “The perception of a discriminatory regulatory system will be counter-productive to the collective objective of creating a conducive business environment. “Consequently, in the interest of creating an inclusive free, fair, and transparent industry standard of practice, ADVAN has sent in a clear representation of expectation.**

of which was not included on original documents, arguing that this further portrays an inconsistency in expectation.

“ADVAN requests that in all instances, the condition of a mutually agreed terms by both parties be upheld and not only as it applies to expectations from Advertisers.

“It observed that government has a specific and critical role in supporting industry development by providing fair and enabling legislation and guidelines for ethical business practices, this involvement, however, it explained should not overrule the constitutional rights of business entities to conduct legitimate business activities.

“The perception of a discriminatory regulatory system will be counter-productive to the collective objective of creating a conducive business environment.

“Consequently, in the interest of creating an inclusive free, fair, and transparent industry standard of practice, ADVAN has sent in a clear representation of expectation. ADVAN is on standby for the acknowledgment of this position and further engagement on a standard of practice framework that is in the mutual interest of all.”

Reacting to ADVAN objection, APCON indicted multinational companies and conglomerates over the alleged rebellion by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) on the Advertising Industry Standards Practice (AISOP).

Faulting the rejection of AISOP by ADVAN, APCON stated that formulation of AISOP followed all constitutional requirements and due consultation with all stakeholders.

The advertising regulator in a press statement signed by the Registrar, Dr. Fadolako, noted that AISOP was instituted to revolutionize the advertising industry in Nigeria and set it at par with international standards, adding that the industry standard of practice is aimed at eliminating sharp practices and unethical behaviours that stifle the growth of the industry and country at large.

According to the statement, “AISOP is in line with the Federal Government’s reformative plans aimed at accelerating the pace of economic recovery post-pandemic era, enhancing gainful employment, attracting talents and investment in the industry as well as overhauling the business regulatory framework of the Nigerian advertising Industry. AISOP seeks to improve mutual respect, eradicate





unfair advantage, unethical competition and inequitable engagement terms between stakeholders in the marketing communication sector of the country.”

The regulator disclosed that AISOP is a product of a committee constituted to formulate the necessary guidelines, terms of engagement and other business protocols and that all sectoral groups, including ADVAN were equitably represented.

“Each sectoral group’s views and points were discussed and APCON moderated a win-win situation in line with best practices and the Federal Government Policies. All other sectoral groups made concessions based on the maxim of equity, fair play and government effort aimed at growing the economy. The document was later presented to the Hon. Minister of Information and Culture for approval in line with the APCON’s establishment Act,” Dr. Fadolapo said.

The advertising helmsman, who asserted that the reaction of ADVAN negates the principle of fairness and equity, affirmed that ADVAN’s rejection of AISOP is against the Federal Government’s agenda to stimulate growth in the economy especially in the SME sector.

It will be recalled that APCON officially unveiled the new AISOP on October 6, 2021 and it was immediately endorsed by AAAN, EXMAN, OAAAN and others who described it as a step in the right direction.

## Applause

Ever since the brickbat, all sectoral groups have been signaling their unalloyed support. Pledging his support for the new advertising guideline, President of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAAN), Emmanuel Ajufo said: “OAAAN is happy that AISOP has come to life, because we have been pioneering this

for a very long time. It is going to benefit the industry ultimately and also impact positively on our businesses.”

Speaking in solidarity with the new provisions stated in AISOP, President of the Media Independent Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) Femi Adelusi urged members to comply with the new guidelines and notify their clients accordingly.

The MIPAN umpire, who reiterated his support for the new standard of practice, said: “We (MIPAN) played a key role in putting AISOP together along with other sectoral groups, and we have the responsibility to abide by it.”

On his part, President of the AAAN, Steve Babaeko, while applauding the initiative, stated that, “It is a good one coming from APCON; I think it is long overdue. As the president of AAAN, these are some of the things that keep me awake, where members complain on some of these issues that the law has tackled. I am looking forward to the enforcement and execution of the laws.”

However, ADVAN had announced its rejection of AISOP after the official presentation, citing a breach in constitutional procedure and claiming that the new guideline is opposed to the rights and interest of ADVAN.

Notwithstanding the discordant tunes by ADVAN, APCON has extended the olive branch saying the AISOP is not cast in stone. Dr. Fadolapo has repeatedly canvassed for collaboration and co-operation by all stakeholders as such is the only way guarantee progress and development of the industry.

The Registrar has also spoken about his Councils’ vision of leaving the Nigerian advertising industry better than what he met. Besides, he has debunked claims of promoting discrimination and biases amongst the stakeholders insisting that his objectives and motives are pure and simple.

## The Dirty Fight

Ironically, the person of the Registrar has begun to experience alienation by the advertisers group in apparent regard to the current development in the sector which seems not to favour the advertisers. At the recently held ADVAN awards, MARKETING EDGE authoritatively gathered that the Registrar was almost barred from entering the Muson Center venue of the ADVAN awards by the hefty security men at the entrance gate. It took the intervention of the top industry leaders who prevailed on the security men before he was allowed entrance.

As if this was not enough, the organizers of the event who though were quite aware of his arrival made no attempt to formally introduce him to the audience. This outright negligence and snubbing of the man of APCON Registrar’s caliber became even louder as the Lagos State Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Tunji Bello who represented the state Governor, His Excellency Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu at the occasion was introduced with a very loud applause. Funnily enough, these two eminent personalities arrived the ADVAN awards’ venue the same time. Industry watchers and some heads of advertising sectoral groups present, who noticed this unsavoury development, gave thumbs down for the awards organisers.

While they were reluctant to be quoted on the seemingly cold war that has ensued between ADVAN and APCON, they were all of the opinion that the ADVAN awards organisers ought to have been more tactical and diplomatic than what they did. The embarrassing experience of the night became more harrowing and dramatic for the APCON Registrar as he was not listed nor called out on the stage to present any of the awards presented at the occasion.

However, being a peaceful and humble person, the Registrar patiently stayed towards the tail end before taking a quiet exit. Yet unrecognized!

The lesson from the above is that the new APCON is no longer a “toothless bulldog”. And the man at the helms appears poised to accept whatever stones and abuses hauled at him if only to move the industry forward.

The truth of the matter here is that there can be no gains without pains; hence, APCON and its officials should be more than ready to step on toes and ruffle feathers if only to achieve the best for the industry in the interest of all.

# Global standard is our benchmark says Jude Odia

**Jude Odia** is the Managing Director of Starcom Media Perspectives, a digital-first integrated media solutions company, and member of the Insight Redefini Group. A respected thought leader on the Nigerian and international media advertising landscape, Jude brings his 360-degree work experience across client and agency divides to bear on his insightful responses to **MARKETING EDGE's** questions in this interview.





## **W**hat is your assessment of the economic situation of the country with the current challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and recession?

For us, we are a sub sector of a broader sector that is a subsector of the economy. However, all of these things are a cyclic movement. So the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest disasters that the whole world has seen in recent time. I think one very iconic thing people need to understand is that it fundamentally reshaped life and how we engage with the Earth. So, life will never be the same again the way it was pre-COVID. I know that many corporations have fundamentally changed their HR policies, and many countries that have changed a lot of their social-economic or whatever policies to begin to reshape their lives to the new normal. So, for us, the pandemic crippled the economy. To a large extent, most of clients' businesses were on freeze because everybody was in a frenzy. We didn't know when to move or for me we were probing in the dark and the best thing to do at times like that was to slow down and watch things. So everything was on standstill. Understandably, clients weren't spending and so our business was on a standstill too.

However, it threw a challenge which was how to unearth the unknown; how do we manage something that hasn't really happened in recent history? So the people who can quickly dimension the new challenge and begin to prepare sustainable solutions become the leader of the new age. What this means is that there is a likelihood that leadership could possibly change hands depending on how we manage the New Normal that we have now.

## **How has agencies coped with the "New normal?"**

Two ways to look at it, the first one is to look at it from the creative point of view. The other one is to look at it from the business point of view. From the creative viewpoint, what makes our industry stand out, what will drive the sustainability of our industry is our ability to own creativity, not technology. Technology is generic. What is not generic is creativity. Quite clearly, it (the pandemic) has challenged the creativity of the creative space and players that play in it.

The questions then are: how have we risen to occasion? How have we helped our clients to dimension what the issues are and proffer solutions to them? Are we doing well in that? I would say that we are playing between the border lines because we are also learning.

Yes, understandably, we have to be ahead of our clients but we are learning. There wasn't a template to COVID before it happened and so even if there is a Playbook to be developed; it is going to be developed in the coming months and in the coming years. So, creativity-wise, we need to champion it much more. We need to ensure that no other sector takes that very skill set from us, which is the ability to create something out of nothing especially ideas that can really move the world. We must think to ourselves, how do we increasingly begin to control the idea space and own it; because technology can't take away creativity except creativity sleeps or goes into slumber, then technology can take over.

The second one is the business. Now, the first one can either support or mar the business; if we are not hands-on or we are not ever growing and improving our creativity, the business will suffer. Clients are not after how you organize your

business, they are not after the kind of affiliations or the kind of partnership you have. They are after the power of the ideas to move their businesses. Once we can handle the ability to help clients move their businesses, our business will keep moving.

The other idea is for us to begin to tell ourselves enough of client's brief-driven income or revenues. It is time for us to rewrite the script. We need to start creating our own revenue base or create platforms, create solutions that people can tap into, that can help us earn income whether the client's brief is coming or not because today is now a platform world.

## **You spoke about owning creativity not technology yet creativity needs technology to thrive, harped on this further for better understanding**

Technology can only help to further amplify; and creativity is what you can own. You can't own technology. We all use Facebook, today. There are some proprietary tools, industry tools that the whole industry uses. The AI of this world, whatever it is, the block chain, etc. It is going to be generic. Everybody can use and so there is no differentiation. What I am saying is that if we have creativity that is ever burning, then technology can help us enhance it. Technology can help us scale it up; but creativity must be what we own as our own because anybody can buy off technology. Technology will ever be changing our world; but technology is generic to everybody whereas creativity is what we can use to differentiate ourselves as an industry.

## **How will you describe agencies' response to the transition from traditional media to digital?**

There are lesser and lesser human

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interactions with our processes because of automations, today. It is practically very possible to start and finish your whole work without having human interaction. The beautiful thing about automation is that in terms of precision they are more accurate than human beings. So, there are no doubts that our systems are, to a large extent, fundamentally changed; ditto our work.

Today, we have what you call planning suit. It means that the algorithm helps you do your audience profiling. The algorithm can help you do targeting by demographics, targeting by psychographics and it can also help you do predictive planning. As such, it is telling you beyond what you need today, rather what can you need in a month's time; in three months' time? They can even scale it by geography. For example, females 16 to 34, what would they need in the next three years in Lagos? There are softwares that can help you do that. Algorithms help you do these projections and, like I said, their accuracy level is much better than what human interventions can do.

### **In view of the current global pandemic, how will you describe the agency-client relationship?**

It is much more value-based or value-driven right now. Before now, you could say we had agencies of record. You could say I have long-term relationships or contract with clients but these days it is a little bit more loosely tied, meaning that clients are now going into more tactical relationships because they are always looking for who is that person that can give me solutions. They are no longer so fixated to what you call fee-based arrangement. They are more focused on performance based remuneration. They are also saying like can you come in and start doing things like helping us dimension problems that agencies weren't scooping around for. For example, clients are asking: can you help us break into a Blue Ocean? I can give examples of brands who today have gone into categories they weren't playing in before because they saw that with COVID, there is no future in their current businesses; and they had to quickly divest to other categories in which they have seen growth opportunities. So, they (clients) are looking for stronger partnerships that can help them. For the first time, they

are seeing the agencies as an extension of their offices, extension of their capabilities. They are more willing to pay more if they can see what you bring to the table to help them improve their bottom line in black and white, and not poetry.

### **What is your opinion about the reduction of advertising spend?**

Spend is a function of target setting, for example. The official spend for 2020 is not out but I can tell you from the numbers I have seen, there will be a drop in spend between 2019 and 2020 because of COVID. That is understandable. The point I am making is that as the size of the market shrinks because of obvious challenges that we have seen, clients now expect you to sweat more on those monies they are giving you. Agencies will now have to walk more now because clients, too, are also struggling in their businesses. You know that to a large extent, disposable income is dropping with consumers. Inflation is off the roof. So the ability to buy by the consumer is no longer as high as it used to be. So it will affect their revenue. As such, once they want to watch their cost as a business, the first way to go is their marketing spend. They naturally will cut their spend. Even the one they are willing to spend, they would want to squeeze value out of it. That is the point that I am making. That the engagement is no longer like pie is plenty, let's come and eat. It is now a question of you have to sweat for every dollar they pay you and it is understandable because we are all here for business. If the client closes his business, the agency, in turn, has nothing to do.

### **Some persons believe it is in times of turbulence, clients should advertise more. What are your thoughts about this postulation?**

These are conspiracy theories if you ask me; and there is no one-answer-fits-all. So, it could work for you, it may not necessarily work for the next guy. As long as my numbers are looking good, it makes sense to attribute those things to every other partner we have worked with. If, however, my numbers are not looking good and projections are not looking good, it will be a tough argument to make – that they



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should spend more. I am not saying it is impossible; but the question is, do you have that compelling story, that compelling proposition, that compelling solution that can convince a client that he has to spend, or invest more when his numbers are going down, and that in six months or in one year, what he is spending on you is going to push up the needle? Fantastic! But in many instances, it is not always so because what leads to an up in numbers for the client is not only as a result of marketing communications. There are other variables that are sometimes outside our own control which the client sees. And so he/she is in a better position to tell you, see the risk I can take, there is a level of risks I cannot take. That, to me, is the point. It is not wrong to say we can invest more even when things are tough but you must have a clear-cut proposition that shows clearly how you want to travel and when the numbers will start picking up. It is a natural thing to want to play safe. Everybody wants to play safe.

### **How do think agencies can improve on the relationship with clients in this climate?**

I think it is, more importantly, on looking at where the client is looking at. I will give you an example. I tell my colleagues every day. When you come to see the doctor, the doctor will ask you what the problem is, what is the medical challenge? You will say I have this. Now, the doctor will take time to ask you lots of questions. Sometimes the questions might be repetitive. Afterwards, he takes his stuffs and does what is called a diagnosis; and, after that, he prescribes drugs or whatever it is; and once you take those things, either you get instant relief or it could take some time to get better. That way, you can see the value the doctor has added.

We, too, as marketing communication experts, need to get to a place where we can clearly put a hand to the value we have brought to the table in measurable terms. That is only when the client can say oh, without this guy, my business would have suffered. If we can get to that point where we don't only speak in pictures and poetry but we speak in numbers, I think our relationship will grow much more. Truth is that how MDs dimension value is, in many cases, different from how creative people dimension value. You are looking at top-of-the-mind recall which is fine; but the guy is looking at real numbers, moving up his sales. Thus, we must be able to look at what the client is looking at and measure

success from his own point of view and not from our own perspective. It is tough and it is still a global challenge but we need to get to that point. If you hear consultants talk to clients, they talk to them on the same frequency. So, when they sit down they will say oh this guy understands my problem. We need to get to that point. Once we get to that point, it will be easier for a client to say oh this guy; I have every reason to keep him. We won't be doing all these things we do to keep businesses. They will want to keep you because they need you much more than you even need them. Doctors, for instance, don't have to beg us to come to them. They sit in their offices and we come. It is possible to get to that point where clients walk into our offices and say I want your help. It is possible. It is achievable. So, if I have to market to somebody else, I will say okay, I move this guy from point two to point six in one year or in two years. Go and ask him. Those are the kind of believable pitches we should be making.

### **Looking forward, what are those skill sets that are required for agencies to have especially during this time and for the future?**

For me, that is a very deep question; and I will come at it in a very unusual way. To me, agencies should start having mental health experts because, for example, it was really challenging for me to work from home from April to December last year; it was a major disruption. And some of the time, I found myself having a lot of challenges. I didn't know I needed a mental health expert. This is because when you are used to interacting with people; you go out, every day; your adrenalin is pumping, you are thinking, you are talking, you are pitching, you are doing this and that. It took me some time to integrate myself to the new reality.

I don't think it is advisable to have HR people that do not understand the new reality. HR should now be a blend of psychologists, psychotherapists – people who can tell you how to best optimize a talent. For example, there are some talents who might be more productive if they work from home. There are some that will be more productive if they work from the office. There are some that might want a combination of both. How do you manage challenges in such a way that you are not about the set rules of the company but about the uniqueness of these talents and how do we formulate flexible work mode

that will fit them and enable them produce optimally. Thus, we need a lot of HR people that are really abreast of the new reality.

From the operational point of view, we will need plenty of tech staff. People who will do a lot in terms of developing applications, platforms, content generation, quick and fast production, mobile editing suite, and people that can multitask. These are the kinds of people we need to have now. It is no longer about depending on the brief that comes in from the client. It is about developing solutions that can sell across party lines. Agencies can buy it, clients can buy it. Anybody that thinks it is something good for me can buy it.

### **How has the pandemic experience prepared agencies in case of future disruptions?**

Is the industry, I mean the marketing communications world, are we all ready for it? The answer is no. Our level of preparedness is in varied degrees. While some are what you call early adaptors, they are way ahead in terms of understanding the need to develop stuffs and begin to look at talents that clearly are already in the new norm and work with them more. Some are also kind of late adaptors gasping with the old. Like I said before, how fast you move determines sustainability for you. So we are at different levels of this transition.

### **There has been a change in consumer's preference and behavior, how will you describe the response of agencies to these changes?**

Changes have existed in different dimensions; but I will try to scope it from levels. One, you will look at the economic impact on people. People are focusing more now on essentials, things like food. They are cutting down on luxury and all of that. Two is that people are now much more health conscious. They are, to a large extent, big on family. They understand now that life can be transient. They are beginning to prioritize on things that really matter. Many of the agencies I know are, today, embracing remote working. Agencies' response is on a sustainable level. From next year, nobody will come Monday to Friday to work.

For me, it has been an eye opener. I think it has been more efficient from the operational point of view, and cost effective. The numbers do better. Then people feel a little bit safer when they don't

have to plunge into the road every day in as much as it is clear what you have to achieve every day and they are achieving it. So, with that balance, people are much more comfortable. If they have to go out, let it be a planned thing and they go out and they come in. Agencies are trying to work on that.

The question now is, how does that relate to clients? While I say that some clients are safety conscious and are still saying no physical meetings, it has, indeed, made us to fine-tune the virtual part of our work so we now have clear-cut meeting agenda. What are we going to take out of this meeting? It is clearer now. It is more result oriented; so each time we engage now, what we are taking out of a meeting is much better now.

The second thing is that to a large extent, we can scale stuffs now so you can see most of our regional group guys coming into meetings more than before. We are beginning to see more capability up-scaling from the much more matured market to the less developed markets. Hopefully over time, maybe end of next year, we will begin to see some upscale in the overall capability skill set of the industry. It has also started to prepare our local talents for the global challenge.

Also for the clients, we are beginning to see more visibility from their global perspective and their regional perspective. So, we now understand what is driving some local briefs that we get, unlike before when you would just see from the country's level. Now, we see more from the regional and global levels. Therefore, there are pluses and minuses, all in all.

### **How has Starcom Media Perspectives responded to these changes discussed?**

For us, it is about understanding that the world is our stage now; understanding that the competition is no longer just direct competition. We now have direct, indirect and many of those things you never thought were competition are now competition. So, it's about not just challenging ourselves but understanding that we are competing with the world and also understanding that whatever it is that we want to achieve, we must embrace partnership. We must embrace collaborations. So, we have redefined competition really because sometimes, where you really need help are those people who you perceive as competition before. It is about understanding how

to engage and know that the person you compete with today does not necessarily become your enemy tomorrow. It could just be okay we compete for this and after that we can always collaborate in other things. It is a lot more of boundary shifting for us, I would say.

Secondly, we have broadened our skill sets, search and acquisition. There are people today who work here who never imagined they would work here, a year six months ago. And they didn't work here just for the fun of it; it was the demand for it. We are seeing ourselves operating in a wider ecosystem that is not just marketing communications. For example, Influencer marketing, the more we distance ourselves from that space, the more they eat our pie



because budget is not growing. Budget is shrinking; and is also being re-directed. Clients are not just adding more budgets, clients are moving budget from one point to the other; and things like influencer marketing, content marketing, etc, are beginning to eat into traditional budget such that if you do not collaborate when necessary, if you don't acquire relevant skill sets in that area where it is necessary, you will be reducing the opportunity inherent there for you.

We should expand our market to include influencer marketing and how we can collaborate because there are existing players now who are not going to shift for you but will rather want to work with you if they see value from you. This will lead to broadening the size of the cake for everyone. That is the power of creativity. Creativity can turn a small thing into a

big thing if you can optimize it. Those are the things we are looking at. Things like applications. Who says agencies can't develop apps? If you know the challenges of the clients, what you need to do is either import or you grow existing talents to begin to have the skills to develop apps because you already know the problem of the client. The only thing you don't have readily in-house is, maybe, talents to develop the apps. So if you partner with somebody who has the skill, then your operation can only be bigger as you go. Clients are more concerned about solutions that can keep them in business.

### **Collaboration is the new competition when considering the blue ocean strategy; how do you collaborate while maintaining a distinct place?**

Collaboration can be a differentiation strategy. If you go and understudy with ideas or great solutions, they will never be done by just one person or one company. They were done by a combination of people. That we are talking about differentiation does not mean it must be unique to you. It's about how novel is that idea. So, Blue Ocean is about discovering untapped opportunities. It is about identifying, dimensioning and developing untapped opportunities. So there are opportunities that are yet to be tapped at all. They exist; it's just that nobody has been able to identify them. There are some that are discovered but untapped. For instance, influencer marketing today has been discovered, but it is under tapped, meaning that it has not been fully optimized. People are paying millions of dollars to endorsement globally. They are so advanced that they have developed robotics who are influencers. We are just starting in that space and we can grow it. But to grow it requires superior expertise; it will also require partnerships.

### **What is Starcom Media Perspectives competitive edge?**

Those kinds of things for me are like hard sells. I don't like hard sells. What I can say is each time you have an opportunity to chat with some of our clients, you can ask them those questions because I prefer to work with feedbacks from clients and not what we really have to say because everybody will say I am good, I am the best.



# Tolulope A. Medebem:

## A Nigerian Experiential Marketing Amazon

**T**olulope Medebem, one of Nigeria's foremost Experiential Marketing professionals, has the honour of being one of the pioneer females in this field, having honed her skills and expertise since inception of this new marketing concept.

With almost two decades of Marketing Communications experience spanning Experiential Marketing, Event Management, and Brand Management & Marketing, she has been instrumental towards the achievement of many successful campaigns on behalf of big ticket clients.

Tolulope currently owns and runs Aster Integrated Marketing Limited (AIML), a marketing communications and experiential marketing agency where, as Lead, she is responsible for ensuring the development of bespoke experiential marketing solutions for a combination of private and public sector clients. Client base includes: British Council, Nokia (HMD Global), Sunking (Greenlight Projects), FlyFix (Erel Worldwide) and so many more.

Her career experience spans through several top notch Experiential / Through the Line Agencies such as Brand Footprint Communication, FKG2 (Troyka Group) and Miss Commonwealth Organization. On client's side, she also served as Consumer Development and Marketing Manager, Dansa Foods Limited, a subsidiary of Dangote Group.

Through the course of her career, she has worked on various accounts including MTN, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Multichoice, M-Net & Supersports, Miss Commonwealth (Nigeria & International), V-Mobile and Zain (now Airtel), Proctor & Gamble (P&G), British American Tobacco (BAT), First Inland Bank, Intercontinental Bank, Dansa Foods, and many other brands.

Early on in her career, she had a stint in broadcasting working with AIT, M-Net New Directions and UNFPA, Klink Studios and so many more.

Tolulope obtained her first degree in Dramatic Arts from the Obafemi Awolowo

Univeristy, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. She is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management consultants, an associate of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), full member of Nigerian Institute of



Management (NIMN) as well as other sectorial / industry associations.

Tolulope is a member of EXMAN (Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria) where she is currently serving as the first female Vice President (for the second time). She is also a member of WIMBIZ (Women In Management and Business and Public Service) where she was recently inducted as a life member.

She has also attended many development programmes in diverse areas.

She is a 2014 cohort graduate of China European International Business School (CEIBS) / WELA Programme, currently serving as a Council member of the CEIBS Nigeria, Alumni Body as well as Chairperson CEIBS Alumni, Nigeria Chapter Editorial Board.

She was one of 500 women selected to

pioneer the EDC/Cherie Blair Foundation Road to Women's Business Growth programme in 2016.

2018, she became a facilitator for LSETF after undergoing trainings with LBS / Lagos State.

She's also a Unido / HP certified trainer, currently volunteering with Lagos State as a facilitator for the RSW (ReadySetWork) programme.

She was WIMCA's Female Experiential Marketing Professional of the year 2018. In 2020, one of Top 50 women in Marketing and Communications. Awarded as one of Africa Woman's Leaders in 2020 by World Women Leadership Congress.

Currently serving as an inaugural faculty member of the ExperientialNG Marketing Academy (the first duly accredited certification programme in Events and Experiential Marketing for Nigeria and West Africa).

Tolulope volunteers with the ACT Foundation with her marketing communications expertise as well as The Slum2School project where she serves with the Graphics and Design Unit. Her other Social / Volunteer Initiatives include: Creator and presenter of BantzwitTee, a social initiative on Mental Wellbeing. BantzwitTee is a mental wellness podcast where everything relating to mental well-being is discussed – [www.bantzwittee.com](http://www.bantzwittee.com) as well as available on all podcast distribution channels and blog articles. Nurture to Nature - Founder and Mentor. Nurture to Nature is a Youth Enablement Movement.

Tolulope, who enjoys traveling, reading, and listening to music, is happily married with 3 beautiful children.

# BUNMI MAKINDE

## – MARKETING EDGE Outstanding Media Personality of the Year

**T**here is no force more powerful than a woman determined to rise.

In summary, this sentence qualifies and defines Mrs. Olubunmi Makinde, a graduate of Mass Communication who has spent over 15 years in the Marketing Communication industry and has contributed remarkably to the Media world, especially in key areas of Media Strategy, Buying and Monitoring. She is currently the Chief Operating Officer, Scout Media Limited.

BM, as she is fondly called (If you know, you know) began her journey into Advertising following a brief stint with one of the foremost Nigerian Advertising agencies where she served for a few months as an Intern, a graduation prerequisite for Mass Communication students of Ogun State Polytechnic, where she studied.

Following the completion of her Higher National Diploma and leveraging on the experience and interest she garnered during the duration of her Internship, she joined the IMC agency, where she contributed her quota and expertise as a full time staff in the Media Department for 10 years. Her flair for numbers also helped in contributing to her interest in the Media Agency.

“It is the size of one’s will that determines our success”. Just like Oliver Twist in a positive light, BM wanted more. She wanted to etch a mark and carve a niche for



herself in the Media Agency and she knew she had to learn and do more to achieve this. For this reason, she moved on to join a Media Independent Agency where she was given the opportunity to learn Data based Planning and Buying until she became a “Pro” while learning on the job.

Just like an actor has to understand the importance of role play, over the years, BM has displayed core competence in discharging her duty as a Media Practitioner with high level professionalism, adept at creating and implementing innovative media campaigns to increase revenue for both client and the agency. She has Managed and still continues to manage successful relations with the agency’s key clients, designs and executes business

process reengineering and relationship management programs for client’s brands, monitors their attitudes and distributes relevant information to build goodwill.

A Persuasive negotiator to the core with demonstrated experience in Relationship Management with both client contact & suppliers, BM has a desire to meet client’s expectations. She has worked on several accounts such as: Reckit Benkiser, Dufil, Elkriss Food, Etisalat, Diageo and Guinness brands, to mention a few.

Prior to her joining Scout Media Limited, she had worked at UB40 Advertising, Centerspread Advertising, DKK Advertising, Mediareach OMD and Algorithm

Media, where she managed Multinational Brands and served in many other capacities.

A lover and an insatiable fan of knowledge, BM has never relented in equipping herself with evolving trends and developments in her field. She is an alumni of London Corporate Training accredited by British Accreditation Council and also a professional member of APCON.

Today, Olubunmi Makinde sits as a Member of Management at Scout Media Limited where she is charged with responsibility of making sound business decisions relating to the overall business operations. She currently manages the Promassidor Brand, May & Baker and other ad hoc clients. Her mantra strongly remains: Delivering on set business goals, internally and externally and she strives to always ensure this is achieved at every given time.

Her hard work, dedication and relentless nature was recently recognized with an award as an Outstanding Media Personality of the year, courtesy of MARKETING EDGE.

Given her ever amiable mien, anyone may easily categorize BM as an introvert or workaholic, but on the contrary, Bunmi Makinde is very sociable, loves the good life and finds it very interesting to relate with people of like minds who are not afraid to dream big, even if it seems impossible.



# NIRMALYA CHOWDHURY

– **MARKETING EDGE Outstanding Marketing Personality of the Year**

**N**irmalya Chowdhury is the Group Marketing Head, Sona Group of Industries.

With over two decades of professional experience and marketing leadership spanning FMCG, Pharma, Alcoholic beverage and Food Industries amongst others, Nirmalya's professional expertise cuts across brand building and management; designing, implementing and facilitating effective local & national marketing strategies; ROI analysis & budgeting, international marketing & sales & operation; overseeing and managing financial budgets; managing daily activities with PR, press and marketing communications agencies & media agencies for all ATL/BTL & digital activations; and carrying out effective research & intelligence into competitor products including turn-around of existing business and driving multi billion USD revenue and management.

Prior to setting his footprint in Nigeria, Nirmalya spent 13 years in India where he achieved remarkable feats in Alcobev industry with India's 3rd largest Alcobev giant RADICO KHAITAN Limited– 1.3bn USD T/O with active global presence on more than 130 countries, wherein grew from various regional to National Marketing Head role capacity. This feat was followed by significant contribution for brand and business building agenda for both launch and establishing of iconic global brands such as Magic Moments Vodka across off and on premise channels; world's 10th largest and fastest growing vodka brand as per Drinks international/ Remix Flavor Vodka/ Verve Super Premium Vodka/ Morpheus Brandy, 8PM Premium Black whisky launch in India.

Through his unmatched professionalism, Nirmalya has led the success of Sona Group and its subsidiaries– Euro Global Food & Beverages Ltd, Sona Agro Allied Foods Ltd, Shongai Packaging Ltd, Songhai Technology



Ltd, Sona Industrial Gases Ltd, Coronation Real Estate Development Ltd, Techblow Nigeria Ltd through marketing, customer Service, reputation and stakeholder management, CSR, media relations, event management, as well as corporate & digital communications.

In 2020, Nirmalya was also awarded

Winner of Marketing Excellence Award in COVID CSR Drive by ADVAN (Advertisers Association of Nigeria). He has worked extensively on leading global brands including Sabrina Gin, Amphora Wine, St. Almanac Cognac Brandy, Brave Heart Rum, Savana & Maltonic Brands, Magic Moments, and 8PM Whisky brand.

*Editor's Note: A wrong picture was used with Mr. Chowdhury's profile in our last edition. The error is regreted and unreserved apologies tendered, herewith.*

# MIPAN's 2021 President's Dinner & Awards hold amidst pomp and pageantry

By Abimbola Mohammed

It was a night of glitz, glamour and splendour for the bigwigs in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) ecosystem and the entire guests at the just concluded Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria's (MIPAN) inaugural President's Dinner and awards, held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Ikeja, Lagos.

In attendance at the glamorous dinner and award party were the Governor of Kano State, His Excellency, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, represented by the Deputy Governor, His Excellency, Alhaji Nasir Yusuf Gawuna; MIPAN's Patrons, the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) Registrar, Dr. Lekan Fadolapo, the Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) MD, Prince Adedamola Docemo, represented by Tope Akande, Heads of advertising sectoral groups, past presidents of MIPAN, the Experiential Marketing Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) president, the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) president, Steve Babaeko, industry stakeholders, diverse marketing professionals, pressmen and friends of MIPAN.

The one of a kind premium black-tie event venue was decorated in shades of blue, which symbolized the colour of the association, live band music performance at the background with songs from the oldies, tables decorated with candles and centrepieces to beautify them which gave the event a welcoming ambiance.

The dinner party also featured awards presentations to MIPAN's patrons, and industry practitioners who have contributed immensely to the growth of the industry in the past years.

Speaking during the occasion, Femi Adelusi, President of MIPAN said the event was organized to build the marketing communications and entertainment industry ecosystem.

"The purpose of the event is to build a marketing communications and entertainment industry brand, an iconic and industry brand assets that will be social yet professional. We need brand assets that will drive engagement and collaboration in the marketing industry, particularly for senior business leaders across various sectors.

"We also want to celebrate those that have impacted the advertising and media profession for the past 30 years. We all can see the positive result of their influence, not only in Nigeria but across Africa. We also want to recognize the initiative of the public sector because at the end of the day, it is really about the people and the man on the street," he said.

While asking for the support of the Governor, Adelusi disclosed that one of the key initiatives for the association for next year is to have MIPAN secretariat at the heart of Ikeja, Lagos Nigeria. He added that it is not just about having a secretariat as an association, but also to have a platform that will be driving its vision.

The chairman of the occasion, Dr. Biodun Sobanjo, who said that his journey in the MC industry would complete 50 years on 5th of December 2021, noted that it wouldn't have been a fruitful and exciting journey without the support of the people he met on the way. He mentioned George Edwin Thorpe, Ahaji Garba Kankarofi, among others, who played pivotal roles in his career.

Dr. Sobanjo noted: "Casting our minds thirty-one years ago with the establishment of All Seasons Media, little did we realize that we had laid the foundation for giving this sub-sector of the advertising profession a foot that, today, celebrates the achievements of MIPAN in leaps and bounds."

He commended the efforts of the past executives of the association for their tremendous work over the years.

"The previous leadership team of this association has laid a solid foundation for their successors and I am glad that the banking exchange has continued to witness transformational growth with significant impact to the advertising industry in Nigeria at large.



"From a mere five-member association that it began with, MIPAN has grown into thirty-four members, strong bodies of committees taking out lead responsibilities in development of the association and professional tactics. It is quite commendable that the present executives have taken cognizance of the economic realities and categorized membership with full and associate statuses," he said.

Shobanjo advised that all advertising practitioners continue to work together to flush out the quacks that are parading as professionals in the industry, while creating rooms to accommodate more members to the profession.

The Awards were in three main categories including: Outstanding Media Personality award (OMP), Lifetime Achievement Awards (LAA) and Patron Extraordinaire Award (PEA).

Award of OMP was presented by Dr. Fadolapo to Tolu Ogunkoya, Emeka Okeke, Alan McCarty (Posthumous); while the Governor of Kano, Dr. Umar Ganduje, represented by his Deputy, presented the Lifetime Achievement awards to Dr. Biodun Sobanjo and Alhaji Bello Kankarofi; and the PEA was presented to Mr. George Thorpe.

The event came to an end with the CSR-MIPAN Initiative/cause to support mental health inclusivity by Dr. Maymuah Kadiri, MD Pinnacle Medical Services who gave a wonderful lecture on self-awareness.

MIPAN noted that, it has plans to partner with the renowned Dr. Kadiri from 2022 in specific activities around mental health awareness and management to improve inclusiveness around mental health in Nigeria.

Commending the efforts of the association, Dolapo Ogunbambo, Associate Director, Strategy and Innovation, Starcom Media Perspectives, said MIPAN now has a committee that is beginning to drive inclusiveness.

"For the first time, we are having an executive committee that is beginning to drive all inclusiveness and which is a very good thing, expanding the frontiers of our practice beyond just traditional media independent agencies to more of digital agencies. Conversations are ongoing; we have a lot of handshakes within other sectoral bodies in the marketing communications industry. We also have the opportunity for us as a body to know our selves more. It has been fun, having had to interact with ourselves and grow on a larger scale. I think that is one thing that is beautiful about this," he said.

Ozone Mbanefo, Founder, 02 Academy, also applauded MIPAN for creating affinity among different stakeholders. "This helps to create some sort of bonding across different sub-sectors of the industry. Together we can make this industry go far. Events like are highly welcoming, and coming from MIPAN, my respect for them just increased on another level."



# MIPAN 2022 BUSINESS OUTLOOK & 2021 PRESIDENT'S DINNER IN PICS



L-R: Former Registrar/CEO of APCON, Alhaji Garba Bello Kankarofi, MIPAN President, Femi Adelusi, Deputy Governor of Kano State, His Excellency, Alhaji Nasiru Yusuf-Gawuna, former President of MIPAN, Ayo Oluwatosin and a guest on the entourage of Kano State Deputy Governor



L-R: Ozone Mbanefo, Provost, O2 Academy, Tunji Olugbodi, Executive Vice President, Verdant Zeal, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Steve Babaeko, President, AAAN and Demola Olusunmade, MD, Red Uhuru Consulting



L-R: Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Babaeko, President, AAAN, Bello Garba Kankarofi, Former APCON Registrar/CEO and Alhaji Nasiru Yusuf-Gawuna, Deputy Governor of Kano State



L-R: Hon. Rotimi Abiru, Chairman, House Committee on Environment, Lagos State House of Assembly, representing Senator Tokunbo Abiru, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Yetunde Adegbite, Asst. Secretary, MIPAN and Bode Shadako, an SA to Gov. Sanwo-Olu



L-R: Alhaji Bello Garba Kankarofi, Former APCON Registrar/CEO, Mr. George Thorpe, Founder/Managing Director, Market Space, Mrs. Iqoh Ukoh, Founder of the IQ Food Platter Blog, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Dr. Biodun Shobanjo, Founder, Troyka Holdings, Ayo Oluwatosin, Former MIPAN President, and Dr. Lekan Fadolapo, Registrar/CEO, APCON



Emeka Okeke, Founder, Managing Partner and Group Chief Executive Officer, Media Fuse Dentsu International (Nigeria)



Dolapo Ogunbamba, Associate Director, Strategy & Innovation, Starcom Media Perspectives



L-R: Kenny Ogungbe, Founder, Kennis Music, Steve Babaeko, President, AAAN, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President and Garba Kankarofi, Former APCON Registrar/CEO



L-R: Former APCON Registrar/CEO, Alhaji Kankarofi, Ediri Ose-Ediale, Executive Secretary, ADVAN, Tunji Olugbodi, Executive Vice President, Verdant Zeal and Kehinde Salami, MD/CEO, Ideas House Limited



L-R: Emeka Okeke, Founder, Managing Partner and Group Chief Executive Officer, Media Fuse Dentsu International (Nigeria) and Former APCON Registrar/CEO, Alhaji Kankarofi



L-R: Kemi Fabusoro, Director/Executive Secretary, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, AAAN, Emeka Okeke, Founder, Managing Partner and Group Chief Executive Officer, Media Fuse Dentsu International (Nigeria) and Dr. Tayo Oyediji



L-R: Ayo Oluwatosin, Former MIPAN President, Elo Iyayi, MD, Ad Traders, Alhaji Nasiru Yusuf-Gawuna, Deputy Governor of Kano State, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Yetunde Adegbite, Asst. Secretary, MIPAN and Garba Kankarofi, Former APCON Registrar/CEO



Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Emeka Okeke, Founder, Managing Partner and Group Chief Executive Officer, Media Fuse Dentsu International (Nigeria), Alhaji Nasiru Yusuf-Gawuna, Deputy Governor of Kano State, Garba Kankarofi, Former APCON Registrar/CEO and Ayo Oluwatosin, Former MIPAN President



MIPAN President, Femi Adelusi



L-R: A Demola Olusunmade, MD, Red Uhuru Consulting, Steve Babaeko, President, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, AAAN, Tunji Olugbodi, Executive Vice President, Verdant Zeal and Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President



L-R: Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Alhaji Nasiru Yusuf-Gawuna, Deputy Governor of Kano State and Ayo Oluwatosin, Former MIPAN President



L-R: Yetunde Adegbite, Asst. Secretary, MIPAN, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President, Elo Iyayi, MD, Ad Traders and Comedian Omo Baba



L-R: Temitope Jemrigbe, MD/CEO, DKK Nigeria, Mrs. Omolara Adelusi, wife of MIPAN President, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President and Dr. Maymunah Kadiri, MD, Pinnacle Medical Services



Dr. Biodun Shobanjo, Chairman, Troyka Holdings



L-R: Bunmi Adeniba, Ag. ADVAN President, Former APCON Registrar/CEO, Alhaji Kankarofi, and Kehinde Salami, MD/CEO, Ideas House Limited



L-R: Ediri Ose-Ediale, Executive Secretary, ADVAN, Femi Adelusi, MIPAN President and Bunmi Adeniba, Ag. ADVAN President



MIPAN award plaques



# There is need to embrace agriculture to boost exports

## Arjan Mirchandani

Arjan Mirchandani is the Chairman of Sona Group of companies, a leading proudly Nigerian global conglomerate, which has grown into an iconic corporate octopus under his watch. With over 40 years of experience in manufacturing, Arjan is a strong advocate of building strong values for sustainable growth through diversification of the economy to support local production and exportation. In this exclusive interview, he spoke on some of the challenges mitigating the successful growth of the manufacturing sector in Nigeria, their impacts on the workforce, as well as the way forward.

### **H**ow did you start the Sorghum business and how has it been functioning?

I will like to update you (and the general public) on what is happening in the industry. Presently, the government does not have much foreign exchange, which is why there is need to embrace agriculture to reduce import and increase export. Again, the manufacturing industry is based on local raw materials to help build for the future of Nigeria and also create employment. Agriculture is the major contributor of raw materials for production and food sufficiency in the country. The diversification of the economy through agriculture will help grow Nigeria's economy to a large extent.

With a population of 200 million people, agriculture is the major solution to avert food shortage. The population needs food. When there is food shortage, it leads to more social problems in the country. To make raw materials available, we think we should support by giving 100% support to all the farmers with whatever they can produce that can be used locally for the benefits of Nigerians. In essence, the only solution that industries can survive on a long-term basis is through the use of local raw materials. Such local raw material as sugar is very important in our production; but we decided to be making use of Sorghum instead to make malt extract







With this malt extract, we can produce different types of drinks such as beer, malt and chocolate. Again, we use Sorghum because it is healthier than sugar, since it is made from grain while sugar is a processed formulation. This processed sugar, according to health experts, is not medically good for human consumption.

In all, the only solution remains local raw materials to meet the needs of the entire spectrum. We also produce biscuit, whose source is from grains produced by the local farmers that we have been able to employ. Employing this multi chain of economic diversification, will help Nigeria and its people to conserve foreign exchange. Besides, there is not enough foreign exchange to keep on importing these items.

Apart from that, we also produce plastics, which is why we need the foreign exchange. 85% of raw materials are sourced from garbage which we put through recycling. We do process and then utilise for our plastic production. It is necessary to have continuity in this industry in order to keep creating employment for the people. We need people to be employed. That is our mission. We must help people, but unless you are determined to help people, you won't be able to help.

#### **What is the latest update on your ethanol plant?**

The ethanol plant has been difficult because what we plan on using grain and cassava. That is local raw material. The price of cassava is very high. As at last year, the price of grain was at N90, today it is N280. With less money in circulation, exorbitant prices for food stuffs, aggravated by insufficient local raw materials due to mono-economy practice in the country, definitely, this will lead to unbearable suffering for the people. Then, they will have to import. Anything that you cannot sustain locally, has to come from outside. And you will create the jobs outside; you will not create in this country. You cannot do that. I think you can now understand how the local industry has to survive on local raw materials, once you have technology. And, you can trust Nigerians, they are very clever. It is not that you cannot get technology. Technology is available. It is not difficult. Therefore, there should be enough raw materials at a sustainable price.

The truth, however, is that now, if you import ethanol, it's cheaper than you can produce here. So, if you produce from here, you cannot sell what you produce because the cost of production is higher and your price would not be competitive. In the circumstance, you have to go on the basis of import to make sure the public is having your product at a very good and fair value. Making them to pay through their nose is

not viable. So, naturally, you have to protect the public. Meanwhile, this is not happening only in manufacturing. But, if we move agriculture forward, we get more and more items. Then, of course, it will cut down the price which will sustain not only the local but we can also export to earn foreign exchange. Interestingly, we have export market for everything. I do research. We are able to export. I want to do ethanol, I have a discount. But for three years, I can't produce because there is not enough raw materials. What should I do when I have invested millions of dollars?

**There was a time you were asking local farmers to go and plant cassava. What happened to that initiative?**

I think we have to leave this farming to Nigerians. They don't have enough jobs. Yes, we can help them. We can give them seeds. I have a land. Government gave it to me for plantation. The government gave but till date, I have not been given the Certificate of Occupancy. It's been two years. I have been asking the Ogun State government. You gave me a land, you haven't given C of O. You haven't given me the authority to go and farm. What do you want me to do? You say you want agriculture, how do you want agriculture? Please tell me. Nigeria and the government have to help people who want to invest in agriculture, and so on.

There are good opportunities in vegetables and a number of areas; but governments (local, state and federal) still have to help those people who want land, who want to cultivate. Opportunity should be given. If I have a land on paper, for two years I have been paying this and that charges, and still I don't have the land, how can agriculture help to liberate the country? It's a pitiful situation. I am not blaming anybody but they have to do something. And it's not something too big.

**Sir we will like you to quickly look at how Covid-19 has impacted Sona Group both positively and negatively?**

It has been very negative since the beginning of last year. I will say for almost two years. The economy is going down and down. The key is that there is not enough money available in the system. You go to the bank; they don't have money to lend to you. They will give you at a rate that you cannot pay. You borrow the money and

you will definitely fail because you cannot pay interest. It's too much. They have to bring the price down but they don't want to bring the price down. If they bring the price down, they think they will buy the dollar and take the money out or whatever it is. Government has some problems, definitely. So they are trying to manage it. We pray to God that they find the solution to grow the economy. If the economy cannot grow, the people cannot get survival. They suffer more and more.

**There are good opportunities in vegetables and a number of areas; but governments (local, state and federal) still have to help those people who want land, who want to cultivate. Opportunity should be given. If I have a land on paper, for two years I have been paying this and that charges, and still I don't have the land, how can agriculture help to liberate the country?**

**How have you been coping with that situation? It has lasted almost two years.**

I must say that in the last 15years, we planned all of our industry based on local raw materials. However, the local law material if the price goes up our cost goes up, we have no choice but to pass it on to the consumers. If consumers cannot sustain, then of course market will shrink. Instead of people buying two they will buy one. They will share among children because they cannot afford two anymore. That way, the economy doesn't grow and then our industry cannot improve and expand. You ask for finance; you cannot get long term finance. You get short term finance, you cannot do anything. Industry is long term investment. It is not trading, buying and selling, quite unfortunate. So it requires a long term sustainability, long term finance that is very economical to make it viable in that industry; and this is my opinion.

**You have businesses in Ghana as well, can you compare the economy in Nigeria and Ghana?**

I think Ghana has its own problem. Ghana today is also having a policy which is not encouraging the industry, honestly. You

know, they started much differently. In fact, if you import items from outside, you are paying 50% duty. They reduced the duty from 100% to 50%. When you do 50% the industry cannot survive. You are not giving any room for them to survive and that's not good. That should not be the case. Industry cannot survive on that. So, the policies by the leadership have to be appropriate to make this industry survive, be self-sufficient and grow. But if you are based on import only, you will continue to devalue your currency because you do not have more money.

Remember we invested money in Ghana at the rate of 120. Today, it is 580 to the dollar. You can imagine how the investment can degenerate. It has not helped anyone, unfortunately.

So, Africa and African leaders have to decide how they want to be self-sufficient. You cannot encourage import and say industries must grow. Industries cannot grow. Many industries that started have had to close down.

So what is the future with imports, imports, and imports; when imports are much cheaper? Why will you grow industry? Why invest millions of dollars? Why would you want to be in that grinder? You can only get beaten, nothing else. It is not necessary to go to that area. Nobody wants to go and do the job where he knows there is no future. Who will go? So a lot of industries are closed. It is not helping at all; unless the policies are changed to help employment. If your industry grows, your labour market will grow. If your labour grows, you will have more opportunities to train the local people to take over those machinery. Farmers are supervising; farmers are not doing the job themselves. They cannot do the job. They are technical, they help you. They sustain the machinery. They sustain the system but the workers have to be local. They have to be trained to get the jobs and make good living. You have to train locals. Without them there are no industries. What are you going to do with the workers? They won't have the opportunity. I can tell you. Paradoxically, if you have a good brain you will survive outside in foreign countries). If you don't have a good brain neither will you survive over there You end up getting a job that you will not like. You just struggle to make living; but that's not a solution for a human being. There should be some opportunities and growth for a human being, in my opinion.



# Nigeria deepens cash-less economy policy, introduces eNaira

**over N500m currency minted, 33 banks fully integrated**

By Dele Ojo

President Muhammed Buhari recently launched Nigeria's newly created digital currency, the eNaira. The launch was described by CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, as the first in Africa and one of the earliest around the world. Emefiele said, "Mr. President, today you make history, yet again, with the launch of the eNaira – the first in Africa and one of the earliest around the world."

According to Central Bank, the eNaira is the digital form of the Naira, issued by the CBN, and direct liability of the Bank, a legal tender and would form part of the currency-in-circulation and at par with the physical Naira. The eNaira shall complement traditional Naira as a less costly, more efficient, generally acceptable, safe and trusted means of payment. In addition, it will improve monetary policy effectiveness, enhance government's capacity to deploy targeted social interventions and boost remittances through formal channels.

At the launch, Godwin Emefiele, revealed that the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) eNaira has taken off with over N500m of the currency minted so far while 33 banks have been fully integrated and live on the platform.

Currently, Emefiele disclosed that over 2.5 million people visit the website daily and N200 million has been issued to financial institutions.

"Over 2,000 customers have been onboarded and 120 merchants have successfully registered on the eNaira platform, Emefiele stated.

For prospective users, the eNaira wallet is required to access, use and hold eNaira. The eNaira will be exchangeable for other Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC).

In the guidelines released for clarification on the innovation, the Apex Bank explained that the eNaira shall be administered by the CBN through the Digital Currency Management System

(DCMS) to mint and issue eNaira, while Financial institutions shall maintain a treasury eNaira wallet for holding and managing eNaira on the DCMS.

The Financial Institution Suite is the primary application used by the financial institutions to manage their digital currency holdings, req\

Facilitating eNaira speed wallet onboarding for bank customers (merchants and individuals) including sensitizing them on the need to familiarize themselves with details of their BVN particulars, especially email address. This is a major requirement for the self-service enrollment process into the eNaira Speed App.

Integrating the eNaira speed wallet feature into their electronic banking channels; Requesting eNaira from CBN for self and on behalf of its customers; Managing eNaira across its branches; Developing and/or updating reports and internal frameworks to ensure compliance with KYC and AML/CFT requirements; Receiving and resolving customers' complaints on eNaira (including prompt

update of customers' BVN particulars in NIBSS); and Ensuring that eNaira enquiries and complaints are included in the periodic reports to CBN.

According to Central Bank, Consumers are the end users of the eNaira and their roles are as follows:

- 1) Creating eNaira speed wallets and funding it;
- 2) Utilising eNaira as an alternative payment option for legitimate transactions;
- 3) Protecting their eNaira speed wallet access credentials; and
- 4) Notifying financial institutions in the event of fraud/complaints/disputes.

In August, Godwin Emefiele, announced the formal engagement of the global Fintech company, Bitt Inc., as the technical partner for its digital currency, and listed the benefits of the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) to include increased cross-border trade, accelerated financial inclusion, cheaper and faster remittance inflows, easier targeted social interventions, as well as improvements in



However, the eNaira stock wallet belongs solely to the CBN and it shall warehouse all minted eNaira.

The guidelines stipulate that financial institution may create eNaira sub-treasury wallets for branches tied to it and fund them from its single eNaira treasury wallet with the CBN.

It noted that CBN shall exclusively perform the following roles:

- a) Mint, issue, distribute, redeem and destroy the eNaira;
- b) Determine the technical, regulatory and operational standards for the eNaira;
- c) Manage unresolved eNaira issues and complaints escalated from the Financial Institutions, FIs and disputes arising between FIs;
- d) Monitor compliance with applicable regulations; and
- e) Issue directives and review Guidelines on eNaira periodically as may be required.

As intermediaries, financial institutions' roles within the eNaira ecosystem shall include:

monetary policy effectiveness, payment systems efficiency, and tax collection.

Project Giant, as the Nigerian CBDC pilot is known, has been a long and thorough process for the CBN, with the Bank's decision to digitize the Naira in 2017, following extensive research and explorations. Given the significant explosion in the use of digital payments and the rise in the digital economy, the CBN's decision follows an unmistakable global trend in which over 85 percent

of Central Banks are now considering adopting digital currencies in their countries, the Bank explained.

According to Emezie, the CBN's selection of Bitt Inc, from among highly competitive bidders, was hinged on the company's technological competence, efficiency, platform security, interoperability, and implementation experience.

a new relationship with any banks, adding that where a financial institution chooses to continue an existing business relationship with holders of an account/wallets on the watch-list, the account holder shall be prohibited from all electronic channels such as but not limited to ATM, POS, Internet Banking, Mobile Banking, USSD including the issuance of third party cheques.

The new framework further stipulates that a customer with watch-listed BVN shall not reference accounts, access or guarantee credit facilities. Also breaches on the customer's part include – use of forged documents, forgery, compromise, complicity and connivance.

In addition listed as punishable breaches were: duplicate enrolment, use of fictitious information, receipts of proceeds of deception, deception, receipts of fraudulent proceeds and any infractions on AML/CFT laws, and dishonest acts.

Others were non-cooperation with efforts (as stipulated in the Regulation on Instant Interbank Electronic Funds Transfer) to reverse wrong credit, erroneous, multiple or duplicated payments or credits; and any infringement of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act. 2015.

The Apex bank said those who misuse identity and financial information, indulge in identity theft and breach of confidentiality would be punished in line with the new regulations.

Meanwhile, banks and other financial institutions involved in BVN operations were instructed by the CBN to ensure all operating accounts/wallets are linked with the signatories' BVNs within 24 hours of availability.

The Bank also instructed that operators must enrol all mobile money wallets (except Tier 1) subscribers on the BVN database and link their wallets (except Tier 1) with their BVNs within 180 days of the issuance of this framework.

The CBN, however, said it would continue to monitor industry developments and issue further guidance as might be appropriate in the nearest future.

It was part of the overall strategy of ensuring effectiveness of the Know Your Customer (KYC) principles, and the promotion of a safe, reliable and efficient payments system. The BVN gives a unique identity across the banking industry to each customer of Nigerian banks.

The Framework also defines the establishment and operations of a Watch-list for the Nigerian Banking Industry, to address the increasing incidences, of frauds, with a view to engendering public confidence in the banking industry.

## CBN to restrict Bank Verification Number's violators from banking services



The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) would henceforth bar customers of banks who violate the bank verification number (BVN)'s rules, as it dolls out a Revised Regulatory Framework for Bank Verification Number (BVN) operations and Watch-List for the Nigerian Banking Industry. The revised framework was issued in October this year.

As at November 21, 2021 the number of BVN in the Nigerian banking system stood at 51.08 million

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in collaboration with the Bankers' Committee, Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), and a German firm, Dermalog, launched the \$50 million BVN project on February 14, 2014, with the aim of capturing biometrics of all bank customers and giving them a unique identity that can be verified across the Nigerian banking industry. The project is also aimed at deepening financial inclusion in the country.

To have many more Nigerians on the BVN database, the CBN had in December last year announced the commencement of classification BVN 2.0 plan that allows both the rich and poor in rural areas to access financial services.

Godwin Emezie, CBN Governor, who broke the news at the end of the 11th Bankers' Committee retreat in Ogere, Ogun State, explained that BVN would now be classified into two – BVN Premium and BVN Lite. According to him, while the BVN Premium covers customers that can provide the 18 basic requirements for a complete BVN enrolment, the BVN Lite requires minimal documentations like name and phone number for bank customers, especially those in the rural areas that do not meet the full requirements.

The initiative, which is in collaboration with the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) and Mobile Money Operators (MMOs), would ensure more Nigerians are brought into the financial system. "The BVN 2.0 classification scheme will help bring more people into the financial system and reduce the financial exclusion rate," the CBN governor had said. "Know Your Customer (KYC) scheme is part of what will be migrated into the BVN Lite.

However, the CBN said the new framework is to enhance the effectiveness of customer due diligence and Know Your Customer (KYC) processes as part of its overall strategy for promoting a safe and efficient banking and payments system.

Mr. Musa Jimoh, Director, Payments System Management Department, in a circular to banks, said the Watch-list is a database of customers identified by their BVNs, who have been involved in confirmed cases of breaches.

Under the new framework, breaches on the part of customer could see the individual getting barred from entering



# UBA Group dominates 2021 Banker Awards, wins 'African Bank of the Year', others

By Dele Ojo



United Bank for Africa (UBA) has again, reaffirms its leadership position across Africa, as it has been globally recognised as the African Bank of the year 2021 by the Banker Magazine, a leading global finance news publication published by the Financial Times of London.

The Bank's solid financial performance, excellent service delivery to customers and its continuous role of facilitating rapid economic growth across the African continent were some of the reasons that led to the bank being named best bank in 12 of its African subsidiaries and in Nigeria.

UBA Nigeria Plc, UBA Benin UBA Burkina Faso UBA Cameroon, UBA Chad, UBA Congo Brazzaville, UBA Cote D'Ivoire, UBA Gabon, UBA Guinea, UBA Liberia, UBA Senegal, UBA Sierra Leone and UBA Zambia all came out top as the best banks in their respective countries.

This is not a first for UBA, in 2020, six of its subsidiaries in Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Zambia were winners of the Best Bank award. This year, the UBA Group is breaking a record with its exceptional wins as African Bank of the Year and Bank of the year in 13 countries. The 14 awards made it the first time ever in the history of the almost 100 years of The banker, that any banking group will be clinching as many as 14 wins in a single year.

At the Virtual award ceremony held on December 1st, 2021, the Middle East and Africa Editor for The Banker, John Everington, explained that a rigorous and highly analytical process is made annually to reach the decision for each Bank of the Year award and the institution's reputation for independence, authority and integrity is thoroughly applied to each submission.

"While several African banks impressed the judges this year, there was no doubt as to the worthiest recipient of the Bank of the Year for Africa – UBA Group – a clear winner across a wide range of criteria. UBA has performed impressively across its footprint with a strong financial performance across most of its markets,"

Everington said.

Kennedy Uzoka, UBA's Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, who expressed delight over the recognition from The Banker stated, "Like I always say, at UBA, we must be doing something right. Winning 14 awards in 13 subsidiaries and the Bank of the Year on the African continent is a big achievement."

According to him, "The recognitions come as a reassurance that we are on track in consolidating our leadership position in Africa, as we continue to create superior value for all our stakeholders. We have our millions of customers across the globe and our many thousands of staff to thank for this. They are the very reason why we keep winning."

Since 1926, the Bank of the Year awards has been celebrating the best of global banking and is regarded as the industry standard for banking excellence. The 2021 edition highlights those institutions that have outshone their peers in terms of performance, strategic initiatives and response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Banker Magazine is a publication

of the Financial Times – a leading global finance news publication which has been in existence since 1888. The Banker magazine is the definitive reference in international banking for high level decision makers.

United Bank for Africa Plc is a leading Pan-African financial institution, offering banking services to more than twenty-five million customers, across over 1,000 business offices and customer touch points, in 20 African countries.

With presence in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France, UBA is connecting people and businesses across Africa through retail; commercial and corporate banking; innovative cross-border payments and remittances; trade finance and ancillary banking services.



## Kiwi Pay Group to launch the largest online marketplace in Sub-Saharan Africa



Kiwi Pay Group, a Singapore-based fintech, has perfected plans to launch into the sun-Saharan African market.

The group has entered into a strategic partnership with Bolloré Logistics, one of Africa's leading transport and logistic businesses to pave a gateway to the African market. The new partnership will see Kiwi Pay Group launch the biggest online marketplace in sub-Saharan Africa.

Already, Kiwi Pay Group has developed a Super App and is looking to launch it in Cameroon in part of a strategic partnership with French group Bolloré Logistics. This will enable them to offer the Africa market millions of products from European retailers at affordable prices, and use local payment methods such as credit cards and mobile money, including 4 to 5 days of air shipping to several countrywide delivery connection points.

Cameroon customers can buy products such as DVDs, books, computers, games, cosmetics, appliances, and millions of SKUs through this strategic partnership from their mobile application in the coming weeks.

Kiwi Pay Group, Bolloré Logistics, and the Customs Bureau of Cameroon sealed the strategic agreement on Wednesday the 4th in Douala, Cameroon. Before then, Kiwi Pay Group had also signed strategic agreements with different economic zones across Africa such as CEMAC, GIM-UEMOA, that allow it to transact in the local currency, FCFA.

In the press release, Serge Agnero, the Regional Manager for Bolloré Transport & Logistics described Kiwi Pay Group as "an experienced player".

# How Bank of Industry lifts brand equity through United Nations, becomes signatory

By Dele Ojo

The Bank of Industry has embraced the United Nations Principles for Responsible Banking, a single framework for a sustainable banking industry developed through a partnership between banks worldwide and the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI). This was affirmed recently by becoming an official Signatory to the UN Principles.

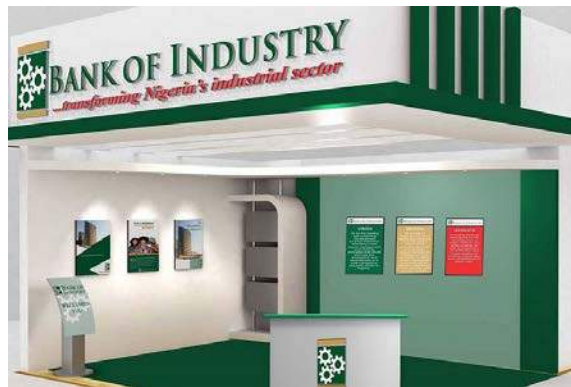
The Principles are the leading framework for ensuring that banks' strategy and practice align with the vision society has set out for its future in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement. Banks who have signed the Principles commit to be ambitious in their sustainability strategies, working to mainstream and embed sustainability into the heart of their business, while allowing them to remain at the cutting-edge of sustainable finance.

Over 250 banks representing over 40 percent of banking assets worldwide have now joined this movement for change, leading the way towards a future in which the banking community makes the kind of positive contribution to people and the planet that society expects. This is a journey of unprecedented scale and scope at a time when such ambition is urgently needed.

Mr. Olukayode Pitan, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Bank of Industry, said, "We are honoured to be the first Development Finance Institution in Nigeria to commit to the UNEP FI Principles for Responsible Banking alongside other leading Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) in the international space. This global framework strengthens our approach to addressing the sustainable development challenges of our economy by critically analysing our market to identify pressing needs of our communities, environment & customers"

To him, the partnership, which is another pioneering effort for the Bank, is in line with its dedication to lead the Development Finance industry in Africa to improve the overall strategic impact of the organisation's interventions towards environmental management, social development, industrialization, and poverty alleviation through sustainable finance.

Signatories to the Principles take on a leadership role, demonstrating how banking products, services and relationships



can support and accelerate the changes necessary to achieve shared prosperity for both current and future generations, building a positive future for both people and planet. These banks also join the world's largest global banking community focused on sustainable finance, sharing best-practice and working together on practical guidance and pioneering tools of benefit to the entire industry.

In line with Bank of Industry's vision to be Africa's leading Development Finance Institution transforming industries sustainably and operating under global best practices, the Bank is confident that these principles provide an opportunity for alignment with international standards for sustainable development, whilst lending credibility and authority to its institutional commitments. This action is also in line with the Bank's sustainability strategy aimed at transforming lives and enterprise responsibly through sustained interventions in economic development, environmental protection, social impact, ethics, governance and partnerships; improving the world for generations to come.

"As Nigeria's foremost Development Finance Institution, BOI stands as a driving force for sustainable development through investment across the nation. By the very design of our corporate strategy, we are positioned to be the leading development bank out of Nigeria promoting social, environmental and economic development through our business operations and activities. We are proud to join this important group of global banks facilitating sustainable finance," Pitan added.

This is a journey of unprecedented scale and scope at a time when such ambition

is urgently needed to address the major planetary crises of climate change, nature loss, pollution and social issues. Together, these collective efforts will ensure that profitability goes hand in hand with a sense of purpose.

The Bank has a mandate to transform Nigeria's industrial sector by providing financial assistance for the establishment of large, medium and small enterprises; as well as to drive expansion, diversification and modernization of existing enterprises; and rehabilitation of ailing ones. This mandate

is geared towards supporting projects with potential developmental impact, and the capability to generate considerable multiplier effects such as industrialization, job creation, and poverty alleviation, which would have significant positive effects on the socio-economic condition of Nigerians.

The Bank continues to support growth across various sectors including Agro and Food Processing, Creative Industries, Engineering and Technology, Healthcare and Petrochemicals, Oil and Gas, Renewable Energy and Solid Minerals; leveraging our state offices nationwide

The Principles were created in 2019 through a partnership between founding banks and the United Nations, and are designed to bring purpose, vision and ambition to sustainable finance. Signatory banks commit to embedding these Principles across all business areas, at the strategic, portfolio and transactional levels. Over 250 banks representing over 40% of banking assets worldwide have now joined this movement for change and embarked on their 4-year journeys of impact analysis, target setting and reporting.

United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) is a partnership between UNEP and the global financial sector to mobilize private sector finance for sustainable development. UNEP FI works with more than 400 members – banks, insurers, and investors – and over 100 supporting institutions – to help create a financial sector that serves people and planet while delivering positive impacts.

UNEP FI aims to inspire, inform and enable financial institutions to improve people's quality of life without compromising that of future generations. By leveraging the UN's role, UNEP FI accelerates sustainable finance.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. ♦



# NCC pegs 5G Reserve Price at N75bn



The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has pegged the reserve price for the auction of the 5th generation spectrum which will hold on December 13, 2021 at N75bn.

Making its decision known to a

broad-section of telecommunication stakeholders in Lagos, the regulatory agency presented timelines, strategy and comments of telecommunications operators to the draft information memorandum for the auction of the

3.5GHz spectrum band as part of its 5G technology deployment plan.

NCC which sought the active participation of stakeholders in the deliberations that would follow towards the licensing of the 3.5GHz mid band for the deployment of 5G services amongst others in Nigeria stated that the Information memorandum provides guidance and a process that the commission will adopt for licensing of the 3.5GHz band.

NCC plans to use the Ascending Clock Auction which is software based and provisions have been made for manual auction in case the auction software fails during the auction process.

The regulator plans to have a mock auction on December 6th 2021 which precedes the main auction on December 13, 2021. However, mobile operators including MTN, Airtel, Huawei as well as GSM Association have called on the regulator to lower the reserve price for the 5G spectrum.

## Race for the Metaverse, Microsoft prepares for 2022 launch

By Zion Rufus



As it turns out, Facebook wasn't the only big tech working heavily on the metaverse; Microsoft is taking a bigger leap at the Metaverse project by creating a more corporate version that can help people meet up in a digital environment, make meetings more comfortable with the use of avatars and facilitate creative collaboration from all around the world.

Where Facebook (now Meta) wants the Metaverse to be the next evolution of social connection where people can socialize, learn, collaborate and play in ways that go beyond human imagination, Microsoft sees it as "a persistent, digital world that is connected to many aspects of the physical world, including people, places and things."

The race to the Metaverse has the

big techs exploring options to create a collection of shared online worlds in which physical, augmented, and virtual reality converge. In its Metaverse efforts, Facebook invested \$50 million, rebranded to Meta, and created 10,000 new jobs across the European Union to help make the building of the Metaverse a reality.

Meanwhile, Microsoft has similar but bigger plans. The tech company announced: "The Microsoft Cloud provides a comprehensive set of resources designed to power metaverses – there will be more than one! – IoT capabilities that enable customers to create "digital twins" of physical objects in the cloud; utilizing Microsoft Mesh to build a shared sense of presence on devices; and using AI-powered resources to create natural interactions through speech and vision machine learning models."

"As we discuss the metaverse, we are thinking about both a new medium and an app type, like the way we talked about the web and websites a long, long time ago, aka the 1990s. At Ignite, we are making two important announcements that continue the evolution of the metaverse: Dynamics

365 Connected Spaces; and Mesh for Microsoft Teams."

Earlier in May, Microsoft disclosed it was uniquely positioned with a stack of artificial intelligence and mixed reality tools to help companies start developing metaverse apps. A number of gaming companies, including Fortnite's owner Epic Games, have also released simulation software and VR services for a metaverse.

To support its Metaverse project, Microsoft will roll out Mesh for Microsoft Teams in 2022. The feature combines the mixed-reality capabilities of Microsoft Mesh, which allows people in different physical locations to join collaborative and shared holographic experiences, with the productivity tools of Microsoft Teams, where people can join virtual meetings, send chats, collaborate on shared documents and more.

Mesh will allow organizations to create metaverses, persistent virtual worlds for people to collaborate, places that connect the physical world to the virtual world via digital twins of people, places and things.

# FirstBank partners NIBSS to drive digital payment convenience with Nigeria Quick Response



FirstBank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier and leading financial inclusion services organisation has announced its partnership with Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System plc (NIBSS) on its recently launched Nigeria Quick Response (NQR) Payment Solution.

The NQR is an innovative payment option implemented for all financial service providers and designed to promote quick and fast transactions by scanning the code on one's mobile device. Also, the initiative reduces cost(s) for merchants and banks in delivering instant value for person

to business (P2B) and person to person (P2P) transactions by simply scanning to pay. Unlike other QR schemes, the NQR is implemented with reduced charges that is cheaper for merchants.

The initiative is accessible on the Bank's payment infrastructure as the NQR code can be used to make payments through one's FirstMobile App. And it is also available for the merchant in facilitating their business activities. The touchpoint and use cases of the NQR payment solution include convenience stores, supermarkets, shopping malls, pharmacy, ride-hailing/taxi payments, bus fares, tolling booths payments, vending machines, e-commerce sites, online (Instagram) businesses amongst many others.

To access the service, launch your FirstMobile App and select QR payment. Afterwards, choose NIBSS as a payment provider, then scan the seller's NQR barcode. Thereafter, the amount is

inputted, followed by PIN validation to generate an instant confirmation of the transaction successfully. On the other hand, merchants are to visit any FirstBank branch closest to them for service enrolment.

Speaking on the initiative Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, CEO, FirstBank said "we are delighted with the adoption of the Nigeria Quick Response (NQR) payment solution, an initiative by Nigeria Interbank Settlement System plc (NIBSS) which has been instrumental to easing and promoting payment convenience with the use of mobile phones. At FirstBank, we recognize the indelible role technology plays in promoting businesses across diverse frontiers and we remain committed to reinventing our technology infrastructure to meet global standards whilst being committed to staying true to our mantra in always putting You, our customers First."

## MTN, Airtel recognised with 'Industry Sustenance Pioneers' awards

By Felicia Nwosu

It was an evening of resounding applause and flashbacks in the history of the Nigerian telecommunications industry, as books of remembrance were opened on key industry players for awards recognitions.

In acknowledgement of outstanding contributions and enormous impacts on the socio-economic growth of Nigeria, leading and pioneering network providers, MTN Nigeria, and Airtel have been honoured with the awards of "Industry Sustenance Pioneers" for leading the revolution and unprecedented move that sky-rocketed Nigeria to be named among the leading markets in global Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This was at the just concluded special summit, tagged: 20 years of Telecommunications Revolution in Nigeria, in commemoration of the two decades journey led by the two frontiers in the telecoms sector, MTN and Airtel respectively.

The network pioneers, according to the organisers and host of the summit, Compact Communications, deemed it fit to bestow such awards as 'Industry Sustenance Pioneers' for acting as enablers of a number of sustainable goals.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Ernest Ndukwe, Chairman, MTN Nigeria & former Executive Vice Chairman of Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), during his lecture, commending the Y'ello network and its counterpart Airtel reassured them of a continuous friendly atmosphere that is fair, firm and transparent for businesses to thrive. He went down memory-lane, while commending MTN and Airtel for affecting every sector of the economy positively.

"It was almost like yesterday; it is great to know that it is now 20 years since this journey started. The journey to regulate and legalise commenced with the promulgation



of the first Nigeria communications in November 1992, and was followed subsequently with the inauguration of the first board of the Nigeria Communications Commission in 1993. As we all know, telecommunications remain a viable tool for development. It is essential transformation that promotes the development of other sectors of the economy. It is indispensable in day to day interaction, in terms of national emergency, natural disasters and many others."

The telecoms sector, since its inception 20 years ago, has played a greater role in Nigeria's economic diversification, prominent amongst being Education, Health, Financial Services and Transportation Sectors of the economy."



# Your company website is your own digital real estate – Prof. Mande

By Felicia Nwosu



With the focus to sustain relevant online presence, as well as being constantly active and available for online business transactions, a professional icon in the advertising space, Prof. Samaila Mande, President, Brands Academy Nigeria, has charged organisations and

brand managers to create up-to-date company websites, describing it as their digital real estate for corporate profile.

He stated that the frequent outage of the social media in recent times has propelled the need for business owners to alternate for multiple forms of marketing platforms, in the bid to maintain an unrestricted online presence.

Sharing his views in an exclusive interview with Nigeria's foremost brand and advertising magazine, *MARKETING EDGE*, the advertising expert said that the abrupt outage of some online platforms has given a dimension on the importance of having more marketing platforms. He urged them to embrace other alternatives such as digital advertising, which he said, though not the most effective for clicks and conversations, can tremendously be of importance in creating awareness at a cheaper cost

“The unpredictability of relying on such an audience rate platform quickly becomes evident because you will just realise that

you are putting all your eggs in one basket, and when it crashes, all of them will be gone for that day.”

Encouraging marketers to expand their marketing horizons with available platforms, the brand icon said: “You can also leverage email marketing programme, converged with chains of addresses, which are mass-mailed with what to do with both existing and prospective customers. With email marketing, your brand has 100% share of voice and avoid clutter of social media beeps, making your messages direct and specific.”

He suggested that they add viral element to their email programme by including a referral programme to encourage email forwarding and subsequent list grow. According to him, embracing the use of talk leadership content production will help produce and write video contents that can project the brand or company directly to experts in the same field and it is more effective than social media.

## iOS updates strengthen barriers to digital advertising, email marketing

By Zion Rufus

Major tech companies like Google and Apple have been making privacy-related moves to the detriment of marketers and advertisers as the enhanced privacy updates put more limitations around email marketing and in-app advertising. Some of these moves include the elimination of Google's third party cookies and Apple's latest mobile operating system, iOS 15 which has forced marketers to develop alternative ways to find

potential customers and engage with existing ones.

Apple's latest mobile operating system, iOS 15 provides enhanced privacy control such as Mail Privacy Protection, a feature that prevents email senders from knowing whether a user has opened an email, and hides IP addresses so that senders can't link that action to other online activity or determine a user's location. These changes will also impact

how marketers measure campaign effectiveness as a result of the restrictions being placed on access to identifiers.

“Efforts from all other advertising networks to connect to Apple users will become increasingly difficult regardless of channel; either mobile advertising or through email,” says Oti Ukubeyinje, VP, Product Marketing and Growth at Terragon Group. “This limits the inventory available



for advertisers to reach apple users. The entire mobile/digital advertising ecosystem is waiting to see how this plays out.”

With the newly enhanced privacy settings, Apple users can now see how often apps have used the permission they've previously granted to access their location, photos, camera, microphone, and contacts during the past seven days. According to Apple's Privacy report, users can check whether this makes sense to them, and take action by going to the app in Settings if it doesn't. Users can also find out who is contacting.

Similarly, a recent update in iOS 14.5 allowed Apple users to opt-in or opt-out of personalised ads. However, with over 1 billion active iPhone users, reports from research company Flurry has revealed that only 13% of users worldwide have accepted data tracking on their devices. In April, Apple introduced the controversial App Tracking Transparency (ATT) feature in iOS 14.5 which notifies Apple users when apps want access to a unique Identifier for Advertisers (IDFA) that's embedded in devices including the iPhone. Marketers use the technology to improve the targeting of online ads, and users who decline to share their identifiers remain anonymous. iOS 14.5 faced criticism from companies including Facebook and app developers that complained the feature would reduce the value of digital advertising when people opted out of tracking.

“Apple will eventually become the biggest advertiser to iOS users,” Oti said. “Overtime, advertising to Apple users will also become more expensive, and all key platforms are affected. For now, the opt-in rate of those who have accepted to be tracked is very low at less than 20% of total Apple users globally, although it's a little bit higher than expected, it is still very low. There seems to be a large preference for Apple in-store related campaigns, as we know, standard brand awareness and reach is highly prioritized by Apple, but the privacy restrictions will make it more difficult to seek out new audiences”.



## Global mobile apps and web analytics market to hit \$28.88bn, increases focus on importance of data

By Zion Rufus

The global mobile apps and web analytics market is experiencing significant growth as it is expected to hit a whopping \$28.88 billion mark by 2028, growing at a CAGR of 18.16% according to reports published by Fior Markets.

The mobile apps and web analytics market which comprises of mobile advertising and marketing analytics, application testing and analytics, marketing automation, search engine tracking and ranking amongst others, captures data from websites, mobile apps, and web apps to trace the purchase journeys of consumers, understand their purchase behaviors, attract new users, retain old ones, and also to analyze actions taken over responsive websites in order to help companies make more informed decisions to improve the experience of their consumers.

Some of the key players operating in this market include Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Apple Inc., Amazon Web Services Inc., Mixpanel, Amplitude Inc., UXCam Inc., Oracle, Adobe, Flurry, AppsFlyer, and Upland Software Inc.

“The transformational power of business analytics and real-time data intelligence even in Nigeria's advertising space cannot be over-emphasized,” says Austin Efenamokwu, Founder and CEO, Ubiquity Media Holding Limited, one of Nigeria's leading creative solutions agency.

“The time where we just buy media in places that we consider relevant for our client is gone. Now we need to make conscious efforts apply a measurement

approach to the media we buy for our clients. As our world becomes increasingly delineated, we see new possibilities in how data, media and technology can be blended to build innovation and effective brand communications,” the media strategist opined.

Up from \$7.60 billion in 2020, the growth can be credited to the acceleration and adoption of mobile apps and web analytics for advertising campaigns, rising importance of analytics to drive efficiency & enhanced ROI, optimization of digital marketing, and the increasing demand for website analytics solutions for analyzing & controlling the geographical distribution of website traffic.

Austin submitted further: “Business success doesn't seem to be driven by size or scale as much anymore, the world is moving away from scale to strategic capabilities. Our strategic capabilities such as in data, analytics and tech gets us to parity with the strongest players in the marketplace. If you have data and analytics, you have the power to give your clients advice around growth and to drive their business transformation.”

Similarly, the rising need for competitive differentiation, increasing number of internet & smartphone users, vast technological advances, and the increased use of data by companies to know more about their customers, and offer integrated, end-to-end digital experience have also driven the adoption of the data analytics solution of mobile apps and web analytics platforms.



# FG commits to 100% increase in crude oil production



The federal government of Nigeria has committed to rebuilding the upstream sector by increasing crude oil output to 3.0 million barrels per day thus ensuring a 100 per cent increase from an average of 1.5 million since this year.

This was disclosed by the Chief Executive, Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, Engr. Gbenga Komolafe at the International Conference and Exhibition of the Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists (NAPE) in Lagos.

“As the upstream technical and commercial regulator, we are committed to addressing these issues to increase our reserves to 40 billion barrels and raise our production to three million barrels per day,” Mr. Komolafe said.

The NUPRC boss added the government would work towards solving some problems, including oil theft, insecurity, and ageing facilities.

“Collaborative efforts between operators, communities and the deployment of state-of-the-art technology to monitor pipelines in remote areas are on course. Already, as a commission, we have commenced consultation with relevant stakeholders towards the achievement of these objectives. A more aggressive policy on routine Asset Integrity Management to curb crude leakages and spills caused by ageing facilities will be adopted. Attractive incentive is being made to encourage multi-client and speculative data companies to acquire state-of-the-art data in open acreage to facilitate exploration activities”.

## Afreximbank, NNPC signs \$1.04bn deal for petroleum exploration

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has signed a \$1.04 billion facility with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to finance petroleum exploration in the country. The facility is expected to assist in boosting crude oil production in Nigeria.

The agreement, which was concluded in Durban, South Africa at the second Intra-Africa Trade Fair, which held recently, comprised a pre-export/shipment finance facility underpinned by a Forward Sale Agreement (FSA) and Offtake Contracts with the NNPC acting as the

Borrower and Seller.

Signed by Umor Ajia, NNPC Executive Director and Group Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of the Corporation, the transaction complies with Afreximbank's mandate to promote local content in Africa's oil and gas and other mining industry and generate foreign receivables into Africa. While lauding the deal as very innovative, Afreximbank President and Chairman of the Board of Directors Prof. Benedict Oramah, explained the bank's decision in the context of the world's climate change agenda, saying this is a case



of adopting a balanced approach.

With the FSA, NNPC is expected to deliver 35,000 barrels of crude oil per day. The proceeds of the facility will boost tax revenues and foreign currency receipts and create thousands of jobs in the oil and gas refining value chain, all by more than \$2.4 billion to the immediate benefit of the government thereby improving the balance of trade and Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria – Africa's largest economy.

## HONL seeks NASS' intervention on Atala Oil field revocation



**H**ardy Oil Nigeria Limited (HONL), one of the joint venture (JV) partners with Bayelsa Oil Company Ltd, and Century Exploration and Production Limited, has approached the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petition over the revocation of their ownership of the Atala Field (OML 46) and the re-awarding of same to another company, Halkin Exploration and

Production Limited by the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR).

In a letter to the committee recently, HONL complained of alleged fraud, criminal breach of trust, forgery, corruption and the improper manner in which the DPR revoked its licence and prayed the committee to invite Halkin Exploration and Production Limited to clarify its claim to have invested \$60,000,000 in the Atala Marginal Field and the acquisition of 41 per cent of Bayelsa Oil Company Limited's participating interest in the Atala Field, claims upon which DPR and the Minister of Petroleum Resources based their justification for the re-award of the field.

The committee, through its chairman, Sen. Ayo Akinyelure, granted the prayer by inviting Hardy Oil Nigeria Limited, Bayelsa Oil Company Limited, Century Exploration and Production Limited, DPR and Halkin Exploration and Production Limited, to appear for a public hearing.



## Stakeholder attributes soaring gas price to supply shortage

**M**r. Patrick Ilo, the Managing Director of Petrocam Trading Nigeria Limited, has said the major reason cooking gas is costly is because NLNG is not supplying enough product to go round the country. Ilo disclosed this during the inauguration of the Petrocam Trading Nigeria of a new solar-powered LPG filling skid station in Itele, Ogun State.

He, therefore, urged the Federal Government to ensure that the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) allocate more Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), otherwise known as cooking gas to the domestic market to meet the growing demand of the people.

"As we speak, the allocation they give to people like us is very minute. They give us allocation for the commodity once in two weeks and it is around 200 metric tonnes. We depend on imported LPG and this comes at additional cost," he explained.

## Militants blew up Agip facility due to neglect

**A** new militant group in the Niger Delta region, known as Bayan-Men, has blown up an oil facility operated by Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC), in the Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Council of Rivers State.

The group, which recently blew up the oil well, OB5, (Obiavu-5) operated by Agip in Omoku, said their action followed the failure of the oil firm to deal directly with their communities.

The leader of Bayan-Men in Port Harcourt said the oil company had refused to allow host communities benefit from their operations in the area, adding that the firm practised divide and rule.

He said: "The only thing we want Agip to do is to deal directly with the 27 communities of Omoku, according to the Federal Government resolution.

"We don't want Agip to be negotiating with anybody. They should deal with the communities. If they continue like this, what we have done now is small compared to what we will do."

Confirming the development, the Coordinator-General of Omoku Community Youth Leaders Forum, Ekeuku Pureheart, disclosed that the development was as a result of the failure by Agip to meet



the demands of the people.

Pureheart noted that the matter required that Agip recognise various communities that make up Omoku, adding that the boys were threatening to carry out more attacks if Agip does not do the right thing.

He said: "Federal Government intervened a long time ago. Now some uncontrollable boys and some militia groups have blown up Agip oil well, OB5. Obiavu-5 is the name of the oil well.

"The boys are still threatening that if Agip does not engage directly with the communities of Omoku and give them what is due to them that they will do more.

"We are calling on the Federal Government and other relevant agencies to intervene before things get out of hand. This may cause a drop in production. The government does not need any situation that will result in further drop in production".





# holds mentorship program in Lagos, empowers school girls for nation building

By Oghale Mafuru

**A**head of its 20th annual conference, Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIMBIZ), held a mentorship program aimed at developing and empowering young girls in public secondary schools with the requisite knowledge and tools to excel in life.

The one week program tagged “Big Sister Program”, which aimed to deepen the core mandate of WIMBIZ in ensuring that more women attain leadership positions in all facets of life, held in several parts of the country.

To welcome delegates of the association and representatives from the Lagos State government, the Principal, Girls’ Senior Secondary Grammar School, Obalende, Ikoyi, Lagos, Mrs. Omotoye Bamidele who was elated commended WIMBIZ for working relentlessly for the wholesome development of the girl child, noting that to ensure that more women attain the highest level in every human endeavour, it is imperative that they develop skills and capacities to attain set goals.

Delivering an address at the event, First Lady of Lagos State, Mrs. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, represented by wife of the Special Adviser to Mr. Governor on Education, Mrs. Oluwatosin Wahab lauded WIMBIZ for the impressive work done to reshape the mindsets of girls for future endeavours.

She said: “Since the launch of the BSP Program in 2016, which is a mentorship initiative for girls in Senior Secondary school, it is noteworthy that teenage girls have been positively impacted, while the female network of WIMBIZ has been deployed to influence the girls by boosting their confidence and leadership capacity.”

The First Lady, who asserted that the female child deserves a life where she is treated as equal to a boy, averred that the girl child should be respected, loved, and given a chance to rule like their male counterpart.

Speaking to the girls passionately, Chairman Board of Trustees, WIMBIZ, Mrs. Ifeyinwa Ighodalo charged them to shun peer pressure and work hard to achieve their dreams.



In her words: “You have to be true to yourself. You have to know who you are. You have to work hard and also smart. When you have problem, seek help and counsel from your teachers, principals and your big sisters. Seek help from the right places not where will put you in trouble.”

Restating the association’s objectives, Ngover Ihyembe-Nwankwo, Chairperson, WIMBIZ Executive Council, disclosed that the association is built on four pillars, which include to inspire, empower, connect and advocate, adding that the “Big Sister Program” was birthed five years ago to deepen its impact on young girls.

To shed light into what the program entails, Chair, Big Sister Program, Awuneba Ajumogobia said the program, which would avail participants the opportunity to learn valuable skills that will reshape their mindsets, will also inculcate certain values needed to attain success.

In her words: “We are holding the Big Sister Program, a mentorship program where WIMBIZ members who are associates come and share a curriculum with the girls and share their experiences. The subjects they cover include financial literacy, careers, entrepreneurship, self confidence, personal hygiene, interpersonal skills among others.”

She added: “What we hope to achieve is a shift in mindset. We are hoping that every single girl that attends the program today goes home with a shifted mindset in terms of what they can accomplish

and how to get there. Goal setting is an important aspect. The goal setting module is the one that actually brings it alive. It helps the girl document tangible stuffs to be able to achieve their aspirations.”

Some of the girls who benefitted from the mentorship program expressed appreciation to WIMBIZ pledging to deploy all the skills and knowledge acquired to attain their life goals and purpose.

One of the students, Umar Aishat said: “This program is an interesting one and very educative. The organization has empowered us. We appreciate their support and we would not let them down.”

Another student, Ngbede Rejoice said: “I want to say a big thank you to WIMBIZ for coming to my school. I have learnt so many things from the Big Sisters. I have learnt to always be true to myself and know who I am. I should be responsible and don’t take no for an answer. I have also learnt to be confident so I can earn my respect.”

Certificate of participation was awarded to the girls at the end of the program.

Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIMBIZ) is a non-profit organization that has, over the last 20 years, implemented programs that inspire, empower and advocate for greater representation of women in leadership positions in the public and private sector.

# MTN shortlists 1000 students for mPulse Spelling Bee second round



**M**TN Nigeria has announced the commencement of the second round of the 2021 edition of the mPulse Spelling Bee. The first 1000 participants with the highest score among over 13,000 entrants have progressed to the second round of the competition. Text messages were sent to successful participants and their names have been published on the mPulse website.

The shortlisted candidates, who are students between the ages of 9 and 15 in primary and secondary schools across Nigeria, will be required to answer 20 spelling questions – each with a definition

and etymology – within 20 seconds to progress to the final round.

Commenting on the quality of this year's competition, the Acting General Manager, Consumer Marketing, MTN Nigeria, Idowu Adesokan, stated, "We are very impressed by the quality of the competition this year. The students gave their best into practising and participating, and it was evident. The shortlist came down to those who had the highest score and who completed the quiz the earliest. Everyone who entered should be proud of themselves for the very impressive effort."

Like the first round, the second round of the competition will be held on the mPulse website. Participants have been encouraged to expect tougher words than those they were required to spell in the first round. In addition to this, the spelling quiz in the second round can only be taken once, so a stable internet connection and complete concentration are advised.

Adesokan congratulated the shortlisted participants for making it to the second

round, saying "I'd like to congratulate all the participants who have made it this far. It's no easy feat. I hope this helps you realise what you are capable of and inspires you to give your absolute best in the second and final rounds."

He noted the importance of the support of parents/guardians and teachers and encouraged them to continue to give the participants the support they require. "A strong support system is important for children to realise and fulfil their potential. I want to encourage all parents/guardians and teachers whose child or ward has made it this far to not rest on their oars. Please, keep giving them all the support and affirming words they require."

This year's competition affords participants, teachers and the winner's school a chance to share in over N7 million worth in cash prizes, laptops, phones and mPulse goody bags.

## Ecobank Group: Why we sponsor Intra-African Trade Fair 2021

**T**he Ecobank Group has shed light on its decision to give sponsorship support to the Intra-African Trade Fair 2021 in South Africa, hinting that the Trade Fair promises to help accelerate Africa's commercial and economic growth and development, which is in line with a core mission of the Group. The Intra-African Trade Fair 2021 took place from November 15-21, 2021 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) is an initiative that supports the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It is organised by Afreximbank in collaboration with the African Union, marking an important step to sustainably addressing the gap in trade and market information for the successful realisation of the AfCFTA objectives.

The theme of the Fair, "Building Bridges for a Successful AfCFTA", aims at boosting trade and investments across the African continent.

According to the Bank, it already have in place numerous solutions to facilitate the exponential growth in intra-African trade

being created by the AfCFTA. These include its scalable digital payments ecosystem which can facilitate trade and ecommerce payments across Africa; its nurturing and supporting of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) through its provision of financial and non-financial support to help them grow and succeed; smart cash management functionalities; its Ecobank Marketplace providing a ready-made and accessible ecommerce solution for sole traders and MSMEs to grow their customer base and sales; its range of training programmes to upskill businesses' management abilities; and the provision of innovative funding solutions.

The Ecobank Group's intent is to be the 'go to' bank for payments and trade finance in Africa.

Akin Dada, Group Executive, Corporate and Investment Banking, Ecobank Group said: "The Intra-African Trade Fair provides Africa's businesses with unique opportunities for unrivalled networking to establish new business contacts from every country across the African continent. This is coming at a time that the African

Continental Free Trade Area agreement is breaking down the historic barriers to intra-African trade and investments by creating a huge single market.

At the Ecobank Group we recognise that this will feed through to exponential growth in the demand and need for the convenience of a reliable and secure payments ecosystem and we already have the established scale to facilitate this as the payments bank of choice across Africa."

The Bank explained that IATF2021 plays a vital role in raising awareness and helping Africa's businesses to leverage on the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), grow and expand their international reach. In conjunction with improvements in market information about the goods and services that are available in other African countries, it will increase intra-African trade and negate the longstanding but unnecessary importation of such products from outside the African continent, while boosting sourcing from within Africa.

"As a key supporter determined to play a significant role in helping to achieve the objectives of the AfCFTA, the Ecobank Group is delighted to be sponsoring the IATF2021 which promises to be an important vehicle in making the vision of 'one African market' a reality", the bank stressed.



# Hyundai announces partnership with Factorial solid state battery outfit



**H**undai Motor Company has announced through a joint development agreement that it has partnered Factorial Energy for solid state batteries for both Hyundai and Kia products along with investments into Factorial's process at the "cell, module, and system level." Factorial Energy claims to have found a way to make its solid state batteries work. Why Solid State Matters.

Range and safety are two issues that are priorities for the majority of potential EV buyers. Currently, lithium-ion batteries are in vogue among automakers, and while they represent the cutting edge among saleable battery technologies, their densities are limited for a given physical

size. That's why batteries have grown larger as a way to increase their capacities, but there is only so much you can do for a given size if you max out on energy density. This, along with the potential for fires when lithium-ion batteries are punctured—the liquid electrolyte is highly flammable—makes for a chemistry that, while fine for today's needs given its tradeoffs, is not likely to be a long-term EV solution.

Solid state batteries are looked at as the ultimate answer, as they build on traditional lithium-ion battery technology and remove the safety issues of its liquid electrolyte. This makes for a very lucrative business venture, if you can figure it out, and why Factorial Energy has dedicated their time and resources to it. Now, it won't be doing it alone as Hyundai Motor Company announced that it will partner up with Factorial on their solid state battery production.

If there is a breakthrough with the tech, it would mean a revolution in EV production, with safer batteries and longer driving range. However, solid state batteries cost much more than regular lithium-ion batteries and their capacities are usually not great at room temperatures.

That is enough for Hyundai to invest, regardless, as they announced a joint development agreement with Factorial. This agreement not only states that Hyundai will test integration in Hyundai and Kia EVs, but also invest in integrating "Factorial technology at the cell, module, and system levels, perform vehicle-level integration, and co-develop specifications for manufacturing Factorial's batteries."

While Hyundai isn't the first OEM to invest into a solid state battery producer, this is the first instance where the deal includes a product that's apparently ready for real-world testing. The data Factorial has shown doesn't rule out a battery that has a 40-ah capacity at room temperature. Siyu Huang, Factorial Energy Chief Executive Officer said to Bloomberg that its "Factorial Electrolyte System Technology"—or FEST—has reached an energy density of roughly 159 kWh/lb in testing, and that the company has a goal of 181 kWh/lb. Tesla, for example, says its batteries have around 136 kWh/lb density and shows just how much improvement there is with a solid state battery, if what Huang says is true.

# Tesla fixes recall issue involving full self-driving beta software

**T**esla has announced the fixture of a software malfunction issue that prompted the recall of nearly 12,000 Tesla Model S, Model X, Model 3, and Model Y vehicles from model years 2017 to 2021. In a report submitted to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Tesla said that it either canceled or reverted the software update on the affected vehicles shortly after it was released to the public. It also disabled forward collision warning and auto emergency braking. Tesla says that more than 99.8 percent of the cars were updated to the fixed software as of October 29.

It should be recalled that Tesla issued a recall, filed with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to fix a software miscommunication with FSD

Beta version 10.3 resulted in certain Model S, X, 3, and Y cars that could lead to false collision warnings resulting in unnecessary automated emergency braking.

Affected vehicles include 2017 to 2021 model year Model S, X, 3, and Y electric vehicles, which is every model in Tesla's current lineup. The company says that the update introduced a software disconnect between two on-board chips where one is in a low power mode when used during Sentry Mode, a security feature, and Summon, which brings the parked car to you via the mobile app. The disconnect can cause the chips to inconsistently detect moving objects, resulting in the false braking scenarios. Tesla says it is not aware of any crashes or injuries involved with the issue.

Software update 10.3 was highly



anticipated as it also granted users with a 99/100 Safety Score access to Tesla's FSD beta software, which is still not fully released to the public. Tesla CEO Elon Musk tweeted shortly after the release those issues like this are "to be expected with beta software."

Although nearly every affected vehicle has been updated to the current software, Tesla says that all stores and service centers began being notified of the fix starting yesterday, November 1. Owners can check in the software tab of the vehicle or in the Tesla mobile app for software updates.

Hyundai announces partnership with Factorial solid state battery outfit.

# BMW rolls out fully electric i4 model ahead of 2022 launch



Fully electric 2022 BMW i4 has been rolled out to customers in Germany during an event which held at the company's headquarters.

Senior vice president, BMW Group Market Germany, Bernhard Kuhnt said: "It is a very special moment for us when we hand over brand new models to customers for the first time. The BMW i4 shows in an emotional way how well fully-electric mobility and sporty driving dynamics fit together. For us, it is therefore clear: the BMW i4 will offer our customers a whole

new dimension of driving pleasure."

According to the Munich based auto giant, i4 M50 is the first fully-electric performance model to come from BMW M GmbH.

The i4 blends the functionality and space of the gran coupe design with the instantaneous power delivery of BMW's latest 5th generation eDrive, class-leading driving dynamics and long-distance comfort, elegant design, uncompromising workmanship, cutting-edge user-vehicle interface, advanced infotainment and

driving assistance technologies all combined to deliver a zero-emissions BMW worthy of the Ultimate Driving Machine moniker.

Stefan Ballin, the owner of an electrical contracting company, was amongst the first customers to take delivery of the BMW i4.

He commented that, "It wasn't possible, at the time I placed the order, to take a test drive, but I knew the BMW i4 was exactly the right car for me! I was impressed by the concept – the symbiosis of range, elegant design, and unmistakable BMW sportiness. I also wanted a car that would show how we, as an innovative company, can comfortably integrate electromobility into both our private and working environments. I'm also looking forward to sporty driving pleasure with zero emissions in the i4 – because the electricity I need to run it will come from our own photovoltaic system."

The BMW i4 is offered in different versions with a battery pack having a capacity of 83.9 kWh and enabling "up to 590km (WLTP) and up to 300 miles (EPA)" of range based on its own estimates.

It has a power output of up to 390kW/530HP with a dual-motor powertrain, which is going to enable acceleration from 0 to 100km/h (62 mph) in around four seconds. A single motor option will also be available.

# Toyota births 2022 Corolla model

Toyota Nigeria Limited, a reputable automobile company, has added another colourful and prestigious feather to its cap with the launch of a new Corolla sedan into the market. This revolution was achieved three months after the introduction of the all new Starlet subcompact sport utility vehicle, SUV.

The new Corolla was revealed at the on-going Abuja Motor Fair as automobile enthusiasts trooped in to have a feel of the world's best-selling car. The unveiling of the new Corolla captured the attention of many, as it was the only new model unveiled at the ongoing Abuja Motor Fair.

Dr. Nau Omisanya, Director, Industrial Infrastructure Development Department of the National Automotive Design and Development Council, who represented the Director General, pointed out the qualities of the Toyota brand which he said was fully imbibed in the new Corolla.



The NADDCC boss noted that Toyota is a reputable brand in Nigeria and across the globe and the successive Corolla models have been a leading model in the market

According to him, Corolla is a well-known model and the new model looks outstanding with its unique feature and touch buttons. Toyota Nigeria also used the opportunity to introduce the new Starlet and RAV 4 as well as other new

models from the Toyota family.

The newly launched vehicle is specially packaged with Seven air bags, anti-lock brake system (ABS/EBD), high mount stop lamp, vehicle stability control, anti-theft system, driver and passenger seat belt warning, rear and front parking sensors, sonary all these gives you a rest of mind in the Corolla and they are standard in the new Corolla.

Leather seat, seven inch multi info display Bluetooth, seven speakers, eco and sport driving mode, auto dual mode air conditioning system, wireless door lock, keyless entry and push button, are other features that leaves one to wonder whether the new Corolla is not ahead of its time. The new Corolla is a typical Toyota that has enjoyed continuous improvement over many decades.





## LIA appoints Terry Savage as Chairperson

London International Awards (LIA) announced recently the appointment of Terry Savage as its new Chairperson. Terry is the founder of Savages Unlimited, a consultancy as well as the Global Chairperson of The Marketing Academy, the much revered, not-for-profit leadership development program that develops marketing skills within the Marketing and Communications industry and operates in the UK, USA and Australia. He comes with over 33 years' experience in awards and events and was previously the Chairman of Cannes Lions. Terry will step into his role as LIA Chairperson, effective immediately.

This appointment underpins LIA's commitment to the development of greater creativity in the industry. In his new role, Terry will foster new relationships and carve out new avenues, making LIA even

more relevant to the industry. Terry has always been passionate about creativity and has spoken openly about his vision of adding value through new developments and innovations. Globally, he is known as a champion of creativity in all forms.

Terry Savage said, "I have long admired what LIA has been doing, with its focus on creativity and developing Young Creatives in a complex environment. I see in LIA an organization focused on both the pure power of creativity on one hand and the development of Young People in the creative space on the other. This is a true testament to Barbara Levy, the Founder and President's vision and to her commitment to improving creative output. It is both compelling and exciting to work with them at a time when the landscape is changing so much. Having said that, change or not, the base premise that creativity is the differentiator has and will not change. My role is to give advice and guide when appropriate to ensure we remain true to the brand and brand values."

Barbara Levy, President of LIA, echoed similar sentiments, "We are extremely pleased that Terry has come on board. Today, the creative industry encompasses agencies, brands, collectives, production and other sectors. To reflect these developments, we want to make LIA even more pertinent by continuing to listen to the industry and implement the required changes. If we can do that, I'm confident we can grow LIA and take it in the right direction to meet the constantly changing industry needs. We are the show that's created for creatives, so pushing creative boundaries and nurturing young creatives is in our brand DNA. As Terry has a wonderful perspective on the overall creative industry and is driven by creativity, he can bring so much to the table in terms of future-proofing the creative industry."

## John Ugbe becomes BON's new Chairman



Solutions-oriented ICT expert and business manager, John Ugbe, the Chief Executive Officer, Multichoice Nigeria, has emerged the Chairman of the Broadcasting Organizations of Nigeria (BON). Mr. Ugbe defeated Sir Godfrey Oluabunwa of Multimesh Limited by polling a total of 63 to 35 votes in a keenly contested election at the Coronation Hall of the Kano State Government House, Kano.

The election was held as part of the 75th general assembly and 20th annual general meeting (AGM) of the nation's broadcasting house, BON. This was officially announced on the broadcasting organisation's website.

John Ugbe is a product of University of Liverpool. He is a solutions-oriented ICT expert and business manager with over fourteen years practical experience in all aspects of ICT. The MultiChoice CEO has a passion for the web and is particularly passionate about motivating and managing people. The ICT expert was formally the General Manager of iWay Africa, a position he held for 3 years. Currently, he is still the CEO of Africa's leading entertainment company, MultiChoice Nigeria.

## Dorsey resigns as Twitter CEO, focuses on Square



Jack Dorsey has announced his resignation from big tech company and social networking platform— Twitter following 16 years of serving as the Chief executive officer of the company he co-founded.

On Monday 29th November, Dorsey tweeted: "Not sure anyone has heard but, I resigned from Twitter."

Hereon, Dorsey will focus primarily on his financial services and digital payments company, Square which he founded in 2009.

Dorsey is to be replaced by Parag Agrawal after the Board of Directors unanimously appointed him as CEO and member of the Board with immediate effect. Agrawal has been with Twitter for more than a decade and has served as Chief Technology Officer since 2017.

Dorsey stated further: "I've decided

to leave Twitter because I believe the company is ready to move on from its founders. My trust in Parag as Twitter's CEO is deep. His work over the past 10 years has been transformational. I'm deeply grateful for his skill, heart, and soul. It's his time to lead."

Dorsey will remain a member of the Board until his term expires at the 2022 meeting of stockholders. Bret Taylor was named the new Chairman of the Board, succeeding Patrick Pichette who will remain on the Board and continue to serve as chair of the Audit Committee.

## NBCC admits SBI Media into its chamber as corporate member

By Abimbola Mohammed

The Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) has admitted SBI Media Limited into its chamber as a Corporate Plus member.

Making this known on all its social media handles, one of the leading media planning and buying agencies in Nigeria, SBI Media said: “SBI Media joins the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce as a Corporate Plus Member.

“The multiple award-winning media agency, SBI Media was formally inducted as a member of the chamber during its induction ceremony on Thursday, 30th September 2021 where membership certificate and other relevant information were presented.”

Speaking with *MARKETING EDGE* in a phone chat on the competitive edge the agency has over other agencies in Nigeria and its achievements, the agency CEO, Rotimi Bankole, said that partnership policy, adapting latest technology and responsive team has helped the agency grown to where it is today. He noted that at SBI Media doesn't just partner with clients, but back it up with actions and



transparency.

His words: “A lot of companies say they are partners to their clients but at SBI Media, we really try to make sure that we actually back it up with action. We do indeed become partners to our clients by helping where a traditional agency wouldn't normally be seen. Apart from offering the lowest rates in the market, adapting the latest tech to simplify and speed up processes, and installing the most responsive teams on the briefs, we do what we can, every day of the year, to be the agency you can call at any time to help you move forward. So far, we are pleased to

hear that our clients continue to choose us for this reason.”

In the same vein, the agency boss mentioned that the future is bright for his firm as it leverages new ideas and advanced technology for the smooth-running of the business across Africa and beyond.

Hear him: “The future is a fascinating animal at this time. With the current state of the world as regards COVID-19 pandemic and the advancement in technology, we are excited to apply new ideas and solutions that help us rise to the top because SBI Media cannot wait to adapt them for our markets, from Lagos to Nairobi to London.”

The NBCC is an international affiliate of the British Chamber of Commerce (BCC), which grants its members access to a network of 53 Chambers of Commerce across the British Commonwealth.

For over 40 years, the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) has been fostering increased trade & investment between Nigeria & Britain.

Part of the corporate plus membership benefits of the chamber includes Global business link through affiliation with the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC); Leveraging on the membership profile of the chamber for marketing references; an opportunity to engage with visiting foreign delegations and market intelligence services on Nigeria-UK trade amongst other benefits.

## Dentsu appoints Mike McCoy as chief growth officer



Dentsu has appointed Mike McCoy as the Chief Executive of its media agency Vizeum UK, and as its UK and Ireland Chief Growth Officer, a new role.

In his new role, McCoy will work with Dentsu's media brands Carat, iProspect and Dentsu X.

The creation of the Chief Growth Officer Position at Dentsu UK & Ireland coincides with a structural overhaul under which the network has been split into three areas: creative, media and customer experience management.

McCoy has been at Dentsu for more than 20 years. Prior to that, he was managing director of Amplifi.

Hamish Nicklin, Chief Executive of media at Dentsu UK & Ireland, said: “We have always fostered a meritocratic culture at Dentsu and it's a huge source of pride to

be promoted from within our own ranks. I am confident that Mike will continue to push boundaries and deliver the best possible work for our clients.”

McCoy added: “Dentsu's media capabilities are second to none, and I'm excited to be taking on this role to help package the breadth of Dentsu's capabilities for clients to access.”

Dentsu has also set up two other new divisions: creative and customer relationship management. The former will house Dentsu MCGarry Bowen and Isobar, the latter will house Merkle.



# Spotify appoints Irvine Partners as their PR agency for Sub-Saharan Africa



Irvine Partners, a multi-national public relations and integrated marketing agency, has been awarded the Spotify communications account in Sub-Saharan Africa. They commenced work last month, heading up all PR activities in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Spotify is the world's most popular audio streaming subscription service, with a community of more than 356 million monthly active users and 158 million Premium subscribers. With a presence in 178 markets, and more than 70 million tracks (including 2.6 million podcast titles), it has transformed the way people access and enjoy music and podcasts. Spotify is therefore well placed to provide relevant commentary on music and audio

streaming, with focus on the African continent.

Michelle Atagana, Head of Communications and Public Relations for Sub-Saharan Africa, says that championing new genre discovery by being a leading partner for creators is a big focus for the brand.

"With Irvine Partners on board as our communications agency, we look forward to strengthening our positioning and commitment to the African market. Music, creativity, and storytelling is a great part of African culture, and we're focusing on articulating Spotify's offering for listeners and creators across the continent," says Atagana.

There has been exponential growth

in interest in African music, particularly Afrobeats, Amapiano and Gengetone, and Spotify aims to amplify artists from the continent.

Earlier this year, Spotify Africa introduced their EQUAL Artist Programme — their latest commitment to fostering equity for women in music globally. DBN Gogo, a DJ based in South Africa, was October's Artist of the Month. Previous Artists of the Month include Nigerian star Tiwa Savage and Kenya's Ssarua Manyaru.

"Film does well on our continent, as does arts and culture, and with the rise of self-publishing artists, we're continually introduced to new talent in our own backyard. There is massive potential for Africa's musicians and creatives, and we believe that Spotify Africa is well placed to be part of a movement that is calling on decision-makers and audiences to open up the industry and to diversify it with multi-layered talent and artistry. We're looking forward to being part of this new era in entertainment with Spotify," says Irvine Partners CEO, Rachel Irvine.

The agency will handle all media enquiries around Spotify in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania which may be directed to [spotifypr@irvinepartners.co.za](mailto:spotifypr@irvinepartners.co.za).

# Airtel Africa appoints non-executive director

Airtel Africa Plc has announced the appointment of Ms. Tsega Gebreyes as an independent non-executive director with immediate effect.

The company made this announcement in a statement signed by the Group Company Secretary, Airtel Africa, Simon O'Hara.

Commenting on Ms. Gebreyes' appointment, Chairman, Sunil Bharti Mittal said: "On behalf of the Board, I am delighted that Tsega has agreed to join the

Airtel Africa Board and we very much look forward to working closely with her. Tsega brings with her great telecommunications experience, working and investing in Africa and above all solid financial acumen. All this adds an additional knowledge base at the Board."

Ms. Gebreyes is the founding partner of Satya Capital Limited, a private investment firm specialising in Africa related investments. She served as Chief Business Development and Strategy Officer of Celtel





TAMUNO KIRI

# Brands and Consumers: Marriage of a Tap Dance (10)

## Human Catastrophe and the Responses of Brands...The Nigerian Example

On April 9, 2019, the BBC Futures Series about the long view of humanity, posted an article written by Seth Baum, a Catastrophic Risk Expert. In that article, he states that any global catastrophe such as “nuclear war, a pandemic, or runaway AI, could damage human well-being on a global scale, and could have much graver consequences for humanity’s future than we realise”. This, would I say prophetic statements came seven months (7), prior to the breakout of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China in December of 2019, and spread throughout the world in 2020, killing millions of people globally. Brands were hugely affected as others aspects of life. The question is, why don’t brands have solid enterprise risk management attributes in their DNA, to handle or at least cushion human catastrophies.

### International Brands in Nigeria

One International brand that the pandemic removed the mask off its face was the brick-and-mortar retail giant Shoprite Nigeria. The company failed to leverage e-commerce. As internet services become faster, cheaper, very convenient before and during the lockdown, more and more Nigerians moved towards leveraging the ease and convenience of e-commerce to meet their shopping needs. Home grown online retailers such as Jumia, Konga, Citydia, Adiba, Spar, were cashing in on the situation.

Although Shoprite puts the blame on other issues such as higher taxes, exchange rate devaluation of converting the Naira it earns into dollars, before converting back to the Rands alongside the challenges on funds repatriation. Consumers were humanizing technology to make life easy for them, but the brand was not nimble enough to quickly adapt to the new normal. Sixteen (16) years after it opened its first outlet in Nigeria, Shoprite, Africa’s largest food retailer sold its Nigerian operations to Ketron, owned by a group of local institutional investors led by a property group Persianas Investment. The new buyer intends to shift the giant brand from an ownership model to a franchise one. The good news is that in September 2021, the Shoprite Group has just launched a Digital Business Hub, called ShopriteX.

During the height of the human catastrophe, while some brands were struggling to get up from bed, other brands such as MTN, BBNaija, were smiling to the bank. MTN, by adopting a Direct-To-Consumer Marketing strategy (D2C), by integrating Fintech resources into an inbound business real time. It made the consumer to Do-It-Himself/ Herself. This approach makes the consumer go through a tech journey of self-discovery. With just a code on the mobile phone, the consumer is led to make self-selections until he pays for the service from his/her bank and begins to enjoy the service while still in bed. No qualms, no hassles. MTN declared a ground-breaking full-year turnover in the financial year of 2020, the highest ever recorded by a Nigerian listed company.

The revenue of the telecom giant expanded by 15.1%, amounting to N1.3trillion,

(\$3,156,105,810.00). On the other hand, BBNaija streamed live during the lockdown, became the biggest interactive reality television programme that caught the fancy of viewers who partook in deciding who leaves or stays, and eventually wins the top prize. Consumers bought data at will, and were not ready to be left out of the process. House-Mates fan power, consumer community influence were rigorously at play. Influencers rolled up their sleeves to push for votes about the individual house-mate of preference. Going by the records, the 71 days show in 2020, broke the record with 900 million votes during the lockdown. This was announced by DSTV Nigeria, on its Twitter page. GOTV, its subsidiary tagged the Season 5 Lockdown Series as “the biggest and most successful season since 2006”. The eventual winner Olamilekan Agbeleshe (Laycon), took home N30million cash prize, a two-bedroom apartment, Dubai trip for two, SUV from Innoson Motors, trip to watch the UEFA Champions League Finals, home appliances courtesy of Scanfroast, one year supply of Indomie noodles, Munch it Chin-chin and Colgate toothpaste, one year supply of Pepsi and branded chiller, brand new OPPO mobile smart phone, among other mouth-watering prizes. Though the huge amount of votes does not translate into wholesome cash for Multichoice Nigeria, but the brand made huge increase in the subscriber base, hitting the 20million mark.

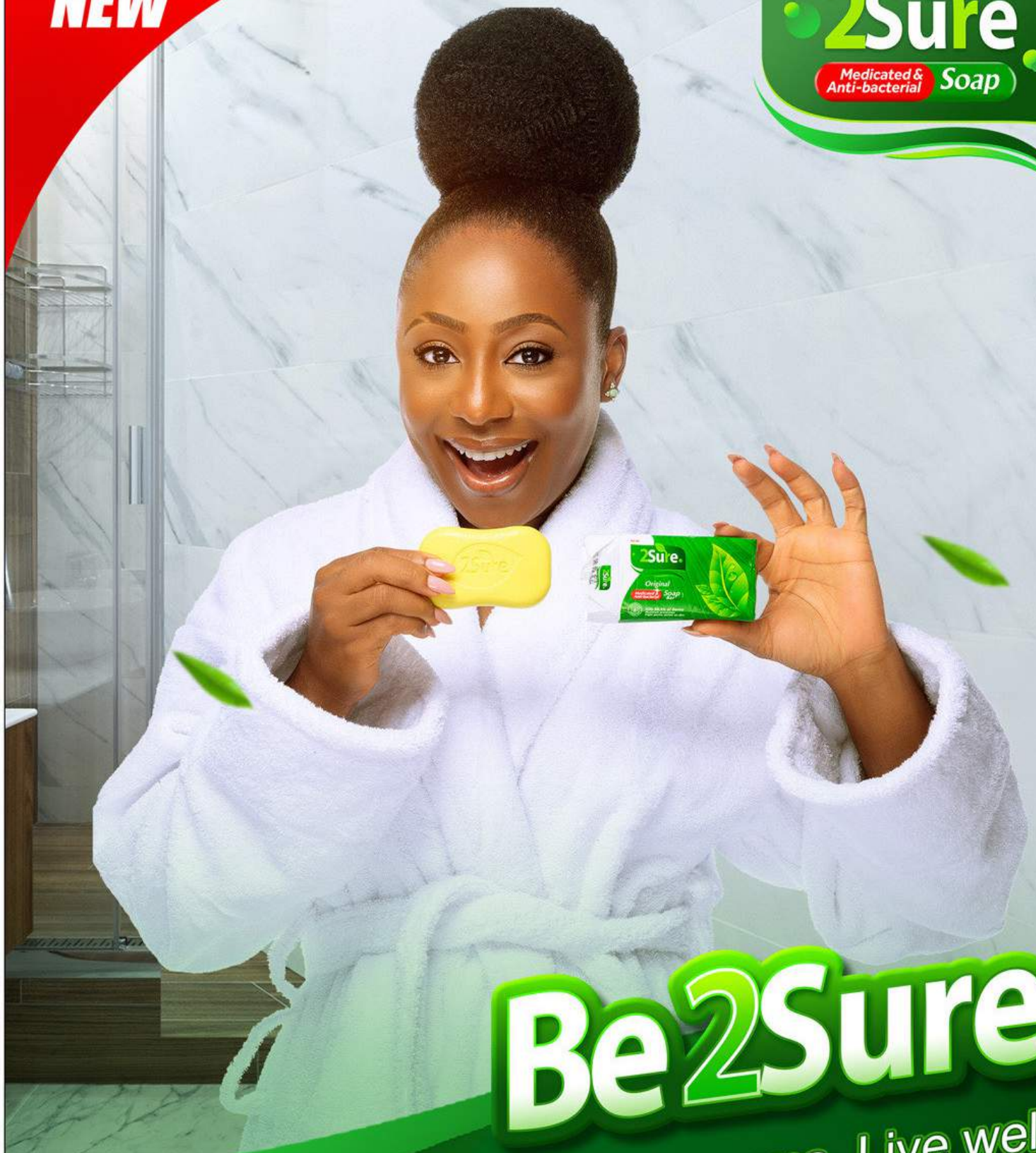
The lessons learnt from this human catastrophe are that:

1. Brands should begin to have Enterprise Risk Management attributes in their DNA
2. Constantly do a vulnerability analysis on the future with questions such as:
  - A) What human catastrophe could happen and take us out of business? B) What technology could be developed that will make us second best? C) What human invention that could alter human life to the point that our business strategy will become obsolete? D) How far could consumer advancement make our business irrelevant to life? E) What opportunities could we garner from every new technology and human advancement? F) How much uncertainty is hovering around our business? G) Where is the world going, and how do we position ourselves to get there first?

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