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LEO BURNETT LAGOS:

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-TUNDE SHOBANJO

NOAH'S ARK:

OUR TRAIL BLAZING STRIDES AT GLOBAL CREATIVE AWARDS

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CONTENTS

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Hot advert lines:

08023243054, 08023039359, 08066879292

8 Local News

25 NEWS FEATURE

11 biggest events and highlights of 2021

30 FOREIGN NEWS

Biggest media account reviews and wins of 2021

72 PERSONALITY INTERVIEW

We are the Progressive Beer Brand of the East
-Uche Unigwe

60 Top of the Market



NEW APCON FELLOWS: A Recharge and a Fillip

Algorithm Media grabs multi-billion naira Coca-Cola business

MARKETING EDGE

Promoting the brand idea | Issue 73, November/December 2021 | N2000 US\$ 6.5 | ISSN 1597-1201 | www.marketingedge.com.ng

DOZIE MBANEFO:
Advertising Czar as an empire builder

PLURAL MEDIA:
Fifteen years of outdoor advertising excellence

Global standard is our benchmark
Jude Odia

INSIDE

- The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity returns to Cannes, France, June, 2022
- The Coca-Cola Company investments in Nigeria gross USD1.7billion in ten years
- Global alcoholic beverages market to hit \$1.6tn in 2025
- Chief Wole Olanipekun: Tribute to an iconic Silk @ 70

When marketers collaborate with influencers

The high cost of hiring an advertising agency, especially during tough economic times, is capable of limiting the growth of the advertising agencies market. For instance, in smaller regions or markets, the cost to hire an advertising agency could vary anywhere from \$95 to \$225 per hour depending on the service and the skill of the person supplying that service.

Global marketing intelligence reveals that, in 2022, supply chain issues will slow down some verticals, and that the tail end of COVID-19 pandemic variants may still inhibit growth in a small number of markets. According to marketing intelligence, the global marketplace will grow by +12% to reach \$795 billion. Linear ad format growth will slow down to +4% (still a stronger performance than the pre-COVID trends) while digital ad formats will grow by +17%.

Throughout the world, consumers spent more money than ever in 2021, using the forced savings they built up in 2020 as soon as restrictions to mobility and shopping were relaxed in the spring or summer. In that environment, national brands and local businesses competed to be the first or the most effective in reconnecting with consumers.

What's more, 46% of global marketing leaders plan to increase influencer marketing investments in 2022 and 11% say it's the top ROI generating trend they have tested. In recent times, influencer marketing has gone from an intriguing trend to a must-use marketing tactic. While some attribute the reason to influencers being the masters of the platforms they use and the field or topic they talk about, others say they (influencers) have an engaged loyal audience who are interested in their content and influenced by the information and opinions they provide. So, when marketers collaborate with influencers and thought leaders they expand brand awareness, increase sales and gain fans from the influencer's followers and audience.

In 2021, all seventy ad markets analyzed by MAGNA recovered to some degree. Sixty-eight out of 70 markets reached double-digit growth. Several of the world's largest markets posted above-average growth including the US (+25%), the UK (+34%), Brazil (+30%), Canada (+27%) and Australia (+23%) while China (+17%) and India (+14%) grew below average. Growth was above average in EMEA (+23%), North America (+25%) and LATAM (+26%, partly driven by economic inflation).

According to Advertising Agencies Global Market Report,

the global advertising agencies market is expected to grow from \$346.12 billion in 2021 to \$383.67 billion in 2022 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.8%. The growth is mainly due to companies rearranging their operations and recovering from the COVID-19 impact, which had earlier led to restrictive containment measures involving social distancing, remote working, and the closure of commercial activities that resulted in operational challenges. The market is expected to reach \$553.11 billion in 2026 at a CAGR of 9.6%. The main types of advertising agencies under review are TV, digital, radio, print, Out-of-home (OOH), and others. The regions covered in the report are Asia-Pacific, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, South America, Middle East, and Africa.

The various modes of advertising include online advertising and offline advertising and are used by banking, financial services, and insurance sector (BFSI); consumer goods and retail; government and public sector; IT & telecom; healthcare; and media & entertainment. The projected increase in advertisement spending across industries is expected to drive the demand for the advertising agencies market. Video and mobile ads are major contributors to the increase in ad investment.

The launch of artificial intelligence (AI) in advertising is gaining popularity in the global advertising agencies market. Major players operating in the industry are continuously focused on introducing innovations and technologies to better serve the needs of consumers amidst the waning global crisis occasioned by the pandemic.

Looking forward from the first quarter of 2022, the major potential threat to the global economy and the advertising marketplace is COVID. There have been endless controversies about vaccination. But the ongoing daily cases worldwide remain well below the previous peaks per day and, more importantly, the number of deaths remains relatively low. This is because 4.2 billion people have already received at least one dose of vaccine, representing more than half the world's population (60% to 80% in most Western countries). World and market leaders are therefore optimistic that 2022, if not entirely COVID-free, will at least be exempt from the more severe policy responses that preceded vaccine availability and contributed to economic pressures in 2020 and the early part of 2021.

In this edition of *MARKETING EDGE*, readers will learn how Nigeria's political campaign is projected to fuel ad spend in



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2022 right into 2023, despite economic downturn. The market place is expected to grow by both digital and traditional media owners to reach a new all-time high.

According to market reports from Publicis Groupe's media agency, Zenith, 2022 is projected to exceed 60% of global adspend for the first time this year, reaching 61.5% of total expenditure. WPP's GroupM also predicted an additional 13.5% growth in 2022 as digital now makes up the lion's share of adspend and is expected to account for 64.4% of total advertising this year, up from 60.5% in 2020.

Marketers and promoters of political candidates are expected to leverage internet advertising to achieve their marketing goals, the rise of social media bloggers and the growing trend of influencer marketing accelerated by the pandemic.

Practitioners in Nigeria's Marketing Communications (IMC) industry are optimistic that there would be exponential increases in advertising spend in 2022 following increased electioneering activities which are expected to proceed to the 2023 general elections. Political adspend is expected to be huge when the entire electioneering process kicks off.

Amidst the high hopes that 2022 will be a rebound year for the IMC industry, will Nigerian agencies be given the opportunity to create memorable campaigns that will resonate with Nigerians?

While predicting that the 2022 electioneering campaigns will contribute immensely to the revenue generation of agencies, industry watchers are not unmindful of the fact that Nigerian politicians and their handlers are known for engaging foreign agencies who are usually not solidly grounded in the culture and local ideology of the country.

It will, however, be the most unprofessional and unpatriotic act of all even as the naira has been on a free fall, if foreign agencies that have little or no knowledge about Nigeria's cultural nuances are hired by political actors. But Nigerian agencies must raise their game in terms of technological utilization as digital will be the major channels to engage the electorate.

The advertising budget is shifting to digital and therefore creating more potential in overall media spend. There is also an exponential growth of content which is driving mobile in the digital media space. Digital will, therefore, fundamentally be the primary beneficiary of political campaigns in Nigeria at the expense of the traditional media in 2022/23.

In 2022, marketers are advised to keep video content short as attention spans of consumers are becoming even shorter. Moreover, short video content takes less bandwidth to create, and the format aligns with the fast-paced attention spans of online audiences.

Marketers are also advised to become educators in 2022 rather than just trying to push consumers into buying something as today's consumers want information and are seeking guidance to make informed purchases. Therefore companies and brands will need to set themselves apart by providing existing and prospective customers with detailed content to educate them, provide answers to their questions, and help them make informed purchase decisions.

Happy reading!

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10 exceptional quotes from Nigeria's marketing communications experts that led 2021



By Zion Rufus

To understand the science as well as art of marketing and advertising, it has become highly imperative to listen to and learn from thought leaders, great entrepreneurs, ad/marketing business gurus, and brand-building geniuses. Although the list of brilliant marketing quotes can never be exhausted, from the wealth of exclusive interviews and researches conducted by *MARKETING EDGE* in year 2021, we have compiled a list of industry leaders and their thoughts that reverberated through the year.

That the consumer is king is an understatement - Femi Adelusi

The above statement made by Femi Adelusi, Founder/Group CEO, BrandEye/Mediaplus, and President, Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) during the *MARKETING EDGE* IMC Quarterly Virtual Summit in March, typically describes how the consumer is the most integral part of any business.

Adelusi explained: "It's critical to track how customers reassess priorities, reallocate funds, switch brands, and redefine value."

Consumers create value, and they are

the main source of demand for all goods and services. The day to day demand and consumption of these services will lead to expansion or enhancement of the business, service sector, and even the economy. Consumers are the basic economic entities of an economy.

Focusing on the positives of 2020 and COVID-19 the best way to ride the post-pandemic storm

- Lanre Adisa
Speaking

at the 2021 edition of the Lagos Advertising & Ideas Festival (LAIF), Lanre Adisa, CEO/COO, Noah's Ark Communications noted that "the things we did with the help of COVID-19 we probably wouldn't have done it in five years."

The COVID-19 crisis brought about years of change in the way companies carried out their business operations as notable transformations and technological innovations initially projected for 2025 were fast tracked to 2020. In the same vein, the pandemic also ensured an accelerated rate of digitization and virtualization of businesses, societies, as well as individual lives.

Advertising moves in sympathy with the economy

-Dr. Lekan Fadolapo

Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, Registrar, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), submitted that advertising moves in sympathy with the economy during an economic downturn, as it bears the brunt and adverse effect of economic hardship rising from the effect of such period.

"Covid-19 or not, if a company is doing well, it tends to pump money into advertising, and immediately the

company has problem, the first thing to cut off in search of cost reduction is advertising instead of investing more."

In-person experience is never going out of style - Tolulope Medebem

The above statement, made in an exclusive interview with *MARKETING EDGE* by one of Nigeria's amazons in the experiential marketing ecosystem, Mrs. Tolulope Medebem, Chief Operating Officer and Lead Strategist at Aster Integrated Marketing Limited (AsterIML), underscores the blended experience which brands across the world now offer their consumers with digital combined with the traditional in-person activations in experiential marketing campaigns.

"In-person experience is never going out of style; humans are social animals in nature; social life activities will always be there; the digital aspect of experiential marketing enhances the experience and the engagement. Live experiences can never go out of style, ever."

You can't pay enough for concept - Taiwo Agboola

The long standing argument as to whether clients should pay pitch fees to agencies has stirred serious controversy in the industry. In this regard, the Chief Executive Officer, 7even Interactive Limited, an award-winning marketing and creative advertising agency, Taiwo Agboola pointed that there was no monetary value that could be pegged or used to qualify the concepts, intellectual property and the efforts channeled towards the success of a pitch as "you can't pay enough for concept".

Brands in Africa should also be ready for the Metaverse

- Oti Ukubeyinje

Oti Ukubeyinje, VP, Product Marketing and Growth at Terragon Group explained: "Mobile has done its time, and humans need to evolve beyond mobile into other types of technology. It is something that African businesses should also be preparing for because it is not going to slow down, the internet is proliferated globally and technology is also making a huge global shift."

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Competition must be re-defined to allow collaboration and partnerships to exist - Jude Odia

Charging agencies to expand their tentacles to embrace influencer marketing as an avenue for growth and resource optimization, Managing Director of Starcom Media Perspectives, Jude Odia advised: "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".

When the dust of the pandemic settles, would we still have an industry? - Steve Babaeko

Chief Creative Officer /CEO, X3M Ideas and President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Steve Babaeko said: "When this Exco was sworn in July 2020, I had my fears because we were in the middle of one of the most devastating pandemic the world has seen at least in about a century. My fears were: Would we even be able to deliver against our campaign promises; When the dust of the pandemic settles, would we still have an industry or business; With everyone struggling to stay afloat would our members be able to rally round the Exco to push our association forward?"

The bright future of marketing in Nigeria is dependent on accurate real-time data - Bunmi Adeniba,

then Acting President, Advertisers' Association of Nigeria (ADVAN).

"One of the challenges is the acquisition of accurate data. We have a very viable opportunity as a community to increase the effectiveness of our marketing outputs with the right data." Urging for collaboration, Adeniba noted that data should be the opening statement of any conversation and negotiation in the industry.

Enhance skill set to match future business environment

- Adia Sowho

Chief Marketing Officer of MTN, Adia Sowho reiterated the need for marketing professionals to build their skill sets and capabilities in order to maintain relevance in an ever changing marketplace.

MIPAN honours Dr. Shobanjo with Lifetime Achievement Award



By **Oghale Mafuru**

To celebrate the iconic feat of the acclaimed legend of advertising practice in Nigeria, the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) has conferred on Dr. Biodun Shobanjo a Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was conferred at the Association's President's Dinner & Awards held at Radisson Blu Hotel Ikeja, Lagos. The award was conferred in recognition of his legendary stature and impact in the industry.

Unable to hide his elation and surprise, the ad guru expressed his heartfelt gratitude, appreciation and

excitement to the leadership of the association for the recognition.

He said: "I was surprised. I didn't know I was going to collect an award tonight. I had no idea, but it feels great."

Meanwhile, during his keynote speech, Dr. Shobanjo hinted that December holds a very special place

in his heart because that is the month of his birth, adding that 5th December, 2021 also completed his 50 years in the advertising profession.

Dr. Shobanjo is the Chairman of Troyka Holdings, Nigeria's largest and most innovative integrated marketing communications group in Sub-Saharan Africa with businesses in marketing communications, resource management and asset protection. Some of these companies include Insight communications, All Seasons Mediacom and Media Perspectives, Optimum Exposures, The Quadrant Company, Hot Sauce, Black Onyx Properties and Halogen Security.

He holds the certificate of the British Institute of Public Relations, London as well as a certificate of the British Institute of Marketing. He is a chartered member of the British Institute of Public Relations, charter member of the British Institute of Marketing, member International Advertising Association fellow, Commonwealth Journalists Association and past president of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

He is a recipient of a plethora of awards in recognition of his outstanding and excellent professional works, integrity, leadership and mentorship.

He started his advertising career half a century ago at the American owned Grant Advertising where he was an Account Executive Trainee and rapidly rose to become Deputy Managing Director.

Indeed, he has given life to Pablo Picasso's statement that: "The meaning of life is to find your gift; the purpose of life is to give it away." His life continues to teach that true success is the ability to replicate oneself and deeds with indelible footprints in the sand of time.

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Zee One appoints Deepvision as exclusive media representative in Nigeria, Ghana



Zee One, a sister channel of Zee World has appointed advertising and media marketing company—Deepvision Legacy Ventures as its exclusive media partner for Nigeria and Ghana.

According to Gaurav Chatterjee, Vice President business development Zee group Africa, Zee Group will be teaming up with Deepvision to take Nigeria and Ghana family entertainment space by storm.

He said: “Statistics show a strong affinity for Bollywood content in various homes. We are incredibly pleased to partner exclusively with Deepvision Legacy Ventures Ltd to offer the Zee One channels as a destination of family-friendly entertainment, a place where viewers can easily connect with our carefully selected

programming. Zee TV was our first channel to launch in Africa in 1996 and it’s thrilling to see it still expanding its reach 25 years later.”

Launched in November 2021, the channel has quickly emerged as one of the most viewed stations amongst viewers following the latest MPS report. The channel is available to over 13.6 million households.

Zee One is dedicated to showcasing a wide selection of family-friendly programming such as award-winning series, lifestyle/food, reality, and highly acclaimed movies, which are dubbed in English.

Zee One is a 24-hour general entertainment channel offering programmes dubbed in English. It contains spectacular series, gripping dramas, movies, and cookery shows such as Snack Attack, Guddan, Lies of the heart, and Reach for the Stars.

Zee One is available on channel 509 (DTT), 553 (DTH) on StarTimes.

With a strong worldwide presence boasting over 40 channels, Zee Entertainment has entered many homes and won the hearts of over 1.3 billion viewers, across 173 countries. Zee first ventured into Africa 25 years ago as the brand’s first international territory

launching Zee TV. Since then, the brand has expanded on the continent with many more channels being made available which includes the flagship channel Zee World.

According to a statement by Deepvision Legacy Ventures Marketing Director, Mr. Zino Nicholas Obibi, “We are excited about this recent development as an appointed exclusive Media representative in Nigeria and Ghana. However, Deepvision has built a solid relationship with the Zee group for the past 3years, ensuring that Nigerian households have wonderful family entertainment shows in one of their channels called Zeeworld.”

Deepvision Legacy Ventures is an Advertising, Marketing, and Content Development firm, specialized in media planning and buying, television buyers rights, media marketing, communication strategy, and media events planning. With a proven track record with combined experience of over 25 years in Radio, TV and Outdoor advertising, Deepvision Legacy has worked with major players in the media industry.

For enquiries, advertising and sponsorship details contact Deepvision Legacy Ventures on Deepvision official line:09158667125 or send a mail to Sales@deepvisionlegacy.com

CMOs of multinationals shun ADVAN exco leadership

It is a New Year, new dawn and a new transitional journey of leadership for the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), which elected new officials to pilot the affairs of the renowned sectoral group for the next two years renewable term in office.

This was at the Association’s 19th Annual General Meeting at Marriot Hotel, Ikeja GRA Lagos, which witnessed the emergence of Osamede Uwubanmwen, General Manager, Biogenerics Nigeria Limited, as President, Nwando Ajene, Category and Marketing Manager Nestle, as 1st Vice President, Yosola Atere, Marketing Director, MasterCard as 2nd Vice President, while Obum Okoli and Kenneth Iruonagbe occupy the positions of Treasurer and Publicity Secretary

respectively, including others as Ex-Officio members.

Feelers emanating from some keen industry observers revealed that, some Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) of multinational companies such as Nigerian Breweries Plc, Guinness Nigeria PLC and Coca-Cola amongst several others have shunned the ADVAN exco leadership election. This is believed not to be unconnected with the busy schedules of the CMOs and the none competitive nature of the contest as industry watchers and observers had expected a full roll-call of renowned CMOs handling leading brands in the country.

In the past, the leadership positions of the advertisers group had been keenly contested and won by chief marketing



officers of multinationals. The gradual lack of interest and retreat from taking frontline positions in ADVAN Exco may not augur well for the group as critical regulatory issues may suffer considerably. The case in point is the current face-off between the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and ADVAN over the recently unveiled Advertising Industry Standards of Practice (AISOP).

The advertisers group, which has come out vehemently to object the unveiling of AISOP, has been unable to proffer alternatives to the reform. Rather, ADVAN has since distanced itself from issues concerning AISOP, remaining aloof, while other groups have hailed and embraced the reform.



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Goonite deepens footprint in Nigeria's sanitary napkin industry, unveils brand ambassador

By Zion Rufus

Goonite Hygiene is set to position itself as the game changer in Nigeria's sanitary napkin industry even as it unveils renowned actress and fashionista, Destiny Etiko as the brand ambassador for its two leading brands Besense Sanitary Pads, and Lebrace Diapers.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony and media briefing which held at the prestigious Oriental Hotel in Lagos recently, John Jiang, Managing Director, Goonite Hygiene disclosed that the brands will be playing major roles in the lives and lifestyles of Nigerians by giving back to the economy, orienting young females on the dos and don'ts of feminine hygiene, as well as ensuring their comfort and well-being as they go about their day to day lives.

In addition to the unveiling ceremony, gift items were delivered to two babies that emerged winners in the recently conducted Lebrace Baby Competition. The competition was thrown open earlier for mothers to engage their babies in the Lebrace moment by using the products and uploading to their social media page. Winners were judged by the pictures with the most likes. Osato Ojugbeli came in first place, while Fareeha Olamiposi Balogun bagged the second position.

The Besense Sanitary Pads, unlike others, is an "all-in-one" pack of 6 heavy flow sanitary pads, 6 light flow sanitary pads, 6 panty liners, and a secret free gift.

John Jiang said: "We want Nigerians to know we care about them. Because we do. Everyone wants to feel comfortable, and we are ensuring we give that to them in all the best ways we can. Through our well-thought products, and our free gifts which are intended to communicate our message of love and care."

He added: "We are not only gaining the profits or benefits of this business alone. We've designed our pricing system and supply chain in a strict and controlled manner that the distributors will get something, the wholesalers will get something, the retailers as well, and even the end users will get something. We launched our company in Nigeria in 2020 and in 2021, we launched our first sets of products. It took us about a year and half to make the preparations done and get everything right and ensure it was done smoothly and meet the requirements of the concerned regulatory organizations in Nigeria."

To further deepen the position of the brands in the Nigerian sanitary napkin market, the newly unveiled brand ambassador, Destiny Etiko announced that she will readily use her platforms to erase the longstanding shame surrounding the



menstrual period amongst female children in schools.

Relating a personal experience, Etiko shared that till date, female children still found it difficult to discuss their periods with their parents, let alone their peers. To this effect, she noted that female-child education on eliminating the shame and reluctance surrounding the topic of menstruation will be on her top priority.

Lagos attracts N157billion from capital market for infrastructure enhancement

By Dele Ojo



The Lagos state government has further approached the capital market to raise some N157.3 billion to fund various critical infrastructure development needed for the state to continue its leadership footprint on the Nigerian sub-nationals sandunes.

To finalise the deal, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Lagos State Governor, recently, signed the necessary documents required by the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) for the issuance of Lagos State's N137.3b 13% ten-year debt instrument.

The Governor, who was elated, explained that it became necessary to issue the bond in order to bridge

the infrastructure deficit in the state and make life more comfortable for Lagosians.

According to the Governor, the day marked 930 days out of the 1,460 days of his administration, and that they will continue to count the days and set the bar for new heights and new levels. He said this same government over a year ago issued a N100billion which was then the largest bond issuance by a sub nation, noting, “we have shown that in the capital market, we can stay in the kitchen and withstand the heat”.

To him, this was the third time a sub nation will issue such a large bond which is a testimony of investor’s confidence in Lagos State.

He said that having received his mandate, it became imperative to redeem his promises, therefore, he commenced the issuance process in 2020. According to him “we saw an opportunity and took advantage of the favorable market environment and with their financial advisors went to the market to issue the Bond”.

At the signing ceremony with the issue houses in attendance, Sanwo-Olu said the conclusion of the process will bring to N377.715b the total value of bond issued from the Lagos State 500b debt issuance programme, explaining that though the plan was to raise up to N125b but closed the book build with bids totalling N137.3b.

“ This strong response from the investing community – to our administration’s debut bond issuance – is humbling and is indeed a testament to continued investor confidence in the State’s ability to deliver on its infrastructural and socio-economic developmental objectives; and to meet repayment obligations.”

“Notwithstanding the significantly over-subscribed book, and active participation from a wide array of institutional investors – including banks, pension fund administrators, asset managers and corporates, Lagos State has maintained its discipline on size and pricing.”

It is a major financial centre and as of 2013 would have been the fifth-largest economy in Africa if it were a country. As of 2021, Lagos State’s gross domestic product (GDP) of \$84 billion compares with Ghana’s \$67 billion, Rwanda’s \$10.4 billion, and Kenya’s \$95.5 billion.

La Casera: Making a difference with social media crisis

By Zion Rufus



Ric Edelman once said, “The lesson you have to learn is to be aware of the incredible power of social media and the dangers of reacting to news that you haven’t verified.”

Some of the greatest advantages social media has offered marketers are how it has helped brands get closer to their publics, attract new customers, get customer feedback, build customer loyalty, increase their local and international market reach, and conduct market research. However, the downsides are just as huge.

Word on the street says, “Social media never forgets, negative news travels faster”, and it couldn’t be truer than the current backlash facing The La Casera Company after a buried 2019 case of improper disposal of expired soft drinks in Kogi State was exhumed to again make rounds on social media.

Today, as people hop on trends to promote their favorite brands, products, personalities, and celebrities by making viral pictures and videos and retweeting posts that pique their interests, others also feel a social responsibility to alert consumers on certain errors of these popular brands.

As advantageous as it may seem, this also means that seemingly harmless comments, pictures, negative opinions, baseless claims, false allegations, and unverified accusations that start with just one unsatisfied consumer, can end

up becoming a huge brand reputation crisis.

Back in 2019, The La Casera Company, a company which has had a remarkable impact on the Nigerian soft drinks landscape for two decades, dissociated itself from the allegations, while reassuring its teeming consumers of its uncompromising commitment to the health of the environment as well as the society.

Today, the beverage giant is yet again distancing itself from the social media post which appeared on the Nigerian WhatsApp space over the last few weeks showing improperly disposed packs of expired La Casera drinks and other apple brands being consumed in Kogi State.

The La Casera Company has a fully operational disposal process for its non-conforming materials and products, as well as an effluent treatment plant in its factories. For the health and well-being of the society, the company fully reiterated its commitment to running completely clean and green operations, by applying the 3R principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in its operational business model.

For 20 years, the company has continually conducted its business with the highest regard and in the best interests of all major stakeholders, including consumers, suppliers, distributors, marketers, business partners as well as the government, and has continued to partner with the appropriate regulatory bodies to adhere to, as well as improve on its EHS standards.

Big brands like Indomie, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Uber, United Airlines, British Airways, Target, and Procter and Gamble amongst thousands of others have also had their fair share of social media crises. Social media crisis is inevitable and there probably won’t ever be an end to it. But how a brand manages its social media crisis makes all the difference.

SBI Media empowers next-generation media leaders through strategic workshops

By **Abimbola Mohammed**

It was a whole new experience for over 1,000 millennials and members Gen-Z who benefited from the second edition of the free annual media workshop hosted by SBI media, one of the foremost media planning, buying and strategy agencies in Nigeria recently.

The hybrid and in-person free media workshop is part of SBI's commitment and corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability projects aimed at empowering Nigerian youths. The workshop featured a series of sessions which covered channel development, audience building, video storytelling, brand partnerships, equipment selection, including the various editing tools.

The media workshop held at Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, with the theme: "Tap Into the Video Evolution" gathered leading Nigerian video content creators and movie producers like Kunle Afolayan, world renowned filmmaker & director, Edem Victor, Vira video & star-maker, Dele Kadiri, GM, Boomplay, and Tolu Aderemi, Partner, Perchestone&Graeys.

Speaking at the workshop, Rotimi Bankole, CEO SBI Media, said that the vision of the agency is to raise, support and develop the Nigerian Youth while urging the youth that participated in the workshop to take advantage of what they learnt to forge ahead in their careers.

Commending the agency's initiative, Bukola Oloyede, Country Manager, Sony MEA, said: "Nigeria stirred the youth that video content is extremely relevant because the Gen-Z and the millennial pay less attention to reading long articles but video say over packed with a lot of information and opportunities because there is value in face to face conversations with the people you look up to. I will advise potential partners and sponsors to jump on the wagon to support a noble course like this."

On his part, Kunle Afolayan, who gave insight to 'Ask me anything



video Biz', appreciated the agency for providing the avenue for youth to learn.

His words: "I want to say a very big thank you to SBI Media for giving this opportunity for people to learn for free, to every aspiring and existing content creators, in whatever you do, money is good but substance is key, don't put money first. Explore and concentrate on substance, not money because that is what will take you far."

Dele Kadiri, who spoke on 'Platform, Platform Owners and Contents that Catch fire' said; "Create contents that catch fire by leveraging on timing with your audience through branding the right content with consistency."

At the fireside session, Edem Victor, who spoke on 'Building partnerships for growth in show business' advised participants to consider the act of collaboration as it is the key tap into people's skills.

To him, "Collaborations are very key because it helps to tap into other people's skills and fan base; it is not just the camera but also the person behind the camera, so get skills."

Olalekan who lectured on 'Shooting for glamour' revealed that: "Social media is faster; you have to be spontaneous and deliberate with your

contents. I will advise the youth to be very consistent, monitor the trend; know the next trend, and jump on it".

In Bankole's closing remark, he said the CSR journey has been interesting, so many brands have keyed into the vision that is why there are massive additions to the sponsors this year while he thanked them for their support on the initiative.

Some of the participants were rewarded with varieties of equipment to jump start their careers in video making, a lucky winner was rewarded round-trip ticket to any choice destination, courtesy of the Turkish Airlines, one of the sponsors.

Participants had an eye-opening experience with facilitators telling personal stories and giving them proven research that can work for them.

SBI Media is a next-generation media agency built on the culture of bravery, thought leadership and innovation. Serving a diverse clientele of telecoms, technology, aviation, automobile, Telecoms, e-Commerce, FMCGs, financial services and allied industry, it's headquartered in Lagos with 20 media professionals in media strategy, research, planning and exchange.

BUA Group deepens market positioning, consolidates food businesses

By Zion Rufus



In a strategic move to expand its product offerings to meet the rising demands in Africa's agriculture and food processing value chains, leading indigenous conglomerate, BUA Group has consolidated its food businesses under a single entity—BUA Foods.

The newly consolidated food arm will include offerings in Sugar, Flour, Pasta, Rice, and Edible Oils.

Addressing distinguished stakeholders and members of the press at a media briefing which held at the BUA Towers in Victoria Island, Lagos, Chairman, BUA Group Plc., Alhaji Abdul Samad Rabi (CON) announced: "We have recently consolidated our food businesses under a single entity to be known as BUA Foods. This, we believe, will enable us to be nimbler and more responsive to the food needs of the population as we continue to build a sustainable business."

The Chairman disclosed that the Group also recently restructured its business model to enable it take advantage of existing opportunities while contributing to the food security drive of the nation, in a bid to further underscore its commitment as well as tap into the diversification agenda of the Nigerian government.

With eight ultra-modern factories across Nigeria for the refining and processing of sugar, flour, pasta products, edible oils, and rice, the leading food and manufacturing

conglomerate has a refining capacity of 1.5 million metric tonnes of sugar yearly from its 2 automated sugar refineries in Lagos and Port Harcourt. Additionally, the company's flour milling and pasta processing factories have a milling capacity of 576,000 metric tonnes and 250,000 tonnes total production yearly, respectively.

The Chairman noted that the investments in the food industry have not only helped to move the nation towards food security, but also created thousands of jobs.

"As a group, we have already set the ball rolling as underscored by the business restructuring that birthed the consolidation of our food operations and our continued investments in our people and processes, aimed at strengthening our market position. This will, no doubt, help our group maintain its market leadership in our foods business and other aspects of our operations," he concluded.

Acting MD/CEO BUA Foods Plc., Abioye Musibau Ayodele added: "BUA Foods PLC, today is a product of hard work by every stakeholder in our businesses. At BUA Foods Plc, our solid brand building process is centered around our customers and consumers. We have continued to evolve to become a loved brand across our offerings in Sugar, Flour, Pasta and Rice. We are committed to doing the same in all our future expansions."

He continued: "BUA Foods, today as a brand, come with many positives that reflect our promises to our customers and our end-users. Aside from being very recognisable, we offer good value, and consistent product quality to a wide range of consumers. As we move in this new journey, our brand promise is focusing on nourishing life for growth and good health. promoting food security for all, at only reasonable prices, with consistent quality services and experiences."

Stakeholders express optimism over media adspend in Nigeria

By Abimbola Mohammed



Stakeholders in the Nigeria's media buying and planning sub-sector of the IMC industry have expressed optimism over media adspend in the country, while stating that there is improvement in adspend since the ease of lockdown and gradual acceptance of the COVID-19 pandemic vaccine.

This was made known in an exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE, as practitioners shared their views on how advertisers are beginning to see reason to

invest more as the number of vaccination continues to increase, business returning to its normal and also ease of lockdown globally.

Expressing his view on adspend in Nigeria, Femi Adelus, President, Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), said there is significant increment in 2021 compared to 2019/2020 when the pandemic started.

His words: "From the data we are seeing and from the feedback that we are getting from our sister agencies from the stop line and button line, the number has begun to grow and improve. I think we are quickly circling out the pandemic, the advertisers are becoming much more willing and open because if you take out-of-home, for example, that suffered the most during the lockdown now the

vacancy level in agencies has significantly reduced and are developing and growing on a continuous basis.”

He assured that investment in that channel is rapidly growing and there is a lot of improvement recorded so far.

On his part Mr. Jude Odia, Managing Director of Starcom Media Perspectives said there is a spike in adspend in 2021 compared to 2019/2020 respectively.

“The media adspend marginally dropped during the lockdown, understandably because the pandemic affected human and business activities globally and locally for the best of last year. What should also be mentioned is that there has been a split – so we saw spend on digital increasing significantly compared to the other media. We also saw that outdoor suffered greatly for obvious reasons when people stayed and worked from home, opportunity to see for outdoor dropped and spend followed suit.

“Spend dropped in the best of 2020; however, there is a spike in 2021, as we are

beginning to see a near rebound in terms of spend globally and locally. But again the shift to digital has been sustained and we are going to see more of that in the next future. There are projections that by 2022 digital obviously in Sub-Saharan Africa will most likely be the top 1 or top 2 spend in terms of split.”

Eki Aduzeh, Secretary of MIPAN is of the view that just like every other sector, clients hold back on their spend, while explaining that things are gradually going back to normal and will record more growth in 2022.

“The media adspend now called media investment went down during the pandemic in the traditional media, but obviously it went up in the digital media. Like every other sector, the client had to hold back to see what was happening, how the industry was going and all. But since after the pandemic things have started picking up in term of media investment.”

Continuing, Mr. Eki said the industry recorded 30% growth before the pandemic

and now there is an increase of about 10% since the ease of lock down.

“Two years before the COVID-19, things were going well, growth was like 30%. During the pandemic things slowed down but are now picking up. I think that in 2021 there has been a 10% increase in what we had before the pandemic and we are moving on from there.”

However, Austin Efenamokwu, CEO Ubiquity Media Holding, is of the view that investment dropped more in radio, but did well in other mediums like TV and digital platforms.

“The adspend dropped significantly; investment has reduced to some extent on radio in terms of overall opportunity because recovery in the industry is much more in a better place now. Growth in the industry appears to have come from platforms like TV, reality TV shows and the likes of social media and digital platforms.”

Guild of Photojournalists holds maiden confab/awards amidst pomp

By Zion Rufus

Nothing short of grandeur and finesse graced the just concluded Guild of Photojournalists Annual Conference and Exhibition, and awards which were held at the Ikeja Business Club in Lagos.

The highly anticipated event was well attended by distinguished stakeholders in the industry and respected personalities including Chairman of the occasion, Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi, Group Chairman, Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc.; Guest Speaker, Dr. Boye Ola, Head of General Studies, Nigerian Institute of Journalism; Fmr. General Manager, Zenith Bank, BukkyLatunji; Chief Coordinator, Tourism Klub, Segun Ola-Oyediji; VP, Product Marketing and Growth, Terragon Group, Oti Ukubeyinje; Publisher/CEO, MARKETING EDGE Publications, John Ajayi, ably represented by Divisional Director Marketing, AnietieUdoh, and GM Strategy and Business Development, MojisolaMatesun; Photojournalism enthusiasts, and aspiring journalists from various institutions across the state.

Themed “Digital Revolution: Opportunities and Challenges of 21st Century Photojournalism”, the colorful event featured in-depth conversations with an impressive line up of experts on the pros and cons of digital revolution, as well as its ravaging effects on the age long norms of sectors such as tourism, media and communications, photojournalism, academics, and finance amongst others.

Commenting on the event, Chairman of the Guild of Photojournalists Nigeria (GPN), Mr. Abiodun Ajala expressed his gratitude to all attendees and friends of the association whom he described as his “backbone”. In his remarks, the Chairman revealed that he had initially doubted the successful outcome of the event.

Ajala submitted: “To see this conference and exhibition turn



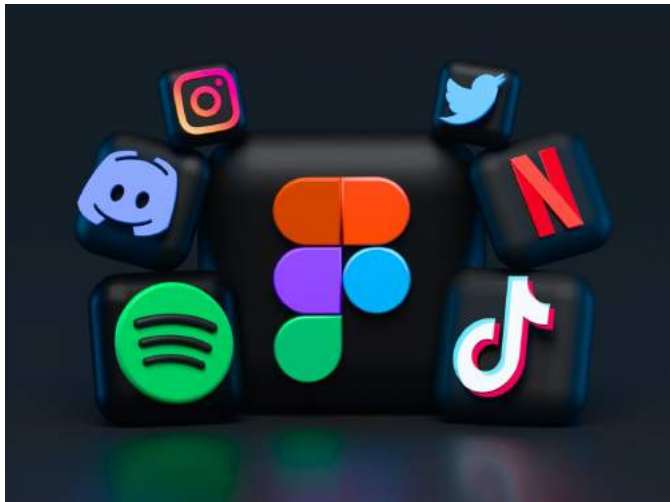
L-R: Head of Department of General Studies, Nigerian Institute of Journalism, DrAdeboye Ola; Chairman, Guild of Photojournalists Nigeria, Mr Abiodun Ajala; Representative of Group Chairman, Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc/Chairman on the Occasion, Pastor GbengaOgunko; Speaker/Former General Manager, Zenith Bank and representative of Grand Matron, GPN, (Revd Esther Ajayi) BukkyLatunji; and Speaker/Chief Coordinator, Tourism Klub, during the 2021 annual conference and exhibition of Guild of Photojournalists Nigeria in Lagos

out the way it did is way beyond my expectation. The turnout, the speakers, my friends and associates, even those that weren't able to make it down, I am grateful, and I can boldly say it is the start of something greater.”

An award of recognition was presented to highly respected publisher and pioneer of brand journalism in Nigeria, John Ajayi for his unwavering support to the excellence of the industry. Similarly, Mrs. Esther Ajayi, Founder of the Love of Christ Generation Church, C&S (Iya Adura), London was also recognized for how she had touched and changed many lives through her ministry and humanitarian foundation.

Brands need to partner e-commerce platforms – experts

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



The global e-commerce growth from 2021 is forecast at 16.8% bringing global e-commerce sales worldwide to \$4.921 trillion. In 2020, global e-commerce growth rates hit 25.7 percent.

According to Bain & Company, a consultancy firm, e-commerce sales saw a significant boost, accelerating its share of total sales to 30% by 2025, up from 12% in 2019.

In Nigeria, the current e-commerce spending is estimated at \$12 billion and is projected to reach \$75 billion revenue per annum by 2025.

However, COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the growth of e-commerce platforms as consumers rapidly moved to online shopping to navigate the restrictions and lockdown which created opportunities to acquire new demographics online as more brands compete for their attention to retain customers.

As competition continues to increase in the new digital world where shopping journeys are compressed and making purchase easier than ever, one would ask why it is important for marketers to partner with e-commerce platforms to leverage first party data to drive growth and visibility.

Speaking with experts in the digital field on why brand marketers should partner with e-commerce website to drive growth and visibility, Temitayo Ige, Digital Brand Manager for Central, East, West Africa, Beiersdorf, opined that while Google is planning on phasing out third party cookies by 2023, it is important for brand marketers to build their own first party data while still leveraging e-commerce platforms that are available to drive brand growth and visibility.

Her words: “From 2023 Google will go cookie-less which means it is important for every brand owner, every marketer and advertiser to build their own data, but while doing that, preferably first party data, it is important to partner with e-commerce platforms to leverage their first party data.”

She said building first party data will help build a community of people marketers have relationships with and also give room to

conduct surveys to review their opinion about their brands.

“The great thing about first party data is that it helps you build a community of people ‘you know personally’ and have one on one relationship with and have permission to send information to. Using first party data to reach out to your consumers will always be better in driving growth.

“Most importantly, every brand should look into building their first party data bank at the moment as much as possible and while that is ongoing, partnering with an e-commerce platform that has a solid base is a way to help drive business growth.”

She noted that the type of partnership with the e-commerce platform has a role to play in driving that growth and visibility by always being ethical about people’s personal information.

Hear her: “Ethical marketing always means: don’t buy their data, don’t be intrusive, don’t spam the consumer, ensure that is done in an ethical way and very relevant and placing way such that you get the kind of result that you need from that partnership.”

On her part, Jennifer Okorhi, Integrated Marketing Manager, OPPO, said e-commerce platforms give brands leverage to sell more, adding that Nigeria has more young people who want to make purchases on the go.

“Basically, e-commerce gives its platform leverage. Nigeria, like every other developing nation, has a high percentage of upwardly mobile young people who buy things on the go and need to be catered to without much ado.

“More so, it helps with online conversion especially when it comes to sales and ease in shopping for specific products. Others include brand awareness, a more targeted niche audience.”

However, Olabode Oruku, CEO, Oruku Consultancy Services, noted that partnering with e-commerce platform should be based on where a brand is weak, not a must-do.

“Partnering with e-commerce platforms depends on some entrepreneurs, not everyone needs that. The secret to success in every business is to focus on your strength, pay others or leverage their partnership in the area you’re weak. That complements your effort towards achieving success.”

Corroborating the foregoing submissions, Otiga Alih, Senior Sales Associate at Anakle, said smart business decisions are informed by data. “The big e-commerce businesses have rich data sets spanning the entire lifecycle of the customer journey. Africa’s e-commerce unicorn, Jumia, boasts of a growing 7 million active customer base. Smart advertisers not only go where the audiences are, but also base media buying decisions across several data sets.”

He added: “From historic data, Jumia probably knows more about my buying habits – the kind of products I’m interested in, the comfortable price range, time of day I shop the most, etc. These are important insights that help advertisers properly plan their marketing mix as we have done for our clients majorly in the FMCG space.”

With the rise of social commerce, it is important for brand marketers to begin to pay attention and also partner with e-commerce websites to promote brands not only on the shelves but also on line, while considering data control privacy.

AirPower Limited elevates airport advertising to premium channel

By Tunde Animasaun

Air Power Limited, one of the concessionaires of airport advertising, has turned place advertisement into a premium advertising channel in Nigeria. In a chat with **MARKETING EDGE**, Felix Ehikhuemen, Managing Director of the company, revealed that prior to the coming on board of Air Power in 2017, the potential of airport advertisements was not fully realized and tapped.

“We have not only opened up the airport advertising space, we have equally evolved a business model that provides a platform that accommodates others in a collaborative effort to avail the advertising public the best of services.”

Mr. Ehikhuemen explained that AirPower Limited operates in the airports with the highest traffic thus providing advertisers with platforms that guarantees return on investments. He listed Murtala Muhammed Airport, both local and international terminals, Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Ilorin Benin, Airports as some of the airports where AirPower Limited operates.

Arguably the most capitalized player in the sector, AirPower Limited is poised to go a notch higher in premium advertising deliverables to the advertising public come next month with the opening of the brand-new second terminal at the international wing of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport.

Fitted with state-of-the-art infrastructure that offers a plethora of advertising opportunities ranging from still to LED and digitally interactive out-of-home advertising, the terminal will be used as a springboard to showcase AirPower Limited's capabilities in place for airport advertising

APCON fellowship will encourage future advertisers

– new *APCON Fellows*

By Felicia Nwosu

A journey of a thousand miles, they say, begins with a step, and so it was for the new **APCON Fellows** who got inducted recently.

In the mood of celebration, and in appreciation of their attainment to professionalism and contributions to the growth of the Nigerian advertising industry, industry practitioners bestowed with the exalted position as Fellows have proudly revealed that the significance of the induction to the industry is huge, commendable, impactful and reckonable among other professional bodies.

Commenting on the significance of the induction to both the inductees and the industry with modesty, Yinka Adebayo, Executive Director, Media Investments at OMD WeCa Nigeria, said it is the celebration of renowned practitioners in the industry who have done exceedingly well over the years and being elevated to the zenith of the profession as Fellows.

“It is the celebration of renowned practitioners in the industry. It is a thing of joy getting to the pinnacle of your career after all these years; it is something one needs to thank God for,” he said.

Temitope Jemerigbe, Chief Executive Officer, DKK Nigeria, expressed her joy for being reckoned with APCON's highest industry status, describing it as a thing of honour.

“It is recognition of the experience and contributions of individuals who are being conferred with the induction of which I am one, and I am really glad for this,” she said.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Towncriers Ltd., Kayode Olagesin said the transitional journey is a prestigious one that is only comparable with other renowned professional bodies such as SAN, ICAN and NMA.

“Being a Fellow is like the crowning glory of one's career in any field. It is something really important to celebrate. People get awarded for so many things



but this one coming from the professional body and a regulator is something that is indeed desirable and worthy of achievement,” he said.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Media Fuse Dentsu Aegis Network Nigeria, Emeka Okeke, in the same vein, agreed that becoming a Fellow is a rare feat, adding that it was timely and apt, considering the fact that the advertising industry is not richly dominated with large number of Fellows.

“It is coming at the right time because you can't have a very striving industry contributing significantly to the gross domestic product of, not just a state, but a country, without having practitioners at the level of fellowship. It is also significant because it tells other people in the industry and outside that we have professionals who have attained their peak in their career, and that they have been accorded their place,” he noted.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Monumental Holdings Ltd, Oluwole Odubanjo, said it is an opportunity to challenge those who have made significant contributions to the marketing communications industry to do more, and to encourage future advertisers to continuously put in their best so as to get to the level of fellowship as well.

“It is good for the industry. It will galvanise people to intensify their efforts to make contributions and landmarks that will make way for recognition,” he said.



Lagos NIPR rewards professionalism, excellence at LaPRIGA 2021

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Lagos State chapter, has recognised and rewarded professionalism and excellence at the just concluded 2021 Lagos State PR Industry Gala and Award (LaPRIGA). The premier Chapter of the Institute celebrated and rewarded practitioners in public and private organizations, including industry stakeholders to boost investment in the practice of public relations.

The event, which took place at D'Podium International Event Center, Ikeja, Lagos with the theme, "GLITTERATI: Celebrating the Best of the Industry and Key Stakeholders", had the

who's who in Nigeria's public relations landscape in attendance.

Commenting on the event, Mallam Mukhtar Sirajo, President and Chairman of Council, NIPR, said: "For the chapter to have sustained this event means that it is on ground. There is no better way to appreciate ourselves than what the Lagos State Chapter is doing. Programmes like this give people room to propel themselves."

Yomi Badejo-Okusanya, President, Africa Public Relations Association, on his part, congratulated the Lagos Chapter for sustaining the award for past six years, while stressing that measurement and recognition are important in the practice.

Mrs. Comfort Nwankwo, Chairman,

NIPR Lagos State Chapter, during her welcome speech appreciated the governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu for his support to the Chapter and his commitment state as a centre of excellence.

She also appreciated the leadership of Mallam Sirajo, the executive council and members of NIPR Lagos State Chapter.

"The LaPRIGA Awards has evolved to become the PR industry Oscars by adding new colours, dimensions and values and recognizing best accomplishments in reputation management, relationship management and support for marketing functions," she said.

MARKETING EDGE bags PR Magazine of the Year award at LaPRIGA 2021

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

MARKETING EDGE Magazine, Africa's leading brand-centric magazine known for journalistic excellence with a credo of promoting the brand idea, has bagged the PR Magazine of the Year Award at the Lagos PR Industry Gala and Award (LaPRIGA), 2021.

The LaPRIGA award with the theme: "Glitterati: Celebrating the Best of the Industry and Key Stakeholders", held at the D'Podium International Event Centre, Ikeja, Lagos.

Commenting on the award, Mr. John Ajayi, Publisher/ CEO, MARKETING EDGE magazine, said: "We work in line with our professional role of agenda-setting. It is not about laurels, it's about our passion for professional excellence. On that score, we know we can always have some scores."

MARKETING EDGE magazine is the number one publication with exclusive news, authoritative reports

and insights in the Nigerian marketing communications sector.

The foremost publication is a credible and authoritative media platform that keeps regular tabs on happenings and developments on brands, marketing and advertising in Nigeria and around the world.

Having pioneered and set the pace with a hugely successful print edition publication, it became imperative to explore the on-line platform. Its print edition today remains a market leader and indisputable companion of all players and gladiators in the competitive Nigerian marketing and advertising landscape.

Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Lagos State Chapter, is the premier branch of the institute accounting for nearly sixty percent of the communications practitioners in the country.

Lagos NIPR inaugurated the Lagos PR Industry Gala and Awards (LaPRIGA) six years ago as the



prestigious high profile award that recognizes excellence and celebrates practitioners to boost professionalism.

Experts commend global recognitions in 2021, commit to more groundbreaking campaigns in 2022

By Oghale Mafuru



Practitioners in the Marketing Communications industry have expressed satisfaction for the excellent performance of agencies in the global arena which was accompanied by a plethora of awards and accolades for the country in 2021.

It is worthy of note that in the year 2021 many Nigerian agencies brought home laurels of awards, a symbol of their dynamic and distinct creative solutions.

Commenting on the success of agencies last year, CEO, X3M Ideas and President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria AAAN, Steve Babaeko said that Nigeria was put on the global map through the outstanding performance of agencies on the international scene affirming that Nigerians are renowned for their tenacity, resilience and determination.

He said: "The average Nigerian entrepreneur is one that is going to stand up and fight despite all the odds

swimming against tides to still make a global impact.

He added: "I think it is the never-say-die spirit of Nigerians. We know that tough times are going to come and for everything that is happening now in our environment, with all the infrastructural challenges, with all the monetary policies that sometimes go up and down with the whole depreciating value of the naira."

The advertising boss while commending agencies that performed remarkably well assured that more efforts will be focused on building on the existing achievements recorded last year.

In his words: "I say kudos to some of our members. You saw Noah's Ark, they did well in the Loeries this year which is very commendable. I think Insight Publicis also picked some global awards this year, X3M was also won some international awards this year. So overall I will say it's a good year for us on

the global stage and that is what we will continue to challenge ourselves with to say "look we have to keep flying the flag for Nigeria."

The AAAN helmsman urged the government to encourage more creativity and innovation in the advertising industry by rewarding excellent and noteworthy achievements.

"I think it's ignorance about how the industry works and the kind of value it brings when we go out there to put Nigeria on the map and our members have been doing it since Adam was a small boy. I think it's about time that we get the kind of recognition we deserve for all the laurels we bring to this country," he said

On his part, Chief Executive Officer of Noah's Ark, Lanre Adisa noted that the global recognitions in 2021 have put Nigeria on the global map for the best creative solutions and that agencies are committed to more excellent creative campaigns this year.

He said: "I think it's great for our industry. If there is anything that is really differentiating in our current generation from those before us it is the fact that we have been more visible on the global stage unlike before now. We have been able to be recognized internationally.

It is good for us. These things add up in terms of how people rank you. For them to know anything is happening in Nigeria, it needs to be seen that there is place where creative excellence matters, we are being represented. I think that is the beauty of winning this. Not just for you as an agency but for all the industry," he added

The advertising expert affirmed that Nigerian agencies demonstrated resilience and innovation in response to the challenges that accompanied the pandemic.

Lagos NIPR inaugurates training and education committee



By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

In a bid to propel growth and reposition for professionalism, the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Lagos State Chapter, recently inaugurated

its training and education committee. The inauguration took place during its monthly meeting at Eko FM Multipurpose Hall, Ikeja Lagos.

The committee members are: John Ehiguese as the chairman and

Eniola Mayowa as the secretary. Other members are: Peter Oguduro, Temitope Musowo, Ojo Stephen Tope, Thomas Anu Modupeoluwa, Efe Obiomah, O.T Oyekola, Dare Ogunyombo, and Olusegun Alabi.

According to the Lagos NIPR, it is expected of the committee to develop and implement trainings and master classes for members' professional development, assist in gathering facilitators at the Chapter's monthly meetings and events, reach out to PR students and academia for events, and provide inputs to the ongoing trainings and educational programmes.

Commenting on the appointment, Mr. Ehiguese, chairman of the committee, said: "I'm thrilled by the appointment. Perhaps the biggest challenge in the Nigerian PR industry today is that of capacity and that can only be addressed through an effective programme of training and capacity building.

"I'm glad that I have been considered worthy to lead the charge of developing and executing training programmes for the next generation of PR practitioners. I and my committee members are determined to make a difference in this assignment."

NAFDAC bans alcohol in sachet and bottles



In a deliberate move to decrease access and curb alcohol misuse in the country, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has banned the registration of alcohol in sachet and small volume PET and glass bottles below 200ml, among other regulatory measures.

In a statement, Director General of NAFDAC, Prof. Mojisola Christianah Adeyeye said, that registration of new alcoholic drinks in sachet and small volume PET and glass bottles above

30% ABV (alcohol by volume) has been banned by NAFDAC following the recommendations of a committee of Federal Ministry of Health, NAFDAC, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) and the Industry represented by Association of Food, Beverages and Tobacco Employers (AFBTE), Distillers and Blenders Association of Nigeria (DIBAN) in December 2018.

"In a decisive move to reduce availability and curb abuse of alcohol in the country, NAFDAC has stopped the registration of alcohol in Sachet and Small volume PET and Glass bottles below 200ml amidst other stringent regulatory measures," the statement said.

According to NAFDAC's executive director general, the agency would ensure that the validity of renewal of already registered alcoholic items in the affected category does not surpass 2024. She

stated that manufacturers of low-volume alcoholic beverages (200ml) who had already submitted satisfactory laboratory reports to NAFDAC for registration before the ruling were ordered to free of charge reformulate their products to meet the new criteria.

According to her, DIBAN was also given a matching order to embark on intensive nationwide sensitization campaigns against underage consumption of alcohol by adolescents below the age of 18 years in the bid to stem the tide of alcohol abuse in the country.

She further explained that the producers of alcohol in sachets and small volume agreed to reduce production by 50% with effect from January 31st 2020 while ensuring the products, completely phased out in the country by 31st January, 2024.

"Even as we grapple with the containment of COVID-19 pandemic, NAFDAC is resolutely committed to the strict implementation of the regulations and regulatory measures towards safeguarding the Health of Nigerians particularly the vulnerable youths against the dangers of reckless consumption of alcohol."

NIMN President charges practitioners on productivity

By Oghale Mafuru

The President of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, NIMN, Mr. Idorenyen Enang has charged practitioners to maximize their capabilities to improve productivity rather than relying on electioneering campaigns expected to dominate the entire media space this year.

Enang said this in an exclusive interview during the fellowship induction ceremony of the Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria, APCON held recently in Lagos.

The NIMN President said that the impact of politicking on the advertising industry and national economy is minimal. He argued that political campaigns do not drive economic activities rather; they create a temporary façade of abundance.

In his words: "Politicians do not spend, they are hoarders. What drives the ripple effect of economic activities is not the politicking. What drives it is the proper oiling of the value chain and that is what elections do not do. Elections do not oil the value chain; they oil pockets and they



are very temporary. So, it makes me laugh when I hear professionals put elections in their plan".

According to the astute marketer, advertising is pivotal to the economic growth of the country and practitioners should continue to intensify efforts to recalibrate the entire economic architecture of the nation through innovation and creativity.

He said: "We need activities like

advertising to drive the entire value chain and that is where we come in to say, how we can leverage that season?"

Commenting on the impact of the pandemic on the industry, the NIMN boss stated that although the COVID-19 virus had a huge toll on businesses globally, it heralded a paradigm shift for the advertising industry as it opened a vista of opportunities for practitioners as well as accelerated the evolution of technology and digital penetration.

"I think it opened doors of tremendous levels of creativity. Folks have been able to do stuffs they hitherto would have said was impossible. So, on one hand, if you look at commercialisation, you probably would say we lost; but what we gain in terms of capability and the ability to see a new world is huge. For me, I think the industry has moved in terms of strides and capability".

The NIMN president who commended the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria for the efforts made to reposition the industry for growth expressed optimism that the year 2022 will consolidate on the gains recorded thus far by practitioners.

"With all that is happening around APCON regulations, bringing folks together, stakeholders managements and we have engagements, conversations and, collaborations, things can only get better".

APCON cracks down on quacks, introduces new vetting regime in April

By Oghale Mafuru

In the pursuit of professionalism and strict adherence to ethical practices in the advertising industry, the Registrar of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, (APCON), Dr. Lekan Fadolapo is set to launch a crackdown on charlatans and individuals parading themselves as professionals by introducing a new vetting regime effective from April 1, 2022.

Speaking during the Fellows induction ceremony held recently, the advertising regulator disclosed that the agency is determined to eradicate all practices that sabotage efforts aimed to reposition the industry for growth.

He said: "APCON is committed to providing you and every advertising practitioner with a conducive business

and professional environment to make sure that the practice and business of advertising in Nigeria are conducted ethically without compromising best practices".

While reaffirming his resolve to prevent the invasive tendencies of non-professionals into the advertising practice, the agency's helmsman stated: "The Corporate License Regime of APCON has been strengthened to make sure that we reduce the encroachment of non-registered professionals on the business space of advertising and marketing communications in Nigeria. In the same light, APCON has intensified efforts to monitor and enforce compliance by licensed advertisement organisations".



APCON

Speaking further, he noted that the new vetting regime which will allow only licensed advertising organisations to the Advertising Standards Panel (ASP) for vetting will undoubtedly reduce unlawful and unethical practices and encourage the businesses of licensed organisations.

11 biggest events and highlights of 2021



By Zion Rufus

The pandemic which made 2020 one of the toughest years ever, held the world spellbound as everyone anticipated a better 2021. To say the least, brands, industries, global organisations, and individuals across the globe can agree that the year 2021 has been recompensing,

productive, and dramatic. Hence, we took it upon ourselves to compile some of the biggest highlights of the year.

1. United States Capitol attack, January 2021

One of the biggest events that shook the world at the beginning of the year was the US Capitol riot on January 6, 2021. The mob breach, which was

incited against the ceremonial counting of the electoral votes to confirm President-elect Joe Biden's win, left four people dead during the attack on the nation's capital.

Following the mob attack global corporations like Coca-Cola and JPMorgan Chase announced their intention to pause all political donations. Tech and Media companies like Google,

Amazon, AT&T, Stripe, Facebook, and Microsoft also announced that they would halt all contributions from their PAC as a result of the riot.

2. WTO names Okonjo-Iweala as first female Director General, February 2021

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) announced Dr. Okonjo-Iweala as its first female and first African leader at the WTO's Geneva Headquarters. She resumed office on 1st March 2021 and her term, renewable, will expire on 31 August 2025.

3. Inflation hits 18.17%, March 2021

Nigeria's galloping inflation hit a new high of 18.17 per cent in March from 17.33 per cent in the previous month.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the increase was 0.82 per cent points higher than the rate recorded in February 2021 (17.33 per cent), adding however, that the food index rose by 22.95 per cent in March 2021 compared to 21.79 per cent in February 2021.

NBS attributed the rise in the food index to increases in prices of bread and cereals, potatoes, yam and other tubers, meat, vegetable, fish, oils, fats and fruits.

4. FG inaugurates Digital Switch Over, 30 free-to-air stations, April 2021

The Federal Government inaugurated the Digital Switch Over and the launch of set-top boxes in Lagos with 30 free-to-air stations as part of its long-anticipated digital switchover (DSO) program. The Digital Switch Over saw the country move from analogue to digital broadcasting, which has the capacity to facilitate video-on-demand, audience measurement and a better viewing experience.

5. Nigeria bans Twitter, June 2021

Twitter deleted a post by President Muhammadu Buhari citing a breach of its community rules as the post insinuated war and injustices. With about 61.4 percent of Nigerian social media users on Twitter, the reactions which followed the president's tweet further fueled the site's decision to delete the post. However, the Federal government announced a ban on the

microblogging site as it also instructed Telcos including MTN, Airtel, Glo, and 9Mobile to commence the process of blocking their subscribers from accessing the social media platform.

6. Big Brother Naija Season 6 premiered with N90 Million grand prize, July 2021

Africa's biggest reality TV show, Big Brother Naija, announced the special double launch and premiere of its sixth season on Saturday, 24th July and Sunday, 25th July 2021.

With N90million worth of prizes up for grabs, the 10-week long reality TV show came with promises of fun, suspense, engagement, entertainment and diverse plot twists as it followed the lives of contestants that fought to emerge winner by entertaining their growing fans and avoiding being evicted from the house by viewers who voted to keep them on the show.

7. Taliban Takes Control of Afghanistan, August 2021

The Taliban seized power in mid-August as the last of the US-led coalition troops that had been supporting the previous government pulled out.

Regarded by multiple governments and organizations as terrorists, The Taliban, which refers to itself as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, is a Deobandi Islamist religious-political movement and military organization in Afghanistan.

Following America's withdrawal, the immediate seizure of Afghanistan's civilian government immediately stirred the concerns of major governments across the world and social media giants including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

8. MARKETING EDGE shakes the country with 8th Awards of Excellence, August 2021

Graced by the presence of His Excellency, Mr. Babajide Sanwo -Olu, the Executive Governor of Lagos State, the prestigious MARKETING EDGE Awards of Excellence became both symbolic and iconic in the history of Integrated Marketing Communications and beyond.

The 2021 edition of the award ceremony, witnessed by the Lagos State Governor and his entourage, further set the Nigerian leading advertising magazine on the centre stage of the

country's IMC industry for further traction and strategic positioning.

9. APCON kicks off AISOP Law, October 2021

The Advertising Industry Standard of Practice (AISOP) which took effect from 6th of October, 2021 was introduced by the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) as the new guideline for all advertising practices in Nigeria. Although the standard of practice was birthed after the thorough joint brainstorming of an all-inclusive committee made up of all sectoral groups in the industry in collaboration with APCON to produce a suitable framework that defines a minimum standard, in order to have equal and fairly represented opinions that will form the guidelines of the entire advertising ecosystem, some bodies faulted the regulations.

10. MARKETING EDGE wins 2021 PR Magazine of the Year, December 2021

MARKETING EDGE Magazine, Africa's number one leading brand-centric magazine known for journalism excellence with a credo of promoting the brand idea, bagged the PR Magazine of the Year Award at the just concluded Lagos PR Industry Gala and Award (LaPRIGA), 2021.

Let's not forget the Metaverse. The Metaverse is fast becoming a big deal in the global marketing and communications industry as data from market research company, Emergen Research has revealed that the global metaverse market size which hit \$47.69 Billion in 2020 is expected to reach \$828.95 Billion in 2028 registering a CAGR of 43.3% during the forecast period. Google analytics also revealed that interest in the metaverse has peaked. This year, the number of searches for the word increased more than tenfold from 2020 to 2021.

The digital world has become an all-inclusive space where commerce, marketing, advertising, learning, entertainment, social interaction, and community-building can be carried out effortlessly. This can be credited to the growing reliance of the world on technology which is rapidly launching us into the possibility of the Metaverse soon becoming a reality.

Covid-19 has created a shift in media consumption among Nigerians – experts

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



The rising popularity of digital media, mobile phones, innovation and technology in Nigeria over the past decade has a major impact on the way Nigerians consume and access media on a daily basis.

The shift to digital has become a boon to industry players, as it has significantly broadened the rate at which people now consume media, culminating in huge revenue growth for advertisers in Nigeria.

Confirming these changes in the lifestyle and pattern in which Nigerians consume media, practitioners in the media sub-sector explained the shift and progress recorded since the pandemic in separate interviews with **MARKETING EDGE**.

Austin Efienamokwu, CEO, Ubiquity Media Holding, said media formerly used to sit by and watch things happen, but has now moved from TV set to on-the-go.

His words: "Media used to be one TV household phenomenon where everybody sat at home and watched TV, now there

is an acceleration of the digital economy occasioned by Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that mobile penetration is growing and cost of data is gradually coming down; broadband services are increasing in the market, providing opportunity to see media beyond just TV.

"So, platforms like mobile phones and streaming apps created options for people to access content during the lockdown. Music streaming platforms have grown because of the pandemic – Netflix, Boomplay, Spotify, Audiomarks and Apple music have all grown in terms of their audience base because people need content and they go for where they can get it."

Furthermore, he said: "If you bring it down to TV, TV reality shows like BBN provides an additional viewing opportunity for consumers. People saw those reality TV shows beyond just watching it on DTH or terrestrial TV, they are now able to see it on the go on platforms like Showmax and where they could really appreciate the content. Those are the kinds of dynamics that COVID-19 accelerated."

Similarly, Jude Odia, Managing Director of StarCom Media Perspectives, said digital has helped change consumption of media, adding that people now have multiplicity of channels available.

Hear him: "Obviously, the rate at which people consume online, video, streaming, even paid TV has significantly increased. The quest for reality shows which I call niche content has increased. We now have a multiplicity of channels, people are now the media; they can wake up and start broadcasting. So the trend is shifting and it is going to increase onto mobile, onto content, onto influencer marketing. So, mobile keeps increasing.

"What is fueling mobile is content and as we get more and more internet penetration across Nigeria and have tariffs go down with improved connectivity improves, we will assume quantum leap in the digital space."

In the same vein, Ada Adheke, Managing Director, Peacock Media, said: "Convenience has taken priority, hence the boost in online purchase and online media consumption ratings.

"Virtual work lifestyle from home has also increased TV viewership ratings. Hygiene and healthy living, enhanced by COVID-19 experience has led to slight drop in Radio and a significant drop in OOH. Many are still observing COVID-19 guidelines."

On his part, Tayo Johnson, Group Head, Creative Services, SO&U, said: "Absolutely, there has been a significant shift in media consumption pattern; digital disruption affects the media landscape generally, be it outdoor, print, tv and radio. For instance, static OOH ads are speedily being replaced with digital outdoor, which gives more options of moving graphics, effects and changing media.

COVID-19 pandemic might have come as a pandemic, but it also came as an opportunity for marketing practitioners to re-imagine media consumption from different perspectives.

Cooking seasonings' tussle for market share

By Felicia Nwosu



The seasoning segment of the market in Nigeria has continued to be a hotbed for brands in the sector. The competition for bigger market shares has remained a challenge for most players to maintain leadership with new entrants making inroads into the market. This has led to various marketing strategies being employed to outwit the competition through campaigns, pricing, flavouring, packaging and taste quality.

For centuries, cooking spices and seasonings are used to complement the creative art of culinary for consumers to experience a relishing moment while savouring their meals.

Despite the stiff competition, more players continue to spring up, making remarkable statement in the seasoning segment of the Nigerian market. In this special report, **MARKETING EDGE** takes a look at how various brands of cooking

seasonings are jostling for consumers' attention and market share in terms of quality, pricing, campaigns and flavor. The report is based on marketing intelligence and research.

Knorr

This is a leading premium brand with attractive wrappers from the stable of Unilever. Originally a product of Cadbury Nigeria, but was later bought over in 2005 by Unilever. Since 2005, there has been a strong struggle between pioneer seasoning brands, Maggi Star and Knorr. For this reason, the company has not rested on its oars but has ensured that the brand's leadership positioning and equity remain a force to be reckoned with through its offering to the consumers.

Initially, Knorr used to be the second in command after Maggi Star from Nestle foods but today, it has become the market leader despite it being the most expensive seasoning brand in that segment.

Maggi Star

Maggi Star is as old as cooking seasoning itself, which explains why it once acquired a generic status in the Nigerian market. This iconic brand has remained an outstanding leader in the seasoning category for more than a century; no wonder, most of its consumers are of the older generation. With a strong heritage and promise, the loyalty of Maggi consumers can be said to be embedded in its quality offering, long history, strong equity and market positioning. Despite the presence of new entrants contesting in the red ocean, like the star that appears anew every night, Maggi never goes dim. In most regional markets in Nigeria, Maggi remains a generic brand when it comes to seasoning as every other brand has come to be known as 'Maggi'.

Established in 1872 by a Swiss entrepreneur called Julius Maggi, Maggi seasoning came with the solution of a protein based vegetable dish, which was quick, easy and inexpensive to prepare. The family-centric seasoning brand

then registered its market penetration across the continent, in 1950, with a logo identification of Maggi Star, characterised by red and yellow colour elements, which has remained its identity since then.

Royco

This is another premium product on the stable of a leading company, Unilever, the same maker of Knorr. The brand is wrapped and packaged with red and white logo identification that makes it distinct. With the introduction of Royco into the market, the battle for leadership in the seasoning market became stiffer, but despite the fact that it shares the same parent company with Knorr, Royco's market positioning is a bit shaky compared to its sister brand, Knorr.



Onga

A unique product that understands that mothers need a helping hand in creating a memorable family experience when preparing sumptuous delicacies. Produced by Promasidor, Onga seasoning is a flavour-filled blend of herbs and spices that is not restricted to any particular meal. Its flavours include classic, stew, chicken, shrimp, pondu, ala tomato and the special 3 mix of ginger, onion and garlic.

The Onga Chicken Seasonings have taken the centre stage for most food vendors, restaurants and hotels, as the brand is gradually disrupting the market share of leading brands in the seasoning powder segment.

Gino Max

A new seasoning brand from GBFoods, a leading multinational company and producers of the Gino range of foods in Ghana was launched in 2019. Gino Max is a unique 12g bouillon and the latest addition to its Gino range of food products. Through this product, GBFoods Africa was able to deliver its brand promise

which is maximum satisfaction to win consumers' loyalty.

Mamador

One of the newly birthed seasonings in the market from the home of PZ Wilmar, launched two years ago as 'Devon King's seasoning cubes' to breach the nutrient gap in food consumption with lesser spending by the family. This latest product has been imbued with the 30 percent recommended daily allowance for healthy living in food intake. It also comprises 15 percent zinc and other 15 percent iron to cater for the health needs of the families. With improved taste, and edible variants, the new product requires no condiments to give consumers value for their money.

Mr. Chef

Mr. Chef brand seasoning is produced by Sweet Nutrition Limited and was launched into the market in 2018. In its bid to continue to create delightful memories for consumers and the need to give Nigerians a complete meal, the company has churned out various flavours which include (beef and chicken), and seasoning powders (Jollof Rice, Fried Rice, Pepper soup, Goat Meat, Curry, Stew, Ginger-Onion-Garlic & Crayfish).

Terra

A product from TGI Distri Limited, a member of the TGI Group, used Terra to storm the seasoning market three years ago. Terra Cubes have particularly been designed to meet the palate requirements of all Nigerians especially in terms of aroma and flavour. They are also designed to preserve the aroma of meals during and after cooking, a reason why it kicked off with the brand's pay-off line, "Locks the aroma in; Gets the taste out", and it is available in various sizes.

Other brands include Doyin, Suppy, Prime, another product from Doyin. Not forgetting seasonings such as Jumbo and Vedan as they seemed to have gone for reinforcement, because they left the market long ago and have not yet resurfaced.

However, responses from consumers, distributors and retailers made up of different demographics indicated that both variants of Knorr were the most preferred in terms of quality, preservation, easy to open, distinct taste and less salty, followed by Maggi Star.

Mrs. Nkechi Steven, a cooking seasoning distributor at Muritala Market at Alaba, told MARKETING EDGE that

Knorr is the only seasoning that still retains and sells in its brand name, unlike others.

"Knorr is very special and many customers like it. It's only Knorr that you can hear customers say I want to buy Knorr. " But if it is another brand, they will say, I want to buy Maggi; when you give them Maggi, they will reject it and say it is not this one," she said.

Another seasoning seller at Orile Market, Mrs. Georgina Paul, said in Pidgin English that she sells more of Knorr and Tasty Chicken flavour

"Dem dey buy Knorr and Maggi well well for my hand, but na older women between the ages of 50-80 dey buy Maggi Star more. Those young girls say salt plenty for Maggi and e dey quick melt for the paper before you even open am. Dem say e no dey last like Knorr," she explained.

Mrs. Adeolu- Shittu, a teacher and housewife, prefers Knorr. "My most preferred choice is Knorr beef. It is tasty and not salty. It is easy to unwrap and use. It's Knorr beef or nothing for me."

For another consumer, Mrs. Udofia, it is Knorr all the way. "I prefer Knorr Meat or ordinary as the women in the market call it. I love the unique taste," she enthused.

Mrs. Edidiong, a restaurant owner, said she alternates both Maggi and Knorr. "I use Maggi sometimes, but if I can't quickly get it, I switch to Knorr. They are my best, but I love Maggi because it was passed down to me by my mother."

Another restaurant owner, Miss Grace Udoh, said she prefers Onga. "Me I prefer Onga, because it gives me the flexibility to cook any dish I want to, and I love it most especially because of the attractive look it gives the meal. It is also very cheap."



Biggest media account reviews and wins of 2021



By Zion Rufus

Just when we thought 2020 was going to be the only year with the most shocking global media account wins and losses, 2021 came in with a bigger bang. Below are some of the biggest reviews and moves we saw that year.

Coca-Cola \$4 billion global account — WPP

In November, following a lengthy review process that included IPG, Dentsu, WPP and Publicis Groupe, WPP was chosen as the global marketing partner for Coca-Cola. The holding company is now tasked with managing end-to-end creative, media, data and marketing technology, across Coca-Cola's entire portfolio.

JPMorgan Chase \$400 million global media — WPP and Dentsu

In January, Creative powerhouses, WPP and Dentsu won the media businesses of American multinational investment banking conglomerate, JPMorgan Chase, in a highly competitive pitch.

The pitch which kicked off in late September 2020, covered the monetary companies' offline media shopping for enterprise within the US, Northern Europe and Asia, and was supported by MediaHyperlink.

Google multibillion dollar global media account — GroupM

In November, Google consolidated its entire multi-billion global media account with GroupM's Essence.

Google has partnered with Essence for more than a decade on all digital and programmatic media buying, but the offline portion of the business has been managed by Omnicom Media Group (OMG). Essence already held 80% of the business globally, and the account was moved without a formal review in an effort by Google to simplify its agency relationships.

Facebook \$750 million global media account — Publicis

In November, following a seven month competitive pitch which involved some of the world's biggest agencies including Group M, Dentsu and Havas Media, Facebook announced Publicis Groupe's Spark Foundry as its global media buying and planning agency. The \$750 million global media account was put up for review in March. The pitch which included media planning and buying across Facebook's entire portfolio — Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and Messenger was managed by ID Comms.

Unilever \$3.3 billion global media account — WPP, Omnicom, Havas

In September, Unilever announced its agencies of record worldwide after a US\$3.3 billion global media pitch. WPP-owned Mindshare has retained several of the UK-based FMCG manufacturer's markets, including the US, UK and Ireland, Netherlands and Belgium, the Nordics, Eastern Europe, South Asia, Southeast Asia and China.

Omnicom-owned PHD, meanwhile, was handed Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Canada, as well as North Africa and the Middle East, and retained Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Havas took over former-WPP territories France and Spain and IPG-owned Initiative has retained Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Greece.

Phillips \$300m global media account — Omnicom

In May, Global health technology and beauty giant Philips awarded its creative, public relations and media accounts, worth \$300m, to Omnicom following a review.

T-mobile \$2.3 billion U.S media account — IPG

Global creative agencies, Publicis and WPP lost telco giant, T-mobile's U.S media account to Interpublic Group subsidiary, Initiative.

The two creative powerhouses and Horizon Media were incumbents on the lucrative account until a review in September, 2020. Interpublic Group subsidiary, Initiative, was awarded the media account following the completion of the pitch process. The review which was managed by ID Comms, also included the new acquisition to T-mobile's business, Sprint.

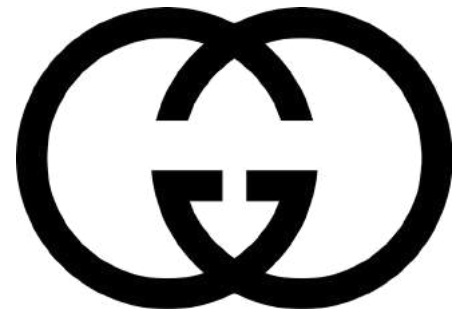
Walmart \$600 million US media account — Publicis

In August, Media powerhouse, Publicis Groupe beat WPP, Omnicom and Dentsu in one of the biggest pitches of 2021 to win the \$600m Walmart US media planning and buying account. The account came back to Publicis after moving over to WPP-backed Haworth in 2017.

Mercedes Global marketing — Omnicom

Following a six-month pitch against Publicis Groupe, global marcomms leader, Omnicom Group bagged the global consolidated media, brand and performance marketing account for Mercedes-Benz. As part of the win, Omnicom acquired two German-based agencies, digital shop Antoni and PR firm OSK. The holding company will also develop creative hubs in the U.S., Europe and China to have account for the local needs of those markets.

China: Gucci joins Mercedes, Three Squirrels as brands under fire for Advertising stereotypes



Gucci, the Italian luxury fashion brand has come under intense fire by the Chinese for depicting Chinese women in western stereotypes. The outcry by the Chinese followed an ad posted by Gucci featuring an Asian-looking model with “scary” makeup, an exaggerated nose ring, and a leather whip in her hand on December 10, 2021, in the fashion house’s official Twitter account. In the advertisement for its new series of bamboo top handle bags posted online on December 10, an Asian-looking female model is seen holding a bag. She’s wearing makeup emphasizing her pink, light eyebrows, small eyes, and high cheekbones that amplify the “Asian face” typically depicted in the Western narrative.

The advertisement subsequently came under the spotlight on China’s social media platform Sina Weibo, and it was discovered that the luxury brand showed different pictures on its Weibo and Twitter posts. The pictures on Weibo did not show the

model but only showed photos of the bag, while on Twitter both the model and the bag were visible.

The perceived different treatment of Chinese and Western consumers by Gucci has been slammed by Chinese netizens who saw it as a clear “manifestation of a guilty conscience,” and that the brand knew it had presented a Western-style Asian appearance that would irritate the Chinese audience.

Commenting on the development, Zhu Wei, Vice Director, Communication Law Research Center at the China University of Political Science and Law, said, “If we don’t oppose such discriminatory labels, there may be more Western enterprises coming up with these images thinking it’s a ‘key for gaining exposure’. Like the term ‘nigger’ can’t appear in a Hollywood movie the West knows where our taboo is, but it is still willing to touch upon it. “This is extremely disrespectful to our culture. The disgust and revulsion expressed by the

whole society toward this kind of insult should be heard.”

A similar sentiment was expressed by a Beijing resident who said, “It’s not about how the model herself looked, nor does it indicate that we refuse bold or innovative fashion styles other than the traditional sense of beauty. It’s about whether a model has been portrayed to specially cater to Western eyes, or has been deliberately created to follow Western stereotypes.”

The controversy surrounding the “Asian face,” which ignited public fury in recent days, started with an advertisement by famous Chinese snack retailer Three Squirrels. It posted a model featuring small, slanted eyes that netizens accused of catering to Western stereotypes and insulting Chinese. Soon afterward, Mercedes-Benz, the German automobile giant, was discovered to have posted models with similar styles of makeup that emphasized slanted eyes in one of its advertisements.



OMD grabs Stada pharmaceuticals, consolidates EMEA media duties

By **Abimbola Mohamed**

OMD, a global media buying and planning agency, has been appointed by Global Pharma Company Stada Arzneimittel as its new OMD media planning and buying agency across EMEA.

OMD Germany will lead the account, which has annual media billings of about \$63m (£43m) across Europe.

The German-headquartered consumer healthcare business, which reported sales of €3bn (£2.5bn) in 2020, has consolidated media duties across the region for the first time.

The account was won following a four-month review led by Media Sense.

The agency said it showcased

“creativity, better analysis and predictive insights and technology capabilities to deliver connected, personalised and seamless brand experiences for Stada customers at all touch points of the consumer journey.”

Jessica Roberts, OMD’s EMEA chief client officer, said in a statement: “We are proud to be growing our relationship with Stada, which demonstrates the effectiveness of our talent, tools and technology in delivering better decisions, faster for Stada. We look forward to continuing our partnership and embracing this opportunity to further connect the EMEA markets and drive additional growth.”

The win continues a streak of new business wins for the Omnicom Media Network stable in Europe.

In 2021, the group won and retained accounts worth media billings of more than \$2bn, including Mercedes Benz, Philips, Ferrero, L’Oreal, Channel 4, Comparethemarket and the UK government’s media buying and planning account.

About Stada Arzneimittel

Stada produces consumer healthcare products for coughs and colds, skin care, sleep, pain relief, vitamins and more. Some of its better known brands include Zoflora, Aqualor, Vitaprost and Nizoral.

Global outdoor advertising market to hit US\$58.80 billion in 2025



The global outdoor advertising market value is forecasted to reach US\$58.80 billion in 2025, growing at a Calculated Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.26%, for the period spanning 2021 to 2025 according to reports released by ResearchAndMarkets.com.

Bouncing back from the devastating impact of the pandemic, some of the respondents in the Out-of-Home advertising space, business activities in the last quarter indicated confidence in the performance of outdoor activities. They agreed that business activities have improved significantly with positive outlook in the present quarter as companies and brands want to dish out their last campaign for the year.

This growth can be credited to factors such as a booming tourism industry, growing programmatic digital display Ad spending, increasing urban populace, accelerating economic growth and improving consumer confidence are expected to drive the market.

Today's Out-of-Home (OOH) advertising offers more creative avenues when it comes to businesses of getting out their message. OOH is highly adaptable and billboard advertising is just one aspect of its unlimited marketing potentials. Billboard advertising utilizes large-scale print to market a company, brand, product, or campaign. Since billboards are placed in high traffic areas, it has become an effective method of building brand awareness.

Leading outdoor advertising categories include billboards, street furniture, transit and alternative advertising. Presently, billboards are the most demand medium owing to high demand for digital billboards in malls and other tourist infrastructures in various countries.



FTC lawsuit seeking divestiture of Meta Companies gets go ahead

Initially dismissed on the grounds of “insufficient evidence for its central claim” the US Federal Trade Commission has been given the order to proceed with an antitrust lawsuit filed against tech giant, Meta.

In a memorandum of opinion made public, the US District Court disclosed that the FTC filed an Amended Complaint containing significant additions and revisions aimed at addressing the shortcomings identified in its prior Opinion, noting that the core theory of the lawsuit remains essentially unchanged.

The court revealed in the statement: “The Federal Trade Commission’s first antitrust suit against Facebook, Inc. stumbled out of the starting blocks, as this Court dismissed the Complaint last June. In doing so, the Court concluded that the Commission had failed to plausibly allege “that Facebook has monopoly power in the market for Personal Social Networking (PS) services. However, the Court left the door ajar for the agency to amend the Complaint and reinstate its suit.”

“The facts alleged this time around to fortify those theories, however, are far more robust and detailed than before, particularly in regard to the contours of Defendant’ alleged monopoly.”

According to the statement, the Commission continues to allege that Facebook has long had a monopoly in the market for PS services and that it has unlawfully maintained that monopoly via two types of actions: first, by acquiring competitors and potential competitors- most notably, Instagram and WhatsApp—that it believed were well situated to eat into its monopoly; and second, by implementing and enforcing policies that prevented interoperability between Facebook and other apps that it viewed as nascent threats.

However, in an interview made public by The Verge, Meta responded: “Today’s decision narrows the scope of the FTC’s case by rejecting claims about our platform policies. It also acknowledges that the agency faces a ‘tall task’ proving its case regarding two acquisitions it cleared years ago,” says the statement. We’re confident the evidence will reveal the fundamental weakness of the claims. Our investments in Instagram and WhatsApp transformed them into what they are today. They have been good for competition, and good for the people and businesses that choose to use our products.”

Google exhibits confidence in the UK, buys \$1 billion office building in central London

By Dele Ojo



Tech giant Google has spent \$1 billion to buy a central London building where it is currently a tenant, showing its confidence in the future of the office as a place to work, the company said in a recent report.

Google, which employs 6,400 people in Britain, plans a multi-million pound refurbishment of its offices within the Central Saint Giles development it is buying, close to Covent Garden in central London.

“We have been privileged to operate in the UK for nearly 20 years, and our purchase of the Central Saint Giles development reflects our continued commitment to the country’s growth and

success,” said Ruth Porat, CFO of Google’s parent company Alphabet.

The company plans to refit the building so it is adapted for in-person teamwork and has meeting rooms for hybrid working, as well as creating more space for individuals.

According to Reuters, the new refurbishment will also feature outdoor covered working spaces to enable work in the fresh air, the company said.

Google said it would eventually have capacity for 10,000 workers at its UK sites, including one being developed in the nearby King’s Cross area of London.

“This investment in jobs from Google is a big vote of confidence in the UK as a world-leading tech hub,” finance minister Rishi Sunak said in a statement.

Last month, Google said it was delaying its return-to-office plan globally amid growing concerns over the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

The Central Saint Giles building had been owned by a joint venture between Legal & General Investment Management Real Assets and Mitsubishi Estate London

Limited.

According to CNBC, its new U.K. headquarters, which sits on a plot behind King’s Cross train station, is still under construction. The 11-storey “groundscraper” has been designed by the prestigious Heatherwick Studios and Bjarke Ingels Group. The plans show a 25-meter swimming pool, a 200-meter rooftop running trail, and a large sports hall with views over London. It will accommodate up to 4,000 Googlers when it’s completed.

It stated that Apple is set to move 1,400 staff from multiple Apple offices around London into a new 500,000 square foot space, which will occupy six floors of the former Battersea coal-fired power station (depicted on the front cover of Pink Floyd’s “Animals” album).

The U.K. is one of the biggest outposts for U.S. tech giants. Meta, Twitter, and Amazon have also acquired shiny multi-story buildings in London in recent years to accommodate their growing armies.

The coronavirus stalled many construction projects worldwide and the lavish headquarters of Silicon Valley firms are no exception. When restrictions tightened in the U.K., many construction companies temporarily shut down building sites and laid off workers.

Unilever to continue acquisition move on GlaxoSmithKline health arm despite rejection



Leading Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Company, Unilever, has expressed determination to

continue to pursue a deal to acquire the health arm of GlaxoSmithKline, a multinational pharmaceutical company.

The consumer giant’s offer valued at £50bn was rejected by GlaxoSmithKline but the company is still resolute to see the acquisition bid scale through noting that the deal is a strong strategic fit for the company.

GlaxoSmithKline said it received and rejected three unsolicited proposals from Unilever to acquire the GSK Consumer Healthcare business, including a late 2021 approach that valued the unit at 50 billion

pounds (\$68.4 billion).

According to Unilever, the acquisition would create scale and a growth platform for the combined portfolio in the US, China and India, with further opportunities in other emerging markets in terms of synergies in the oral care and vitamin supplements business.

GSK’s health products business owns brands such as Sensodyne toothpaste, Panadol and Centrum vitamins while Unilever brands include Marmite, PG Tips and Dove soap.

Amazon halts plan to block UK Visa credit cards amid talks

Amazon has dropped plans to block UK Visa credit card payments, as the two sides continue to try to resolve a dispute over payment fees. “The expected change regarding the use of Visa credit cards on Amazon.co.uk will no longer take place on January 19,” Amazon said. Visa said it was “working closely to reach an agreement”.

Amazon said last year that Visa payment costs were “an obstacle” to providing the best prices for customers, but Visa accused Amazon of threatening to restrict consumer choice. “When consumer choice is limited, nobody wins,” Visa said.

According to BBC News, neither company has indicated when the talks might conclude. In an email to customers on Monday, Amazon said it was working closely with Visa on “a potential solution that will enable customers to continue using their Visa credit cards on Amazon.co.uk”.

An EU-enforced cap on fees charged by card issuers is no longer in place in the UK following Brexit. Both Visa and its rival Mastercard have raised the

so-called interchange fee on cross-border transactions between businesses in the UK and the European Union following Brexit.

However, Amazon and Visa said last year that their dispute had nothing to do with the UK leaving the EU. They have been slugging it out in public and in private, now these two corporate heavyweights are going in for an extra round.

Amazon is ahead on points in this bout. Given this announcement has come so close to the deadline, many customers would have already switched their primary Amazon payment method away from Visa. But the online retailer would also have been hurt financially if it had followed through on its threat.

The canceling of the deadline, and the fact a new end date has not been set, suggests a deal is near. Neither Amazon nor Visa is saying much to be able to judge quite how close they are to a compromise.

This dispute is about more than just fees. It is also about control. Don't forget that Amazon has taken a different course with Mastercard, which is behind Amazon's



reward card.

Amazon has previously declined to say how much Visa charges the retailer to process transactions made on credit cards. Visa also declined to comment, though it claimed that on average it takes less than 0.1% of the value of a purchase.

The Payment Systems Regulator has raised concerns about competition in this sector, which is dominated by Visa and Mastercard.

In a strategy published recently, it said one of its priorities was to promote competition between UK payment systems. “We will focus more on improving competition between payment systems, not just competition within payment systems,” its managing director Chris Hemsley said.

“This is important because we know that the future of retail payments is becoming increasingly about digital payments, most of which are currently made using card payment systems.”

Cannes Lions announces Paul Hirsch as Jury President, Creative B2B Lions at 2022 Awards



Cannes Lions has announced Paul Hirsch, President, Chief Creative Officer, Doremus, as the inaugural Jury President to lead the newly launched Creative B2B Lions at the 2022 Awards.

Paul Hirsch will lead the jury for the Creative B2B Lions, which celebrate game-changing creativity and effectiveness in work for products and services that are purchased by professionals on behalf of businesses, to recognise creative excellence in the sector.

The Creative B2B Lions were developed with input and research from industry experts, supported by the B2B Institute, a LinkedIn Think Tank and strategic thought partner.

Commenting on the announcement, Paul Hirsch, President, Chief Creative Officer, Doremus, says: “For years, B2B

has been an often-overlooked part of the industry landscape. But now, with a dedicated award at Cannes Lions, I'm looking forward to flipping that script and giving the talented people and creative companies that create groundbreaking work their due. As Jury President, my hope is that we can inspire creatives and embolden brands for years to come.”

Philip Thomas, Chairman, LIONS, adds: “The Creative B2B Lions is reminiscent of the launch of our Health & Wellness Lions in 2013. The industry asked us to launch a Lion that will help to raise the creative bar for B2B, just as it did for Healthcare, and we are delighted that Paul, alongside his jurors, will set the new standard for global creativity for B2B brands.”

Susie Walker, VP Awards and Insight, comments: “We have seen a rise in creative B2B work winning across the Lions in recent years, including two Grands Prix in 2021, so now feels like the right moment to launch the Creative B2B Lions to benchmark creative excellence in B2B. This award will set a global standard, elevate the discipline and help raise the bar for B2B creative.”

Paul Hirsch is a creative leader focused on designing and shaping the

next generation of brands. Paul spent his formative years at Goodby Silverstein & Partners, Leo Burnett, and an agency he co-founded, Division of Labor. At GS&P, he crafted memorable work for Nike and Cracker Jack. At Burnett, he relaunched Chef Boyardee with a film that still circles the internet, and he also co-authored the Amazon charting book “Stop Tweeting Boring Sh*t.”

Currently, as the CCO and President of Doremus, Paul has brought all these previous experiences together to help reshape not only one of advertising's oldest agencies, but the B2B category as well. Hirsch has won two Lions at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, alongside a host of global accolades throughout his career.

The Cannes Lions Awards, which each year set the global benchmark for creative excellence in branded communications, opened for entries on 20 January. The Lions are judged by over 400 global experts. In 2022, the jurors will complete initial judging remotely before coming together in Cannes, France to discuss and award the Lions in June.



Coca Cola, PepsiCo, other big brands advocate global plastic production

International brands including Coca Cola and PepsiCo recently called for a global pact to combat plastic pollution that includes cuts in plastic production, a key growth area for the oil industry.

World officials will meet at a United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2), Conference later this year to start negotiations on a treaty to tackle plastic waste crisis that is choking landfills, despoiling oceans, and killing wildlife.

It remains unclear whether any deal will focus on waste management and recycling or take tougher steps such as curbing new plastic production, a move that would likely face resistance from big oil and chemical firms and major plastic-producing countries like the United States.

According to Reuters, the more than 70 signatories to Monday's joint statement include consumer goods companies like Unilever and Nestle, which sell a myriad of products in single-use plastic from shampoo to chocolate bars, as well as retailer Walmart and French bank BNP Paribas.

"We are at a critical point in time to establish an ambitious U.N. treaty," the statement said, noting that any deal should "reduce virgin plastic

production and use."

"UNEA 5.2 is the decisive, most auspicious moment to turn the tide on the global plastic pollution crisis. We cannot afford to miss it," the statement said.

Less than 10% of all the plastic ever made has been recycled, and a Reuters investigation last year revealed that new recycling technologies touted by the plastics industry have struggled to combat the problem.

Meanwhile, production of plastic, which is derived from oil and gas, is projected to double within 20 years. This is a key source of future revenue for energy majors, as demand for fossil fuels wanes with the rise of renewable energy and electric vehicles.

While scaling-up global recycling is critical to tackling plastic waste, these efforts will not prevent plastic pollution from continuing to skyrocket without constraints on production, a landmark 2020 study by Pew Charitable Trusts found.

As pressure mounts on firms that sell products in hard-to-recycle plastic to tackle the resulting waste, some have teamed up with cement makers to burn plastic waste as a cheap fuel in the developing world, a Reuters investigation found last year.

UK regulator fines Mastercard, others for prepaid cards cartel



Britain's payments regulator on Tuesday fined five payments companies including Mastercard a total of 33 million pounds (\$45.01 million) for cartel behaviour involving prepaid cards issued to vulnerable people on welfare benefits.

Mastercard received the largest fine of 31.56 million pounds (\$43.04 million). The other companies fined were allpay, Advanced Payment Solution, Prepaid Financial Services, and Sulion.

According to Reuters, the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) said the firms broke competition law by agreeing not to compete or poach each other's customers on pre-paid cards offered by local authorities to distribute welfare payments to vulnerable people.

The cartel meant recipients of the cards – who included the homeless, victims of domestic abuse, and asylum seekers – could have missed out on cheaper or better-quality products, the regulator said.

The PSR previously announced in

March last year it planned to fine the five companies in preliminary findings. It said on Tuesday it had concluded the investigation. The regulator said during the course of the investigation, all the parties settled and admitted to breaking the law.

“This investigation and the significant fines we have imposed send a clear message that the PSR has zero-tolerance for cartel behaviour,” said Chris Hemsley, Managing Director of the Payment Systems Regulator.

Formerly known as Financial Collection Services (FCS) Ltd, allpay was established in 1994 providing swipe card payment facilities to facilitate revenue collection for local government and housing associations. It began with two clients and four members of staff.

Managing Director and Founder, Tony Killeen, first came up with the idea of electronic bill payments whilst collecting rents on behalf of the council:

“It was very frustrating working with paper-based bill payment systems. I knew there had to be a better way. This gave me the idea of using technology to speed up the process. What I used to do on paper at the council, we now do with swipe cards,

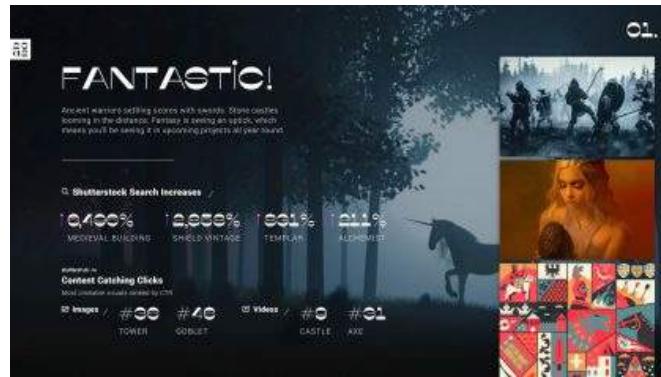
Our system provides convenience and choice for the people paying bills and greater efficiency for any organisation collecting payments” he stressed.

Formerly known as Payment Financial Solutions, EML creates awesome, instant, and secure payment solutions that connect its customers to their customers, anytime, anywhere, wherever money is in motion

People are at the essence of everything we do. It's about simple, tailored payment solutions for your brand and customers. We're changing the face of payments, the company explained.

EML provides an innovative global payment solutions platform, with years of experience in delivering innovative and secure payment solutions. We work closely with businesses all around the world to solve their payment needs and create awesome customer experiences.

Shutterstock predicts 2022 creative trends, emphasises on time & space



Global creative platform, Shutterstock, has released its annual Creative Trends Report, which predicts the themes, creative projects and marketing campaigns that will dominate the industry in 2022.

The report foresees themes of time and space featuring heavily in creative trends as a result of the pandemic disrupting the concepts of time and space for many over the past two years.

Flo Lau, Creative Director, Shutterstock, said: “When we took a closer look at what the global Shutterstock community is searching for, it is clear that 2022 is set to be a year defined by pushing traditional boundaries and exploring the unknown.

“There is a sense of wanderlust and a desire to explore the fantastical and the uncanny, and this year’s trends captured just that. From the barren desert landscapes of the West to the neon reflections of a futuristic skyline, this year is ready to test the boundaries of our imagination.”

As mentioned before, Shutterstock’s six 2022 Creative Trends fall under two thematic categories: time and space. These include:

Fantastic (14th Century): Owing to Game of Thrones and The Witcher, people’s medieval obsessions will continue. Keywords such as medieval building (+6496%), vintage shield (+2858%) and templar (+831%) have seen a drastic uptick, as creatives and marketers turn back time to revisit a realm of drama and adventure.

The Macabre (Modern Era): Search patterns show the horror and thriller genres are making a comeback, with a particular focus on dystopian and post-apocalyptic futures.

Way Out West (18th – 19th Century): Data shows an interest spike in cowboy culture, wild west environments, and prairie fields, with searches for “wild horses”, rising by 1961%. Western-themed images and videos are fast climbing marketing wish lists, with Navajo patterns having grown in popularity by 225% over the last year.

On The Road Again (Modern Era): Staying indoors has sparked a wanderlust in millions, with users searching for bikes on the road (+14911%), roads to mountain (+5763%) and the badlands (+487%) in an effort to explore unknown territories from the comforts of their own homes.

Cyberpunk Is Not Dead (2100s): In a world constantly innovating and breaking technological barriers, it’s no surprise creatives are turning towards high-tech aesthetics, with content receiving the most clicks being electrical outlets, webcams and LED.

What’s Cookin’ (Modern Era): Lockdowns around the world spurred people to get back in the kitchen and find inspiration from all corners of the globe. Searches for regional specialities and ingredients such as Porcini (+2566%), Takoyaki (+2024%) and Panna Cotta (+435%) are on the rise, as creatives and marketers look for gastronomical inspiration near and far. Content receiving the most clicks include pretzels and cupcakes.

Shutterstock has also localised the trends report for the first time for top markets including Brazil, France, Japan, U.S., and the UK.

Global volumetric video market to experience a surge in advertising demand

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



According to an exhaustive Research and Markets.com report, the value of global volumetric video markets will treble in size by 2026.

Expected to grow from USD\$1.5 billion in 2021 to USD\$4.9 billion, a Cumulative Average Growth Rate of 26.9 per cent, the volumetric video market is an extremely attractive investment opportunity.

This ambitious growth forecast has been attributed to an accelerated demand for enhanced viewing experiences, 3D/360° entertainment and AR/VR in the retail and e-commerce spaces.

However, the hardware segment is predicted to hold the largest share of the volumetric video market during the forecast period.

Major players like Microsoft, Intel, Google, Unity, Sony and Verizon have in large part contributed to the expeditious construction of studios that have made volumetric video proliferate into the mainstream.

According to the report's findings, "The volumetric video market for signage and advertisement application is expected to grow at the highest CAGR during the forecast period."

Creative advertising is driving demand

for volumetric media as its superb technology can be deployed at corporate events, product launches and promotional events.

Additionally, the continuing growth of digital signage should drive demand for better ad content which would, in turn, propel the demand for volumetric video.

With growing advertising competition, the report outlines that volumetric video could be a boon for businesses that need to develop new and unique content.

Also notable, the volumetric video market is expected to grow the fastest in the APAC region.

This estimation is due to the fact that there is a mushrooming of professional creative studios and increased adoption in sports, events, entertainment and most importantly advertising applications.

JCDecaux receives certification for first Carbon Neutral advertising in Australia

By **Abimbola Mohammed**

JCDecaux, Out-of-home Media Company has announced that it has received certification from Climate Active for Australia's first carbon-neutral out-of-home advertising product across Transit.

Steve O'Connor, CEO, JCDecaux, said in a statement that: "There is no doubt that sustainability is important. Reducing our environmental impact, and helping our clients do the same, is a continued priority in our strategy."

"I'm delighted that we're leading the industry with the first Out-of-Home sustainable advertising solution in Australia with our Transit bus and tram products, certified by Climate Active.

Now, when media agencies and brands choose our in-house printing service GSP for their Transit campaigns, they will automatically be part of the solution in driving change and making a difference to the environment."

With sustainability high on the agenda for customers, it is now more crucial



than ever for brands and media buyers to consider this in their advertising plans to gain increased customer loyalty.

There is no opt-in required or additional cost to Transit partners when using GSP. All parts of the Transit product are certified carbon neutral.

O'Connor continued: "With the growing concern among many consumers around sustainability, we are continuing our work this year to offer further sustainable media solutions, as we endeavour to be a socially responsible

business."

JCDecaux has selected two Indigenous carbon projects to offset the Transit carbon neutral product the Thaa-Nguigarr Carbon Project and the Nyaliga Fire Project.

The Thaa-Nguigarr Carbon Project, Emissions Reducing Fund Project, is an early dry season Savanna burning project aimed at reducing late dry season wildfires, and therefore reducing carbon emissions. The Nyaliga Fire Project is a registered savanna burning carbon project with burning operations carried out in line with traditional indigenous knowledge and practice.

JCDecaux was the first Out-of-Home media company globally to join the RE100, a worldwide organisation that advocates for a commitment to 100 per cent renewable energy. In Australia and New Zealand JCDecaux is the first media company to commit to this and means the entire network, including offices, will be powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity in 2022.

In Australia, JCDecaux has been a proud certified carbon neutral business since 2015 through Climate Active, an Australian Government organisation that certifies Australian businesses as carbon neutral. It is also working to achieve carbon zero status in New Zealand.



A third of CMOs loses talent to rivals, study finds

As the war on talent intensifies, more than a third (35 percent) of Chief Marketing Officers across Europe say losing talent to competitors has been a major workforce challenge over the past six months, according to new research from LinkedIn shared exclusively with Marketing Week.

Another 35 percent of the 263 CMOs surveyed say they are receiving fewer applications for vacant roles and 32 percent report finding it difficult to recruit people with the right qualifications.

As a result, marketers are casting the net wider when it comes to recruitment, with more than a quarter (26 percent) now looking overseas for talent, while more than three-quarters (76 percent) believe offering hybrid working is key to attracting the best applicants.

Having a strong employer brand is also rising in importance as companies

try and stand out to candidates. Almost three-quarters (73 percent) say investing in their employer brand is an important priority over the next six months. This is partly because more than a third (35 percent) admit they feel prospective candidates are put off by current workplace policies.

The importance of employee experience is rising up the agenda and has been singled out as one of Marketing Week's trends for 2022. Not only in response to the 'great resignation' and people seeking a better work/life balance but as businesses realise employee experience is linked to brand performance.

The 2022 Agenda: CMOs have the opportunity to drive employee experience

"Companies will need to focus on building an employee experience that puts flexibility and professional development front and centre, and CMOs will need to demonstrate they are finding ways to help employees

nurture their creativity and continually develop their skill sets in a hybrid working reality," says Tom Pepper, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions EMEA, and LATAM senior director.

The fastest-growing skills

As Marketing Week has reported previously, digital skills are becoming increasingly sought after as companies look to respond to shifting consumer behaviour brought about by the pandemic.

According to the social media platform, the fastest growing marketing job titles in the UK over the past year are growth manager, growth specialist, head of growth, social media assistant, and product marketing manager. This is followed by chief marketing officer, marketing lead, insights director, social media marketing manager, and community manager.

Companies will need to focus on building an employee experience that puts flexibility and professional development front and centre.

Tom Pepper, LinkedIn

Meanwhile, the 10 fastest growing marketing skills in the UK are sales and marketing, ad serving, creativity, presentation skills, Instagram, analytical skills, content marketing, web content writing, video editing, and finance.

The need for upskilling and training is therefore growing in importance as brands look to retain and attract the best talent.

Specsavers marketing and ecommerce director Chris Carter told Marketing Week last month that teams will need to focus on developing technical skills around data, analytics and digital performance marketing next year.

Unilever has been on a major upskilling drive this year to ensure its marketers are up to date on digital. While General Motors has just embarked on a global upskilling programme for its marketers. The company has identified 22 key skillsets touching on areas such as innovation, personalisation and modern martech, it believes marketers need to thrive.

Source: MarketingWeek.

Five priorities for Africa in 2022

Africa's rapid economic and social change will give the continent a bigger role in world global affairs and the global economy.

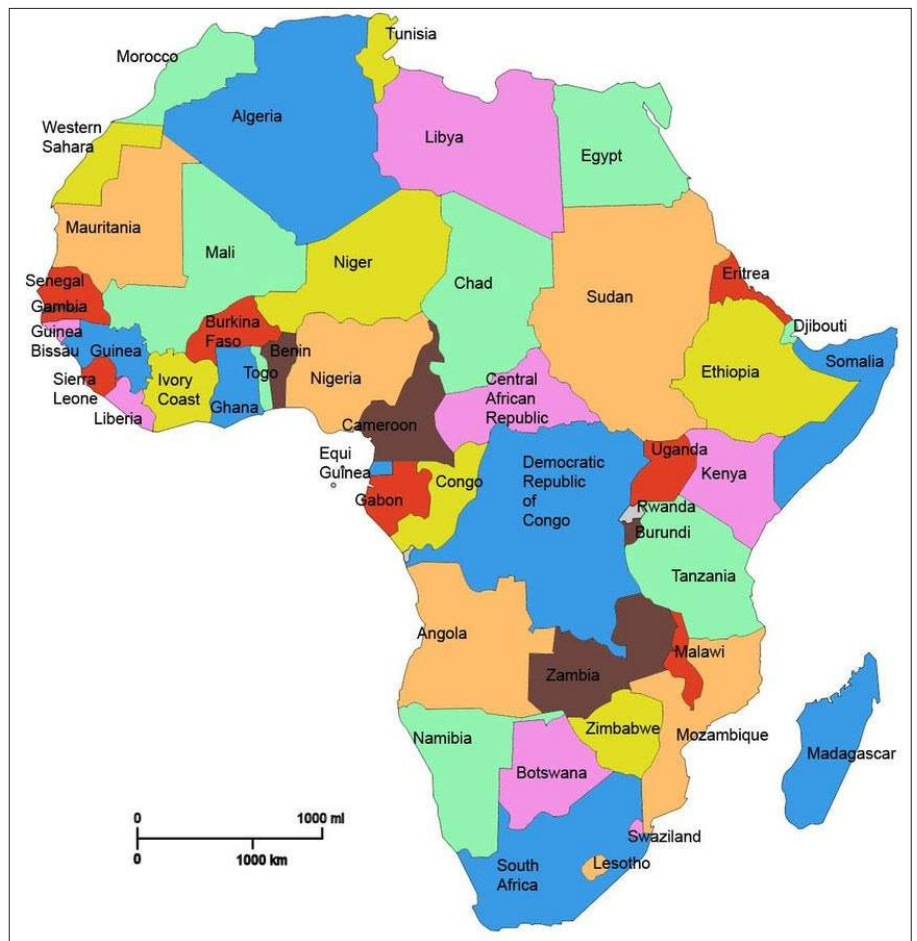
Since the onset of the pandemic, 30 million Africans have fallen into extreme poverty. In the years ahead, Africa and global stakeholders must restore trust and solidarity to tackle these challenges. A failure to do so would result in a divergence in the global economic recovery, partly reflecting inequitable access to vaccines and financing.

The start of a new year is often a time to reflect and reassess. As the pandemic stretches into its third year, apprehension over the health crisis and the associated economic uncertainties is proving hard to shake. The following are envisaged to be the priority areas for the African continent this year.

1. Meeting the challenge of vaccine equity

THE COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical importance of international solidarity and support. In particular, the threat of new variants highlights the need for a global response, with a particular focus on the unvaccinated people of Africa. To date, Africa has fully vaccinated 77 million people, just 6% of its population. In comparison, over 70% of high-income countries have already vaccinated more than 40% of their people. The low levels of vaccination increase the risk that new variants could emerge as the virus continues to circulate.

Repeated waves would worsen the financing crises in many African countries. The IMF estimated a funding gap of between \$130bn and \$410bn for 2020-23 (equivalent to 8%-25% of regional GDP).



Business continuity, investment, and revenue-generation prospects will likely be impaired by successive waves of infection and accompanying containment measures — threatening past gains in poverty reduction, improved health outcomes, and food security.

Importantly, the region is moving quickly to build up its capacity to manufacture and distribute vaccines. Recently, BioNTech struck an agreement with Rwanda and Senegal to initiate

the construction of the mRNA vaccine manufacturing facility in mid-2022, with an initial capacity of 50 million COVID-19 vaccine doses per year.

In the year ahead, it will be critical that policymakers develop plans to ensure the equitable allocation of limited doses until there is sufficient global supply. Indeed, the pandemic is likely to persist until there is genuine global cooperation on vaccine supply and access.

2. Preparing for Africa's growing global role

Looking beyond the pandemic, the region's potential remains undiminished. Demographics, in particular, will fuel the continent's rise in a world of shrinking working-age populations. Over the next three decades, the global population is set to grow by about 2 billion people, with half of that increase in sub-Saharan. (Today there are almost two Africans for every European.)

Africa's rapid economic and social change will give the continent a bigger role in world global affairs and the global economy. More specifically, sub-Saharan Africa's population is growing at 2.7% a year, and GDP needs to grow at least as fast. The good news is that the region's economy is expected to grow by 3.8% in 2022; more than twice as fast as South Asia (1.2%) and Latin America (0.9%).

In this context, and contrast to many other regions, sub-Saharan Africa's working-age population is growing faster than any other age group, providing a valuable opportunity for accelerated growth. However, capitalizing on this potential will require bold transformative reforms. Africa, more than many other regions, desperately needs to provide the education and skills training necessary for the jobs of the future. In addition to a skilled workforce, sustained growth will require that new job entrants are matched with new job opportunities.

Africa's progress will be shaped by a fast-growing middle class with rising spending power; and the growing integration of Africa's markets.

3. Harnessing opportunities afforded by Africa Continental Free Trade Area

At a time when the continent's economies have been hard hit by the pandemic, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) holds economic promise. Africa has recently become home to the largest free trade area in the world, both by area and by the number of countries. The AfCFTA comprises 55 countries with a population of 1.3 billion and combined GDP of about \$3.4 trillion.

The pandemic has accelerated the need to implement the terms of the AfCFTA and thereby boost intra-African trade. Intra-regional trade accounts for 7 percent of

Africa's exports compared to 59 percent in Asia and 69 percent in Europe. Emerging from the region's first recession in 25 years, free trade provides a much-needed stimulus. It is not just the movement of people and goods across borders that will stimulate recovery, but also the integration of services, intellectual properties, and competition policies.

However, there is still much more to do as major components of the agreement still must be negotiated, between many countries and regional economic communities. Moreover, according to the IMF, removing non-tariff barriers could be up to four times more effective in boosting trade than tariff reductions. Accordingly, the Forum is supporting trade facilitation projects — in Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia — from simplifying import and export documents and procedures; to designing and introducing a new framework for licensing customs clearing agents.

Finally, the pandemic has underpinned the need to expand and deepen regional value chains. In this context, the AfCFTA has the potential to not only reduce the region's exposure to global disruptions but boost local manufacturing and productivity. This will be key as the region endeavours to develop a regional manufacturing network to support access to vaccines manufactured in Africa.

4. Accelerating Africa's digital transformation

The digital transformation of African goods and services markets and supply chains will continue to accelerate in 2022; however, infrastructure investment, education, and training will be crucial to fully leverage the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Notably, venture capital funding for African startups amounted to almost \$5 billion in 2021, more than double the previous all-time high in 2019 when 234 tech companies raised \$2.02 billion.

Entrepreneurs and SMEs are fundamental to innovation, economic growth, and job creation in Africa. SMEs, which account for an estimated 80 percent of jobs across the continent, are the backbone of the African economy. However, a renewed focus on innovation and digitalization is required for these companies to increase their

competitiveness and compete in the global economy. While digital transformation offers SMEs opportunities to innovate and grow, significant barriers remain to prevent the realization of these opportunities.

In particular, for these businesses to grow, create more jobs, and generate economic growth, they need access to capital. At the upcoming World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, members of the Regional Action Group for Africa will publish a report that explores Incentives to Increase Investment and Adoption of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Africa — with a focus on the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

5. Financing Africa's green transition

Africa contributes the least of any continent to global warming but is the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The impact of climate change in Africa goes beyond food insecurity; it impacts the spread of infectious diseases, biodiversity extinction, and direct loss of human lives.

Climate finance is certain be the top priority, for African countries, at the upcoming 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to the UNFCCC taking place in Egypt, in November 2022. COP 27 will likely highlight the severe climate impacts facing the continent with a view of delivering more support for climate adaptation and mitigation.

In 2009, the world's wealthier nations pledged to mobilize \$100 billion a year by 2020 but ended up providing \$20 billion less. Adaptation costs for African countries, for the period between 2020 and 2030 are estimated to be between \$259 to \$407 billion; and mitigation costs for the same period were estimated to be \$715 billion. To be sure, mobilizing external financing from both public and private sector sources will be a top priority for most African nations.

Since the onset of the pandemic 30 million Africans have fallen into extreme poverty. In the year ahead Africa and global stakeholders must restore trust and solidarity to tackle these challenges. A failure to do so would result in a divergence in the global economic recovery, partly reflecting inequitable access to vaccines and financing.

Source: World Economic Forum.

AirPower Limited; Set to Disrupt Multi-Billion Naira Nigerian Airports OOH Advertising

With the Commissioning of the ultra-modern Terminal -1 of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport Lagos scheduled for March 17, 2022

By **Felicia Nwosu** and **Zion Rufus**



AirPower Limited, a place-based Outdoor advertising and digital interactive media company, currently aggregates Advertising services in 14 out of the 22 airports in Nigeria.

They see the Airports as an ecosystem and their proposition is to provide discerning Buyers of Media and advertisers a smart way to navigate and efficiently unlock the huge potentials available at our airports to leverage their brands through advertising and by extension, contribute to the success of Nigeria's destination branding efforts.

Airports are monumental destinations with unique features that offer a wonderful combination of emotions and story for people as they journey through. In addition to the foregoing, it is also a marketing haven because it offers robust consumer data and Air Power Limited offers 500+ inventory, in a variety of formats (Digital, Static and Branding of special positions) at 18 airports that reaches over 13 million captive audience annually).

Due to recent developments, internal security issues and Covid-19, domestic air travels is growing astronomically, this increase in traffic along with the protocol now put in place for screening passengers for compliance, Passengers now spend longer time at the Airports all of which contributes to longer dwell time for the brands/Advertisers, with the potential to increase brands/campaign deliverables for adverts at the Airport.

In a recent interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, Felix Ehikhuemen, the Managing Director of AirPower Limited, shed some light on the aspiration of the company and how it plans to leverage technology more in a rapidly evolving digital age



Felix Ehikhuemen, Managing Director of AirPower Limited

via-a-viz, programmatic placement, 3-D animation and extension of Digital OOH to mobile advert network to serve advert through triggers.

According to him, AirPower Limited is accelerating discussion with her strategic partners to use the ultra-modern Murtala Muhammed International Airport Terminal -1 which is scheduled for commissioning on March 17, 2022 to show-case her capacity in digital interactivity.

One programme that has already been delivered as per our plans to democratize DOOH and also to burst the myth that Airport Advertising is pricy and exclusive only to big budget brands is the deployment of smaller digital screen, across the travel path, from the entrance of the terminal -through check-in

counters -boarding gates and immigration screening, right to the exit to the concourse” so that smaller brands can also leverage the Airport Advertising in a way that optimizes spend because of the ability to select/choose the locations which connects with the psychology of their target per time and/or where they consider fitting to tell their stories

The pragmatic and dynamic marketer recalled the road that company has had to travel since 1 May, 2017 after the former concessionaires of the Airports Advertising franchise ended till date. Starting off first, on a temporary appointment before the successful completion of the bids and awards that normalized the operations and the collaborations with like-minded concessionaires to be able to disrupt this premium space.

Through these multi-level collaborations, AirPower is able to offer Indoor Advertising at 3 Lagos Airports (2 Terminals of International and 1 Domestic terminal), Ibadan, Akure, Ilorin, Benin and Anambra International Airports; and Outdoor Advertising at Enugu, Owerri, Port-Harcourt, Calabar, Anambra International and Abuja Airports. Thus having the ability to deploy in 18 Airports which represent the most

premium destination for Air Travels and thereby ably to aggregate and offer nearly 70% of Airport Advertising Inventories in Nigeria.

According to him, the other companies that won the bid to serve advertising at Airports are New Crystal Communications Limited, MkpokoIkenga Limited, Loatsad Promomedia Ltd, Prodigy Advertising and Maxi Media.

Explaining further, Mr. Ehikhuemen said: “We have deliberately kept out of the media to enable us focus on what’s at hand, developing the inventories and use of technology to market them, but it has become necessary to speak more openly now because the advertising community can help us improve and finalize the viability of these platforms especially the “Search and book” interface of website and the use of “AP” app to buy advertising at our Airports.

Please, go to www.airpowerltd.co.ng and look for the “AirPower” app. available on both android play store and IOS, we will be delighted to get your feedback.

To navigate the App, you can either search 1) by Airport specifics, if you are already familiar or know which Airport you wish/plan to advertise in or 2) you can search using media options which allow



Dozie Mbanefo, CEO, New Crystal Communications

us filter using the following 4 options independently or in combination across all our Airports.

- Type of adverts: Indoor, Outdoor
- Format; Digital, Static, Branding
- Type of Traffic: Inbound, Outbound
- Locations
- Check-in counter, boarding gate,



LAGOS DOMESTIC TERMINAL 2 PLATFORM: OUTDOOR-DIGITAL-LED



LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL 2 PLATFORM: INDOOR-DIGITAL-LED,



LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL 1 PLATFORM: INDOOR-BRANDING-GLASS & TRAVELLATORS



PORT-HARCOURT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PLATFORM: OUTDOOR-DIGITAL-LED

food court, Baggage Forecourt etc.

Claims, Terminal

“The problem we set out to solve is for buyers of media and brands/Advertisers to be able to implement their strategy across Airports and see the Airport in a wholesome manner and to make informed decisions about a group with a clear set of behavior. We have done this by creating a one stop shop “HUB” for Airport Advertising as a way to overcome the challenge that may arise with the fragmentation of the franchise and dealing with multiple vendors thereof.

“Potentially, this HUB has capacity for expansion into other areas of our interest as a place-based operation, including for Malls, Rail Advertising, Stadia and Sporting Arena among others.”

The agency boss hinted that ahead of the commissioning ceremony of the newly built terminal/wing of Murtala Muhammed International Airport Lagos on the 17th of March, by His Excellency President Mohammed Buhari GOC, “There will be another event to unveil the Advertising Opportunities using 3-D simulations at an earlier date where buyers of media, Brands, Advertisers and the industry people will interact in a relaxed environment. Please watch out for that date.”

About Felix Ehikhuemen

Felix Ehikhuemen is the Managing Director of AirPower Limited, a place-based Outdoor advertising and digital interactive media company, a platform that currently aggregates the advertising services franchise in 18 out of the 22 airports in Nigeria.

Felix has competences in Operation & Project management, business development, media asset management & investment advisory, with extensive experience across outdoor advertising operation and value chain of viz-a-viz, media ownership, Media planning and brokerage and Regulatory and revenue setting of OMC including management of bids & assets acquisition.

Early on in his career, he held senior positions in Marketing and Media, Capital Media – OOH, Outdoor Monitoring & Control Service (OMCS) and Landmarks OHMS Limited, and has worked with Government and Non-Governmental agencies, including multinationals, large corporates, SMEs in management of their brands.

Felix is a member of the 2019-2021 Executive Council of the OAN and served as Chairman of Project and Monitoring Committee, Edo and Delta Region

Felix holds a B.Eng. in Production Engineering Class of 92, P.G.D of Media and Communication from Pan Atlantic University and is an alumnus of Lagos Business School and has certificate in Leadership from Cranfield University in United Kingdom.

He has a career spanning two (2) decades in advertising and is a registered practitioner of advertising (rpa) of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON).



LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL 1 PLATFORM: INDOOR-DIGITAL-LCD



LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL 1 PLATFORM: INDOOR-DIGITAL-LED



NNAMDI AZIKIWE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ABUJA PLATFORM: OUTDOOR-DIGITAL-LED



AKANI IBIYAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ENUGU PLATFORM, MOUNTDOOR - STATIC -WALLMOUNT



LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL 2 PLATFORM: INDOOR-BRANDING-CAROUSELS & PILLARS

How Multichoice deepenes relationship, showcases talents in new commercial

The 2021 yuletide period again provided opportunity for Pay TV giant -Multichoice- to extend its frontiers in the market place. If you are in doubt, check DStv's latest television commercial, where the company promotes love and good relationship.

To a larger degree, the brand has over the years in the Nigerian market demonstrated that its success in the market is not enough to encourage complacency. While competitions struggle daily to catch up with the brand, its promoters are not only winning with product offering, they are also winning with advertising as they are always fast to register DStv on the conscious mind.

In the just unveiled television commercial which was purposely used to announce the DStv's end of year promotional offer, the TVC was brilliantly explored to address the conflict between Pere also known as the General and Maria, both housemates in the just concluded Big Brother season 6 Shine Your Eyes.

Through a well scripted story line and a convivial scene, the TVC shows General and a friend as they deliberate on what gift to offer Maria to impress her. First, they thought of an Ultimate adventure but it wasn't appealing, then drama and music but none could solve the problem as Maria remains unconcerned. At the end, they settled for the big one –the DStv Premium Gift, which combines all shades of entertainment. Immediately Maria sighted it, she jumped at it with admiration and it instantly performed the magic and won her over.

Looking back, one can easily conclude that DStv is a gift that never stops giving. For decades now DStv Nigeria has been in the frontline of plumbing the depth of Nigeria's entertainment space. Amongst all the amazing local production they put their heavy financial muscle behind is the wildly popular Big Brother Naija reality TV show. For weeks on end the show keeps Nigerians entertained. It also serves as an incubator for harnessing the talents of young Nigerians who always leave the show as big stars.

Last year, during the gradual ease of the lockdown orders imposed by both the Federal and state governments to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease Multichoice applied what many described as a balm to the economic injuries through 'We've Got You campaign'

The 'We've Got You campaign,' according to the company, was its way of showing appreciation to its loyal DStv and GOTv customers for their support and patronage during these challenging times. The campaign, which ran from 20 April to 30 June, 2020 offered active and disconnected DStv and GOTv customers the opportunity to enjoy discounts and get upgraded to the next viewing package when they pay the fee of their current package. Through it, all active and disconnected DStv customers on Compact Plus, Compact, Confam, Family, Yanga and Access packages got discounts of up to 44 per cent.

The beauty of this TVC is the brilliant exploration of the conflict between the two former housemates, using it as a story bed to lay

DStv's end of year promotional offer.

The beauty of it all is the backward integration of building the stars on their own platform, empowering them economically as they are besotted by other brands by way of endorsements. In a way, this shows deep faith and commitment in the stars the platform created by including them in their own advertising.

This TVC is heart-warming and sprays the joy of the season in the atmosphere. It was developed by DStv's creative partner X3M Ideas, the agency with offices in several African countries. X3M Ideas emerged as the creative agency of the year at LAIF Awards 2021.

BBNaija is popular for its heavy dose of escapism. Every day, Nigerians are faced with multidimensional challenges that put a strain on the mind. Watching these people's true nature revealed during the course of the show builds a strong connection that's evident in the fandom displayed on social media. As a result, Big Brother Naija turns out to be a rollercoaster for fans, viewers, and generally every Nigerian who nurses interest in pop culture.

When one considers it from this perspective, the hit TV show is defined by its economic value. In fact, the entire show is profitable for everyone involved in the creation, marketing, and advertisement. The participants are almost always in a better financial position after they leave the house. Sponsors get their value in advertising and PR. Everyone involved in the show ends up a winner one way or the other.

Many brand enthusiasts and critics have commended the creative and consistent approach MultiChoice Nigeria has adopted

in leveraging the reality show platform to promote made-in-Nigeria goods and services.

However, three strategic areas of importance are the overall influence, media value for sponsors, and its popularity with young people.

The media value of sponsoring BBNaija according to experts surveyed is in billions of Naira, somewhere around N10 billion. The eyeballs, conversations and general awareness generated by the show make it a viable option for brands looking to get the word out about their business.

This much is seen in the robust mentions enjoyed by previous sponsors of the show. The top-of-mind-awareness, share of mind and share of voice BBNaija offers partners makes it a top choice for many smart brands. Little wonder, the show always never fails to attract top Nigerian brands as sponsors every season.

As a one-stop-shop marketing communications company that's 100% built on ideas, X3M Ideas has not only become a leading agency in the continent, it has continued to clinch laurels within and outside Nigeria. Last year, the trailblazing Nigerian agency won bronze at Lisbon Advertising Festival for its International Women's Day press campaign Make History Equal For Women.

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Amber's brand journey in Nigeria's energy drinks market



In marketing and brand building, developing a growth strategy is important. However, systematically executing on that strategy is even more important because without action, a strategy will always remain a strategy.

All existing successful brands in the market space have growth trajectories. But like in a sprint or a marathon, some new entrants sometimes come from nowhere to overtake and capture market share, while showing no signs of slowing down in their quest for more. And this is the story of Amber energy drink in the Nigerian market.

One and a half years ago, Amber, a premium energy drink from the stable of Amber Nigeria Limited, landed like an eagle in Nigeria's competitive energy drinks market at the height of Covid-19 pandemic. Defying all odds, Amber daringly opened up the frontier by launching into the market in digital style and grandeur, while many brands were nowhere to be found, perhaps in hiding, waiting and watching the market to open or unravel. Amber brazenly stole the show and dared the sharks and lions in Nigeria's energy drinks market, seizing significant shares from their grips. Today, the mustard seed planted amidst the pandemic crisis has grown in equity and relevance.

Amber's audacious entry was not without promises and essence. The premium energy drink has been fulfilling its promises and proving its essence as it continues to stimulate the unbounded energy in Nigerian consumers. As an iconic brand, Amber has continued to gain market traction and to set an agenda while others follow. In fact, the wonder energy drink brand remains an enigma and indeed a brand to watch in its exciting growth trajectory and market penetration.

Packaged in an elegant can, endearing green, red and black colours, accompanied with a refreshing taste and healthy energy boosting ingredients, the brand Amber is in a class of its own. It is manufactured with distinctive features and unique qualities that have distinguished it from the packs in the hotly competitive Nigerian energy market.

Having kicked off with the pay-off line, "Stimulate the Energy in You", an indication that the brand is strategically positioned to understand the hustle and bustle associated with Lagos and Lagosians, the city and the people that never sleep. Above all, Amber knows Nigerians to be hustlers and workaholics, which is why it is not leaving any stone unturned, as a top-of-the-mind brand, by engaging with positive life-changing corporate social responsibility activities.

As soon Amber's presence began to be felt across in the market, the energy drink brand began to show care and concern for its teeming consumers. It started connecting with the consumers by activating the market long abandoned due to the pandemic and its attendant lockdown. After activating the market, Amber went on a charity and CSR by innovating Free BRT Bus Ride for millions of Lagosians and commuters just emerging from the pains and pangs of the pandemic.

Amber did not stop at that, it launched an empowerment programme aimed at improving the standards of living of several thousands of Nigerian citizens in becoming self-employed and financially independent. As it stands, Amber has succeeded in creating a huge number of entrepreneurs popularly called Amber-sadors who now own their own in the Nigerian enterprises sector.

Despite the fact that the premium energy drink was launched into the Nigerian market during the most challenging period, the planets seemed to have been in perfect alignment for it, as Amber can be proven to have become the Fountain of Youth in contemporary Nigeria's energy drinks market segment.

Suffice it to say that what stands Amber out is boldness, courage, innovation and the can-do spirit of an average Nigerian. And the brand's reason for being can be brilliantly summed up as enriching Nigerians while relieving them of the hustles and bustles of everyday life.





OUR TRAIL BLAZING STRIDES AT GLOBAL CREATIVE AWARDS – Noah's Ark boss

Noah's Ark Communications' corporate entry into the Nigerian Creative Advertising landscape in 2008, did not only mark a turning point for the industry, it introduced a new benchmark below which the industry could no longer go; and a pedestal from which the industry has continued to soar! Significantly, the agency, right from inception, has espoused the patriotic vision to place Nigeria on the map of the world of creativity. Significantly, the agency has steadily stayed on this course; consistently pursued this vision and has recorded a number of continental and global wins, all of which attest very loudly to its commitment. The exciting and exemplary performance of Noah's Ark Communications, at the recently concluded Loeries Creative Week 2021 is only the latest colourful feather added to its corporate cap. History has already recorded that the agency emerged as the only creative agency in the entire West African sub-region to win in any category at the said Loeries award event. Interestingly, Noah's Ark remains unrelenting; it is future-focused and globally minded on creativity. This much is underscored by the Chief Executive Officer/Chief Creative Officer of the agency, Mr. Lanre Adisa, in this exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE's AMOS OLADELE, OGECHI ODIGBO, ZION RUFUS and OGHAE MAFURU

Congratulations on your recent win at the 2021 Loeries awards; can you tell us how you feel about this iconic feat?

There's not so much to be talked about apart from the fact that at every point in time you want to strive to be at your best, and you never can tell what the jury would decide; it's one thing to enter, it's another thing for the jury to find you worthy of being rewarded.

The CEO of Loeries this year said that whoever gets to be on the shortlist, for starters, is a great accomplishment. Then when you are able to pick any metal for that matter, then that is something really great, and it's not just about Africa, it's also about the Middle East; so, for that reason it is something one is really pleasantly grateful for. Remember that you can't determine exactly what will be rewarded, that's the reality of our work.

Interestingly, your agency has been a recipient of awards within and outside of the country; what would you say is the impact of this recognition on the Nigerian

advertising industry?

I think it's great for our industry. If there is anything that has actually been differentiating our current generation of practitioners from those before us, it's the fact that we have been more visible on the global stage unlike before now. As a matter of fact, I remember the cry then used to be about Nigeria is not here, Nigeria is not there, and I think Cannes is always the hub and everybody wants to win a Cannes Lion. But then, it's not about winning a Cannes Lion alone, it's about being recognized internationally and what you have achieved in the past decade and some more.

It's also not just about Noah's Ark; you could see that a few other new generation agencies and some of the old ones are also picking up stuff. So, it is good for us because all those things add up in terms of how people rank you.

For them (international community) to know that anything is happening in Nigeria, it needs to be seen that in those places where creative excellence matters we are being represented and I think that's the beauty of winning this, not just for you as an agency but for the industry.



I don't think it is too much of an issue; I think in terms of our vision, we never saw it as being limited to Nigeria, when you do that you limit yourself. Yes, our market is Nigeria, our market is Africa, and the vision from the beginning for us has always been that look, we want to be in the league of the most successful brand builders out of Africa and that means that at any point in time we want to be in reckoning. It doesn't mean that I want to be number one; nobody can be number one forever.

Talking about representation of Nigeria's creative in the international space; we would like to know what birthed the vision to start Noah's Ark Communications.

I always tell people that I am an accidental entrepreneur; it was not something I spent all my life hoping for that I would one day set up an agency; but I thought that our industry needed some competition and I was ready to risk everything to be part of that competition, so to say.

I recognize and I respect the generations before us and the great achievements of the likes of Dr. Biodun Shobanjo, Chief Akin Odunsi, Sir Steve Omojafor and the likes of them and, of course, those who came after that, the Prima Garnets of this world, the SO&Us of this world. But I thought that for my generation, I mean those of us who started in the late 80's and early 90's, there wasn't any particular agency that was representing that generation that I could look up to and say wow I love what they were doing.

Then, the thing about clocking 40; I was going to be 40 that year and I thought, what next; what would be the legacy that one would leave behind? So here we are over 10 years after that, and I think the insight that led to that thinking is being justified by what has happened in the past 13 years of Noah's Ark.

Noah's Ark is a shiny example of think global, act local; how convenient or challenging or both has this been?

I don't think it is too much of an issue; I think in terms of our vision, we never saw it as being limited to Nigeria, when you do that, you limit yourself. Yes, our market is Nigeria, our market is Africa, and the vision from the beginning for us has always been that look, we want to be in the league of the most successful brand builders out of Africa and that means that at any point in time we

want to be in reckoning. It doesn't mean that I want to be number one; nobody can be number one forever. Look at any football league anywhere in the world, no one team can be on top of that league every year, it's not possible. But you will always know who are the top contenders and that is where we want to be such that when it comes to the best of brand building, you know marketing communications in whatever ramification it is, we want to be in contention at all times, especially out of Africa because that's very important for us. Africa needs to add its voice to that global conversation, and by Africa, I mean not just South Africa, because over time it has always been about South Africa, which is ok. But there are other parts of Africa, especially West Africa because every other part of Africa seems to be relatively well represented. In East Africa you have Kenya coming up and of course in North Africa, you have Egypt and Tunisia. And so West Africa is the one that doesn't get that kind of recognition; and I always thought we could do that and, with all sense of modesty, I think that is being accomplished every passing year.

Talking about campaigns; we would like you to talk a bit about the campaigns that won Noah's Ark continental and global awards and recognition over the years?

Well, there are quite a number. I'll probably just highlight one or two of them. I remember we did some proactive work for a client of ours, Hypo, which won us our first Loeries Silver; the one about "Oscar So White"; that year, we thought there was an opportunity. You know, here's this bleach brand and the last thing you would think about when it comes to bleach is anything that could really trend; and everybody was all about you know what Oscar this year is all about - white nominees, no other color so to say and we love our whites so we thought, we could really jump on that as a trend; and we came up with the Oscar ... bleached white; and that went really viral.

We got a journalist from New York interviewing our ECD on that particular campaign. There is a particular gallery in New York that collects posters from around the world and they actually demanded for a copy of that material. Somebody was writing a book as well and asked for permission to use it and, of course, it won us the Loeries. So, it's a kind of thing that we love to do and that was really good.

Another one I would like to talk about is the Airtel commercial. The first one won us a Gold EPICA award; that was the Lost commercial, the one with Gabriel Afolayan, we won a gold for that. We also won Agency of the Year for the African continent at the Cristal Awards for Airtel Amin with Mama Rainbow, and, honestly, that was really wonderful and to think that it was done in Yoruba language and yet it was well appreciated by the jury in Marrakesh, Morocco that particular year. We got Agency of the Year Award for it.

Is there any of the awards that came to you as a surprise?

Everything comes as a surprise! Like I said, you never can tell what a jury would like; a particular jury can look at a work and say brilliant, another jury might look at it and say we don't know what they are trying to say; or we don't feel it's delivering anything. You probably would have high expectations on some pieces of work but you leave it to the judgment of the jury at the end of the day.

Is there any one of them that actually gives you this special feeling of joy?

It's like asking a parent about a particular child that he loves the most. It will be difficult for me to do that. Every piece of work is very important to us.

Look at it this way, the one that we won for this year at the Loeries will not be a very famous brand in that sense because it is an NGO,



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the way the world is today communication-wise, digital is on the rise and so the access to creating stuff is easier and you know there’s user generated content which, if you are not careful, would beat whatever you were doing. You also have the influencers and all sorts of people; almost anyone can create content such that for you to actually say that you are an advertising agency in one form or the other you really have to beat all those factors around you. You have to justify why you are who they call you to be. That is where we are; and I think we will see more of that dynamism going forward.

but the issue is so big, and for me that means a whole lot. So, it’s not all about the usual suspects, the win with the big account like Airtel, everything matters; every award matters.

The Nigerian creative industry witnessed an impressive level of global recognition in 2021; what will you attribute to this laudable development?

I think it’s encouraging. I think it’s only telling us that in terms of the state of our game, that we are seeing beyond what we have always done in the past, which is also that the competition is here and we are raising the game and that means the standards are getting better and that is why we can be recognized globally that we are doing some good work.

You know that some of the time we tend to belittle ourselves that not much is happening; but it only says that yes, we may not have arrived there in terms of where you have in mind but we are on our way there and we need to just stay consistent and faithful to that mission.

Can you assess the creative industry here in Nigeria, comparing Nigeria to other countries?

It’s not about comparison, so we don’t mix things up. I think there is a new movement of sort, a new generation of agencies coming up and that is a good thing really, because that is what tells you that there is a future for the industry. Yes, the old guard will still be relevant and we are still going to see it around for a long time; but it doesn’t really help if you are not growing the industry by having new

people come on board and that is what we want people to see.

If you take a look at the last LAIF Awards, quite a number of young and upcoming agencies were recognized on that night and, for me, that is good for our industry; it signifies growth, otherwise it’s the same and I don’t think that will be good for any industry.

So, the industry is getting better; the practitioners are demanding more from themselves; and you know we live in a global world where information is flowing all over the place and people benchmark themselves against the very best around the world and I think that is the only way we can get better. That is what we are beginning to see and I can only hope that we can sustain that so that we can go into the future and we all can be very proud of our industry.

So, what would you consider to be the factor contributing to the growth of agencies this year?

I would say that it’s because there is some dynamism already being established by the players (old and young) in the industry, and people can see that it’s an open field for you to thrive and be at your best. To me, that exactly is what we need. We need talents that can be fearless to really go places; and that is what we are beginning to see. There is a whole lot more that we can do no doubt about it; but by and large I feel confident.

But again, the way the world is today communication-wise, digital is on the rise and so the access to creating stuff is easier and you know there’s user generated content which, if you are not careful, would beat whatever you were doing. You also have the influencers and all sorts of people; almost anyone can create content such that for you to actually say that you are an advertising agency in one form or the other you really have to beat all those factors around you. You have to justify why you are who they call you to be. That is where we are; and I think we will see more of that dynamism going forward.

No doubt, the country experienced a devastating blow as a result of the global pandemic (COVID-19); how will you describe the global evolution of agencies since that year of the pandemic?

One thing is that I like to look on the bright side, the bright side is that we all

learnt to be very agile; we all learnt to find a better way of working.

For instance, normally at the end of the year we have what we call a Secret Santa, where you pick random names and get a gift for Christmas, usually we do it here, it's always a beehive of activities; people crawling here and there, etc. But since the pandemic we did it from home and I think we did that last year as well, and so we are being innovative. We are finding ways around what we do, and also with work with clients. We are running pitches online, etc. But that's not saying that will always be the case going forward.

I think the world we are in now is the world of hybrid work culture where it's going to be a mix of working from one's office, and working from home or anywhere as the case may be. We are in the creative environment and a whole lot of stuff can happen when we meet and talk one on one, but we have spent a bigger chunk of our time working from home at least I can say that for Noah's Ark this year.

From what the experts are saying, this thing is not a pandemic anymore; it's an endemic and that it's going to be with us for a long time so we have to live with it. So, it is about working towards that reality and adjusting within that reality. It also has something in terms of impact on talent; you know talent these days, when you want to employ them, they ask if they will be working full time or from home. So, things are sometimes a bit unpredictable; so, you also have to think differently as an employer: what kind of environment are you creating? How do you still ensure the team spirit even when people are working from different parts of the city? And it also means that I can actually have somebody work from anywhere in the world with me. I can set up a team that can be scattered all over Nigeria and they can deliver. So, there is something good there as well and when we need to come together, we can find the place and time to come together physically when we need to. There's a whole lot that is going on in that respect.

Even in terms of training, the training opportunities are now more accessible. A lot of prestigious institutions are now doing more online because people can't travel easily for training anymore unlike before. So, in a way it's liberalizing the training environment as well as other opportunities for people because almost everything can be taken online now as it is. All of that, to me, is on the bright side.

Looking on the bright side as you



just rightly mentioned, what are the new innovations that your company is looking forward to exploring in 2022?

Well, we just want to build on what we have done so far since last year. Like I said, we have had to migrate everything virtually to a large degree, so whatever it is that can enhance productivity, that can enhance team work from that point of view because it is not so much just about work, it is also about our social life, because there is also the danger of mental health being affected

by people being secluded for too long. As such, we are taking stock of what we have done in 2021 by saying what can we do in this new year to create a balance between what we have done and what could happen because sometimes also you miss out on some things when things are done solely virtually. For instance, you miss out on the non-verbal communication because actually we do more of non-verbal than verbal communication with people. You know body language and all sorts of things.

Yes, we would like to explore the opportunities of doing more. How do we

achieve more of a hybrid situation and not just concentrate solely on a particular way of working because there is also danger in packing everybody in a space all year round? We have worked virtually for a greater part of the year (2021), we know how to make that work, and we know how to still create magic while doing that. But it's tough I must tell you. We would like to relax that a little bit as we go along hoping that more people will get vaccinated which I think is very important, and will become more important. Once we have that, we will create more of a hybrid situation.

What then are your projections for year 2022 for the creative industry?

For the creative industry I think we will see more dynamism. Looking at the feel in the hall during the last LAIF Awards, people stayed till the end, people felt something was going on, especially because of the new kids on the block, so to say, everybody would have been feeling like if they can do it, I can do it also. Therefore, I expect more of that this year; I expect that impacting positively on the outlook of our industry generally.

One area I'm interested in is content, and there is a whole lot to be gained in that respect for what's going on in the world of content. Nollywood is waxing stronger; Netflix and Amazon are here; so, I see all of that impacting on our industry as well in terms of what we do and it is good for us because if the production industry is getting better it also has a way of positively rubbing off on what we do; and I think also that we might see a lot of agency people pivoting towards that direction because we create content for a living. Our work is short form, 60seconds, 90seconds, but it's like a short film. The question then becomes, what will it take for you to go for long form, you have the required skills, you have all it takes. I see a bit of that convergence and fluidity of anything content is game. And you can see that also from the guys that create content; clients running to some of these influencers even though they may not be experts in communication. At the end of the day, they do more of entertainment and less of selling and quite unfortunately



because we are in a world of short-termism brand building suffers. You get something done now and hope to get good results instantly. But we are the experts that can bring to the table our knowledge of brand building and brand communication. As such, collaboration will be very important going into this (new) year and even years to come. How well are we finding the partners to collaborate with? How do we bring our own skills set to what they know and what they do so that the clients can actually get better value for their investments?

Would you subscribe to the banking industry kind of consolidation in the advertising industry?

I'm not too sure about that. There might be some kind of shift in terms of strength of agencies and all that but the market forces have ways of actually making this

happen. I think that agencies on their own will determine how they want to play, but the kind of consolidation carried out in the banking industry, I don't see that happening in our industry. I think what perhaps might happen is there might be some sectoral policies that may say maybe you need to have some kind of capital or whatever, but nothing as huge and demanding as what you found in the banking industry consolidation. I mean there have been talks and talks about mergers and acquisitions, but I have not seen anything really serious in that respect. But yes, when it becomes a requirement to attract some kinds of business, how capitalized you are, then maybe yes on our own we will determine how we want to do that; but I don't see it being forced on us.

We'd like to know your opinion on the reforms that are currently ongoing in the industry; what would be your opinion?

I think it's something that is long overdue in terms of achieving a balance for our industry. I think the industry has been too much tilted in the favor of a particular player, that's the client, and there can be no mincing words about that.

The clients are good people; I have relationship with clients that go far back more than twenty years or so and we have also seen instances where some things get abused in terms of having too much of a sway in matters affecting different parties, so to say. Therefore, I think what the reform set to do is just for them to create a balance; to say look it's about partnership, I bring something to the table you bring something to the table, it is an exchange of values, we don't need a master-servant relationship; we don't need a situation where somebody is calling the shots and saying by all means this is what I will do and there's nothing you can do about it and if you don't like it I'll go to the next guy and that is a big blow to our industry and we are losing our bargaining power in the process such that if you don't have the means you can't train your people; you can't attract great talents.

What we are simply saying is that there are other industries, other markets where there is a bit more sanity in that regard; you can't just run away with things and

say there is no consequence. That is the intention.

However, it is not to make clients look like bad people or predators. No, it's just to say hey let's look at what is fair. It's about fairness for the client and fairness for the agency, which is the intention.

What then would you expect to see as action points from APCON as the New Year progresses?

I think APCON has done well in terms of starting that process. The next thing will be about how it is well implemented, and a lot of that will depend on how the sectoral bodies help APCON fish out those that are flouting the set rules, going forward.

Talking about the involvement of sectoral groups in helping the enforcement of AISOP, you recently headed the working group behind the inauguration, monitoring and compliance of AAAN to ensure compliance with AISOP, so tell us about the efforts in facilitating strict adherence to the new guidelines.

I think it was one of those things that you do without even knowing where it might take you. You know the idea of a monitoring unit actually came up even before AISOP was promulgated. We just thought that over time people hardly really report infringements and that's not helping our industry; it's the culture of silence and that culture of silence would mean that whatever is done to A would be repeated to B, C and D because everybody is keeping quiet; and while we were still at that AISOP came up and we were like: Brilliant! This is a good thing in terms of how we as a sectoral body can help the cause of AISOP; so that was what led to it. And I can assure you that as we speak, that monitoring unit has set to work in terms of the kind of abuses that we see in our industry, the kind of ill treatment some clients give to agencies which can't be done anywhere else in the world.

If we are saying we want to be a world class industry then we have to play like any other world class industry plays and that has started as we speak.

So, how would you describe Noah's Ark's response to the challenges like inflation, etc, that are confronting

the economy?

The best we can do is what we have always done. We always want to be a partner to our clients so at times like this I always tell people our clients will not stop advertising. In fact, this is the time that they need to. But clients will be selective in terms of who they work with and we want to be positioned as the best possible partner for them because our joy and pride is knowing that we started from point A with this brand, we saw a clear-cut challenge and we were able to work together with that client and moved it from point A to point B and that is when we really feel happy: This is what we are about, and we have seen that trend with clients with some of them even coming to say guys, you know what, you don't have to pitch; we want to work with you guys based on the records that they have seen. That is who we are and that is what we believe is what any really serious and determined client really needs at a time like this.

How then is your agency positioned for the year 2022?

We are open for business. That is what we have always done – attracting the best possible talents around town and challenging ourselves; we don't rest on our oars and say we have been that agency that was celebrated, no. We are forever hungry.

I borrow this from an agency I respect a lot, RGA, which says, we are the 90% and not the 100% agency, because when you are 100% you are ok and contented so you can close your doors and just go home. But for us, we are always hungry, always looking for the next opportunity; we love trouble so whatever your troubles are, you can bring them over.

How is your agency strategizing to further put Nigeria on the map of the creative world?

Nothing has changed. That is what we have always done and we are still doing it, and we will remain consistent in that respect. We will continue to create relatable work that gives our clients an unfair advantage. That is our key reason for being, our way of life. We always say to ourselves, that look we happen to be in Nigeria, but we could equally be anywhere in the world. In all of this, we are guided by the audience that we have to deal with. Our motto readily comes to mind here: We go wherever the idea takes us. And that is who we are.

Heineken does things that other brands can't copy

– Sampson Oloche

Heineken is indisputably the world's leading premium lager beer. In its almost 150 years and with indelible footprints across 192 countries, the brand has tenaciously sustained an uncompromised drive for quality and perfection. With its unique green bottle, red star and the smiling "e" which represents excellence, Heineken, the world's most valuable international premium lager brand is available and recognized in almost every country on earth. The brand has consistently maintained its international stature and credentials in Nigeria, Africa's largest market, as it has relentlessly led in the premium lager segment. Heineken deservedly emerged winner in the Premium Lager Brand category at the recently held MARKETING EDGE Brands and Advertising Awards of Excellence; and the entire industry gave a deafening applause to the champion brand which, for many years has not only been the proud sponsor of the UEFA Champions League; but which has brought the Champions League trophy to Nigeria, live and direct!

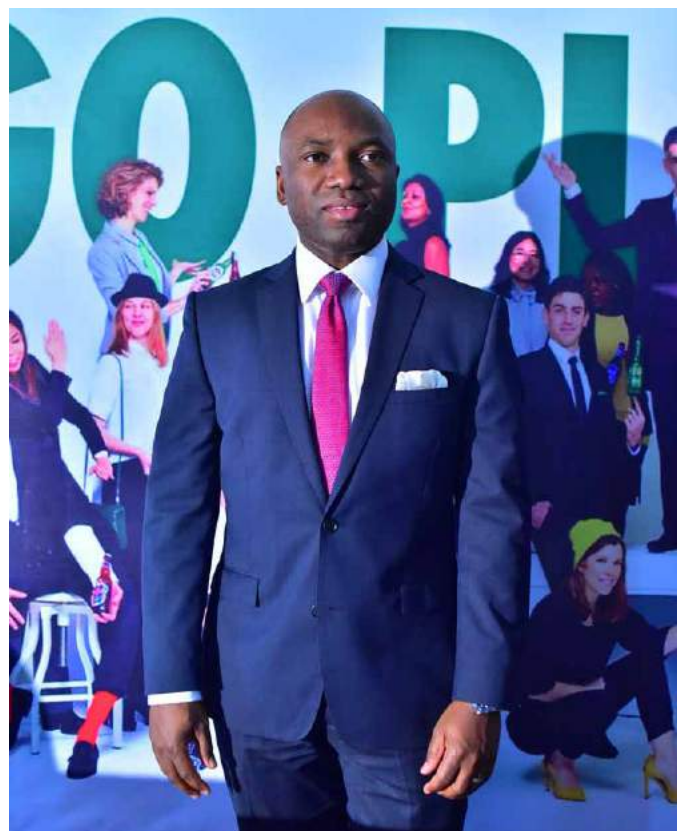
In an exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE's ANIETIE UDOH, FELICIA NWOSU and OGHALE MAFURU, SAMPSON OLOCHE, Nigerian Breweries Plc's Head - Premium, Sessionable, 0.0 Portfolio speaks about the brands and its primus inter pares brand equity and towering stature in the Nigerian market. Excerpts:

Every single branding and marketing step your team takes seems to be in the evolution of the Heineken brand identity. What has the market response to Heineken's 33cl sleek can been like?

It is not a regular pack type for beer in Nigeria because if you have noticed, energy drinks are known for sleek cans most times; and then recently soft drinks. As such, it is not what we will call the regular pack type for beer; and so going into it, we were very skeptical. But then, I think what we call a winning design led to something I will call a winning proposition.

The response for it has been very positive. It is now contributing a significant portion of the Heineken volume already. I will be honest to say that we were pleasantly surprised that it worked out the way it is working out currently and it has been such a big discovery for us; and we intend to keep it that way.

Basically speaking, in Nigeria, beer consumers like large volume hence the 33cl; you will think it's small but not for a premium brand like Heineken. The design of the can and the look of it the consumers have accepted and will want to be seen with it. It has been a prominent feature at parties and events; and so it has been great.





Heineken has transformed over the years into a global icon that is sold in more than 192 countries. How has the brand maintained its hallmark for quality in the Nigerian lager beer market?

Basically, I think Heineken sets itself a very high standard and so it starts right from the product level. The ingredients for beer, we use the highest quality ingredients across board and the process is very standardized. It is set up from the centre. So, it is controlled centrally from Amsterdam. The quality standard is really very high.

For a brewery to qualify to brew Heineken anywhere in the world, it has to go through a very rigorous process. We have eight breweries in Nigeria and Heineken is produced not in everyone. That is just to give you an example. That means that the quality expected to produce Heineken is high. That is what has been set up as a standard globally. Every brew of Heineken has to be approved in Amsterdam before it goes out to the market. There are lots of quality checks and that's why even if the demand for Heineken is very high, we cannot produce it too much. We can't rush the process. It has to go through a certain number of days; the ingredients have to be of certain quality and the brewery that produces it has to be of a certain quality and also the brewers have to be master brewers. So, it is the highest level beer you can make; that's what Heineken is. If that standard is set globally and the market complies with it, then the result is what you're seeing. You can hardly have Heineken having any quality complaint anywhere all over the world. That has been the major success factor. It is the first child of the company and it is treated as such.

One of the major features on the Heineken's sleek can is the UEFA Champions League trophy. Is that part of your partnership deals or is it meant to appeal to your sports fans alone?

The trophy was used last year and I think we plan to bring it back again. We have been sponsoring the Champions League for many years and I think it is just to bring that association to the consumers at first hand level. That is why we put the branding on it. It is not a permanent fixture; so we put it there for a month at the peak of a Champions League season; and they will take it out again. So, basically it is a way of driving our association with the platform because, of course, if you know Nigeria very well, football, generally speaking, is one of the biggest passion points for our consumers and the Champions League is the highest level of football that we can have on an annual basis.

Of course, you have the World Cup that comes once in four years. But on the yearly basis, this is the highest level of football and it has delivered a lot for the Heineken brand and we are proud to be associated with the platform. In the advert you see on outdoor, on billboards, TV, digital, radio, this is also a way of driving that partnership. It is a way of driving the association with the Champions League.

Would you say the sleek can is achieving its set goal which is to create new associations with football and new drinking occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic?

Yes, it is exceeding all expectations. If you noticed, the regular Heineken is in a 60cl bottle. It is drunk mostly on premise and so here you have a pack type that people can buy and travel with; take to the beach; have parties without bothering about deposits; and with the increase in food consumption due to COVID and people staying more at home, the pack type just came at the right point in time.

So, I will not say it is meeting its objectives; rather, I will say it is exceeding all our expectations and it is currently one of a major contributor to the Heineken volume. The interesting thing there is

the main Heineken bottle, the existing pack type, the volume did not drop. It means this is driving penetration for the Heineken brand and getting us more users.

The lead-up to the launch of the new sleek can started with the “Never Watching Alone” campaign. Would you say that your strategic intent to drive a connective and communal message through celebrities still resonates?

The ‘Never Watching Alone’ campaign was the global campaign for the year (2021). In fact, it is running for the second year now and what you saw with celebrities in Nigeria was a local tour spring where we got some celebrities to drive the message home, to also make it resonate more with the consumers.

The sleek can, of course, was featured in there but that was not the primary purpose. The ‘Never Watching Alone’ campaign is a global campaign for UEFA Champions League that we used in 2020 and 2021. It is a COVID era campaign because you are talking about people not being able to go out; they sat at home to watch football and we are telling you that with Heineken, you are not watching alone because you are connected to millions of fans all over the world; and the sleek can is a very relevant pack type on that occasion.

As the world’s most international premium beer with powerful partnerships, including UCL, EURO, Champions Tour 2019 etc, would you describe Heineken as the closest companion of football fans?

There is football on different levels but we are talking about the best of football. So if you say you are the best of beers, of course you are bringing the best football experience to the consumers. the association we are driving and, to belittle the other football leagues but you can see same association with the EUROS. That is like the pinnacle, the highest level and it just goes with the positioning of Heineken as the most premium international beer associating with the most premium and best of football. So, those platforms are used to solidify our position and project what we stand for as a brand.

Heineken is the long-standing official sponsor of the UEFA Champions League for over 27 years. Would you explain the gains of this time-tested sponsorship?

I think the length of sponsorship already tells you everything. If you are married to someone for twenty-seven years, no matter what happens after that, that person is part of your life. So, it is a partnership like a marriage. Twenty seven years are a very long time and that time already indicates that we are both happy.
Don't forget that a platform owner can also be unhappy with the

sponsor. A sponsor brings something to the table; so it is a mutually beneficial relationship where they benefit from you and you benefit from them as well. Of course, there is money to be exchanged on one side but there is also a platform to be exploited on the other hand. This, I think, we have done quite well. We have brought the experience to billions of consumers across the world and we have taken a lot of people to experience it first hand as well. Thus, football being like the number one passion point of Nigerians ties easily with this platform and as long as it keeps delivering, we will continue to do it.

Last year, the campaign you talked about was tested in Nigeria and other countries and Nigeria got the highest score globally in terms of connecting with the message and the passion portrayed in the commercial and we are very happy with that. So, the UEFA Champions League is a very relevant platform for the Heineken brand and it is really doing well in Nigeria.

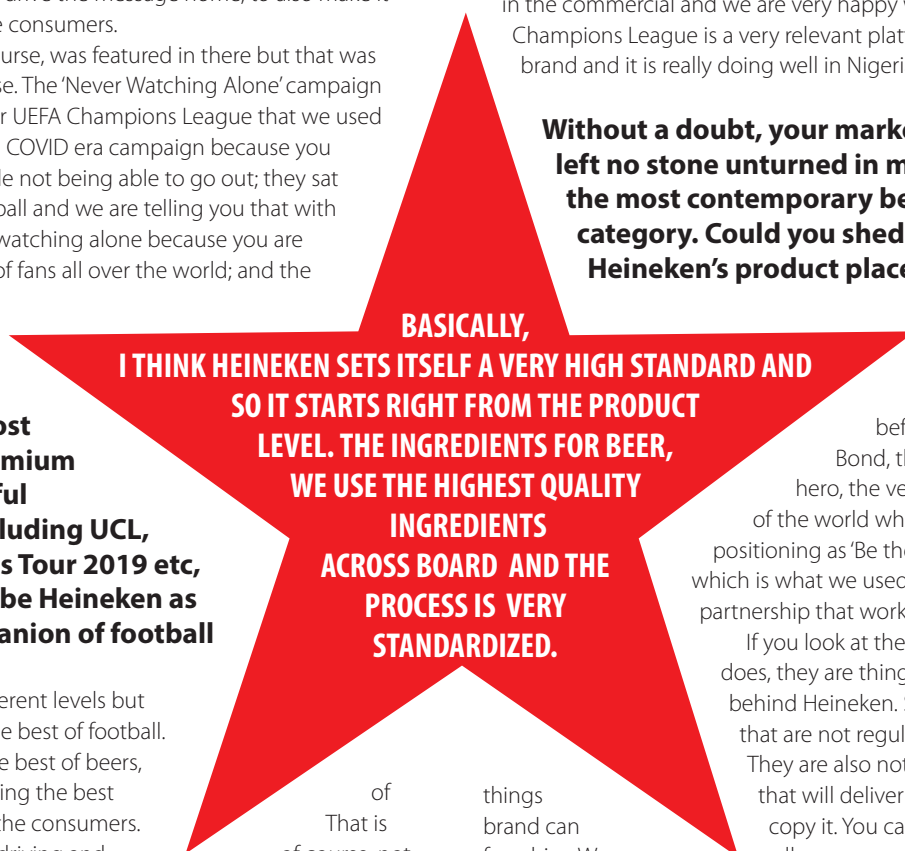
Without a doubt, your marketing team has left no stone unturned in making Heineken the most contemporary beer brand in its category. Could you shed more light on Heineken’s product placement with James Bond movies?

I think James Bond is also an association we have been making before. If you look at James Bond, the whole franchise, the hero, the very international man of the world which ties with our formal positioning as ‘Be the man of the world’ which is what we used to say. It is also another partnership that works.

If you look at the kind of things Heineken does, they are things we want you see only behind Heineken. So, we look for things that are not regular and not easy to get. They are also not cheap; but they are that will deliver for you because no other copy it. You can't copy a James Bond all grew up watching James Bond. old, everybody associates with the platform. Everybody sees in themselves a hero even though they don't act it; but it is somewhere hidden in you and that association is just fantastic.

Who were you targeting in your “When You Drive Never Drink” campaign, which focuses on the root causes of drink driving?

The statistics in Nigeria, I am not so sure of it, but I don't think Nigerians have a problem like everybody is crying that drink driving is causing anything; but it is just us being a responsible corporate citizen to encourage people because at the end of the day, we sell a product that can get you drunk if you drink it too much and it exposes you to danger. You might think it is simple and everyone knows this, it is good to remind people. So, that basically is a reminder to all beer drinkers that we love you to drink our beer, it is a fantastic beer but keep it to a limit and when you drink, don't risk people's lives





IT IS DRUNK MOSTLY ON PREMISE AND SO HERE YOU HAVE A PACK TYPE THAT PEOPLE CAN BUY AND TRAVEL WITH; TAKE TO THE BEACH; HAVE PARTIES WITHOUT BOTHERING ABOUT DEPOSITS; AND WITH THE INCREASE IN FOOD CONSUMPTION DUE TO COVID AND PEOPLE STAYING MORE AT HOME, THE PACK TYPE JUST CAME AT THE RIGHT POINT IN TIME.

by going into a car to drive because driving, if you look at the global survey, is something that is a problem when people drink and they drive. As such, that campaign is targeting everybody that drinks and has the opportunity or option of driving. We portray that in different commercials to let people know that when you drink, it is either you get a designated driver who does not drink or you find alternative way to go home and to keep people safe.

How much of Heineken's media spend goes into promoting responsible drinking across all operating companies?

We have a global mandate and I don't think it is a secret that it is 10% of our media. So one out of every 10 Naira spent in media has to go into this campaign. There is no regulatory or government regulation on this. This is just us, being a corporate citizen, to say we take 10% spend of our media on promoting this, then we are doing a good job educating people and reminding them that they should stay safe.

The "Never Watching Alone" campaign remains one of the most popular campaigns running in 192 countries. What informed the courage for this campaign despite the fact that UEFA Champions League matches' crowds aren't what they used to be due to Covid-19 precautions?

It is a way of fighting back against COVID; to also say that yes COVID is a threat to all of us. Some months ago we couldn't sit together but life goes on. It is our acknowledgement that the pandemic has really brought a lot of restrictions on people but that does not mean it is the end of the world. So, it is a positive message to tell people that even though you are not able to go out there, you can still have as much fun watching on your own, connected to people virtually or however without you necessarily being in the stadium and the experience can still be the same. For different people, the reality would differ but at the end of the day, the important aspect of the Champions League is experienced on the pitch and we were able to still see that after all the delays. So you don't have to go out to watch as you used to watch, just know that different people are doing the same thing you are doing and that connection still remains even if it is not physical.

What's the difference between "Better Together" and "Never Watching Alone" campaigns?

The 'Better together' is promoting the association of football, Champions League and Heineken. That was a pre-COVID campaign. That is to say we are better when we are together. The 'Never

Watching Alone' is related to that because we say you are better together and now you cannot come together. We are saying even though you are alone, you are watching not alone. So, it is like a continuation of that campaign to say although we are better together but now we cannot be together, we are still not alone.

How would you describe Heineken's consumer trip to global activation events particularly the ones dedicated to Heineken House?

The Heineken House is shut now; it was something we used to do in the past. The novelty was not there anymore because the first time the experience it brought to people was unique but in terms of getting consumers to global activations, it is still something we want to do as soon as we can do it. You just need to be there when we take consumers on this experience to understand the impact it makes. Unfortunately we were not able to take too many people because there are a lot of travel logistics to sort out from visas to cost, because it is a VIP experience. We want to bring this to as many consumers as possible and this year, we are looking at it already.

We have things like the Champions League, Rugby in some parts of the world, Formula One, for other types of consumers and these are experience that again, can only be brought to you by Heineken. We tend to bring the modalities back as soon as we can, where people can travel again, because watching it on television versus watching it in real life, the experience is different. We want a lot of people as much we can to experience it. It is something that we have planned to do as soon as we can do it again.

Heineken was one of the first global brands to invest in the Lagos Fashion and Design Week. Could you elaborate on the success of the initiative?

The Fashion and Design Week is a way of broadening the reach of the Heineken brand because, if you look at a lot of our sponsorships, like Formula One, Euro, Bonds Movie are a lot more masculine than feminine.

Again, fashion in Nigeria is a platform that attracts a broad audience but it indexes a lot in females and also very young people. If you add that to the football audience, you will see how we are trying to reach a broader set of consumers, first-hand through their passion-points; because, all we do is about igniting consumer passion, and anything that ignites their passions is something we are interested in. We are meeting the consumers at their passion points, the same way we are meeting a huge part of our consumers with football.

Fashion is also relevant because, it is cool, trendy, young and it is something that Nigeria is really accelerating. There is also another side

to it, which is our own way of contributing to the development of the art, because, if you look at what is happening there over 10 years; it is amazing, the kind of talents we have here in Nigeria and the platform has given opportunity to a lot of designers to showcase themselves and give them the opportunity to be known, not just in Nigeria but even beyond our shores. There are two things we are doing there: we are reaching our consumers and we are also making a little bit of contribution to the art.

Which other key markets have you extended the fashion programme to?

For us in Nigeria, in everything we do, we focus on Nigeria alone. There was a time, a few years ago, when they brought some finalists from East Africa here; there was a kind of partnership that was a kind of association. For us here, our target is the Nigerian market and any other market that takes up this platform is really doing it on their own. But the fashion platform is a Nigerian initiative, because of how relevant it is to Nigerians. We look at how many fashion week shows we have in Nigeria and it is growing in quality to the amount of investment. It is something that we intend to continue with.

What more should Heineken loyalists expect as the brand continues in its quest to influence and define the global fashion landscape?

For fashion, we are just the sponsors of the platform and we have increased from one to two platforms, because, on the one hand, we have the platform that is very established, that gives established designers access to the runway to do all of these things, and on the other hand, we have another platform that gives aspiring designers platform to showcase themselves. It is almost like a talent hunt for fashion talents. That is also another thing. But going forward, for us, it is just to keep the partnership going, because then, the platform just exists for people to know that if I work hard, then I can be on this platform and if I am on this platform, I can be known, and if I am known, I will become successful in that industry. If you go through that journey, you have to acknowledge that a brand that gives you that opportunity deserves some kind of kudos. That is where we keep it at this point.

During Heineken's tour of 2019, an impressive number of your Nigerian consumers were thrilled in a momentous football match by Carles Puyol Saforcada, a UEFA Champions league legend and Heineken Ambassador. Could you elaborate on the tour and its impact on Heineken market leadership in Nigeria?

As the sponsor of the platform of the game that is a European platform, at the end of the day, people have access to it from digital and TV. Bringing the trophy to Nigeria makes it more tangible. This is the same trophy that it is going to be presented to the winners. It is we bringing credibility to Nigerians and saying, look, this is the biggest prize in club football and you are able to come and touch it. The passion it brings out of our consumers is immense both target audience and non target audience just football lovers. If you look at those activations and the way people go wild just looking at the trophy. I remember the first time I touched that trophy, I felt like oh these people that you watch on television, this is the same trophy they have been touching. That gives you a different kind of feeling. It is great and we are planning to repeat it again, if we can, this year.

It is in the plan; but now we need to deal with the whole COVID restrictions. Can the trophy travel, can the UEFA people come, can we get a legend to come with the trophy, all that conversations are going on now, and we will keep you posted.

What informed the strategic move of taking the UEFA Champions league tour beyond Lagos, down to Uyo?

At the end of the day you can do the activation anywhere you can take people to. We have a good partnership with the state and they have a fantastic stadium, the trophy is probably here just a few days. We thought that for the first time let us see if we can take it out. It was an experiment we did and it seemed to have worked. We are looking at more of such outreach activations beyond Lagos to have future editions as well.

The unforgettable match was played by Puyol and his team representing Heineken and Nigerian football legend, Jay Jay Okocha and his team, representing Shine Shine Bobo (STAR). Did it not bother your marketing team that such a tournament could create intra-competition among lager beer consumers, between two lager brands from your stable?

At the end of the day if we had done our job properly then, the target audience of the two brands are never the same. If two brands are targeting the same people, generally speaking, then we have not done our job. You see a lot of brands in the portfolio, but the idea is, each brand is reaching out to more people, although they are overlapped but that should be minimal. Again, the idea is that we are driving overall penetration for our entire portfolio, so the target audience for STAR is not necessarily the audience for Heineken, so to say. If you understand it, that will mean that we have done our job like I hope we have done.

If you put them together, that should not be a problem; we are talking to two different people. If Heineken was just making the trophy accessible to more people, then, STAR was also activating football and of course, any football fan respects the UEFA trophy; the same thing with the World Cup. Everybody respects the World Cup even if you are not a football fan, especially women that are not into football, they can watch the world cup because their country is involved. It is a different thing entirely because it comes once in four years; it is not a weekly thing that people do.

To the football fans, there is no overlap at all. There is no competition because there are different people or different audience that each is targeting. It is more of psychographics. But at the end of the day, these are not things that we put in the face of the consumer. Think about it, if you look at a Heineken ad, the people you see in that ad, if you want to shoot that ad for Goldberg, there won't be sync, the music we use, if you look at it, that is what we are trying to do. It is not a hard science, but it is setting motivation we tap into for our brand and the job we do in marketing is to make sure those motivations are different enough but also validated.

We have what is called demand spaces where different people want different things. You might want a beer that connects you to your village people, I might want a beer that makes me look like I have money; some people don't care about that some care about both but not at the same time.



THE 'BETTER TOGETHER' IS PROMOTING THE ASSOCIATION OF FOOTBALL, CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AND HEINEKEN. THAT WAS A PRE-COVID CAMPAIGN. THAT IS TO SAY WE ARE BETTER WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER. THE 'NEVER WATCHING ALONE' IS RELATED TO THAT BECAUSE WE SAY YOU ARE BETTER TOGETHER AND NOW YOU CANNOT COME TOGETHER. WE ARE SAYING EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE ALONE, YOU ARE WATCHING NOT ALONE.

Maybe this afternoon when I was sitting there, I wanted to let everybody know that I am a chief from the West, I might put a Goldberg in front of me but in another period I am not feeling like that, maybe I dressed like this to attract some of the girls that I have money, I may take something else. You can see that they may have some overlaps but the occasions you have them may differ; you can also see that motivation can differ from one consumer to the other.

Would you say that the marketing goal for that was successfully achieved?

Yes, very successfully achieved. If you look at all the numbers and all the metrics we used to do like post-event activation, it was fantastic and that was the first time the brand hit its one million hectoliter volume. It got to a very high volume and that year was a breakthrough year for Heineken.

Can Heineken loyal Nigerian consumers expect more of such a tour in the near future giving its 2019 huge success?

Yes; and that is why we are trying to bring it back this year. In 2021, we rested. Think about it, the guys that were 15 years (in 2019) will be 18 this year. Imagine that group of people who could not come in last time, three years is a long time enough for people to desire to come back again and have the same people there, so yes, we intend to do it again, and again and again, because it is different consumers every time; and we will definitely go to different cities.

Imagine us in Enugu with the trophy; it is something that probably never happened there before; so if we look at the passion that comes out of people, the excitement that it brings, it is priceless.

Recently, Heineken won the prestigious MARKETING EDGE Premium Lager Beer Brand of the Decade award, an honour industry watchers judged as "well deserved". How would you describe this eminent award?

It just tells you that the things you are doing are not only working but are recognized because Heineken has a lot of support internally. I won't pretend as if there are brilliant things we do with the brand but it is also a focused brand. It is one of our most important brands and we treat it with that respect. We invest heavily in the brand; we like to think that we do the right things with the brand. We try

to understand the consumers' aspect as much as we can, we try to make the brand fit into their life styles and we try to keep the level of activation extremely very high. What gave us this award which we really appreciate is a combination of many things over the years and it is a testament to the fact that we are doing the right things and we will keep it like that.

In similar vein, Heineken also won African Brand Leadership Merit Award, Africa's Best World Class Premium Quality Brand of the Decade. What does this esteemed award mean to your team in Heineken brand?

When we say Heineken is the best beer in the world, we are not just saying it. It is not like some guy that is not very good looking to come and stand in your front and say I am good looking. If you say you are good looking, or fine, everybody should say yes, you are fine. We use these things in comms, because some people probably don't know this: when we say a glass of Heineken is the best beer you can drink, it is not a marketing gimmick, it is a fact. You cannot produce a higher quality beer than Heineken. You can call it something else; there are levels to these things. I am sure there are shoes people wear, there are hair women wear, you all know the standards.

When you say this is the highest, when you say something is of the highest, there is nothing higher than this. In beer there is actually nothing higher than Heineken and that is why it is the world's most international beer. I am not just saying it, it is in all of these countries. Look at Nigeria, you can see all these other beers, they will come along and do all those that they are doing, do football, but it is not the same thing. They don't taste the same, the quality standard is not the same, the activations and platforms are not as authentic as ours.

It is just a recognition of what the founding fathers of this brand put in place. I am not taking the credit for it. If you take over the Heineken brand, there is almost like a Bible that you inherit that you have to follow. It is tested and trusted; and if they need to make changes, these are made after rigorous testing and in the coming few years in Nigeria, you are going to see a lot of product innovation from Heineken and these are also things that have taken a long time to put in the pipeline; and the outcome of it is to make sure that anything you put in Heineken must be successful, because this is one brand for which we cannot afford to have anything from the consumer to say this is not good enough.



NEW APCON FELLOWS: A Recharge and a Fillip

Confession time! It is never in the nature and character of this column to be stereotypical. Truth be told, stereotyping and mediocrity of whatever hues or in whatever disguise is antithetical to our culture and DNA. For us, we believe that excellence in obscurity is better than mediocrity in the spotlight; hence we don't trade in mediocrity. Without equivocation and perhaps without any resort to ego trip, this column is fanatically committed to a self-imposed task of spicing up the industry mood and emotion with gists, jests and jabs.

Sometimes, the issues in focus at regular intervals can be serious, and at other times hilarious and mundane. Interestingly, miscellaneous issues treated in this column from time to time always touch and tug at the heart of the industry. It could sometimes be on the politics of the

industry or the politics of business in the industry by the stakeholders.

However, developments in the Nigerian advertising and marketing ecosystem in recent times appear to have become the focal point of this column on the Advertising Practitioners Council Of Nigeria (APCON), the regulatory agency of government. APCON, which was set up through the Legislative Act of the federal government with the statutory powers to regulate advertising practice and the practice of advertising in all its ramifications, has advertently or inadvertently become topical for all industry stakeholders irrespective of sectoral groupings or professional affinities.

For the avoidance of doubt, the regulatory agency, which this column had in the past tagged a "toothless bull-dog", has suddenly regained its rhythm and has, since the assumption of office of a new

helmsman, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, become vibrant and dynamic. While all the noises and resistance over its newly launched Advertising Industry Standard Of Practice (AISOP) continued to grow, developing some twists as the days go, the regulator appears largely unperturbed but rather shows that it is focused and well directed.

APCON demonstrated this assertion recently when it inaugurated different generations of advertising practitioners into its hall of fame. This, the regulator did through the induction of a brilliant gathering of over 63 long serving practitioners as Fellows of advertising in a well attended function which was graced by seasoned industry gurus and titans. The induction ceremony, which was held on 19th January 2022 at the popular Raddison Blu hotel in Ikeja, Lagos, was quite a unique assemblage of Who is Who in the contemporary Nigerian advertising sector. The practitioners inducted were not only long over-due for this exalted industry cadre, but have attained the highest level in the advertising practice over the years.

The unique occasion attracted the presence of the Chairman of the Troyka Holdings Ltd, Dr. Olusina Abiodun Shobanjo (David Ogilvy of Africa) and Chairman of STB McCann Group, Sir Steve Bamidele Omojafar aka Omojesu, also a renowned advertising titan, and all Heads Of Sectoral Groups. Others include Mr. Femi Adelusi, President, Media Independent Association of Nigeria (MIPAN); Mr. Steve Babaeko, President, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN); Mr. Tunji Adeyinka, President, Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN); Mr. Idorenyen Enang, President, National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN)



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and a coterie of other top industry gurus and icons.

In its over three decades existence and in recent memories, there has never been a time the regulatory body has rummaged through the profiles and pedigrees of its registered practitioners to uncover the energy buried in its archive due, perhaps, to poor discretion, leadership failure or sheer bureaucratic processes and protocols. Indeed, it is appropriate to say that the foresight of the Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo led current APCON to uncover and honour these eminent professionals is emblematic of the drive for a new vigour and the realization of a new dawn for the hitherto bedeviled Nigerian advertising sector.

What a better time to do this than now, when the industry has almost become a shadow of its old self? It is pointless recalling the golden old days of Nigerian advertising. Those days remain ever-green as practitioners strutted and fretted in enviable and remarkable swagger in the boardrooms and conference centers of multinationals and blue chip conglomerates. Then, it was more like the proverbial old sellers market where the words of the advertising professionals were like the words from the gods as they were held sacrosanct and in high esteem by the clients whose concerns were focused on getting topnotch marketing and advertising solutions for their brand management business and the business of brand management.

Those good old days were hallmarked by glamour, style and panache. The epoch was significantly noted and famous for trademark designer suits, ties and well polished shoes as well as top of the shop label shirts and all. The practice itself was made more admirable and attractive to both the uninitiated and the general public as razzmatazz ever known to any industry or trade was usually in effusive display.

Along the line, some of these allures of the industry took backward position as the music ended and the curtain was drawn on advertisers and client companies who are no longer valued as partners again, but as mere appendages or brand vendors. This unsavoury development graduated into a master-servant relationship thus making the clients become proverbial pay masters while the agencies remain at their mercy.

Inducting the new Fellows, APCON

Registrar, Dr. Fadolapo left no one in doubt about his choice of selection as he revealed how competent and professionally minded the new inductees are.

His words: “In the course of my two-and-a half decades in this industry, I have known each of the inductees personally and I have worked with virtually every one of them in different capacities and therefore I can attest that none of the Fellows inducted today lack the professional aptitude to be designated as such.”

Continuing, Fadolapo said: “I am proud to affirm that all of them are eminently qualified to be in the category which they are today made to be.” The advertising regulator further urged the inductees to continually promote the ideals of the profession while pledging his unflinching determination to support practitioners by making the business and practice of advertising favourable to all stakeholders.

“I am optimistic that with the status that comes with your elevation in the advertising industry, you will diligently represent the profession in all progressive ramifications and resourcefully apply your position to promote the best interest of the profession.

“APCON is committed to providing you and every advertising practitioner with a conducive business and professional grounds to make sure that the practice and business of advertising in Nigeria is conducted in an ethical manner without comprising best practices,” the APCON said.

Indeed, the induction exercise will no doubt release fresh energies into the industry as most of these practitioners represent a new generation of leaders who will be counted upon to ensure that the industry and the practice attain the goals and objectives already set out in the code of advertising practice, more especially as regards the newly launched AISOP.

From all intents and purposes, APCON surely needs a fresh breather and more pillars of support if what it has set out to achieve must be achieved. As old practitioners go into retreat on account of age, the newly inducted Fellows, who are still young and vibrant in their prime and already at the peak of their profession, should be able to galvanise enough support to live up to its statutory duties and responsibilities.

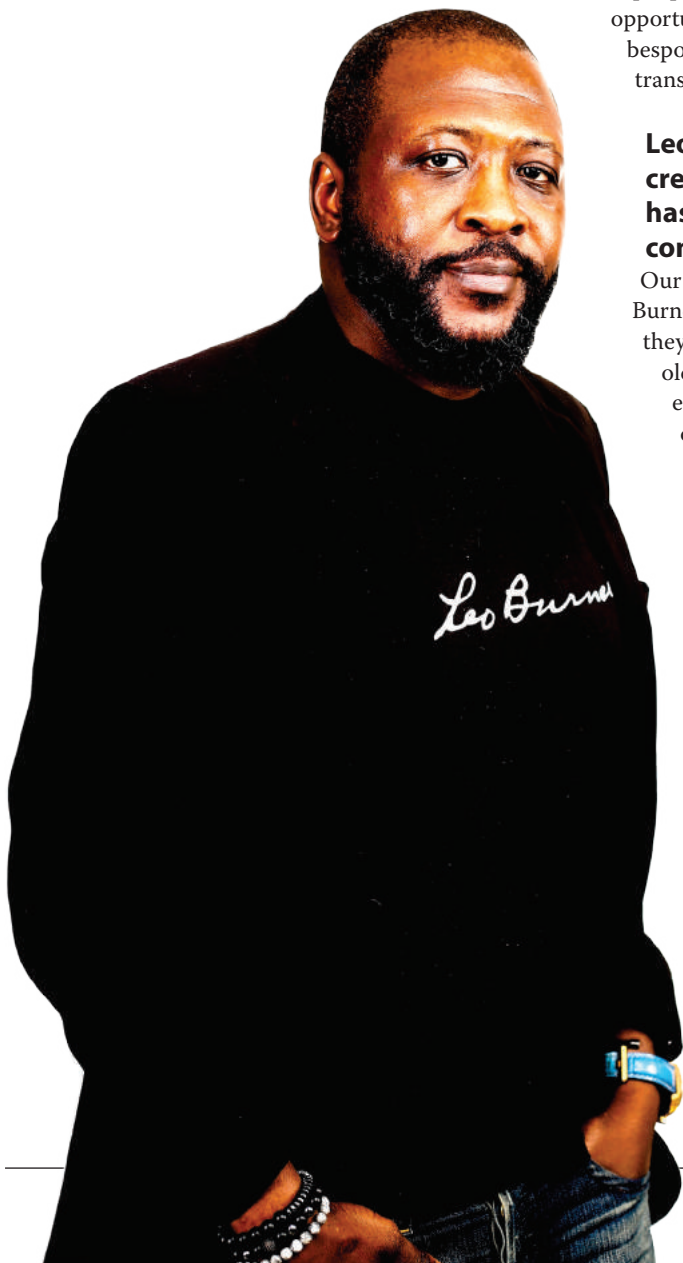


Leo Burnett Lagos: Positioned on the frontline of creative disruption – Tunde Shobanjo

Tunde Shobanjo is the Head of Business/Chief Operating Officer at Leo Burnett Lagos, one of Nigeria's fastest growing agencies based out of Africa's most vibrant city. With more than 14 years in the service industry with a passion for defining, developing and executing a business vision, Tunde is dedicated to ensuring that all people and processes are in place to support business strategies and deliver results. He is a man of many talents who somehow believes work should be FUN! His charm and high spirits have caused him to grace the hearts of many clients across his 8+ years in the advertising industry, which started at Dimeo & Co Chicago Illinois followed by a stint in Grey Advertising London, Saatchi & Saatchi London and Insight Communications. Before the advertising journey began, he worked in the financial industry and also worked as a chef (yes, you read correctly!) in a few of Chicago's fine dining establishments. Nothing surpasses the combination of a chef and an ad man. Little wonder that the agency which he leads prides itself as an agency that has behind its growth its people and its philosophy – a philosophy that is rooted in its core belief of what it calls HUMANKIND (TM); and which is driven by the belief that creativity has the power to transform human behavior. In an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, he takes both a current and futuristic look at the advertising industry, in general, and his agency, in particular.



The Leo Burnett group is a very data-centric agency. Creative output is no longer just about creating work; it is now, more than ever, based on insight. That insight is from data collected on people, products and brands and how they fare in the marketplace. There is no room for guesswork. We mine our data skillfully to make sure we deliver.



Advertising has walked the fine line between disruption and status quo, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. How has Leo Burnett Lagos embraced the future and positioned itself on the frontlines of this disruption?

The pandemic has proven, without a doubt, that data is king. Those that have the right amount of data are the most influential. It is no surprise that clients directly approach consulting companies for data and insights because it helps them understand consumer behaviour.

The Leo Burnett group is a very data-centric agency. Creative output is no longer just about creating work; it is now, more than ever, based on insight. That insight is from data collected on people, products and brands and how they fare in the marketplace. There is no room for guesswork. We mine our data skillfully to make sure we deliver. This has helped us position ourselves on the frontline of the current disruption.

Technology has changed the game, but advertising has not stopped evolving. How is Leo Burnett Lagos navigating the landscape in the new normal?

We have moved from the industrial age to a technology era that is growing very fast. This era's consumers are the youth whose primary touchpoints, for example, are mobile phones, not television. We are all surrounded by devices. Technology drives all facets of lifestyle and living now. Leo Burnett leverages solid partnerships and taps into a global network to adapt global trends and regional strategies for Nigeria.

Because technology and digital lead the conversation now, we make sure our people are very well trained to adopt for client brands. We also seek opportunities across other markets for our clients, going as far as developing bespoke training to help each one understand the ways technology has transformed how information is consumed.

Leo Burnett Lagos is recognised as one of the most creative agencies in Nigeria, and as a result of that it has won several awards. What distinct qualities have contributed to making this possible?

Our people. The creative and strategic minds we have are amazing. Leo Burnett is filled with young industrious people who do not hold back; they tap into our collaborative culture to create magic. We have 20 year olds contributing to quality work through content development, video editing and other creative output. Back in the days, it used to be the older guys, but now, it is leveling out, and there are more people who are able to showcase their talent.

One other key factor is our Humankind philosophy. It is in our DNA. It drives our continuous evolution as Leo Burnett Lagos, and defines our essence as part of Leo Burnett Global. We put people at the centre and then the brand builds around them. We do this because, at the end of the day, the people matter. We are in business to solve their problems. Additionally, the people we work with determine the quality of the ideas we deliver. Back in the day, we would sell to people. Now, we create with them. This understanding and our unique application of these insights stand us out.

Another factor that makes us distinct is our adoption and access to global best practice and resources. These ensure our thinking and solutions draw from unique and diverse perspectives, as we reach into the cultural diversity of the global Leo Burnett brand.

Tell us about some of the brands you have and continue to work with and campaigns that have thrilled your audiences?

We have worked on some very interesting projects. Our



work with Konga will always be special to us. Konga used to be a follower brand as a indigenous company made in Nigeria for Nigerians, while the competition reigned supreme, as a foreign brand. We managed to flip the script and position Konga as leading in every aspect.

Currently, we are working with one of the world's largest quick-service restaurants (QSR) chain franchises, Burger King Nigeria, and what we are doing now with the brand is historic, taking a cue from the success recorded at the launch.

In the last three weeks, the publicity and marketing we put behind the campaign has people waiting in line just to get a burger. It is a testament to our work with the brand. Notable amongst our creative output is the 'See Finish' campaign created for Leadway Assurance Plc. That was a very special time for us and the reception was mind-blowing. I cannot list them all, but we have done quite well and successfully thrilled our audiences, clients and industry as a whole with great and impactful campaigns.

How do you leverage the variety of media channels to deliver value and amplify your clients' products or services, while enhancing their positioning?

Whatever the campaign or client we work with, it always starts with understanding the target audience and their media consumption habits. This helps us strategically leverage our ties with our media partners and seek the expertise of our PR partners to deliver value.

When talking to our guys in media buying, we ask and try to understand how

the target audience consumes media. They give us an analysis, showing the target audience's daily journey. For example, if we are looking at 18 to 25 year olds, I doubt we can use CNN as a channel to reach them. Based on a day in the life of the target audience and the way they consume media, I would not give the same solution I would to a client with a different target audience. That is where merging data, our humankind philosophy, tech tools and collaboration within the group comes in. Our solutions are customized based on the objectives that we have set.

Social media has been considered a primary disruptor. However, we have noticed that within the social media landscape are individual disruptors changing the game and the concept of social networking. For example, Facebook is fast becoming an old generation app. How is your agency adapting and adopting new creative strategies for consumer engagement?

While I understand that Facebook is fast-becoming a tool for the older generation, we also have to look at the environment we are in. The digital landscape in Nigeria is growing. However, of over 200 million Nigerians, what percentage uses digital platforms?

Now, if you look at where the population is and the information consumption pattern, traditional media remains primary. I like the idea that Facebook has made it more accessible

and easy for users through Facebook Free Mode. But I was in Kano recently and the majority of the population still use feature phones and spend a lot of time listening to the radio. So, as much as digital is growing, we are still a developing country.

We have to go where the people are. Let's look at the last elections. Candidates like Fela Durotoye and Kingsley Moghalu made the right amount of noise on social media, but at the end of the day, the number of votes they got was not up to the number of followers they have on social media. Other candidates such as our current president went into the intercities, the rural lands, talking to people.

Nigeria's internet and digital penetration is growing, but it's still nowhere near other markets. Those of us that are educated and on these platforms tend to look at things from a one-sided point of view at times, instead of the overall landscape. So, as a flexible and agile team, we adapt quite well and adopt where necessary to give the best creative output to our clients and creatively engage their audience and consumers for result.

There is a new maxim, "collaborate or die". What does collaboration mean to Leo Burnett Lagos and how is it fostered within your agency?

Collaboration is entrenched in our DNA. The first level for us is as part of the global Leo Burnett group and West Africa's largest integrated marketing communications network, Redefini group. We enjoy the brilliance and unique contributions of five other companies and diverse cultures. Beyond this, access to a global network gives us the rare opportunity to deliver more through collaboration because we are not a lone wolf. This is something a lot of agencies do not have yet. This gives us the headway to shine as collaboration reflects largely in our creative output and helps us get work done faster and with more quality.

Give us some insight into your personal journey through advertising. How have you evolved? What lessons have you learned engaging across the industry?

I learn everyday. I started my journey in Chicago, where I worked for a small advertising agency, which had the Popeye's Chicken and Chicago Bulls accounts, amongst others. That was my first

international experience in advertising and I learnt a lot. Then I moved to Nigeria and had a different cultural experience, as it was a different environment. One thing I have had the opportunity to do is work in different organisations through exchange programs with Leo Burnett's partners.

I worked at Saatchi & Saatchi London and, for a long stretch, at Grey, learning their processes and ways of working.

I've learnt that culture plays a big role. So, depending on what your culture is, in your own country, the way that people work is different. As you learn and evolve as an individual, the way you deal with issues change. It has been a good journey, but there is still a lot ahead for me to learn.

What keeps Tunde and Leo Burnett going despite all the challenges inherent in the Nigerian business environment?

We are a lively crop of people who work in a very fun atmosphere. I believe if you enjoy what you are doing, you will do it very well. So, we try to create that atmosphere, especially for the younger staff. There is always some team-bonding activity going on and we make sure to celebrate everyone's birthday. I operate an open-door policy; music plays in

the background at our office. All these, we have realized, make our people feel comfortable in the knowledge that there is freedom, which helps them deliver in their jobs as well.

As much as we have that freedom, we still understand our responsibilities and our targets. I trust my team. I can literally go to sleep for six months and I would be 100% positive that no client would be disappointed or have to call me in for a problem. This is because the clients trust them. This culture is passed down to our junior teams. You would be surprised that clients can call one of the account executives or even the interns and still get the best direction and creative solutions out of them.

To achieve credible results, we set out at the beginning of the year carrying every single person along. We are not a huge agency, but being that small means that it is easy to get everyone involved and aligned on achievements for the year. This allows for transparency.

We agree on our objectives and track quarterly to keep ourselves accountable. While there isn't too much interference in operations, we have global input into strategy development and delivery. This keeps us on our toes and ensures that we have an eye on things. At the end of the

year, we take stock and re-strategize, taking learnings from the previous year.

I can honestly say, hand-to-heart, head-held-high, that within the next five years, Leo Burnett Lagos will be considered one of West Africa's top boutique agencies. With what we are doing and the genius and creative people we have around, we are well on our way to achieving this.



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Israel Jaiye Opayemi is the Managing Director/Chief Strategist of Chain Reactions Nigeria, one of the country's leading Public Relations firms in the nation's marketing communications space; and he is the President of the Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN).

Jaiye Opayemi in this exclusive interview reiterates the need for a more reformed Public Relations ecosystem that will enable its practitioners (both individual and corporate) to stand at par with global practice.

He lauded the leadership of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) for launching the Advertising Industry Standards of Practice (AISOP), which he hopes his association, in collaboration with the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) could follow suit with a view to according the profession its deserved place in the league of other noble professions in Nigeria.

Conversation on-going about strengthening PR practice in Nigeria – **PRCAN President**

What would be your assessment of the PR industry in our clime in recent times?

I will say that the Public Relations sector is an integral part of the service sector in Nigeria. When you are looking at the sectoral growth, you really need to understand what is happening in the service sector itself. It is quite significant to say that the sector has grown in leaps and bounds in terms of its contributions to Nigeria's GDP if the data and what we have seen from Q1 2021, Q2 2021, is anything to go by. If you then want to go outside of the service sector, to also look at the agricultural sector, the industries, manufacturing, and all of that, you will find out that our members in the Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria are key players in all of these sectors in the sense that whether you take a company that is in agri-tech, for example, or a company that is into manufacturing, one way or the other, most of these key players utilise the services of public relations firms. Therefore, when you are looking at that growth, you cannot separate the growth of the sector, from the growth of the players. When it then takes a deep dive into industry specific or sector specific issues, that is when you will begin to touch on the problems of the sector and say okay, maybe, this growth is actually not commensurate to the sectoral growth itself

What I mean by that is that when you look at Public Relations and then you look at the growth of the service sector in general, you can then now say well, based on what we see, or what we know, the growth is not commensurate to the service sector where we play so that we don't also confuse the two.

Service sector has been growing phenomenally from Q1, 2020, in spite of all the challenges of Covid. When you look at that and you then compare with the growth of Public Relations sector specifically now, we can then say that the growth has not been quite commensurate to the larger sector that we are a part of. That I think is the picture as it is, that is what the outlook has been like.

What will be your assessment of the current state of PR practice in Nigeria as compared with the contemporary advertising practice?

I always like to compare Apples with Apple, because when you compare Apples

with Apple, you don't mix things up; you don't want to compare Apples with oranges.

One of the things that have significantly contributed to the growth of the advertising sector in Nigeria is the strong regulatory backing which is still a bit of a challenge for the PR sector. But, I am happy that we are having very strong conversations with the leadership of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations; and we are taking lessons from what our counterparts in advertising are doing. The kind of backing that the AAAN is receiving from APCON, is what we do hope to receive and that is where the issues really are, such that probably the kind of growth that we would have seen in Public Relations today, would have been far better than what we are currently seeing if we have that kind of strong regulatory backing, regulatory interventions, and a strong regulatory voice in the market all of which we must credit our colleagues in advertising for. APCON has done pretty well; it has become a strong voice in support of regulations of the advertising sector.

Looking at it, I can say that that is where the differences still lie currently; but I am happy that the leadership of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations is aware of this because it is one thing for you to have a problem, and not be aware of it; they are aware and conscious of it and we are talking. We intend to go out stronger together in the year 2022.

But, then, in terms of global comparison, I really don't like to do that simply because, even though we are in the age of convergence where so much has become quite similar in terms of what advertising agencies and public relations firms are doing in other parts of the world, we are not yet where we want to be; but we have left where we were some years ago.

There is a better appreciation of what public relations firms do by clients now; what are the metrics I'm using if the number of RFPs and RFQs we have seen in the year 2021 is anything to go by. It is being unprecedented in the history of public relations of recent times; and this cuts across both the public sector and the private sector. We have a lot of government agencies now calling for tenders, asking for public relations firms to come forward and be part of their tender processes; we have seen a lot of private sector organisations also doing the same, asking for PR firms to come forward and also be part of their RFP processes.



ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE GROWTH OF THE ADVERTISING SECTOR IN NIGERIA IS THE STRONG REGULATORY BACKING WHICH IS STILL A BIT OF A CHALLENGE FOR THE PR SECTOR. BUT, I AM HAPPY THAT WE ARE HAVING VERY STRONG CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS; AND WE ARE TAKING LESSONS FROM WHAT OUR COUNTERPARTS IN ADVERTISING ARE DOING. THE KIND OF BACKING THAT THE AAAN IS RECEIVING FROM APCON, IS WHAT WE DO HOPE TO RECEIVE AND THAT IS WHERE THE ISSUES REALLY ARE, SUCH THAT PROBABLY THE KIND OF GROWTH THAT WE WOULD HAVE SEEN IN PUBLIC RELATIONS TODAY, WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR BETTER THAN WHAT WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEING IF WE HAVE THAT KIND OF STRONG REGULATORY BACKING, REGULATORY INTERVENTIONS, AND A STRONG REGULATORY VOICE IN THE MARKET ALL OF WHICH WE MUST CREDIT OUR COLLEAGUES IN ADVERTISING FOR.

That is a very strong metric to actually use because it simply means that quite a number of PR firms are getting this request from time to time and then, of course, after every process like this, there is always a winner. It simply means that one public relations firm or the other has been appointed after every tender or after every RFP, which I think is good for the industry and it is a very strong indicator of what is happening. I can tell you that we have never seen it like this in the last 5 years.

What would you identify as the missing link in the growth and development of PR practice in Nigeria?

Well, I have mentioned one, which has to do with the absence of very strong

come knocking on your door to ask you; are you qualified? Do you have APCON certification for you to be able to run the advertising business? We do not have that yet.

We also need to have some reforms even in the law governing the practice of Public Relations in Nigeria. At the moment, it will require some reforms in the law. You will remember that before AISOP, this was the first thing that APCON had to fix by ensuring that the law governing advertising practice had to be amended, so that, you can address the contemporary challenges of the sector. Our colleagues in advertising have done excellently well in that regard and I do hope that this is one of the things that we are going to be tackling in 2022 in the light

How would you benchmark the performance of the Nigerian PR industry with the global PR industry?

Let me drop this distinction: in terms of the quality of work, really as somebody who has done PR not just here, who has also gone to global events in the public relations space such as the global PR Summit and all of that, I think we are not doing badly in terms of the quality work that we do, those of us who have made presentations at some of those live gatherings, who have done thought leadership pieces at some of those live gatherings, we are not inferior to our contemporaries around the world.

I can say this with all sense of responsibility; we are not inferior to our contemporaries. Are there sectoral challenges? Yes, one of which we have identified, that is, strong regulations is what we need. We need to raise the barrier to entry. What kind of qualifications must you have for you to be able to set up a public relations consulting firm and call yourself a public relations adviser to a client who wants to pay you and get value in return for money? In terms of that, I can say that we are not doing badly.

However, there is still some work to be done and I can tell you for free that one of the major challenges we are still having today in the industry is the challenge of talents. Let me break this down and unpack it a little bit. Public

Relations itself, has evolved significantly, so the talents that you need today, are not the same talents that our forebears needed ten- twenty years ago, when all you needed to do was have people they called client services executives who go knocking on doors of clients and tell them that we are from so-so agency. There are also those we now call content developers today. In those days they used to call them media executives; then, the guys who did the writings, feature stories, etc. But Public Relations has grown far bigger than that. So, the question is: who are we still employing? Those are some of the things about which I have been having strong conversations with some of our colleagues in the industry.

For us to be respected, and for us to make good money, we can't be employing the same type of talents; we can't be investing in the same type of talents that

regulatory intervention in the space. What do I mean by this? The barrier to entry needs to be raised significantly. At the moment, practically anybody can leave a media organisation and set up a public relations consulting firm, and this is still a major challenge and I don't think it happens like that in other parts of the world.

We need to take care of the issue of the barrier to entry. Are you qualified, because when you say you are a consultant, it simply means that you are an adviser who has the requisite expertise and training to be able to advise client on its reputational issues or on its image issues. We need to ensure that this is sorted out; this was something that I think APCON had been able to sort out years ago, and which has impacted greatly. You can't just wake up tomorrow and set up advertising agency in Nigeria. APCON is going to

of some of the ongoing conversations that we are having now.

I have said this earlier that at Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria, PRCAN, we are also coming up with something similar to what AISOP is; and basically, we just want to ensure that the industry is sanitized and in a win-win situation.

By the way, let me say this upfront, it is a win-win situation because it is not just about the public relations firms themselves who are within the fold of PRCAN, it is also about our clients. We also want to ensure that our clients are getting value for money. When you have a public relations firm and you are paying 5million Naira retainer fee every month, are you getting value? we will like to ensure that this is done.



our forebears invested in 20 years ago. What is the future public relations talents poll? We are going to need a photographic specialists, you are going to need your own cinematographers under your roof, you are going to need data analyst, consumer neuron-scientist, etc; because in a recessed economy, in this sense I am talking of global economy, before you can get a share of the consumer's wallet, you need to understand how his mind is working in that purchase decision journey; but if you don't know, you can't advise your client. If you don't have somebody who specialises in that, you can't advise your client. All you will be talking to them about will just be about press releases and all of that.

We also need to challenge our clients to demand for more. The public relations firm is as good as the quality of the knowledge of the clients; of course the clients also need to know that he can get more.

In our experience as a company, we invest a lot in data, talk of any sector, if an insurance company walks up to us today, we are going to share some amazing data with that company and say, what are the insights from this data? You move from insight to strategy and then from strategy, you then begin to create tactical programs to be able to assist your client, and this is what clients are looking for, and this is how PR firms can also make money.

Why do clients still trust more in the advertising agency for brand building initiatives than they do for PR?

Let me back-track to what I said that the public relations firm is as good as the quality of the knowledge of the client, if as a client you know that something that is as basic as what has been settled by Al Ries and Laura Ries years ago, that brands are built with publicity, which is within the remit of public relations, and then sustained by advertising, you will know that your first port of call when you want to build a brand is the public relations space, and not advertising. What is the story of your brand? What is the purpose? You need to create purpose around your brand that goes beyond just, oh; we want to sell this product. What is the value? All of these rest within the remit of PR. All of these have to be settled by PR before advertising then comes to do its role of now selling that brand. But what do you want to sell when you have not crafted your brand purpose and value? You have to, first of all, settle one before you go to another. But then, there is a whole lot of confusion in the market place, even on the client side.

I have seen that gradually, people are getting aware and this is impacting the public relations business significantly. That is why I said that we have seen an unprecedented upward swing in the number of RFP's and RFQs more than we have ever seen in the last five to ten years and that shows that, somehow, within the Nigerian market, there is a better appreciation of the role of Public Relations in brand building.

What would the association do in trying to educate clients on the need to engage PR agencies for their respective needs?

There is a limit to which the association itself can actually talk to all the clients on a global basis, across the market in Nigeria. But what we can do is what we are doing which is to empower our own members and we have been asking people, to begin to rethink the model of their businesses. What model of business are you running, are you running the agency model, or the consultancy model? For as long as you are running the agency model, the client

will just see you as an agent who is just here to do something and collect 15% or whatever and go. But when you are a consultant, it simply means you can make more money because you also have to educate yourself in the business of the business that your client is involved in and that is where the client will then begin to see you that there is a difference between the public relations agencies and the public relations consulting firms.

Of course, there is a difference, there is a level of expertise, there are skills involved; but there are people you need to bring in, into your own business for you to be able to offer that quality service. For example, one of our associate directors on strategy is a Bloomberg trained financial analyst. Anytime we have a request from a bank or whatever, that is the person who takes the lead because he is able to read the financial statement, he is able to understand what we need to be telling and advising the clients on so he understands what needs to be done.

But if you don't have that, the client is probably only going to reduce you to helping them to provide wide coverage for their annual general meeting when you are supposed to be advising them on everything, all of the elements of their communication around their AGM.

The year 2021 has been a mixed bag of blessing and...; what is your assessment of the wins and failures of the Nigerian PR industry in that year?

It has been a mixed bag in the real sense of it; but you can choose to look at the glass as half full or as half empty. I have chosen to look at the glass as half full. I think that it can only get better. The fact that we are seeing this deluge of attention and request for public relations services is an indication of something, that appreciation of the role of the public relations in business is growing. This is the reality, in a VUCA market, like ours, the challenges businesses confront today, are such that will make them see that we need more today than we probably needed from our public relations firms ten years ago

Businesses are now looking for people who are going to be their ears, eyes and helping them to predict the future which is actually the role of public relations. By the way, offering counsel, senior executive counsel, helping our clients in predicting the future, looking at trends, looking at imagined culture and telling our clients this is how this is going to impact your business, so you are sitting comfortably in a place today like an industry head; certain things are evolving and because of the way these things are evolving, you can be at the bottom of the ladder in another three years because consumers will just no longer need the services you are offering. That is part of our role, to a significant extent. I think it has been a good year based on what I also hear from some of my colleagues in PRCAN; it has been a good year so far and it can only get better. I see the glass as being half full rather half empty.

What would you identify as the major shift in the year 2021 for the PR industry?

Again, from what I also hear from some of my colleagues, there is this gospel that we are preaching about rethinking our business model. I think it is paying off; more and more of our members are now positioning themselves not as agencies again, but as consultants; that is reflecting on the kind of investments which some of them are making and the kind of talents they are beginning to hire. That is a very significant point.

As such, to me, the major shift we have witnessed is that now, more public relations consulting firms are now positioning themselves stronger and investing more into being able to offer



consultancy services, as opposed to just agency services.

I think we are witnessing that shift, and for as long as I have the breath of life in me, I will continue to preach this same message to more of our colleagues. Don't ever position yourself as an agency again, that era is gone and dead. Position yourself as consultants, invest in acquiring knowledge. If an automobile firm walks up to us today, we will acquire within a week, all of these things, so as to put us in what lawyers call la terraferma translated, solid ground. We will certainly be able to offer value-adding services to that automobile firm. I think that is what is creating the shift and I will continue to appeal to more of our members to begin to position as such.

I also think that we are beginning to see more investment in data by public relations firms. Don't forget that we all resource from the same market, so we are beginning to see who is buying what, who is requesting for what and it is good for the business.

Talking about positioning the PR industry for the year 2022, what will be your projection for the year?

It is going to be a better year; and I will tell you why. There is going to be a swing in public sector spending and therefore, government at different levels, especially state and federal will need to explain what they have been doing and the smart ones will engage the services of public relations firms to be able to get those messages out clearly, concisely and accurately. They will definitely need the services of public relations firms.

Secondly, in the build-up to the election itself, and for the election proper, I can also predict that more aspirants and candidates will engage the services of public relations firms to be able to help them in managing their campaigns, filing

their campaign messages and managing their own personality brands in the course of the campaign because it is going to be a tough one this year and so, I see a good year for a lot of companies and public relations firms.

What is your opinion about mergers and acquisitions in the public relations industry? Will they solve some of the problems that you highlighted earlier?

It will solve some of the problems; but it will not solve all of the problems. Just this week, we had one of the committees that Public Relations Consultant Association of Nigeria set up with the likes of Tokunbo Modupe of TPT International, Mr. Yomi-Badejo Okusanya and others. Mr. Okusanya said look, what stops Chain Reactions from merging with CMC Connect, to form a major behemoth in the public relations space.

It is good for the industry and it simply means that we can do better, we can harness our areas because some of the talents and skills that CMC Connect has, may not be the ones that we have, and so CMC brings all of those talents into the pool and then we bring our strategy, talents into the pool and we are a better business. I am for it; it is going to ensure that we can play bigger and even international businesses will know that there are big players in the Nigerian public relations sector; it is a very good one.

You are the president of the Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria, PRCAN, what will be your assessment of your association in the face of growing challenges for the industry and practitioners?

At the risk of blowing the trumpet of my own leadership, I think the fact more than ever before, more clients are now asking for PRCAN membership, for you to be invited for their pitch processes, is, for me, a thing of fulfillment.

Number two, our members came together just a few weeks ago and extended the tenure of our leadership, gave us also a vote of confidence, saying: in all of the challenges of Covid, we have done pretty well, because, we have built stronger equity for PRCAN; and I say this with greater respect to my predecessors who have laid the foundation for the work that we are doing now. You can't mention

the name PRCAN, in the public relations ecosystem in Nigeria today, and somebody will say he doesn't know it; or mention it among business decision makers whether marketing directors or brand managers who take decisions on who to invite for a pitch or whatever, they will tell you they know PRCAN; they will tell you they know what we stand for.

The fact again that, I have seen this upsurge in the amount of tenders and pitches that have taken place by PRCAN members and agencies were invited to come and pitch and tender for those businesses, is an indication of the fact that what we are achieving what we promised our members when we took over the leadership of PRCAN. We promised them better business, and that is exactly what is happening. We are having better businesses to do now than before, and it can only get better.

What would you bequeath to the next generation of leaders of PRCAN?

The fact that it is now a stronger and better industry is my main bequeathal. I want a stronger industry, with stronger regulation, better respect for those who do the practice of public relations.

More than ever before, we are launching an identity campaign for PRCAN itself, to enable clients understand the services which public relations firm render. Truth is that unless our clients, out there, know what we do, and they can draw a line... There was the case of a bank that called a PR pitch and invited a very notable musician in Nigeria to be part of it; it does not show that the bank understands what PR is all about. To the ban, it was just about crowds. No! That is not what Public Relations is all about. This identity campaign is to let people appreciate, understand and be able to separate what PR is from any other thing. If you don't understand a thing, you won't value it. When purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable.

What is PRCAN and, of course, NIPR doing specifically to address this issue in 2022?

When you talk about regulation, let me give you an example of law: on medicine, the penalty for practicing illegally in medicine and in law, the penalties are so severe, that is not the case in Public Relations.

In PR the man who wants to practice

PR illegally can actually budget to sustain his illegality. If you arrest him today, shut down his office, he will just go, pay the penalty and reopen again. That will take us nowhere.

The first thing is to take a look at that regulation and we are in a very serious conversation with the leadership of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations and it is going pretty well. I can tell you that it is going to happen. We need to sort out the issue of the penalty because that is what is going to create deterrence, such that you have to think twice before you practice illegally. Why do you think the lawyers have what is called the practice license? It is to ensure that not everyone who has graduated from the Law School, can just wake up tomorrow and say, I am practicing Law, no!. You have to get a practice license.

Somebody once told me a story, he said he was on a British Airways flight, and there was a medical emergency, and the pilot made an announcement, that we have a medical emergency, and I don't have medical doctors on board, he said he stood up, wanted to volunteer himself, but he remembered that he was yet to renew his practice license and he sat down, because, if he touches that man and something goes wrong, the first question that would arise is who attended to this man and he would go to jail. These are some of the initiatives that we are currently discussing, and like I said earlier in the course of this interview, it is a win-win situation. It simply means that if you are in business and you have hired a public relations firm, but you are not getting value, you can come to PRCAN and say I have hired one of your men and I am not getting value. Then we can make an intervention: is it a problem of lack of skill, supervision, so that the client can get value for money. These are some of the initiatives currently being discussed and we have seen it in Accounting, Law, and Medicine and why shouldn't it be in PR? Why shouldn't a PR firm have a practice license that you must renew every year?

Lets us talk a bit about your consultancy, the firm, Chain Reactions, how will you assess its success story so far?

I think it has been quite a fulfilling journey for us; and we are not resting on our oars in anyway whatsoever. It has been good and I think it can only get better from here.

What we have done differently has been in our positioning, and we always say this with all sense of modesty every time we have cause to stand before a client, and

say no, we are here, we are not an agency, we are consultants, so we are going to tell you the truth about who you are in the industry, the truth about your business, we are going to lay it up to you, to give you amazing data, about things that you didn't even know about your business and sector that the competition is taking advantage of. Again, these are some of the positive things all of which can only get better.

What is your unique selling point?

First and foremost is the fact that we are the best at strategy. This is how I say it: it is like the relationship between the dog and its tail. It is the dog that wags its tail; it is the strategy that wags the tail. I am even happy if all we do for a client is just to give them the winning strategy and they say don't worry, we will implement it by ourselves; that is what we are known for and that is one of the things we want to remain known for. There is no client we have pitched to, whether those who have hired us or those who have not, who will not say there is something uniquely different about your approach to strategy and this is simply because, everything is rooted in research, in data and insight. We are first and foremost a strategy company, before we are a PR company.

What are the mission and vision of Chain Reactions?

We want to be the leading public relations consulting firm, not in Nigeria but in Africa, because this is where the whole lot of things will happen. Nigeria is where a whole lot of things will happen, so we are positioning as such if anybody wants to do business in Nigeria, we are positioning to be the go-to guys that they would want to talk to.

Tell us about you and how did you come into the PR practice?

I started first as a writer, maybe I would have ended up in advertising because I was also mentored in part by late Mr. Sesan Ogunro of Eminent Communications. He was one of the guys who said to me, "Israel, you know what; you are going to be an amazing PR person. Do not come into advertising. Someday, your writing skill will create a distinction for you". I started doing that right from the time I graduated from the university, and, of course, I started taking certification exams for Public Relations, and then this is where I am, today.



WHAT WOULD YOU BEQUEATH TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS OF PRCAN?

THE FACT THAT IT IS NOW A STRONGER AND BETTER INDUSTRY IS MY MAIN BEQUEATHAL. I WANT A STRONGER INDUSTRY, WITH STRONGER REGULATION, BETTER RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO DO THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS. MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, WE ARE LAUNCHING AN IDENTITY CAMPAIGN FOR PRCAN ITSELF, TO ENABLE CLIENTS UNDERSTAND THE SERVICES WHICH PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM RENDER.



Uche Unigwe is currently the Sales Director of Nigerian Breweries Plc. He is of Igbo extraction and joined NB Plc over three decades ago. He started out as a trainee brewer and rose steadily through the ranks. His dedication and commitment to hard work saw him holding different managerial positions locally and internationally within the Heineken Group. In his capacity as the Sales Director of Nigerian Breweries Plc., Uche Unigwe oversees a product portfolio which consists of over 20 alcoholic and non-alcoholic products under the sales operations.

He has successfully driven exponential sales growth across product lines in Nigerian Breweries Plc and is championing several initiatives to deepen the route to consumer. His management and stewardship of the sales operations of these products have ensured that all the products have maintained leadership positions in their categories and brought glory home to Nigerian Breweries Plc. through his actions.

In this exclusive chat with Marketing Edge, Uche Unigwe sheds more light on how Life Continental Beer is opening newer vistas of brand engagement and positioning in the Eastern parts of Nigeria; while also charting innovative campaigns to sustain its brand leadership within the alcoholic beer segment in the Eastern parts of Nigeria.

We are the Progressive Beer Brand of the East

**-Uche Unigwe, Sales Director,
Nigerian Breweries Plc**

So, Life Continental Beer recognizes progress and has tapped into that progressive nature of the Igbos. They are industrious people who are never in doubt of their heritage and progressive instinct.

Can you tell us about the Journey of Life Continental Beer so far?

It is quite a special feeling for me because I grew up knowing Life Continental Beer. It was first produced in 1981 but began full operations in 1983 when Nigeria's economy was booming and brewery companies were springing up from all nooks and crannies. Later, I joined Nigerian Breweries Plc after my school years in 1989. Life Continental Beer was one of the pioneer Beer brands in Nigeria with relevance in Onitsha. At that point, it was one of the stand-out beer brands in the Eastern region of Nigeria because it was a local beer. However, the brand began to pull its weight and as ownership changed hands, Nigerian Breweries was able to leverage its super-efficient technical know-how to refine, reformulate, and premiumize the brand to a really mainstream brand that appeals to the majority of the Igbos and mainstream market. That journey has proven quite successful such that within a few years of being considered a local brand, it became the biggest lager brand in this country. It is a remarkable journey and it is not surprising that a number of campaigns have been showcased to announce Life Beer's leadership position.

Since we are in the period of democratizing beverages, why is Life Continental Beer Positioned for the Eastern region of Nigeria?

When you look across the world, one trend you will observe is the increasing evolution of self-awareness and rediscovery. So, the different ethnic nationalities across the world are

beginning to rediscover themselves. They have found out that it is within that their community that they truly find a real sense of communality. It is not a bad thing in itself that you claim what God made you first and then collaborate among other ethnic nationalities. That is how life should be. Hence, Life Intercontinental Beer, which began from the east, wanted to establish and stamp its own identity that it is unapologetically "Eastern". This is also born out of the realization that the people of the Eastern part of Nigeria have contributed immensely to its successful journey today. However, the Beer brand is also extending its hand of friendship across the regions to meet fellow Nigerians wherever they are. It is also a known fact that the Igbos are in every nooks and crannies of the country; hence, Life Continental Beer will always be the brand of choice. It is being entrenched in the Igbo land as an identity but at the same time most appealing to friends and families of the Igbos.

How successful and fruitful has the bond between Life Continental Beer and the Igbos been over the years?

The bond has really been very fantastic. This brand has identified what is of utmost importance to the people of the East. This brand also believes that for the Easterners, one thing is being wealthy, it is entirely another thing to be progressive. Being progressive is all about what you do with your wealth and successful achievement. One can be a successful business person today; but what is better is what you do with it in the long run, is actually a function of progress. So, Life Continental Beer recognizes progress and has tapped into that progressive nature

of the Igbos. They are industrious people who are never in doubt of their heritage and progressive instinct. Life Continental Beer has been supporting the Igbo people through various channels; one of which is the Progress Booster that allows us to support people from the East with funds to drive their business enterprises yearly. A lot of people have benefited from this initiative. The second way that Life Continental Beer identifies with the people of the East is by showing brand sponsorship for local community festivals. Life Continental Beer has always thrown its weight behind all cultural festival emanating from the East.

Is that why Life Beer was conferred with the title of "Mmanya Oganiru of Igboland"?

The title of "Mmanya Oganiru of Igboland" is a recognition of the effort and support that Life Beer has shown to the entrepreneurial spirit of the Igbo. The Title "Mmanya Oganiru" simply means the "Beer for Progress". For us, the title is a validation of our brand purpose which is "Progress" and an indication that all our efforts and commitment towards the progress of the Igbo community and Nigeria in general has not gone unnoticed by the people. That first class traditional rulers in Igboland came together to crown Life Beer "Mmanya Oganiru of Igboland is really special".

What is the volume of entrepreneurship support that Life Beer has given to the Igbos lately?

Life Beer has given a significant amount of financial support to the Igbos so far. We extend an average of N300,000 to thousands of entrepreneurs on a yearly basis as support for their business ventures. This does not include the money spent in local sponsorships of community events and festivals. We also give financial support to Igbo artists and afford them with the needed leverage to succeed in life.

What impact does the TuruUgo Lota campaign have on Life Continental Beer's Target Audience?

The impact that TuruUgo Lota is having

on its target audience has been massive. Within the East and wherever the Igbo man resides today, TuruUgolota has become a slogan; it has become the trending language among Igbo people. When they go congregate in the bars or occasions, they no longer say 'Give me a bottle of Life Beer' anymore; they say give me 'Progress'. This is because Life Continental Beer is now synonymous to progress. The impact of a campaign can best be measured by the communal connection among people. This campaign has now become a way of life and philosophical relevance amongst the Igbo people. In the hearts and minds of every Igbo person, they are aware that there is value in going out there to hustle, conquer and come back home to celebrate. They have now taken it a step further to deploy their resources to improve the lives of their immediate community and kinsmen.

How timely is this TuruUgo Lota campaign during Covid-19 and Insecurity?

There is no better time to have launched this campaign than now. This is because TuruUgo Lota is not so much about bringing money back to the Village. It is about bringing knowledge, experience and skills. At this point that the nation is facing diverse challenges, we need the requisite skill, knowledge and experience to mitigate the impact of these challenges. What this means is that in whatever way or form we have been blessed with experience and skills, we need to deploy them to engage the challenges of Covid-19, insecurity and economic depression. We will need to deploy our expertise. It can be physical or virtual deployment. This can also be how to educate people to stay safe during this Covid-19 impasse. These actionable ideas are also forms of TuruUgo Lota. It is always about showing value and impacting positively in our little sphere of influence.

How is Life Continental Beer tackling the challenge of distribution among the eastern region of Nigeria?

Life Continental Beer has an impressive footprint across Nigeria today. We have thousands of distributors and sub-distributors across the country; and we are able to meet the demands of our

It is important to state that success cannot only be attributed to money. Success is about achievement and self-discovery. It is crucial that every youth must set goals and targets for themselves at every point of their lives. They should also learn to celebrate every milestone and commit to impacting the lives of others within their community. It could be as simple as putting a smile on the face of someone. For the youths, it is important to know that making progress is an all-encompassing attribute and Life Continental Beer associates with everybody who is imbibing the never-say-die spirit of progress and excellence.

consumers in the country on a daily basis. At every distribution touchpoint, we have professional sales representatives at the frontlines working to reach all the product demand touch points. In that way, we ensure that our products are well circulated. We are about the only brewing company that has 9 breweries operational every day across all the regions of the country. In places that we do not have distributors, we have depots. We are always able to meet our consumers and shoppers at every point of need.

Can you throw more light on the iconic lighting up of the Niger Bridge?

This is one achievement that we are really excited and proud to be associated with. I was present at the commissioning of the bridge and what was most significant is that this is a bridge that connects the East and West. On a closer outlook, this is not just a bridge that connects Anambra and Delta State; it is a bridge that connects the Onitsha indigenes and the Asaba people. We are delighted because eminent personalities were present when we executed the project of lighting up the bridge. This bridge is very symbolic and everyone is excited about our own contribution to the bridge. The governments of Anambra and Delta State acknowledged that it was a welcome development from Life Continental Beer. It is instructive that we carried out this

project in the heat of Covid-19, when there was depression in the land. This also sent a clear signal to the people that all hope is not lost and that wherever there is light, there is life.

How is Life Continental Beer capturing the youth demography between 18-25 years who are aspiring to progress in life with the “TuruUgo Lota” campaign?

It is important to state that success cannot only be attributed to money. Success is about achievement and self-discovery. It is crucial that every youth must set goals and targets for themselves at every point of their lives. They should also learn to celebrate every milestone and commit to impacting the lives of others within their community. It could be as simple as putting a smile on the face of someone. For the youths, it is important to know that making progress is an all-encompassing attribute and Life Continental Beer associates with everybody who is imbibing the never-say-die spirit of progress and excellence.

What role did Life Beer play in the trending ‘Egedege’ video?

When Theresa Onuora sang that song, I was a young man and it was a fantastic music. At the moment, the Egedege musical is a commercial success. Over time, as generations changed, the musical tastes and preferences of the youths also changed. It felt like that we had started losing the assets that defined our cultural music. Again, only the beer of progress began to turn things around by taking the younger ones back to when it all started. This music was a way of pointing our new generation of musicians to blend the old and newer forms of music. This was also replicated when we featured Pete Edochie and Yul Edochie. It is a consistent demonstration of what Life Beer stands for. When you blend the old with the new, it produces exponential outcomes. The Egedege project points to the reality of how big we can become when we support one another. Today, this musical project has inspired some of our Igbo musicians like KC to remix another old Igbo cultural song. This is how to show direction and intentional leadership. I feel a sense of



pride about the success of the Egedege music remix.

It appears that the Life Continental Beer and its competition are leveraging on the industriousness and innovativeness of the Igbo race. Are there other unexplored niches of the Igbo’s that can also be celebrated?

Within any culture, there are some niches that are peculiar to that race. No person of progress should be afraid of competition because healthy competition is good for the consumer. We encourage competition because it brings out the best in us. Without competition, ‘Egedege’ musicals, ‘TuruUgo Lota’ and other unique initiatives wouldn’t have been berthed today. However, progressive brands like Life Continental beer will always differentiate itself from the clutter and I can assure that you will begin to see quite a few more innovations coming through soon.

In your capacity as the Sales Director, NB, can you enumerate some of your major accomplishments?

I am very happy to state that Nigerian Breweries is blessed with a great team.

We have been able to address some of the challenges that was noticeable within the organization. As against the culture of positional arrogance, we have been able to motivate and empower our team. Today, we have regional Managers that make important decisions, manage their budgets and take full responsibility for their regions. As a result, our commercial business leaders are delivering amazing sales results in their respective regions. The impact is that our sales team sell our products completely such that we usually run out of stock. This model of sales management has increased our sales volumes across the different regions. Their success story is very heart-warming and I am always proud of my team. We also propagate the success stories of our sales team and the result is that most of them are outside the shores of Nigeria continuing the great work of marketing great brands. At NB Plc, we are one big family. We are big on collaboration and this shows in the existing co-operation among the various units which make work pretty easy. There is seamless working relationship between all departments and this has yielded innovative products that sold out even before we launched.

NDIC assures bank customers funds' safety amidst surge in Ponzi scheme

By Dele Ojo

Bello Hassan, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, recently advised bank customers in the country not to entertain fear in case any bank failed in the course of business as their money is very well insured, stressing that over 97 per cent of depositors of banks would be fully covered by the Corporation in the event of bank failure.

Though the number of accounts in banks in the country has risen from 83.0 million in 2016 to 128 million in 2019, the NDIC maximum insured limit of N500,000 fully covered over 97.0 percent of the insured deposits. This entails that any customer of a bank that have more than N500,000 in account balance shall be paid N500,000, while those having less than N500,000 account balance would be paid all their deposits.

Deposit Insurance is a system established by the government to protect depositors against the loss of their insured deposits. The role of the banking sector, the financial safety net, and other financial institutions that accept deposits from the public are important in the economy because of their involvement in the payments system, their role as intermediaries between depositors and borrowers, and their function as agents for the transmission of monetary policy. By their nature, banks are vulnerable to liquidity and solvency problems, because they transform short-term liquid deposits into longer-term, less-liquid loans and investments.

According to Mr. Hassan, "what these figures entail is that only less than three per cent of accounts/depositors are not yet fully covered by the prevailing coverage limits, adding that the implication of this is that in the event of failure of a bank, above 97 per cent of depositors would be fully covered by the Corporation."

From the foregoing statistics he stressed, "It could be observed that the Corporation's deposit insurance coverage limits are not only adequate, but also robust enough to engender confidence in our banking system".

The NDIC boss explained that the Corporation's maximum coverage limits of N500,000 per depositor in commercial, merchant and noninterest banks, primary mortgage banks and mobile money operators, as well as N200,000.00 per depositor in microfinance banks remained



the most adequate and robust in the world.

Bello stated this recently at 2021 Finance Correspondents and Business Editors (FICAN) workshop in Gombe State organised by the commission.

The NDIC reassurance becomes imperative in view of the resurgence of illegal funds managers, otherwise known as Ponzi schemes, in the country, attracting gullible investors, with attendant loss of life savings.

A Ponzi scheme is an investment scam that involves the payment of purported high returns to existing investors from funds contributed by new investors. Ponzi scheme organizers often solicit new investors by promising to invest funds in opportunities claimed to generate high returns with little or no risk.

In many Ponzi schemes, rather than engaging in any legitimate investment activity, the fraudulent actors focus on attracting new money to make promised payments to earlier investors as well as to divert some of these "invested" funds for personal use. The SEC investigates and prosecutes many.

As with many frauds, Ponzi scheme organizers often use the latest innovation, technology, and product or growth industry to entice investors and give their scheme the promise of high returns, because their activities are not covered by law, or rather insured since they are not licensed by Central Bank or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Meanwhile, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has expressed serious concern over the resurgence of Ponzi schemes and illegal fund managers in the country's financial sector. This is as more members of the investing public continue to fall prey to their activities.

Lamido Yuguda, the Director-General of SEC, at an enlightenment workshop with the staff of the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning recently in Abuja, revealed that the unlawful schemes had continued to enjoy massive patronage of the populace and remained a source of concern for regulators in the financial

sector.

Mr. Yuguda said the commission is ready to continue to apply measures and seek the cooperation of relevant stakeholders towards preventing the activities of these Ponzi schemes, stressing that the reputation of the financial markets and investors' confidence, among others, have been negatively affected by the upsurge of the illegal schemes.

SEC has been at the forefront of the fight against Ponzi schemes and illegal capital market operators, by stepping up its enforcement actions to safeguard the investing public, following an upsurge in their activities since 2019.

The commission had in March 2020, warned stakeholders and the investing public against the activities of some unlawful/unlicensed market operators and promoters of fraudulent schemes as they listed 12 fraudulent Ponzi schemes with bogus investment and return claims.

Also, in August 2021, it vowed to clamp down on illegal capital market operators, especially Ponzi Schemes operators as the commission identified their activities as a huge problem for the economy and the country in general.

In Nigeria, Ponzi schemes date back to the 1980s and early 1990s with the famous 'Umana-Umana' investment platform that held sway in Port Harcourt and Calabar, the 'Planwell' scheme in Edo State as well as 'Nospecto' in Lagos.

In November 2015, the Mavrodi Mundial Moneybox or MMM scheme, founded by Sergei Mavrodi, a convicted Russian fraudster, was launched and Nigerians were fleeced of billions of naira.

Others like Twinkas and Ultimate Cyclor were later introduced between that time and 2016, but they all crashed in 2017.

As of June 30, 2021, the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) had paid a total of N101.67 billion in uninsured sums to depositors of failed banks, according to Bello Hassan, the corporation's Managing Director/Chief Executive.

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation is an independent agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The purpose of the deposit insurance system is to protect depositors and guarantee the settlement of insured funds when a deposit-taking financial institution can no longer repay their deposits, thereby helping to maintain financial system stability.

approval paved way for GTB to conclude transition from a standalone commercial bank to a group structure that allows it to invest in other areas of financial services or other businesses.

Managing Director, Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB) Plc, Mr. Segun Agbaje said the adoption of holdco was necessitated because of existing Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)'s regulations, which require the separation of commercial banking business from other financial services businesses.

He explained that under the new structure, existing shareholders of GTB would be migrated to Guaranty Trust Holdings through a share-for-share exchange between the shareholders of GTB and GTHoldings.

According to him, the overall strategy was to create an operating model that would profitably grow the bank's presence in the market for commercial banking and non-banking financial services in order to achieve the aspiration to be the dominant financial services group.

"I am delighted over the approval by shareholders for the holding company and I assure the investors of a more rewarding future. The bank will not embark on any share reconstruction as the same number of shares they have with the bank will be maintained," Agbaje said.

At the court-ordered meeting in Lagos, shareholders approved the transfer of entire issued and paid up capital of GTB totaling 29.431 billion ordinary shares of 50 kobo each to a new company to be known as Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc. The new company, Guaranty Trust Holding Company (GTHoldings) Plc, simultaneously allot the same 29.431 billion ordinary shares of 50 kobo each to the former shareholders of GTB in accordance with their shareholdings in the bank.

CBN introduces digital currency, eNaira, deepens Cash-less economy policy

In October, President Muhammed Buhari launched Nigeria's newly created digital currency, the eNaira, in Abuja, Nigeria. The eNaira was scheduled to be launched on October 1, 2021, but was moved due to lots of activities billed for Nigeria's 61st-anniversary celebrations.

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 while 33 banks were fully integrated and live on the platform.

At the launch, Emefiele disclosed that over 2.5 million people visit the website daily, and N200 million 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, requests, and redemption with the CBN.

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.

The Nigerian Exchange Group listed on The Nigerian Exchange

Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX Group), which owns and operates the Nigerian Exchange (NGX), was successfully listed on the stock exchange, seeking funds for

further expansion of its services.

The listing of NGX Group on the NGX took place on 15 October, putting nearly two billion shares onto the market, and was described as a "milestone" towards the company's 2018-2021 corporate strategy, in a statement by NGX Group chairman Otunba Abimbola Ogunbanjo.

"Our shareholder base has more than doubled since our demutualisation in March 2021 and our valued shareholders will benefit from the enhanced liquidity that listing on the exchange will facilitate," he said, explaining that the listing would allow for a much wider range of investors to buy into the company.

The deal was approved by Nigeria's Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and NGX Regulation, the division of NGX responsible for oversight of the exchange.

The demutualisation of NGX Group received approval from SEC in 2018 and was finalised in March, with approval from the SEC and the business sector regulator, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

With passage of the Demutualization Act by the National Assembly, and approvals by SEC and CAC, The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) became the latest exchange to be demutualized. Demutualization is the term used to describe the transition of a stock exchange from a mutual association of exchange members, operating on a not-for-profit basis to a limited liability company, operating for profit and accountable to shareholders. Demutualization in its many forms has become a widespread phenomenon globally since 1993, when the Stockholm Stock Exchange blazed the trail as the first exchange to demutualize.

NGX Group managing director and chief executive Oscar Onyema said the listing would allow the market operator to expand beyond Nigeria: "With strengthening market dynamics, serving the largest economy in Africa, NGX Group's listing allows us to expand in key capital market infrastructure verticals and look beyond Nigeria's borders, as we deliver on our growth plans to become Africa's leading capital market infrastructure group."

NGX chief executive Temi Popoola said demutualisation and listing "will position NGX Group to provide liquidity to members while stimulating the capital market ecosystem to grow at the same pace as the economy".

Lagos-headquartered law firm Aluko & Oyebo advised NGX Group on the

listing, through a team consisting of senior partner Olubunmi Fayokun, capital markets partner Ayodeji Oyetunde and associate Abisola Akinyemi.

Nigerian investment management firm Chapel Hill Denham Securities acted as stockbroker and provided financial advice, while Lagos-headquartered RMB Nigeria Stockbrokers was joint stockbroker, and its parent company, Johannesburg-headquartered Rand Merchant Bank was also a financial adviser.

The NSE was established by an Act of Parliament in 1960 as a mutual, not-for-profit organization, limited by guarantee of its members. For sixty years of existence, it functioned as a charitable organization, consisting of members but not owners. Its surplus income was not distributable but retained. The situation has now changed because of its new corporate status. It can now make profit, distribute same to shareholders and also pay corporate income tax.



Titan Trust Bank takes over Union Bank

On December 23, Titan Trust Bank the newest national commercial bank in Nigeria, which commenced operation in October 2019 with a strong capital base, it was revealed, strategically bought over the Stallion -Union Bank of Nigeria in a landmark deal between the majority shareholding investor in the 104-year old bank.

An elated Mudassir Amray, Chief Executive Officer, Titan Trust Bank, said: "After completing over two years of operations with aggressive organic growth, we are excited to have an opportunity for a significant leap forward in market share. UBN's widespread presence, state of the art technology platform, quality staff and strong brand loyalty fits well with our synchronized modular strategy. We look forward to delivering superior results for the benefit of our staff, customers, shareholders, and stakeholders."

The takeover was revealed by the Board of Directors of Union Bank of Nigeria Plc Thursday, in a message by Somuyiwa Sonubi, Company Secretary, to

the Nigerian Exchange and the investing public that it has received a notification from Union Global Partners Ltd, the holder of majority shareholding in Union Bank, of the execution of a Share Sale and Purchase Agreement between UGPL, certain other existing shareholders of Union Bank and Titan Trust Bank Limited as Purchaser, for the sale of an aggregate 89.39% of the issued share capital of Union Bank held by the Sellers, to the Purchaser.

However, completion of the transaction is subject to obtaining applicable regulatory approvals and the fulfilment of certain conditions precedent.

To Mr. Tunde Lemo, Chair, Titan Trust Bank, "The Board of Titan Trust Bank and our key stakeholders are delighted as this transaction marks a key step for Titan Trust in its strategic growth journey and propels the institution to the next level in the Nigerian banking sector.

The deal represents a unique opportunity to combine Union Bank's longstanding and leading banking franchise with TTB's innovation-led model which promises to enhance the product and service offering for our combined valued customers."

Mrs. Beatrice Hamza Bassey, Chair, Union Bank, while commenting on the transaction said, "On behalf of the Board, we congratulate all the parties involved in reaching this phase of the transaction and the Board looks forward to supporting the next steps to ensure a seamless completion of the process following regulatory approvals.

We are grateful to our current investors whose significant and consequential investments over the past nine years facilitated the transformation of Union Bank, one of Nigeria's oldest and storied institutions. Today, the Bank is well-positioned with an innovative product offering, a growing customer base of over six million and consistent year on year profitability. This is a solid foundation for our incoming investors to build on as we move into a new era for the Bank."

On his part, Mr. Emeka Okonkwo, Chief Executive Officer, Union Bank, explained that: "This transaction marks a significant milestone in the journey of our 104-year old Bank. Whilst thanking our current investors for their unwavering commitment to the bank over the years, we welcome our new core investor, TTB. We recognize the strategic fit between the two institutions and expect that this deal will deliver the best outcome for our employees, customers and stakeholders.

We look forward to collectively writing the next exciting chapter for Union Bank."

CBN Bans Foreign Exchange Sales to Burueaux De Change (BDCs)

In a similar fashion to the January 2016 episode, the CBN governor at the end of the July 2021 Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), meeting placed a ban on FX sales to BDC operators and suspended the issuance of new BDC licenses over allegations of FX racketeering. This was followed by a directive to Banks (DMBs) to set up Foreign Exchange teller desk in all branches to cater to approved FX transactions.

Although this development could help boost the FX and commission income of DMBs (due to increased transactions), we are less optimistic on how it would restore complete sanity in the FX market given the huge FX needs that are met outside the official delineation. Besides, the import-substitution objective of the FG cum CBN which led to the blacklisting of 41 items from accessing FX at the official window in 2016 has not yielded any significant fruit that could help reduce the demand for FX in the parallel market.

In 2016, currency crisis worsened in the aftermath of the ban of FX sales to BDCs, despite the instruction to commercial banks to fill the void. This on one hand was driven by the insufficient FX supply to banks by the CBN, and on the other hand, customers' apathy to banks' cumbersome processes. Consequently, demand for FX at the parallel market remained elevated, aided by the large market already created by the CBN's ban on FX sales to importers of the blacklisted 41 import items. By extension, these fuelled a steep rise in the inflation rate (Jan'16: 9.6% to Dec'16: 18.6%) and the deterioration of offshore investors' confidence which resulted in large capital flow reversal of 67.2% year on year to US\$1.8bn in 2016.

Interestingly, the CBN had in the last 20 months expanded its list of banned items to 45 items (Maize, Fertilizer, Milk, and Sugar being the new additions), while foreign capital inflow declined 61.1% year on year in first half of 2021 to N2.9tn. This is reminiscent of the 2016 trend, especially as the import-substitution objective of the Federal government has not yielded desired results.

Why Access Bank adopts Holding Company structure – *chairman*

By Dele Ojo



Dr. Ajouritosedere Awosika, Chairman, Access Bank has given reasons for the institution's adoption of Holding Company structure, saying it is a move to create strategic flexibility and diversification of the group's revenues.

According to her, the transition to a financial Holding Company was in line with considerations such as regulatory compliance, facilitation of growth and expansion in banking across Africa, diversification into permissible financial services and risk management.

A holding company is a company that doesn't conduct any operations, ventures, or other active tasks for itself. Instead, it exists for the purpose of owning assets. In other words, the company does not engage in the buying and selling of any products and services. Instead, it is formed so that it gains control over one or more companies.

Dr. Awosika further explained that the structure would unburden the bank from oversight functions and responsibilities of managing the subsidiaries.

She gave the dossier at the organisation's court-ordered meeting held in Lagos, as Shareholders of the bank unanimously approved the proposed restructuring to a Holding Company (Holdco) to be known as Access Holding Plc.

Herbert Wigwe, Group Managing Director/CEO, appreciated the shareholders for their continuous support since the inception of the bank in 2002, assuring that the shareholders that the board and management would remain committed to decisions that would take the bank to the next level.

"The institution has grown beyond a lot of one of those things, even the very presence of your institution in several countries requires a different organisational structure to handle all of those things.

"If anybody tells you that there is one

managing director who will oversee 20 or 30 countries, it's a lie. We have to continuously evolve and create a structure that will ensure there is proper oversight over the subsidiaries," Wigwe said.

President, Association for the Advancement of the Rights of Nigerian Shareholders, Dr Farouk Umar, commended the board and management for the foresight of transforming the bank to Holdco, stressing that structure would help in risk management and as well enable the company to diversify into other business opportunities to increase profitability.

President, New Dimension Shareholders Association, Patrick Ajudua, described the Holdco structure as a welcome development that would impact positively on the bank's bottom-line and improve shareholders' value, and commended the management for smooth running of the affairs of the bank, urging them to ensure enhanced returns on investment for stakeholders going forward.

Recently, the bank announced that its wholly owned banking subsidiary, Access Bank Mozambique S.A. completed the acquisition of African Banking Corporation

(Mogambique), S.A., ("BancABC Mozambique"), a subsidiary of London Stock Exchange listed group, Atlas Mara Limited.

Access Bank Plc. is a leading full-service commercial Bank operating through a network of more than 600 branches and service outlets, spanning three continents, 12 countries and 31 million customers. The Bank employs 28,000 people in its operations in Nigeria and has subsidiaries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the United Kingdom (with a branch in Dubai, UAE) and representative offices in China, Lebanon and India.

Listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange since 1998, the Bank serves its various markets through four business segments: Retail, Business, Commercial and Corporate. The Bank has over 900,000 shareholders (including several Nigerian and International Institutional Investors) and has enjoyed what is arguably Africa's most successful banking growth trajectory in the last twelve years. Following its merger with Diamond Bank in March 2019, Access Bank became one of Africa's largest retail banks by retail customer base.

Currently, the following Financial institutions operate holding company structure FBN HOLDINGS PLC,

FCMB GROUP PLC, FSDH HOLDING COMPANY, STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC, and Guaranty Trust Holding Plc, while Sterling Bank has requested the Central Bank nod to embrace the structure.

First Bank divests from Honeywell, FMN grabs equity

By Dele Ojo

Four Mills of Nigeria Plc has entered into an agreement with First Bank of Nigeria Limited to acquire the Bank's 5.06% equity interest in Honeywell Flour Mills Plc, in addition to the 71.69% majority shareholding interest in Honeywell Flour Mills, (HFMP). Consequently, upon completion of the acquisition, and subject to obtaining all requisite regulatory approvals, Flour Mills of Nigeria is set to hold a cumulative 76.75% equity interest in HFMP.

Molu Joseph, Company Secretary/ Director, Legal Services, FMN, relayed the unfolding development in a message to The Nigerian Exchange at the weekend, explaining that "Further details will be communicated to the market upon

relevant approvals from regulators".

According to the company, given FMN's parallel negotiations for both stakes culminating in the agreements being signed on the same date, the basis for arriving at key commercial terms including final equity price per share, will be the same. The price payable to FirstBank will be the same as HGL's.

Commenting on the transaction, Omoboyede Olusanya, Group Managing Director of FMN, said: "The proposed transaction is part of our global growth strategy; which is aligned with our vision to not only be an industry leader but also, a national champion for Nigeria in the Food and Agro-allied industries."

Digital platforms appeal to large spectrum of Nigerian consumers – experts

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



Digital and social media platforms are moving beyond their traditional role to offer big and small brands new ways to connect with their audiences, including streaming, banking and shopping on e-commerce websites. Social networking and social commerce drive an increasing portion of companies' marketing revenue.

According to report by DataReportal, in 2020, Nigeria recorded about 85.49 million internet users, and 27.00 million of these users are active on social media platforms. In January 2021, the number of users increased by 19 million (+22%), leading to 104.4 million internet users and 33.00 million social media users.

In light of the continuous rise in internet penetration and social media usage in Nigeria, **MARKETING EDGE**, the foremost brand and advertising magazine, interviewed experts in the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Industry on their views on how media platforms appeal to Nigerian consumers.

Giving his views on the development, Dipo Mohammed, a PR Consultant, said that average Nigerians are looking for platforms where they can get information on-the-go and interact real time by sending feedback. He explained that digital platforms provide such.

His words: "If you look at the dynamics, an average person has a phone and consumes information through social media platforms. The traditional media like TV, Newspaper and Radio are dwindling because whatever you are putting out there has already been seen on social media. Whatever is on TV can be gotten through Netflix, Boomplay, Sportify and also streaming online, there is more content online because while you are still planning, developing content for traditional media, the content is already up on social media."

Explaining why brands leverage digital more than the traditional media, Mr. Mohammed said: "Brands now leverage digital more than traditional media because if you look at the population of Nigeria, more than 60% is below 35 years, and for most brands that is their target audience. Even people in their fifties and sixties are now looking at young people to determine how they do things. What is trending is what young people are doing, and for older people to do those things, they have to look at the younger people."

Digital platforms are fast and give room for instant feedback. TV and Radio are all platforms, but people consume content through digital media because it brings fast information and you can always get second party opinions as compared to TV where you can hardly get that. So, social media is very fast-paced."

On his part, Omotayo Johnson, Group Head, Creative Services, SO&U said social media created more connections between brands and their consumers than traditional media.

Hear said: "Electronic and social media appeal to Nigerian consumers more than the traditional media do. People are more connected to brands, and also the new media possibility of targeting consumers in terms of content makes it livelier."

"Consequently, new media has the power of going viral and well spread; it's economical, analytic and, of course, encourages two-way communication between the media platforms and consumers."

In the same vein, Austin Efenamokwu, CEO, Ubiquity Media Limited, said digital platforms remain the biggest in the post-COVID-19 era.

In his words: "I think digital platforms remain the biggest platforms for consumers. Social media has created what they call the soulmate media phenomenon. Before now, you would just wake up in the morning to look at your regular go-to platforms to know what is happening on Facebook or Instagram. But the COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything; people now use digital media to view what is happening in the industry, lifestyle etc."

"Mobile phones, for example, play more roles in our lives than ever before; from your bank transactions, to e-commerce, logistics etc. The digital platforms would be for me the most compelling platform that became a go-to touchpoint during the period of the pandemic."

"The rate at which internet users keep increasing in Nigeria, we are going to see even more social media tools over time that will drive audiences to action and counter any losses in ad spend."

Samsung expects rise in profits by 52%, amidst global chip shortage

Technology giant Samsung Electronics has said it expects to post a 52% jump in profit for the last three months of 2021, amidst the global chip shortage. Samsung is one of the world's biggest manufacturers of semiconductors. The world's biggest memory chip maker estimates that it made \$11.5bn in the period. This would be its highest fourth quarter operating profit in four years.

According to BBC News, the company's earnings were boosted by strong demand for server memory chips and higher profit margins in its chip contract

manufacturing business.

“Samsung is well placed to profit from the record-breaking demand for PCs and electronics,” technology analyst Sam Reynolds told the BBC.

He also highlighted that the firm had benefited from currency fluctuations: “The Korean won continues to depreciate, making Korea’s exports more attractive on the global market.”

Samsung’s spending on such things as employees’ bonuses and marketing for its smartphone business were seen as reasons for it missing the market forecast.

In recent months, the global shortage of semiconductors has been causing major disruptions for manufacturers, from carmakers that have had to suspend production to Apple warning that iPhone shipments would be delayed.

Investors are also watching the company’s chip manufacturing operation in Xi’an, central China. The city has been in lockdown since 23 December due to a coronavirus outbreak.

Samsung said last week that it would “temporarily adjust operations” at its sites in Xi’an but gave no further details of how the measures could impact the production of microchips.

In November, Samsung announced that it had chosen a site close to the US city of Taylor in Texas for its new \$17bn computer chip plant. The plant is expected to be operational by the second half of 2024. It is the South Korean electronics giant’s biggest-ever US investment.

Shares in Samsung Electronics were trading around 1.8% higher in Seoul on Friday.



FG rescinds Twitter suspension after 222 days, N546.5b economic losses

The Twitter ban in Nigeria has been lifted by the Federal government after 222 days of inactivity with a record of N546.5 billion losses to the economy.

The decision to rescind the suspension was announced in a statement by the Chairman Technical Committee, Nigeria-Twitter Engagement and Director-General National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi.

According to him, the Federal Government directed him to inform the public that President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the lifting of the ban recently.

The statement reads: “The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) directs me to inform the public that President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, has approved the lifting of the suspension of Twitter operation in Nigeria effective from 12 am, 13th January 2022,” the statement read.

“The approval was given following a memo written to the President by the Honourable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof Isa Ali Ibrahim. In the Memo, the minister updated and requested the President’s approval for the lifting based on the

Technical Committee Nigeria-Twitter Engagement’s recommendation.”

Abdullahi also noted in the statement that Twitter has agreed to set “a legal entity in Nigeria during the first quarter of 2022.” The establishment of Twitter’s legal entity, according to the statement, is the social media giant’s “first step in demonstrating its long-term commitment to Nigeria.”

It would be recalled that the Federal Government announced the suspension of Twitter on the 4th of June 2021, after the social media platform deleted a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Telecommunication companies had on June 5 blocked access to Twitter after receiving a directive from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to that effect.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari in his Independence Day speech hinted that the ban would continue until Twitter is registered in Nigeria, has a physical presence, and representation.

Also, the Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Festus Keyamo said Twitter had agreed to the nation’s conditions for the suspension to be lifted.



Microsoft's Metaverse plans get clearer with its \$68.7 billion Activision acquisition

Microsoft, the giant multinational technology corporation's plan to acquire Activision Blizzard for the sum of \$68.7 billion is the biggest deal in the space since the tech industry collectively shifted its attention to the Metaverse in 2021.

Recall that Meta formerly Facebook appeared to be the standard-bearer, with its Oculus virtual reality platform and augmented reality development work targeting its billions of Facebook and Instagram users.

But now that Microsoft has added Activision Blizzard's large roster of popular game titles like Call of Duty, World of Warcraft, and Overwatch to its Azure cloud, the deal immediately gives Microsoft the edge in the next phase of gaming and the virtual assets that populate the various game environments.

Phil Spencer, Microsoft Gaming CEO, in a statement said: "The fantastic franchises across Activision Blizzard will accelerate our plans for Cloud Gaming, allowing more people in more places around the world to participate in the Xbox community using phones, tablets, laptops and other devices you already own."

Cloud services, which provide high-speed access to software applications regardless of location, are among the pillars of the emerging metaverse and its growing array of VR and AR devices. As of now, two of Microsoft's primary consumer-facing cloud competitors of note are Google Cloud and Amazon Web Services, neither of which has a significant internal foothold in gaming. The acquisition also means that Microsoft will likely revisit the cloud deal Activision Blizzard signed with Google Cloud in 2020, with Microsoft's Azure cloud product the probable beneficiary.

The Activision Blizzard deal will also bring a huge new audience to Microsoft's Game Pass, which already



has 25 million subscribers. Currently, Call of Duty, the studio's most popular game franchise, has roughly 100 million players.

"Upon close [of the deal], we will offer as many Activision Blizzard games as we can within Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, both new titles and games from Activision Blizzard's incredible catalog," Spencer said.

The deal locks in the content engine for Microsoft's metaverse future

In previous years, Microsoft's gaming efforts have had mixed success with its attempts to compete with consoles like Sony's PlayStation console and game studios like Electronic Arts (EA), Nintendo, and Epic Games. With the acquisition of Activision Blizzard, Microsoft immediately becomes one of the most important players in the content portion of the gaming space.

So far, Activision Blizzard's footprint in the VR realm has been mostly experimental, with one notable experience being the Call Of Duty: Infinite Warfare Jackal Assault VR experience, which was released a few years ago for PlayStation VR users.

Although Spencer touched on the Metaverse in 2021 as an area of focus, he declined to confirm any VR plans.

Spencer speaking to a Protocol, a tech news site said: "I want to be able to experience the things I own on any screen that can render those I want to be able to have the experiences I have anywhere and it requires a lot of cloud infrastructure to make that happen."

Despite the dearth of VR content from its new acquisition, Microsoft has been at the forefront of supporting the VR space on the hardware end through its wide-ranging Mixed Reality line of headsets and partnerships. That foothold in VR offers an easy path toward merging Microsoft's existing Metaverse interests with the more traditional gaming fare of Activision Blizzard.

As the next phase of the internet gradually unfolds in VR and AR, Microsoft's newly robust entertainment profile and deep work in immersive platforms will give it the advantage as gaming moves from screen-based interactions to immersive experiences.

Apple makes history as first public company to hit \$3 trillion capitalisation

Apple's market capitalisation hit \$3 trillion during the trading day on Jan. 3. It thus became the first public company to reach that level of capitalisation. Apple has raced to a \$3 trillion market value from \$1 trillion in just 41 months. The company's stock-market valuation topped \$1 trillion in August 2018 and \$2 trillion in August 2020.

The iPhone maker is the first public company that has ever been as big as to account for 7% of the S&P 500 Index. Apple pulled ahead of its closest rival, Microsoft which caught up a few months ago. Other close public companies are Google owner, Alphabet, which like oil behemoth, Saudi Aramco and e-commerce pacesetter Amazon.com are either at \$2 trillion or less than \$2 trillion.

Despite that surge and significant risks, the technology giant run by Tim Cook can continue to evade the law of large numbers.

Apple's revenue, \$366 billion in the most recent fiscal year, is in the same ballpark as the GDP of Israel or Hong Kong. The company returned nearly \$200 billion to investors through share buybacks and dividends last year, more than the entire market value of any but the top 40 or so groups in the S&P 500.

For more than a decade leading up to 2019, the company's shares typically traded at a price-to-earnings ratio discount to the broader market. That's no longer the case, but today's stock price doesn't look badly overstretched. At roughly 30 times earnings, it's only a little richer than the S&P 500 overall. An enterprise value of about 8 times revenue makes Apple cheaper than, say, Microsoft. Adjusting for one year's forecast growth, per Refinitiv, provides the only hint that Cook has his work cut out: A higher price-earnings-to-growth or PEG ratio suggests more demanding expectations for Apple than for most other tech giants.

TikTok is an emerging tech for brand visibility-experts

By Oghale Mafuru



TikTok app is one of the fastest-growing apps in the world recording massive strides in the social media landscape. With millions of active users around the globe, advertising and marketing professionals have described it as a gold mine for brand owners and managers for audience targeting and brand visibility.

Marketing and advertising expert, Ikechukwu Onyekwelu said target mapping is vital so that brands can effectively align messages that match the demographics and psychographics of the target audience.

"TikTok is the ideal platform if you're looking to target a younger audience. If you have the time to invest in making fun and creative content, you can increase your brand's awareness in far less time than it would take on other social media platforms. Target audience mapping is important. Each brand has to be clear about whom they're talking to."

Attention retention is a vital aspect of communicating a brand's message to the target audience, Short videos that are entertaining get the eyeballs.

"Attention span is shrinking and the younger generation prefers short videos. This is for brand promotion though. They stimulate dopamine and keep up wanting more", Onyekwelu observed.

He also noted that TikTok offers paid advertising to brands so that the platform comes with precise targeting to ensure that ads are reaching the right users that would be interested in your offer.

Acknowledging the massive reach of

the video-sharing social media app, Promise Oduh, Business Unit Director, MediaReach OMD Nigeria, asserted that Tiktok has gained dominance in market share globally and its users have continued to grow in a numbers.

"This makes it a viable platform for brand awareness," he said.

The IMC practitioner stated that Tiktok enables users to create short and exciting video contents that could make individuals become brand ambassadors.

"What TIKTOK has done is to create a sort of a platform for content co-creation; co-creation in the sense that it is a platform that quickly makes the GenZ more like an influencer. Do not forget that it is a platform where you create short videos of yourself and you can actually do so many things with Tiktok. So, what has happened is that the platform has enabled a lot of GenZ to create what I would call a brand for themselves.

"What it means in itself is that when you create videos with Tiktok and post, people will begin to associate with you and you can become an influencer on your own and brands will begin to use you. They can be brand ambassadors" he concluded.

Launched in September 2016, TikTok has exploded in popularity over the past six years.

The latest TikTok statistics report by DataReportal shows that as of January 2021, the platform has 689 million monthly active users worldwide making TikTok the seventh-largest platform in terms of users, ahead of others that have been around much longer such as Snapchat, Pinterest, and Twitter.

ExxonMobil guns for zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

By Dele Ojo



ExxonMobil has announced its ambition to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for operated assets by 2050, backed by a comprehensive approach to developing detailed emission-reduction roadmaps for major facilities and assets.

According to the company, the report provides details of how ExxonMobil's business strategy is resilient when tested against a range of Paris-aligned net-zero scenarios, including the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2018 Special Report and the International Energy Agency's Net-Zero by 2050 scenario.

"ExxonMobil's Outlook for Energy, which is based on current policy and technology trends, continues to be the basis for the company's business plans and investment decisions. In the Advancing

Climate Solutions report, the company outlines how its short- and medium-term business plans are adjustable to developments in policy and technology and how it uses signposts and leading indicators to evaluate the need for any changes in future years", the company explained in a statement.

Sound government policies, the oil giant said, will accelerate the deployment of key technologies at the pace and scale required to support a net-zero future. ExxonMobil continues to support an explicit price on carbon to establish market incentives and encourage investments in lower-emissions technologies.

While also committed to helping customers reduce their greenhouse emissions by investing in carbon capture and storage, hydrogen, and biofuels, ExxonMobil said Bio-based feed and plastic waste streams provide further opportunities for lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

"ExxonMobil is committed to playing a leading role in the energy transition, and Advancing Climate Solutions articulates our deliberate approach to helping society reach a lower-emissions future," said Darren Woods, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer. "We are developing comprehensive roadmaps to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our operated assets around the world, and where we are not the operator, we are working with our partners to achieve similar emission-reduction results."

"As we invest in these important technologies, we will advocate for well-designed, high-impact policies that can accelerate the deployment of market-based, cost-effective solutions," said Woods. "We believe our strategy is unique among industry and enables us to succeed across multiple scenarios. We will create shareholder value by adjusting investments between our existing low-cost portfolio and new lower-emission business opportunities to match the pace of the energy transition."

The net-zero ambition is contained in the company's Advancing Climate Solutions – 2022 Progress Report, formerly known as the Energy & Carbon Summary. The net-zero aspiration applies to Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions and builds on ExxonMobil's 2030 emission-reduction plans, which include net-zero emissions for Permian Basin operations and ongoing investments in lower-emission solutions in which it has extensive experience, including carbon capture and storage, hydrogen and biofuels.

Royal Dutch Shell plc changes name to Shell plc

By Dele Ojo

Shell plc has confirmed its name has changed from Royal Dutch Shell plc to Shell plc. It disclosed that the decision to change the company's name was made by the Board on December 20, 2021, while this change takes effect, January 25, 2022.

Euronext Amsterdam, the London Stock Exchange, and the New York Stock Exchange have been informed of the name change and it is anticipated that Euronext Amsterdam and the London Stock Exchange reflect the change of name on January 25, 2022, while the New York Stock Exchange follows on Monday, January 31, 2022.

The company, in a statement, assured shareholders that their shareholdings will be unaffected by the change of name and existing share certificates should be

retained as they will remain valid for all purposes and no new share certificates will be issued.

On Dec 20, 2021, Shell sets out an expected timetable of Simplification of the company's share structure and aligns its tax residence with its country of incorporation in the UK.

As a result, the Board decided to change the company's name to Shell plc which will be implemented in January 2022, with a further announcement to be made at the time.

"Today's decisions follow the completion of the consultation with the Centrale Ondernemingsraad van Shell Nederland (Central Staff Council of Shell Netherlands) and the Shell European Works Council, and come after a December 10, 2021 shareholder vote giving



the Board overwhelming approval for the necessary amendments to the Company's Articles of Association, which have been adopted with immediate effect", Shell notified then.

The ISINs, SEDOLs, CUSIPs, and ticker symbols of the company's A shares and B shares and A ADSs and B ADSs will remain unchanged for the time being but will change in accordance with the remaining steps of the Simplification as set out in the announcement released on December 20, 2021. The Company's Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) remains 21380068P1DRHMJ8KU70.

Experts bemoan adulterated PMS' impact on national brand perception

By **Oghale Mafuru**

Coming on the heels of the current economic and social crisis caused by the infiltration of adulterated Premium Motor Spirit, PMS into Nigeria, practitioners in the Integrated Marketing Communication industry have expressed worry that the occurrence will further debase the country's fragile image in the comity of nations.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, the practitioners who described the importation of adulterated fuel as a national disaster affirmed that corruption has continued to rob the country in diverse ways.

Former Vice-Chairman of Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, NIPR, Rivers State, Lawrence Dike who blamed the sad incidence on corruption affirmed that aside from the economic devastation it has caused, it put a strain on the already battered image of the nation in the international arena.

"It has compounded the fight against corruption. We are losing the fight against corruption. It is a dent in the national brand image. If you check the Nigeria brand index, I don't think it is very encouraging. Corruption is very high. It shows the system isn't working and when the system isn't working especially in the Oil and Gas sector, then we have a huge problem. He said

According to him, the economic devastation has bred distrust for the government which will discourage investment.

"It is not a good one for the brand image and it will not encourage investors. One of the cardinal points that will drive investment is the brand personality. What does the brand belief, the culture, the ease of doing business, and all that? If corruption is so high, then it is going to de-market the country. Our reputation has been marred. Considering that Nigeria sits in the cartel that regulates Oil and Gas, that's OPEC and we are having this kind of challenge. What will be our reputation in the comity of nations? Corruption is deepening and killing our reputation."

While stating that the unfortunate occurrence was caused by sabotage at the



points of entry, the PR expert noted that the failure of the government to make the refineries operate optimally has been the bane of the country's growth potential.

"We have not solved the issue of refineries. Now, we have the importation of bad fuel after the government was able to contain the fuel subsidy. It goes to show that the fight against corruption as far as I am concerned has not been won", he concluded.

Speaking in the same vein, Communication expert and Public Affairs Analyst, Aliogo Ugo expressed displeasure over the recurring cases of corrupt practices in the country which have negatively affected the country both nationally and internationally.

While pointing out that the fuel emergency crisis is a bad signal for the country, Aliogo Ugo noted that despite calls for serious punitive measures to check future occurrences, it appears it will be swept under the carpet with no one held accountable.

"The petrol that is being imported has high methanol content. This is a slap on NNPC. It is a slap on the Federal Ministry of Petroleum. The NNPC GMD must be called to explain. Sadly, nobody is held reliable. In a sane society, the Group Managing Director should be called to question. Nobody is held accountable. Some people are profiteering from this. It

is a dent in our reputation.

"Nigeria is among the top producers in the world. We have a controlling stake in OPEC. How can we explain the importation of fake petrol? What this occurrence shows is that we are not growing as a nation. It shows the failure of our governance in the area of ensuring that we have adequate petroleum products in the country. It is not a good omen for Nigeria". He submitted

Commenting on the economic impact, he said: Let's stop this idea of sending our crude to Europe to refine. It is causing a lot of economic strain on our revenue. How much do we have in our oil reserve? We need to focus on refining. Now we have the Dangote refinery coming up. NNPC does not want to repair the refineries because the focus is on the Dangote refinery. Dangote refinery has not kicked off.

Meanwhile, the importation of the adulterated fuel has been accompanied by unpleasant experiences for motorists and commuters who had to endure long queues at fuel stations and severe damage to their car engines.

The Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mallam Kyari has disclosed that a major investigation to unravel the circumstance surrounding the importation and supply of the adulterated product has commenced.

Tastee Fried Chicken tackles hunger with health-focused, charity-led initiatives

By **Zion Rufus**



To reiterate its commitment to bettering the society and promoting the health and well-being of its teeming customers, leading quick service restaurant, Tastee Fried Chicken has taken strategic steps to tackle hunger in the state through its Tackle Hunger and Walk-A-Thon initiatives.

The recently concluded Walk-A-Thon which held recently is a charity led initiative launched to create awareness, promote general health and well-being, and to give back to the society while encouraging others to do the same.

Led by the Group Managing Director, Tastee Fried Chicken, Mrs. Olayinka Pamela Adedayo, the 60-minute walk kicked off from the TFC Headquarters on Oyin Jolayemi Street in the heart of Victoria Island through Ademola Adetokunbo, Ajose Adeogun, and back to the Headquarters through Oko Awo.

Commenting on the Tackle Hunger initiative, Executive Chairman, Tastee Fried Chicken, Adekunle Adedayo said: "We know how difficult it is for some people to feed even once a day, speaking less of affording a healthy three square meal. So, the Tackle Hunger initiative is

just our way of giving back to society, we have mapped out a schedule that ensures that every month we reach out to the less privileged and orphanages. This is something that we have been doing, but this time around, we are doubling it because we want others to be aware that there is a need for us all to tackle hunger."

Chief Operating Officer, Tastee Fried Chicken, Fowoke Akinleye who in her remarks urged other corporate bodies to join in the fight against hunger by gifting meals this Christmas noted that provisions have been made for meal vouchers which can be redeemed at any TFC outlet.

She said: "We have always had something like this, but this is the first time we are calling it a walk-a-thon and we intend to do it every year going forward and we are tying it to charity. We want people to know that they can come to us and buy vouchers that they can give to anyone on the road and the vouchers can be used to get food at any of our outlets. The Tackle Hunger/ Gift a Tastee meal is also a major aspect of today's walk."

Buttressing the need to "put a smile" on someone's face this Christmas, Brand Manager, Tastee Fried Chicken, Onyeka Ezeamama noted that the initiatives were launched in strict adherence to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2: Zero Hunger by gifting meals and creating awareness, even as they as well promote the physical and mental well-being of the people.

Launched in 1996, Tastee Fried Chicken from De Tastee Group is a leading quick service restaurant, outdoor catering service, and home delivery hospitality outfit based in Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

With branches located strategically to provide a beautiful ambience for its diverse customers, TFC is known for its sumptuous meals which are produced in a very stringent hygienic environment.

Lagos State tackles mental health challenges, builds first-class facility

By **Abimbola Mohammed**

As part of its commitment to Lagosians, the Lagos State government has taken the bull by the horns in tackling mental health challenges in the state, while also demonstrating its commitment to healthcare services, research and rehabilitation by building a first-class mental health institution in Ketu Ejirin.

Speaking during the Lagos Mental Health Conference with the theme: “Responding to the Mental Health Needs of a 21st-Century Megacity” at the Landmark Event Centre, Oniru, Lagos, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the state governor represented by Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, his Deputy said the state is building a 500-bed psychiatric facility and 1000-bed rehabilitation facility.

He noted that the facilities, when completed, will be one of the largest in West Africa, if not in sub-Saharan Africa.

“Our commitment to mental health is symbolized by the development of the Lagos State Mental Health Policy and Lagos State New Mental Health Law which was passed in 2019. This law provides for the protection of those suffering from stigmatization because of their illness and sets the framework for developing an effective and robust Mental Health Service for all Lagosians.

“We recognize the difficulties in accessing mental health services not necessarily because of non-availability of these services, even though the existing institutions and resources that provide these services are stretched to the fullest. More important factors are the lack of courage to come forward and seek help or insufficient awareness of where these services can be accessed.

“As a government, we are working to partner and collaborate with other sectors to create a strong network of operations, facilities, and programmes that will address some of these challenges.

“Our goal is to reduce by one-third, premature death through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being, in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goal for Health,” he explained.

Recall that stakeholders in the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) had earlier reiterated their commitment towards proving mental health inclusivity in the industry to ensure that they continue to deliver quality and top-notch solutions.

During the President’s Dinner and Awards night, Femi Adelus, the president of the Media Independent Practitioner Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) express the support of the association towards creating awareness around mental health.

His words: “As a leading professional association, MIPAN will be supporting existing initiatives that continue to build awareness around mental health for improved inclusiveness in Nigeria from 2022, to encourage inclusiveness, increase awareness, support technical initiatives/ tools that address the issues, provide resources and platforms that reduce the native impacts and reduce the social stigma associated with people facing this challenge.”

According to him, MIPAN will be partnering with renowned Dr. Maymuah Kadir this year in specific activities around mental health to drive awareness and management to improve inclusiveness around mental health in Nigeria.

As for Steve Babaeko, President of the Association of



Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), said: “We are starting from a holistic national point of view. We created campaigns that will bring more attention for people to care more about their mental health, and went one step further by enlisting ‘Mentally Aware Nigeria’ and other professionals for our members and people who work for us to consult in the most professional and confidential situation.”

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and can contribute to his or her community.

According to BMC Psychiatry, Globally, 450 million people are predicted to be suffering from psychiatric disorders. However, in our day-to-day activities, mental, physical and social health are the necessary components in every individual.

In addition, according to a report by WHO, it says globally more than 25% of people are experienced mental illness at some point in their lifetime. The Nationwide Institution of Mental Health (NIMH) in the United States also estimates that 1 in 5 people (20%) would be affected by this condition at some point in their lives.

Mental health becomes more challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many people’s mental health and created new barriers for people already suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders.

FirstBank rewards customers in *Transact and Win Promo*

Getting rewarded for spending money is a dream that is probably going to remain exciting for many people. In a two month Transact and Win campaign that started on November 22, 2021, First Bank of Nigeria Limited is rewarding several customers for carrying out transactions on its Firstmonie Wallet application.

The e-wallet is useful for conveniently paying utility bills, purchasing airtime and data, transferring and receiving money, and many other digital transactions. Just for using the mobile-friendly wallet app, Customers got rewarded with mouth-watering prizes both in cash and kind. The number of transactions done on the app determines the price a user could win.

100 customers who had done 1-15 transactions through Firstmonie Wallet within the month won N10,000 cash prize; 53 25kg bags of rice and 50 units of standing fans were also won by customers who carried out 16 – 30 transactions with the Firstmonie Wallet; 2 units of power generating sets, 1 unit of Air Conditioning systems and 1 unit LED Televisions went to customers who carried 31 – 50 transactions; while 2 units of iPhone 12 were won by customers who had carried out over 50 transactions on the app within the month.

Victor Nnanna Onyedikachi, a student of the University of Abuja was one of the winners of the iPhone 12, and while receiving his gift, he admitted that he did not expect to win the prize. “I used the Firstmonie Wallet App, and just like that, I was told that I had qualified. I did not believe it until I saw it myself. I am truly grateful to FirstBank” he said.

Other winners also expressed their pleasure at being rewarded for using a completely user-friendly app. “There is no issue of service error when using it for any transaction. The service is seamless and the app is easy to use” one of them said.

The Group Executive, e-Business &

Firstmonie Wallet

FirstBank Since 1894

Transact & Win on Firstmonie Wallet

Transact more on Firstmonie Wallet to win amazing prizes

Promo runs till 22 January 2022

GET IT ON Google Play | Download on the App Store

Air Conditioners | iPhone 12 | Generators | Bags of Rice | Cash Prizes

All money, now on Firstmonie.
Terms and conditions apply

-You First-

Retail products, Mr Chuma Ezirim had noted that the promo was targeted at appreciating customers for their patronage; and in line with the Bank's December-is-a-Vybe campaign. “This promo is hinged on the need to appreciate our customers for their patronage, especially as we have had an increased engagement and usages of the various services offered by our mobile-friendly wallet product,” Ezirim said when the promo was being launched.

Interestingly, the promo also includes new customers and users of the app. By simply downloading the mobile app from the play store, or using the *894# USSD string to sign up, anyone can qualify for the promo. The promo runs till January 22, 2022, so what are you waiting for as you could be the next winner of any of these fantastic prizes.

As the premier Bank in West Africa and the leading financial inclusion services provider in Nigeria for over 127 years, First Bank of Nigeria Limited has remained at the forefront of promoting digital payment in the country, and the Firstmonie Wallet is one of the channels for digital transactions.

Little wonder FirstBank was named “Most Valuable Bank Brand in Nigeria” six times in a row (2011 – 2016) by the globally renowned “The Banker Magazine” and “Best Retail Bank in Nigeria” for seven consecutive years (2011 – 2017) by the Asian Banker International. FirstBank also bagged the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards and “Best Bank in Nigeria” by Global Finance for 15 years.

GM loses century-old US. auto sales leadership to Toyota



General Motors Co, the leading automaker in the United States has relinquished its leadership position in the U. S auto industry to Toyota Motor Corp after it was outsold by the Japanese automaker in the United States in 2021. This was the first time since 1931 that the Detroit automaker has not led U.S. auto sales. Toyota sold 2.332 million vehicles in the United States in 2021, compared with 2.218 million for General Motors, the automakers said on Tuesday.

According to Reuters, GM's U.S. sales were down 13% for 2021 – and down 43% in the fourth quarter – while Toyota was up 10% for the year. GM last had lower sales in 2010 at 2.202 million. In 2020,

GM's U.S. sales totaled 2.55 million, compared with Toyota's 2.11 million and Ford Motor Co's 2.04 million.

Commenting on the accomplishment Jack Hollis, Senior Vice President, said the automaker is "grateful" for its loyal customers, but "being No. 1 is never a focus or priority." The Japanese automaker

does not see it as sustainable that it can retain its U.S. sales lead and had no plans to use the 2021 accomplishment in any kind of advertising, he added. Toyota had been credited by analysts for weathering the chip shortage better than other automakers.

GM spokesman Jim Cain said the Detroit automaker had a very strong sales year in the United States in full-size SUVs and pickup trucks as it has focused on profitability, and as the supply of semiconductors improves, so will sales.

"I wouldn't rush out if I were (Toyota), and get a 'We're No. 1' tattoo," he said.

GM under Chief Executive Mary Barra

also has emphasized profitability over volume, abandoning such money-losing markets as Europe and Russia.

GM is however hopeful and expects U.S. economic growth will boost U.S. total light-duty vehicle industry sales from around 15 million in 2021 to around 16 million in 2022.

IHS Markit forecasts U.S. sales are expected to reach nearly 15.5 million in 2022. Toyota sees industry sales jumping to 16.5 million this year, with demand even higher if the industry can boost production further, with its sales topping 2.4 million.

Last year was marred by a shortage of semiconductors used heavily in vehicles, forcing automakers to focus on their most profitable models.

For the entire industry, sales finished 2021 at just under 15 million vehicles, according to Wards Intelligence, with the annual sales rate in December finishing at 12.44 million. The full-year number was well below the five-year average of 17.3 million from 2015-2019.

GM has been the largest seller of vehicles in the United States since 1931, when it surpassed Ford, according to data from industry publication Automotive News.

Rolls-Royce records historic sales in 2021

Rolls-Royce, the British luxury carmaker, declared that in 2021, it sold the highest number of cars since its 117-year history. Torsten Müller-Ötvös Rolls-Royce CEO made this revelation in an online presentation on Monday, January 10. He said the luxury carmaker sold 5,586 vehicles to customers in more than 50 countries, the largest number in its 117-year history despite all the volatility wrought by the pandemic.

"In the luxury sector as a whole, the struggle was not so much focused on attempting to find customers, but rather producing enough product to satisfy huge customer demand," Müller-Ötvös said.

He said sales hit all-time records in most regions, including China and the

Americas. He said further that sales soared 49% to a record high despite the global coronavirus pandemic, as demand worldwide for luxury vehicles surged.

Premium and luxury car sales have been growing more broadly in key global markets such as China and the United States as pandemic travel restrictions have left wealthy consumers with more disposable income.

He said the carmaker's British plant in Goodwood was running at close to maximum capacity and its order books were full well into the third quarter of 2022.

"If you order a Rolls-Royce today, you will expect to take delivery of it about a year from now," he said.



Mercedes will assemble EQS electric sedan in India



Mercedes-Benz plans to start local assembly of its EQS electric sedan in India this year, as part of a broader push to electrify its portfolio in Asia, said Martin Schwenk, the brand's India chief.

According to Schwenk, Mercedes, which will be the first global luxury automaker to assemble EVs in India, expects to start selling the locally

assembled EQS in the Indian market in the fourth quarter of this year.

The company started selling imported models of its EQC electric crossover in India in 2020 and has been developing an "EV roadmap" for the country over the past two years, though the plans are at an early stage, Schwenk said.

"Now we bring a car from an imported to a domestically produced vehicle because

it has underlying volume and product potential."

Sales of EVs, especially luxury electric cars, make up a fraction of total vehicle sales in India, chiefly because of low demand and high prices, as well as a lack of a local supply chain, including battery manufacturing.

Further, high import duties on EVs India taxes fully built imported cars at as high as 100 percent are a deterrent for companies. Tesla has been lobbying the Indian government over the past year to slash import rates on EVs to as low as 40 percent.

Schwenk did not comment on how much Mercedes would invest in its EV push in India but said the company has invested 4 billion rupees (\$54 million) in the country over the past two years, taking its total investments there to \$351 million.

Globally, Mercedes's parent Daimler plans to invest more than 40 billion Euros (\$47 billion) by 2030 to develop battery EVs as it prepares to take on Tesla, the company said in July.



Tesla set to take over US luxury car sales crown

Tesla, the trailblazing electric car maker is poised to take over the US luxury car sales crown from BMW. According to Automotive News, Tesla, which does not separate domestic sales figures from global numbers, may surpass BMW as America's best-selling luxury car brand if data emanating from US new car registrations is anything to go by. Industry watchers have also indicated that Tesla's sales performance is likely to receive a renewed boost as soon as it starts production at a nearly completed factory in Austin, Texas.

Tesla's sales performance is a big challenge to BMW, Mercedes, and Toyota/Lexus, the 'big three' in the US luxury car sales market. Based on sales data, BMW was ranked the most popular luxury brand in the U.S. for 2021, a position it is holding for the third consecutive year having

displaced Mercedes, which occupied the top spot in the three years before that. Though Lexus has never been number one, it has continued to give both BMW and Mercedes a run for their money.

According to statistics posted by statista.com, "in 2021, BMW was the leading luxury car brand in the United States, recording sales of over 336,600 units. It was followed closely by its main competitor Tesla, which climbed up in the ranking during 2021, recording estimated sales of over 313,400 vehicles." Lexus had 304,475 sales with Mercedes trailing in the fourth spot at 276,012, in part due to its less effective handling of the semiconductor supply crisis.

However, unlike the 'traditional three' Tesla does not exclude domestic sales from the world's numbers. The new car registration data from the United States

will likely give a clearer picture of the sales.

With over 42,000 Tesla registrations in 2021, it would likely outdo BMW – if it sold as many cars or more in December. Responding to inquiries from Automotive News, Jessica Caldwell of Edmunds remarked that even if Tesla doesn't clinch sales honors, it's still "remarkable that they have risen to the top in a short period, considering collapse seemed entirely possible a few years ago."

Citing data from financial firm Experian, Automotive News shows that the latest registration numbers for November 2021 suggest Tesla's sales supremacy. As of November last year, 303,246 Tesla vehicles were registered in the United States. In the same period, Munich-based BMW shifted 336,644 units.

The automotive news publication does note, however, that there is a difference between sales figures and vehicle registrations, as a car can be sold one month and registered the next.

Toyota launches new Noah, Voxy Minivans in Japan, new Land Cruiser delivery in 2026



Toyota Motor Corporation has revealed its Japan wide launch of its completely redesigned “Noah” and “Voxy” minivans, with various models. The Noah and Voxy are compact cab wagons developed in pursuit of the pure minivan fun, with sliding doors for easy entry and exit, and roomy, comfortable cabin spaces for lots of passengers and cargo. As cars supported and loved by Japanese families, they are still among our most popular cars, particularly with families.

According to the company, the new fourth-generation Noah and Voxy have been reborn as minivans with more comfort, convenience, and peace of mind than ever to encourage users to load up their hobbies and toys and hit the road.

“Using the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA) platform for their basic structure, these minivans were developed for a deeper sense of happiness that the outstanding packaging and ease-of-use their generations of models have always brought, and to achieve even greater minivan appeal through use of the latest advanced fixtures.

“Designed based on three unique worldviews that further emphasise their features, the Noah is built on the concepts of ‘majestic, modern, and high quality’ combined with ‘mainstream and aggressive,’ while the Voxy goes for ‘leading edge and unique’”, it said in a statement.

The new Noah and Voxy have been reborn as everybody’s minivans, with more comfort, convenience, and peace of mind to provoke a deeper sense of happiness that only minivans can offer.

In addition to the excellent packaging unique to minivans, the ease of use is

further increased, with universal steps and free stop rear hatch doors using karakuri mechanism.

New models come equipped with the latest advanced fixtures, including Toyota Safety Sense and Toyota Teammate. They also come with exceptional dynamic performance, including the new-generation series parallel hybrid system.

Welcab models (assisted mobility vehicles) also enhance the model line-up by dramatically improving the range of wheelchair-adapted models and expanding the configuration for type-designated vehicles.

Meanwhile, the company has told its customers in Japan that they will have to wait for up to four years to take delivery of its new Land Cruiser SUV. The world’s biggest carmaker says the delay is not related to the global chip shortage or the supply chain crisis, though it refuses to comment on the reasons behind the long delivery time.

The company says it is slowing production at up to 11 plants in Japan due to rising Covid-19 infections among its workers and at parts suppliers.

“As Land Cruiser is very popular, not just in Japan but around the world, we apologise it is expected to take a long time before we can deliver the product,” Toyota said on its website.

“There is a possibility it could take up to four years if you order now. We will continue to shorten the delivery time and we appreciate your understanding.”

The company also said “This delay is not related to current semiconductor shortage or supply chain issue.”



VW records 10-year low sales in 2021

Volkswagen Group has recorded its lowest sales figures in 10 years in 2021.

The auto company said it made 8.9 million deliveries in 2021 thereby witnessing an 8.1% drop in sales as compared to previous years.

Blaming the occurrence on the chip crisis that rocked the auto industry last year, Klaus Zellmer said: “the huge effects of chips on production were not able to be fully compensated.” He described as “unusually challenging circumstances”, the conditions under which the company operated in the year under review. The carmaker said further that it expected supply chain conditions to remain volatile in the first half of this year.

Meanwhile, Daimler had earlier reported that Mercedes-Benz sales dropped 5% in 2021, losing its crown to BMW for the first time in five years as the premium carmaker with most vehicles sold worldwide.

BMW saw record deliveries of 2.21 million vehicles from the BMW brand, a success attributed in part to its ability to adapt to supply chain shortages.

Top female CMO appointments for 2021

By **Zion Rufus**

In 2020, about 47% of all Chief Marketing Officers (CMO) appointments were women, up from 43% in 2019 and 36% in 2018 according to the latest CMO Tenure Study from executive search firm Spencer Stuart. Women represented more than half (52%) of the incoming class of CMOs in 2020, an increase from the previous year. With not much significance in female CMO appointments in 2021, here is a list of our top amazons set to break new grounds as CMOs.

Adia Sowho — MTN

Following its decision to localize its management team, Nigerian telco giant, MTN in August 2021 appointed Adia Sowho as its first female Chief Marketing Officer (CMO). She is interim CEO at Thrive Agric, one of Nigeria's largest agri-tech startups. Prior to her current role, she was the VP of Growth and Managing Director, Nigeria for Migo, a machine learning-powered instant credit platform. At Migo, she grew the company's userbase to one million users and led its expansion to Brazil. Prior to that, she was the Director of Digital Business at 9mobile (formerly Etisalat Nigeria) where she partnered with startups to deliver mobile content, advertising, financial, and API services to the company's 23 million users.



Donna Tobin — DDB Worldwide

In May 2021, Omnicom's DDB Worldwide, a global marketing communications network, appointed Donna Tobin as its new Global Chief Marketing officer. With over two decades of agency and brand experience in marketing and advertising, Tobin has served global agencies and brands such as Arnold Worldwide, Grey and VaynerMedia, Ocean Spray, Hasbro and WPP's Kantar. She was the EVP of Marketing, Communications, Events and Partnerships at the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's) where she led the organization's new vision, mission, marketing and communications strategies, and the re-imagining of the 4A's virtual thought leadership events.

Emily Duskow — Leo Burnett

Global advertising agency, Leo Burnett appointed Emily Duskow as Chief Marketing Officer for its U.S. operations. Duskow's appointment marked her return to Leo Burnett, where she spent several years leading the Coca-Cola account team—culminating in the brand being named Ad Age's 2011 "Marketer of the Year"—prior to a successful tenure as VP, Director U.S. Growth, spurring the future direction for her career.

She joined Leo Burnett from Energy BBDO, where she spent the last three years at the helm of business development, architecting the teams and processes that led to significant global-scale wins and helping build and market new capabilities to drive organic growth.

Jane Wakely — PepsiCo

In November, PepsiCo announced Jane Wakely as its executive VP, chief consumer and marketing officer and chief growth officer, international foods. Wakely joined PepsiCo with 28 years of marketing experience at Procter & Gamble and at Mars, where since 2019 she served as CMO of Pet Nutrition, one of the largest divisions of Mars' \$40 billion portfolio. She was previously Global CMO of their Chocolate Division. She has operated globally and in highly complex product categories, brands and businesses across a variety of growth, turnaround and transformation challenges.

Antonia Wade — PwC

Multinational professional services network of firms, PwC in July announced Antonia Wade as its Global Chief Marketing Officer. Wade joined PwC with extensive experience as a marketing leader, having delivered significant commercial results and change for leading global organizations, including Capita, Thomson Reuters and Accenture.

Julia White — SAP

In January, Software giant, SAP appointed Julia White as its Chief marketing officer. White joined SAP after spending nearly 20 years at Microsoft Corporation where she led product marketing for Microsoft Azure over the past five years. Previously, she was responsible for product marketing for Microsoft Office 365 during the transition to the cloud.

Nigerian Breweries fortifies board, appoints Ighodalo, Anammah as Non-Executive Directors

By **Dele Ojo**



Nigerian Breweries Plc has appointed two accomplished Non-Executive Directors to further fortify its Board of Directors in a strategic move at consolidating its leadership in the country's brewing industry. The new appointments were conveyed to The Exchange by Uaboi G. Agbebaku, the Company Secretary at the weekend. The appointments take effect January 1, 2022.

According to the company, Asue Ighodalo joins the Board as a Non-Executive Director. Mr. Ighodalo is a lawyer with over 35 years of experience and is a founding partner of Banwo & Ighodalo, a leading full service law firm in Nigeria. His core areas of practice are Corporate Finance, Project Finance, Securities and Capital Markets, Energy & Natural Resources, Mergers & Acquisitions and Corporate Governance. He is recognised as a leading figure in corporate Nigeria and sits on the Boards of reputable organisations including the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, which he chairs and Sterling Bank Plc, which he also chairs.

Also, Juliet Anammah joins the Board as an Independent Non-Executive Director. Mrs. Anammah has over 30 years of professional experience covering Consulting, Consumer Goods, Sales, Marketing, E-Commerce and Sustainability.

She is currently the Chair Nigeria and Chief Group Sustainability Officer, Jumia, having previously held the role of Chief Executive Officer, Jumia. She was also the Managing Director, Accenture LLC in charge of the firm's Consumer Goods Practice, Retail and Transportation practice in West Africa. She serves on

the Boards of several local and international organisations, including Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc and Imperial Logistics, South Africa.

"The Board is glad to welcome Mr. Ighodalo and Mrs. Anammah to the team and looks forward to the wealth of experience, exposure and knowledge both of them will be adding to the Board and the Company", the company as stressed.

However, as a result of appointments, the Company's Board effective the 1st of January, 2022 shall be composed as follows: Chief K.B. Jamodu, CFR – Chairman; H. Essaadi (Dutch) – Managing Director/ Chief Executive; J. Anammah (Mrs); A.O. Aroyewun (Mrs); S. Hiemstra (Dutch); A. Ighodalo; R. Kleinjan (Dutch); N.O. Nwuneli (Mrs), MFR; I.M. Omoigui Okauru (Mrs), MFR; R. Pirmez (Belgian); S.L.M. Siemer (Dutch).

Recently the foremost brewing company unfolded plans to celebrate its 75 years anniversary of operation in Nigeria while the logo for the anniversary celebration with the theme "75 years of refreshing lives" was officially unveiled.

Nigerian Breweries Plc, a member of

the Heineken group is the pioneer and largest brewing company in Nigeria was incorporated in 1946 as "Nigerian Brewery Limited". In June 1949, the Company recorded a landmark when the first bottle of STAR lager beer rolled out of its Lagos Brewery bottling lines.

From a humble beginning in 1946, the company now has nine fully operational breweries from which its high-quality products are produced and distributed to all parts of Nigeria, in addition to the two malting plants in Aba and Kaduna. It also has Sales Offices and Distribution Centers across the country. For seven and half decades, the beer giant has produced iconic brands in the Nigerian market.

Nigerian Breweries Plc has a rich portfolio of high-quality brands that include Star Lager beer; Heineken, Gulder, Maltina, Fayrouz, Star, Climax, Legend extra stout, Amstel Malta, Goldberg, 33 Export, Life Continental, Malta Gold, Hi-Malt, More, Turbo King, and the recently launched Desperado.

As a major brewing company, the company encourages and continues to play major roles in, the establishment of ancillary businesses. These include manufacturers of bottles, cans, crown corks, labels, cartons, and plastic crates as well as service providers including those in the hospitality sector, distribution, transport, event management, advertising, and marketing communication.

Bunmi Adeniba joins Coca-Cola as new Marketing Director



Bunmi Adeniba, an experienced marketing professional and commercial operator with a strong bias for using consumer insights and her understanding of an end-to-end manufacturing process to harness value for multiple stakeholders, has been appointed as the new Marketing Director of Coca-Cola Nigeria Plc.

Prior to her current appointment,

Mrs. Adeniba, the Acting President of Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), was the Marketing Director of Unilever Nigeria. She is also the Vice-President of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA). The WFA Executive Committee brings together senior marketers and public affairs executives to reflect the dual mission of helping marketers be more effective and efficient in terms of their marketing spend, while helping brand owners protect and future-proof their license to operate through advocacy and effective advertising self-regulation.

Mrs. Adeniba has worked in several other FMCG companies in her chequered career trajectory. She is a customer focused professional with broad spectrum, cross functional work experience spanning brand building, new products and category development, supply chain/quality management and quality systems set up.

Her ability to quickly understand, interpret and apply strategic directions is believed to be highly remarkable and commendable. She has a great disposition and always willing to learn and share knowledge.

Mrs. Adeniba's over two decades experience spans across brand building, innovation design, and quality management system.

She has an MBA from Hult Business School, Boston and a certificate of Strategic Marketing Management from Harvard Business School, Massachusetts, USA.

She is a 2018 CSC Leader, a global programme for exceptional senior leaders selected from government, businesses and NGOs across the 53 countries of the commonwealth

Mrs. Adeniba is passionate about women empowerment and raising phenomenal leaders in the marketplace.

She has been recognised as one of the fifty Ladies in corporate Nigeria by Leading Ladies Africa and Brand communicator's top 50 women in marketing and communication in Nigeria.

Mrs. Adeniba holds membership with the Institute of Directors (IOD), National institute of Marketing (NIMN), Chartered institute of Marketing UK (MCIM), Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), and American Society of Quality (ASQ). She is a Certified Digital Marketing Professional (CDMP) from the Digital Marketing Institute.

She is married and has three children.

Omnicom names Guy Marks EMEA CEO, Cooper as VC Europe



Global advertising and marketing communications company; Omnicom Media Group has appointed Guy Marks as CEO of its EMEA region.

Marks who has been at the helm as CEO of OMD since 2018 will succeed former chief executive of Omnicom Media Group APAC and EMEA, Mike Cooper.

Meanwhile, Cooper will assume his new role as Vice-Chairman of Omnicom Group Europe and will report to Omnicom

president and chief operating officer, Daryl Simm.

In his new role, Marks will be tasked with overseeing regional strategies and the development of transformative products and services to support the company's media agencies, OMD, PHD, Hearts & Science, and Annalect.

He said: "My career to date – whether in the start-up space or as part of the world's biggest media agency – can be summed up in one word: collaboration. Whether you're 10 people around a kitchen table, or 10,000 people around the EMEA region, collaboration elevates our thinking and accelerates the pace of change.

"As the CEO of Omnicom Media Group EMEA, my priority will be assuring our agencies have the talent, technology and behaviours required to drive collaboration, fuel innovation and deliver better outcomes for our clients."

Tayo Oyedeji appointed CEO of Publicis Groupe/ Redefini Nigeria

Dr. Tayo Oyedeji, a business leader with startup and corporate organization experience in Africa, Europe, and North America has been appointed as the new CEO of Publicis Groupe/ Redefini Nigeria. The group's agency brands include Insight Publicis, Leo Burnett Lagos, Starcom MP, All Seasons Zenith, Digitas Lagos, and Quadrant MSL.

In addition to leading the sub-Saharan Africa's No 1 marketing communications group, Dr. Oyedeji's work experience spans advertising, technology, and management consulting in Africa, Europe, and North America.

Prior to his current appointment, between January and May 2017, he was responsible for managing Starcom MP in South Africa while driving the growth of Publicis Media's brands (Starcom, Zenith, Mediavest Spark, and Blue 449) across 34 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

He was the Managing Director/ CEO of Starcom Media Perspectives, Nigeria's No. 1 media planning and buying advertising

agency in billings and reputation for excellence, from 2014 to 2016.

Dr. Oyedeji co-founded Overwood,

a Texas-based emerging market FinTech that uses technology to democratize investments by making safe, high yield investments available to regular people, and was the managing director of Starcom (South Africa) where he coordinated the activities of 750 employees in 38 countries.

Dr. Oyedeji, a graduate of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Ilorin, holds an MBA from Oxford University and PhD from the University of Missouri-Columbia.



Elvis Ogiemwanye appointed as VP Marketing, Opay-Nigeria

Elvis Ogiemwanye has been appointed as Vice President, Marketing, Opay-Nigeria.

The quintessential corporate egghead, who specializes in Brand Experience, Media Relations, Marketing Communications, Corporate Strategy & Brand Development, has over a decade of multi-functional experience in core marketing, Telecoms marketing, high level strategic marketing, marketing communications, sponsorship, brand management, corporate strategy, media and corporate event management. He grew Etisalat's (now 9Mobile Nigeria) Youth Segment product from a zero-subscriber base to over 6M subscriber base within a 5-year period.

Before his engagement with 9mobile, Elvis was the Advertising Development Manager, MTN Nigeria. He managed a lot of projects which included the MTN media. He also launched and managed some several frontier services and activation among which are: Who Wants to be a Millionaire, Project Fame, Moving You Ahead theme campaign, Life is Beautiful campaign series, Go campaign, Everywhere You Go campaign. AFCON Campaign and activation. Also directly managed MTN Xtra cool along its key Value Proposition pillars (Price, Product and Services, lifestyle and Rewards and recognition).

A brand experience enthusiast with deep passion for building interactive and functional relationships between users and brands via digital and traditional means, Elvis has built user-focused designs to establish good relationships between brands and users to meet up and most times supersede standards and expectations. He has also engineered various product launches and brought the brilliance of big-label marketing to big brands.

Elvis won MARKETING EDGE's 2021 OUTSTANDING

MARKETING PERSONALITY OF THE DECADE.

He has several professional certifications from leading institutions such as Columbia Business School, Columbia University, Cranfield University, Nigeria Institute of Marketing and Chartered Institute of Marketing London, and his goal is to help brands have more visibility than ever into national and international markets.

There is no doubt that Elvis will help take the marketing department of Opay-Nigeria to the next level.



Ogilvy names Jo Arden as Chief Strategy Officer



Marketing and public relations agency, Ogilvy has announced Jo Arden as its Chief Strategy Officer at Publicis.Poke across the enterprise.

Arden will be tasked with leading a 97-strong strategic division working

throughout Ogilvy's 5 enterprise areas which includes promoting, content material, model, expertise and PR.

With effect from April, Arden will report back to Fiona Gordon, chief executive of Ogilvy UK, and work alongside her and the company's group inventive leaders, Andre Laurentino, chief inventive officer, and Jules Chalkley, government inventive director.

Commenting on her appointment, Arden said: "My ambition for Ogilvy is easy. Assist individuals do nice considering that drives nice work and that helps shoppers fulfil their ambitions. I consider our craft has the potential to really change an individual's behaviour, and nowhere

is that so true as at Ogilvy. I am so excited to construct on the unbelievable heritage of the enterprise and assist in creating actually fashionable, related and efficient communications for such terrific shoppers."

Arden has a wealth of expertise in main technique throughout disciplines and enterprise segments: when she started her current role in June 2020 she was the first CSO across the newly merged ad shop Publicis London and formerly independent digital agency Poke. At the Publicis Groupe-owned store, she has worked on manufacturers together with Morrisons.

Prior to becoming a member of Publicis.Poke, Arden was the chief strategy officer at MullenLowe Group UK, which incorporates the advert company and different disciplines, between 2017 and 2020. She beforehand labored at behavioural specialist 23red from 2011 as the pinnacle of technique.



TAMUNO KIRI

OPINION

BRANDS AND CONSUMERS: MARRIAGE OF A TAP DANCE (7)



Developing Consumer Trust

As a form of mental exercise, I would like us to do a little backflip into 1936, on rethinking Dale Carnegie's "How To Win Friends And Influence People" especially in this era where brands seek to be humans. In 1936, humanity was gripped by the neck due to the unpalatable events that followed the olympics of that year. Race, colour, stereotyping, hate, and bigotry were very visibly pronounced and acted out, making human relationship unpleasant. But that was the year, super brands like Volvo and Mercedes-Benz launched two massive products, the Volvo PV51, and Mercedes-Benz 260D.

Volkswagen Beetle, Toyota, came on stream the following year. Electronic brands such as Canon, Elna, Hashmira, Polaroid, all hit the streets. These iconic brands gave the world something to cheer.

While the world was struggling on how to relate with one another, brands were preaching comfort, style, and the excellence of life. Brands held the message of hope and comfortable living. A broad category of brands took centre stage to create the possibility of a better world. It was in this critical period that Dale Carnegie wrote his book, a classic, that has remained through the test of time. The objective of this article is to inspire brands to leverage on the key principles of this book and act more humane to

win consumers over, especially in this era where individual consumers are becoming brands, after all brands are the pillars of individual self identity. So, the relationship between brands and humans could be likened to human relationships where friendship and influence are the key ingredients for lasting togetherness. The question is, how could brands influence consumers and win them over for keeps?

Dale Carnegie suggested ten (10) very strong methods of winning friends and influencing them. In this case, we are looking at how brands could adopt these principles to influence and win consumers over.

1. Give people a fine reputation to live up to (Praise them on what they are doing right, and they will continue to do it). Brands could actually become fans to consumers, by being the first in the crowd to congratulate them when they win or lose. Identify their strengths and support them to do more. This is different from team sponsorship. This is like believing in an individual and standing by him or her, offering the hand of friendship and support to win in life. I do believe that this is the concept applied by Youtube, Google and other platforms that began rewarding individual influencers who started to pull huge followership to their fan pages. That encouragement spurred these individuals to excel more. In my last article on this topic, I stressed that "Normal humans who never cared about being famous just shared their passions with their audiences but became famous overnight because of the massive following they enjoyed. Now, they have influence, power, and

money.

As long as new technologies will continue to come up, fresh entrants will continue to emerge into the world of fame and power through human interest content such as gaming, sports, fashion, photography, arts, poetry, paintings, folklore, dances, cooking, entertainment, relationships, architecture, and every other slice-of-life issue that relates to life and living”.

2. Encourage others to talk about themselves (the more they talk about themselves and you listen, they love you more). They feel in control, and see you as a confidant, fan, and inspiration to do more, knowing that someone somewhere truly believes in them. The question is, how could brands be tempered to listen, knowing that they are talkatives themselves? Brands have been talking and talking to consumers for decades. They just can't stop to listen. They feel afraid to give up that right, because they have been enjoying the horizontal communication for years under traditional marketing.
3. Become genuinely interested in other people (Learn about their concerns). In this postmodern era, it not difficult to identify consumer concerns, because they are talking. Consumers voice out their concerns on every available space and platform, using their mobile phones.Brands do not need a band wagon of research firms to do multiple surveys about consumer feedback. In an earlier post, I reitrated that...

“ He is the unofficial Board Member of every football club, determining which coach should be sacked, why and when, which player should be sold, and who to buy. If the cost of buying a player is very high, he cries foul. Technology has made the postmodern consumer to become omnipresent at every media outlet responding to every programme content, twitting back in response to every issue discussed. He calls into a radio station and questions every programming content, and sometimes demands the sack of an On-Air-Personality, who acted disorderly. He secretly films any misdemeanour of a shop attendant, flight crew, waiter serving, randy boss, and twits in an instant. Even a non-corporative lover is filmed during sex, to be swindled, black mailed and tarnished. With the power of technology at

his fingertips, the postmodern consumer has become bold, brash, audacious, authoritative, always wanting to be noticed. If you dare him, he goes on Twitter, to create a community to lambast you”.

4. Do not resist people. Agree first, because it breaks down all the fences around them (If you let them freely express themselves, it enables you to have access into them, and pass your message). Brands must cultivate the habit of not confronting a consumer when he or she triggers a conversation in form of a complaint.Encourage that lateral two-way communication. It creates room for a much better engagement. As brands always have what to say, humans always want to say theirs too.
5. Appeal to their nobler motives (Appeal to the parts of them that want to do good. Those aspects that demonstrate honesty and fairness. Today, the consumer is your news agent, your weather informant, your news correspondent on Twitter, and Instagram. He is your unofficial panellist to every discussion, your buddy, your window into the world.
6. You seek his opinion in every discussion, no wonder he has become an Estate Agent for Airbnb, a mobile phone virtual card, data seller, Momo agent for MTN, the Uber driver, he is the product App tester and user. There is practically nothing that the consumer cannot do for you, if you let him into it.
7. Talk in terms of the other person's interest (Brands must constantly seek the interest of consumers). Truth is, if someone is genuinely interested in you and your welfare, you will know. Consumers can easily fish out ulterior motives o brands. They know when all you care about is their money, and they won't give it to you.
8. Make the other person feel important (Not constantly trying to prove how smart, how important, and how awesome you are). People detest those who always sing their song. Afterall life is not all about you. Tell others they are important too. Give others the chance to take the stage, rule and reign, and you applaud. “People see reality through their own personal filters”— Arthur Schopenhauer

9. Ask questions instead of giving orders (Ask consumers how best to serve them, not how great you are serving them). No one dances and sees his or her back, only onlookers will be able to tell you how great you dance.

Consumers are the onlookers of brands. They can spot it, when you just throw it at them. Offer him nonesense, and watch him gather a communy of people on social media and lambast you over your trash.

10. Use encouragement and make less of their faults (Praise, encourage, and inspire). The art of deploying human relationship skills to market brands, will always be a tall order because the skill sets of marketers are not geared towards human relationships. Perhaps Universities and Business Schools should begin to include this as part of the requirements in studying marketing, because the consumer of today can no longer be won over by mere advertising and PR gimmicks. The consumer has become smarter, outspoken, and very highly opinionated.
11. If you want people to like you (buy your product), then you genuinely like them first. It must be genuine. But how can brands show genuine likeness for consumers? How can brand-likeness be expressed to consumers?

“Empathy is the path to customer traction”—Seth Godin. It is until brands begin to see the relationship between brands and consumers as that of real human relationship, brands will always be at a loss. The world was created for man, techology is created for man, science is adapted to be useful to man, so also are brands manufactured for man. The art of making consumers buy a brand and do repeat buying can only come from a genuine humane relationship with man. Dale Carnegie ends by saying that “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you”.

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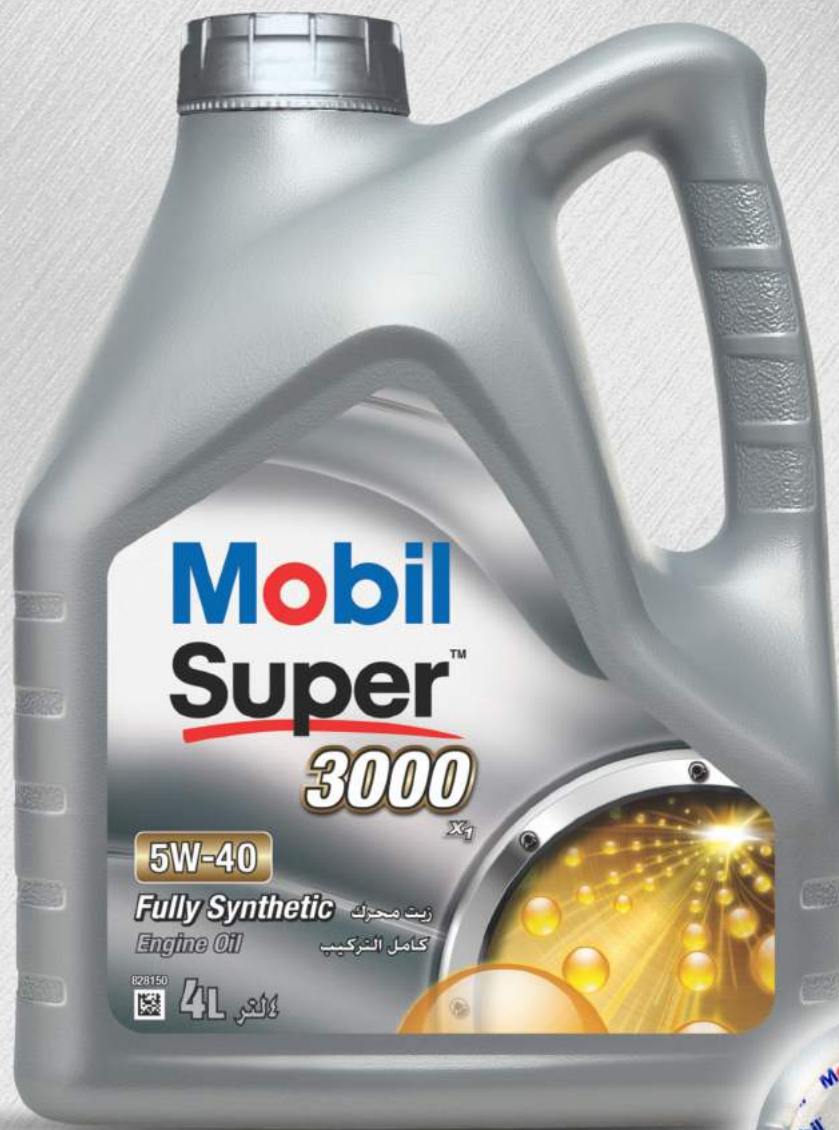
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