

**NIGERIA'S INNOVATIVE BRANDS TO WATCH IN 2022**

# MARKETING **EDGE**

Promoting the brand idea.

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L-R: Marketing Director, NB Plc, Emmanuel Oriakhi; Corporate Affairs Director, NB Plc; Sade Morgan, Human Resources Director NB Plc, Grace Omo-Lamai, 4-time UCL Winner and UCL Trophy Tour Ambassador, Clarence Seedorf, Sales Director NB Plc, Uche Unigwe and Supply Chain Director, Martin Kochl at the UEFA Champions League Trophy Tour presented by Heineken at a Press Conference in Iganmu, Lagos on the 12th April, 2022.

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# CONTENTS

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## 10 Local News

## 30 NEWS FEATURE

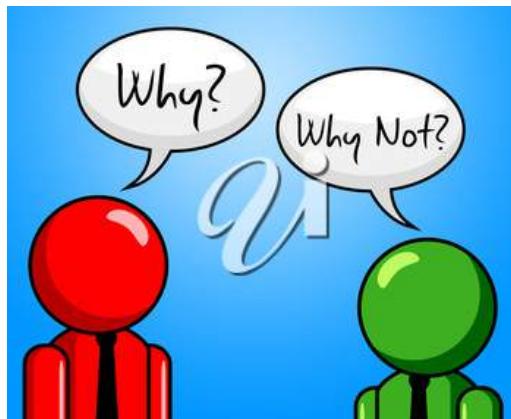
Brands need to understand the metrics of reach - **Experts**

## 38 FOREIGN NEWS

Unilever commits €5m to global humanitarian response in Ukraine

## 52 Top of the Market

### Can we reason with ADVAN?



## 72 PERSONALITY INTERVIEW

WE DO THINGS THAT NO OTHER BRANDS WOULD CONSIDER DOING - **Eat'N'Go boss**

Media buying recovers from the pangs of pandemic

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Promoting the brand idea. Issue 75, February/March 2022 | N2000 US\$ 6.5 | ISSN 1597-1201 | [www.marketingedge.com.ng](http://www.marketingedge.com.ng)

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**TOP 00H**  
COMPANIES AMPLIFY BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU'S GIANT STRIDES

**P&G ANNOUNCES FURTHER PRICE INCREASE AS IT DECLARES \$4.2B REVENUE IN Q4, 2021**

**PUBLIC RELATIONS HAS GONE BEYOND PRESS RELEASES - EXPERTS**

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# Creatively disrupting the Nigerian marketing and advertising Eco-System

Since the launch of **MARKETING EDGE** magazine into the Nigeria print media market, the story has never been the same. Not only has the 19 years old print publication heralded a new genre of journalism tagged "brand journalism, with its unique features and specialties, **MARKETING EDGE** has through series of innovations and avant-garde ideations changed the paradigm albeit positively. Upon debut, the magazine left no one in doubt about its self appointed task of promoting the brand idea while expanding the frontiers of marketing and advertising knowledge. At the back of its coming was the vision "to be the best, authoritative and avant-garde leading source of news and deep market insights serving brand marketing eco-system".

Having done this religiously, passionately and professionally for a decade, **MARKETING EDGE** launched National Marketing Stakeholders Summit & Brands and Advertising Awards of Excellence as a yearly industry initiative aimed at rewarding creative excellence in brand advertising while setting new standards and benchmarks for global competitiveness.

The introduction of the yearly summit and awards created unprecedented excitement and joy for industry players and stakeholders who had for long been looking forward to such a competitive initiative. It will amount to stating the obvious if it is revealed that **MARKETING EDGE** National Marketing Stakeholders Summit & Brands and Advertising Awards of Excellence has become a soar-away success in its ninth year of existence.

The initiative has recorded tremendous growth since inception, rewarding outstanding brands, market makers, gladiators and players while expanding the frontiers of knowledge in the business of brand management and the management of brand business. Not satisfied with itself, the magazine launched a new initiative in the electronic media through the creation of **MARKETING EDGE ON TV**, a half hour content rich pot-pourri of news, gists and developments in the IMC sector spiced with industry conversation by highly placed professionals on a weekly basis.

The **MARKETING EDGE ON TV** is another replication of the outstanding of **MARKETING EDGE** magazine. Rich, robust and very stimulating, **MARKETING EDGE ON TV** which goes on air every Wednesday on TVC DSTV Channel 418 between 12:30-1pm has become another veritable platform in promoting the brand idea. It has also further expanded the frontiers in educating, entertaining, informing and agenda setting thereby creating another unique selling point and unrivalled competitive advantage.

The weekly TV show, now in its third year has continued to wax stronger, attracting continuously enlarging viewership while drawing more adherents of the Nigerian broadcast media audience to itself. Ever since the launch of the **MARKETING EDGE ON TV**, the Nigerian marketing and advertising eco-system has never been the same.

The **MARKETING EDGE ON TV** has fully redefined brand journalism while up-scaling the brand equity of the foremost marketing and advertising publication. Through **MARKETING EDGE ON TV**, a larger spectrum of the Nigerian TV viewing audience are now better educated, informed and entertained by the basic marketing information and tips.

Not done in its pursuit of creative disruption, **MARKETING EDGE** last year initiated a **Quarterly Virtual Summit** aimed at constructive and pro-active intellectual engagement of industry gurus and titans on contemporary issues in marketing and advertising.

The **Quarterly Virtual Summit** which has gained pre-eminence amongst industry players has become another veritable platform in knowledge sharing, peer reviews and deep market insights across all sectors of the industry. This pioneering initiative by **MARKETING EDGE** has strongly repositioned the brand as a go to resource media platform.

Past edition series of the summit held by zoom have featured seasoned marketers, renowned advertising professionals, digital marvens and leading OOH players, PR professionals and accomplished brand experience head-honchos. Indeed, the **MARKETING EDGE Quarterly Virtual Summit** has become a much sought after platform by cerebral professionals and industry juggernauts eager and ready to unleash their creative powers while setting new standards in the industry. It has been a worthwhile effort all these while as the Quarterly Summit continues to offer fresh market insights while serving as an avenue for global benchmark and market competitiveness.

In another development, the **MARKETING EDGE** brand wowed the industry two years ago, when it partnered leading Out-Of-Home companies to launch online news headline on LED digital billboards in major metropolis across the country. The initiative which came as a bang in the Nigerian print media sector has further raised the bar of journalism practice while deepening digital transformation in the genre of brand journalism. Through this unique initiative, key headline news on **MARKETING EDGE** online are streamed live on iconic OOH LED structures Pan Nigeria. This pioneering initiative has enriched public knowledge about the industry while helping **MARKETING EDGE** publication to continue to live up to the expectation as an agenda





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setting platform. The gesture which has fundamentally altered the marketing and advertising landscape remains a great fancy and attraction to the industry.

As if all of these are not enough, **MARKETING EDGE** launched daily digital Newsletter to further expand the frontiers of marketing knowledge. The digital newsletter which features exclusive news, gists and happenings in the industry on a regular basis has become a major companion to all stakeholders. We make bold to say that we now serve industry players hot and sizzling exclusive and authoritative news that are very organic in all aspects and ramifications in the true DNA of **MARKETING EDGE**. It is a platform like no other as it has become an adjunct media platform to penetrate the industry more widely and globally than ever before.

Still following in the culture and tradition of innovation, **MARKETING EDGE** management again earlier this year introduced **MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame**. The initiative initiated not only to honour trailblazers and accomplished leaders in the industry is also aimed at inspiring the generation next while restoring hope and confidence about the potentials in the IMC sector. The men and women inducted into the **MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame** have impacted outstandingly on the industry with indelible footprints on the sands of time. Identifying and recognizing these industry icons through the **MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame** has been described as the best that has ever happened to the Nigerian marketing and advertising sector over the decades. It has become another metric in measuring and determining those make things happen across the IMC sector, be they old or younger generation. The introduction of **MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame** has no doubt set a new standard in performance measurement and career achievement assessment and review.

Consequent upon this, the editorial board of **MARKETING EDGE** has chosen to do a special edition publication on these eminent professionals whose avalanche of records of achievements and accomplishments define and symbolize the best and brightest in modern Nigerian IMC sector. They are the legends, heroes and heroines of this age and epoch. Though the industry contributes so much to the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) yet it remains largely unrecognized and less celebrated at the national political leadership.

The special edition publication, a collector's item as usual is a rich pot-pourri of news, gists and happenings in the entire gamut of IMC in Nigeria. The edition also features comprehensive profiles of the achievers who were inducted into the maiden edition of **MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame** at a colourful dinner with class, glamour and elan. Their profiles and resumes bear eloquent testimonies to our right choice of selection in a bid to further raise the bar of professional practice excellence. This edition, a special tribute and dedication to their salutary contributions, immeasurable impacts and incomparable but remarkable giant strides will go down into the history and histrionics of the Nigerian IMC Sector as an unforgettable memento.

We at **MARKETING EDGE** are proud of these super and mega-stars whose chequered career growth trajectory will remain evergreen to present and future generations. We say a very BIG KUDOS to these pace-setters, path-finders and legends. May your shadow never grow less. Keep soaring higher like the Eagle as you all remain the best and the brightest in all of us.

Similarly, in this special edition, we serve you hot and sizzling, our variety of rich offerings in juicy and delicious taste. As usual, the package, put together in very lucid prose, style and panache is quintessentially **MARKETING EDGE**.

We wish you a very happy and exciting moment as you savour the contents of this brilliant master-piece! It is simply unput-down able publication!

Happy Reading!!!

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# Advertising and marketing, key contributors to creative economy – Rotimi Bankole

By Abimbola Mohammed



**M**edia planning and buying expert Rotimi Bankole, CEO, SBI Media, the foremost Next-Gen media planning, branding & digital marketing agency, has reaffirmed the role of marketing and advertising as contributors to the creative economy.

The media expert said this in an exclusive interview with *MARKETING EDGE* magazine, while noting the positive role of the integrated marketing communication (IMC) in the national gross product (GDP) in 2022.

His words: “Aside from being a core element of business, advertising and marketing are also key contributors to the creative economy. The contributions made by the marketing communications industry will be seen in all areas of business, from manufacturing to healthcare, from transportation to hospitality, from fintech to agriculture, and, of course, media and the creative economy.”

Speaking on the challenges advertisers face, Mr. Bankole said when other sectors of the economy are down, it affects the marketing communications businesses a great deal. He is, however, optimistic that 2022 being an election campaign year and with the ease in travel restrictions, business will return to normal.

“The challenges faced by these industries are usually felt, sometimes extremely intensely, in the marketing communications business. Therefore, 2022 being an election campaign year, the sector will become quite busy with increased political advertising, public relations, and media buying.

“Also, the world is gradually easing COVID restrictions and we hope that this will result in increased cross-border business activities across industries, which

will in turn bring back engagement with agencies.”

The media guru is confident that 2022 will be better than 2021 for the IMC industry as there is hope to develop local expertise amid the weak naira challenge the country is facing now.

“With regard to the challenges for 2022, we will still have to pay attention to government policies regarding trade, manufacturing, media and other key areas.

We will have to watch the economy with regard to inflation, interest rates, and exchange rates,” he said.

“For instance, a weak Naira makes it more costly to pay for international collaboration in content production. But that may also be an opportunity to develop local expertise in certain areas. Altogether, when we compute the hopes against the fears, it looks like 2022 will be better than 2021 for our industry,” he noted.

## Poor technology investment, bane of effective media strategy – Nworah

By Felicia Nwosu

**U**che Nworah, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Anambra Broadcasting Service, has noted that poor investment in technology and manpower by brands and agencies are the bane of effective advertising strategies. He, therefore, urged them to adopt a technology or social media strategy that will harness and pivot their business accurately and professionally.

“We set the trends, we should also monitor and follow the trends. With content consumption and distribution trends shifting speedily, brands and advertisers who have not really migrated online should start thinking about that. The challenge we have in Nigeria is that brands are not investing enough in technology because it costs a lot of money,” he said.

The brand and marketing expert also noted that winning companies are investing in technology, while advising every brand and agency to operate on a digital-first philosophy or mantra, with cutting-edge technology to strengthen their positioning and prepare for the new era.

Reviewing 2021 adspend, the advertising expert stated that there has been a tremendous shift, propelled by huge audience in digital penetration.



“I may not have figures for you but I can say we are beginning to see yearly that advertisers are migrating more online, though radio is still strong; but based on the trends we are seeing, television is not doing too well and that is for obvious reasons because we live in an internet age,” Chief Nworah said.

Commenting on the pre-election year and its impact on advertising spend, Chief Nworah predicted that participation by media houses might be a little bit challenging.

“This has been happening; in an electioneering year, we see some of the FMCGs and financial clients take back seats to allow the politicians take over the space. This year and 2023 will be a little bit difficult for media houses, but that is what is already happening.”

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# Digitisation heralds shift in consumer lifestyle - Experts

By **Oghale Mafuru**



A comprehensive consumer data analysis across all touchpoints is vital to the success of marketing efforts. It is imperative for brand owners and marketers to understand their target audience by analysing, and keeping track of consumer behavior as it is critical for the success of businesses. Experts in the Integrated Communications Industry have re-emphasised the need for brand managers to follow consumers along their journey to decipher habits, behaviours and most importantly acquaint themselves with valuable information through an understanding of the footprints of the consumer in his journey.

According to them, digitisation has led to a paradigm change in consumer behaviour and brands must be where their consumers are, be abreast with the changes in terms of preference, passion points, purchasing habits, and use of technology to create memorable strategies required for the attainment of marketing objectives.

Founder of O2 Academic, Ozoemena Mbanefo, said for brands to deliver value and get a return on investment, they must understand the psychological status of their target audience as well as the changing patterns necessitated by technology and the evolving economic

landscape.

He said: “Brands should understand the consumer’s motivation, likes, and dislikes, the things that make them be. The more you appeal to them from the motivation point, the more you will get their attention and when you get their attention, you can have their retention, and from their retention, you will have their conversion and when they are converted they can now be evangelists to help you bring some other people.”

According to the renowned advertising expert and trainer, understanding a person's way of life, thinking pattern, and digital footprints will be a very good strategic road map to reaching him.

"There is something we call a day in the life of the consumer. We talk about a day in the life of a consumer. In analysing the consumer, we are talking about when he wakes up to the moment he goes to bed. What does he do, where does he go, what does he listen to, who does he interact with, how does he interact, where, what, and how does he live his life?" he added

Similarly, Mobolaji Martins, Chief Operating Officer of Slice Media, affirmed that brand positioning in the digital age is attainable when brands evolve along with their consumers and that brands should

continue to invest in consumer data to get insights into their changing behaviours.

**"It has always been a scenario where you evolve along with your consumers. We just had a conversation where we spoke about what brand positioning should look like in the digital age. For me, the issues have always been around like not understanding who your consumer is or where your consumers are, or what lifestyle habits they have changed. As long as you are a brand owner, there has to be a real investment in understanding where your consumers are, who they are, and what they are doing at this point."**

he said

According to the seasoned professional, without investment in consumer data, brands will not be able to keep up with their changing behavioural patterns.

Commenting on the rapidly evolving market realities, Strategy Lead, SPV Communication Solution, Sheriff Akinpelu asserted that understanding the consumer journey is critical to the success of any brand and should be taken into cognizance in every marketing effort. He advised that brands should be deliberate in acquiring the requisite knowledge about the daily activities of their consumers.

In his words: “What is very important for us is the way human beings behave. I think human behaviour is what we marketers need to focus on. What behaviour did we have before the pandemic? What behaviour do we currently have now? Are there any differences and how can we tap into the opportunities that abound in the new way that consumers are behaving? Therein lies the secret.”

While re-echoing that the customer is always king, the communication experts urged marketers to put their eyes on the consumers at all times and deploy data to make a vivid and mental impact as top-of-the-mind awareness will facilitate increased patronage and brand loyalty.





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# Terragon targets improved data driven marketing for SMBs, introduces TerragonPrime

By Zion Rufus



Data and marketing technology company, Terragon has launched TerragonPrime, an end-to-end marketing platform created to enable data driven marketing at scale, and help businesses grow.

Particularly aimed at improving the marketing efficiency and campaign performance of small and medium sized businesses as well as the organizations that provide services to them, TerragonPrime was created to help organisations aggregate, enrich and activate consumer data to drive targeted and personalised experiences for cost effective customer acquisition, and retention.

Commenting on the launch of TerragonPrime during a press meeting which held on 18th February 2022 at the company's headquarters in Victoria island, Lagos, Head of Product at Terragon, Oti Ukubeyinje said: "We basically looked at how we could take the enterprise solution we have built, all the data that we have

access to on consumers in the most compliant ways, and use them to not just support the large enterprises, but to support small and medium enterprises as well."

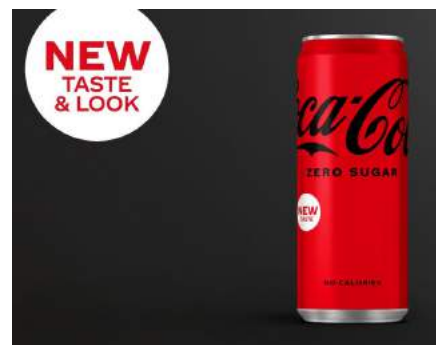
TerragonPrime combines the power of an enterprise grade customer data platform powered by a wide range of data supply partners including telcos and AI and ML solutions, with mobile-first customer activation channels to create custom audiences based on various criteria eg age, gender, location and interest, and as well enhance data-driven marketing programs in Africa.

Describing TerragonPrime's primary target market, Oti explained that in Nigeria, SMEs contribute 48% of GDP, account for 96% of businesses, 84% of employment, and are the largest contributors to the African Economy, in the areas of jobs, GDP, etc.

He said: "Small and medium enterprises most importantly need to be able to deliver more personalized experiences because they don't have all the budget to burn, so they move to ensure that every single interaction with a customer is as profitable as possible."

With zero license fees, businesses get to have access to over 100million profiles, segmented audiences, enrichment, insights, and direct messaging. In addition, the company is offering up to 5000 free message credits to the first 500 subscribers.

Terragon is Africa's leading Data and Marketing Technology Company. We help organisations execute highly targeted campaigns by aggregating, enriching and activating consumer data for personalized experiences.



## Coca-Cola Zero Sugar wears new look, improves taste

Coca-Cola Nigeria has released a new and improved recipe of Coca-Cola Zero Sugar. The new refreshing recipe and bold packaging promises to deliver a more delicious and refreshing taste that brings it closer to that of the iconic, Coca-Cola Original Taste.

Speaking on the latest offering, Bunmi Adeniba, Marketing Director, Coca-Cola Nigeria, expressed confidence that the new and improved Coke Zero Sugar and Calories will deliver great taste to its Nigerian consumers as it signifies the company's commitment and resolve to continually explore ways to delight and refresh consumers.

"We are excited to start off the year with the new look and improved taste of Coca-Cola Zero Sugar to our consumers. This has been a well thought out process as we paid attention to the ever-evolving tastes of our consumers. The Coca-Cola brand is humble but iconic, authentic and magical, and it is our goal to continually bring the magic into the homes and lives of our ever-faithful consumers," she said.

Coca-Cola Zero Sugar was launched in Nigeria in 2005 and has continued to refresh millions of Nigerians who want to reduce their Sugar and Calories intake. We implore our consumers to now enjoy Coca-Cola Zero Sugar with their favourite meals, during breaks or whenever they need a delicious refreshing drink, which is currently available in various pack sizes including in returnable Glass Bottle, 60cl PET and 33cl Can, all for the primary purpose of catering to the diverse tastes of Coke lovers across the country.



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# Advertising has democratized, consumers now wield power - Experts

By **Zion Rufus**

Consumer sovereignty has evolved beyond just the consumer buying power or their influence over the number of goods that are produced. Now, consumers also wield the power of communication which can make or mar a business.

Procter & Gamble Director, Scott D. Cook once said: “a brand is no longer what we tell consumers it is—it is what consumers tell each other it is.”

This sovereign power has allowed consumers to be able to influence not only their own purchase decisions, but also the buying behavior of others.

“Brands do not have the autocratic power anymore. It’s now communication for the people, by the people and for the people, just like you have it in government” said Ozone Mbanefo, CEO O2 Academy Lagos.

Describing how advertising used to be about brands speaking to the people and telling people what they want them to hear, Ozone noted that now, brands cannot decide what the consumers should think about their brands anymore.

Continuing he said: “Brands have been forced to speak to the people through the people, and that has changed the dynamics of communication. Consumers are now

producing communications by themselves and that’s why somebody will just go on Instagram and film something about a brand that he feels very cool with and put it out there and people start sharing it and the brands get free media. And the same way it can happen on the negative side. You see something in a bottle of a Carbonated Soft Drink brand, and you say ‘these people are poisoning us’, you put it out there, it goes viral. So, you can see that consumers are now producing communications by themselves.”

Leveraging digital technology tools, consumers now set trends or hop on trends to promote their favourite brands, products, personalities, and celebrities by making viral pictures, videos, and retweeting posts that pique their interests; the same way others utilise such platforms when they feel a social responsibility to alert other consumers on certain errors of these popular brands. The communication chains therefore becomes strengthened.

In agreement, Dolapo Otegbayi, Specialised nutrition’s director at Friesland Campina opined: “The challenge we have as marketers is that we always try to listen to our own voices, if you are too close to what you do and you don’t step back from time to time you might make mistakes.

It is important for brands to drive that distinctiveness in the minds of consumers.”

Ace journalist and integrated marketing communications industry powerhouse, Mr. John Ajayi, the MD/CEO of MARKETING EDGE in his contribution explained that at the core of any successful brand marketing strategy is the consumer while noting that brands have come to realise the hard way that it is no longer about them and how good their products are, but about their positioning and perception in the minds of the consumers.

He said: “In the sellers’ market of old, consumers were practically at the mercy of product manufacturers and suppliers. They had no options than to accept whatever products they were offered. But today, brands no longer distance themselves from the consumers. Gone are the days of distancing, they would rather do all in their powers to connect, relate and even customise.”

Beyond positioning and value propositions of brands, marketing strategies have now evolved to be planned around what the consumers want, how the brand’s message will be received, the perception of the brand in the mind of the consumers, and the metrics of reach amongst others.





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# Air Power dominates airport advertising as Buhari commissions New Terminal in Lagos



**P**oised to push brands into the consciousness of high profile consumers through spectacular billboards, wall and pillar wraps, airport bus transport among resplendent indoor hoardings, Air Power Limited, Nigeria's leading indoor airport advertising platform, has unveiled a perfect ambience for brand promotion in the new terminal at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos.

The state-of-the-art terminal built on a land mass of approximately 56,000 square metres, and expected to handle 20 million passengers a year, was recently commissioned by President Muhammadu Buhari during a well-attended ceremony

in Lagos.

Speaking on the unique market positioning of the new terminal which is under the advertising concession of Air Power, Felix Ehikhuemen, the company's Managing Director, said his agency has deployed modern technology in indoor advertising at all strategic points of the facility to give brands premium value and to enhance travelers' experience.

The agency boss, while underscoring the impact of airport indoor ad messages and images, noted that, Air Power Limited as an innovator of contemporary display concepts will be reeling 10s of millions of advertising impressions yearly at the new terminal.

"As you can see, after touch down through the immigration check-in and the outdoor of the new terminal, there is a huge display of Air Power's impressive and imposing indoor hoardings.

"The up-to-the-minute state of the terminal has made it attractive to brand managers coupled with the cosy ambience which encourages passengers of any class to sit down and relax. While looking at the ambience, passengers would also want to look at the beautiful advert," he said.

Mr. Ehikhuemen continued: "Our digital and static structures are world-class and I can assure you that the high traffic of passengers at this new terminal will enhance high mileage for brands. I can also tell you that we have invested heavily in our indoor advertising infrastructure.

"Our modern digital infrastructure can support modern outdoor anywhere in the world. Air Power is here to make sure that indoor advertising medium is well explored and utilized in Nigeria. We expect brand managers and advertisers in the telecom, beverage, banking, oil & gas and lifestyle industry to take advantage of this medium."

The terminal, which has about 60 sets of check-in counters and six boarding bridges, also comprises of a four-storey Main Terminal Building, three-storey Finger Building, two-storey Cargo Terminal Building, 82,925sqm apron, and external and ancillary works.

Other facilities in the terminal include five baggage collection carousels, 16 immigration desks at arrival, 28 immigration desks at departure, eight security screening points, two food courts, four premium lounges, 22 guest rooms and spa, 16 airline ticketing offices, visa on arrival and port health facility, as well as praying area, more than 3,000 square metres of duty free space, approximately 5,000 square metres of lettable utility space, amongst others.





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## Nestlé launches Nescafe Malt



To deepen market penetration, Nestlé Nigeria has introduced NESCAFÉ MALTY, a new blend of coffee and malt in the NESCAFÉ 3in1 coffee options which delivers a rich, bold and enjoyable taste to satisfy consumer preferences.

Commenting on the new line of product, NESCAFÉ Malt 3in1, the

Managing Director and CEO of Nestlé Nigeria PLC, Wassim Elhousseini said: “At Nestlé, we are focused on unlocking the power of food to enhance quality of life for everyone today and for generations to come. We therefore continuously provide distinctive food innovations fueled by creative exploration and consumer insights. It is based on this insight that

NESCAFÉ Malt 3in1 was developed with the Nigerian consumer in mind, bringing together the goodness of malt with the rich flavour of Nescafé that we enjoy at an affordable price.”

In the same vein, the Category Manager for NESCAFÉ in Nigeria, Gbenga Alabi said: “NESCAFÉ is proud to launch this new 3in1 with malt. This innovation is a result of years of dedicated research to find the perfect blend of coffee, creamer, sugar and malt, that constitutes a rich cup of coffee. Each 25g serving of the new NESCAFÉ Malt 3in1 is formulated to provide the thrill to “Start Strong, Finish Strong”. It offers a great tasting stimulation that sets you up for the day, when you need to start with the best version of yourself.”

With this new addition, the Nestlé Nigeria NESCAFÉ range now includes three variants: the NESCAFÉ Classic, NESCAFÉ Original 3in1 and the new NESCAFÉ Malt 3in1.

NESCAFÉ is a flagship brand of the largest food and beverage company in the world – Nestlé. The beverage was invented by Nestlé in the 1930s to deliver rich, bold flavor in an instant. The innovation also helped farmers reduce labour and post-harvest crop waste, which was a huge agricultural challenge at the time.

## GSK on course to spin off Consumer Healthcare business mid 2022

Research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare company, GlaxoSmithKline plc. has revealed that the company is on track to demerge its Consumer Healthcare business.

The Consumer Healthcare business is a Joint Venture between GSK and Pfizer, with GSK holding a majority controlling interest of 68% and Pfizer 32%. GSK's health brands include Sensodyne toothpaste, Panadol and Centrum vitamins.

Emma Walmsley, Chief Executive Officer, GSK said: “We have ended the year strongly, with another quarter of excellent performance driven by first-class commercial execution, and we enter 2022 with good momentum. This is going to be a landmark year for GSK, with a step-change in growth expected and multiple R&D catalysts, including milestones on up to 7 key late-stage pipeline assets. 2022 is also the year when we demerge

our world-leading Consumer Healthcare business. At our capital markets event later this month, we will set out the future growth ambitions and highly attractive financial profile of this business, and the outstanding opportunity it provides for shareholders.”

In January, GlaxoSmithKline revealed that it had earlier received three unsolicited, conditional and non-binding proposals from FMCG giants- Unilever plc to acquire the GSK Consumer Healthcare business for a total acquisition value of £50 billion comprising £41.7 billion in cash and £8.3 billion in Unilever shares.

Disclosing that the company rejected all three proposals on the basis that they fundamentally undervalued the Consumer Healthcare business as well as its future



prospects, GSK announced: “The Board of GSK is strongly focused on maximising value for GSK shareholders and has carefully evaluated each Unilever proposal. In doing so, the Board and its advisers assessed the proposals relative to the financial planning assessments completed to support the proposed demerger of the business in mid-2022, including the sales growth outlook set out below.”



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# IMC experts express divergent views over 2023 elections

By Felicia Nwosu



As the socio-political atmosphere becomes charged ahead of the 2023 general elections, experts in the IMC industry have expressed divergent views on what the election portends for the industry and how to align their expectations with the national exercise.

In separate exclusive interviews with **MARKETING EDGE**, the advertising experts advised agencies to become more relevant by jumping on the digital transformation bandwagon as well as shifting gears to innovative marketing. According to them, this will help agencies chart easier pathways during the election proper.

Projecting what the election heralds for the industry in 2023, ace advertiser and marketing professional, Babajide Fagade, Managing Director, Ocean Outdoor Ltd., noted that the influence of politics on the economy is very massive as it impacts on economic life of both individuals and businesses. He, therefore, urged IMC practitioners to make salient impact through innovation for the task ahead.

"In terms of outlook, it is a very hopeful one. We just have to keep innovating. We need to engage in the use of technology the most. We have a huge audience size in Nigeria because of the population of the country. So I believe that if IMC practitioners can continue to innovate and become more creative and then engage the use of technology; the industry will be better for it," he said.

"I think most of the consumers' touch points that will be used by candidates will have an exponential growth. We can't put our fingers on how our advertising platforms will be engaged by politicians in the coming elections. But, by and large, it will add

to what we have in the marketing space because brands are still active. It will be a bumper year," he added.

Steve Babaeko, President of Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), said Nigerian agencies are strategically positioned for relevance and in terms of ad growth. He revealed that there is a huge opportunity inbuilt in an election cycle, but expressed concern over the penchant for foreign agencies by Nigerian politicians.

He advised aspiring candidates to embrace Nigeria agencies for better storytelling and right delivery of content.

"Our politicians sort of have acquired this foreign taste when it comes to advertising. If you look at all of the memorable campaigns that in the annals of politicking and political campaign in Nigeria, some of the memorable ones were the ones created by local agencies like Rosable, the Insights of this world and all of those agencies.

"If you remember the "Hope 93, MKO Abiola, till tomorrow, that is a classic political advertising. It portrays the nuance and the cultural understanding of our people and how best to speak. I will still encourage the political class to patronise local agencies and we can keep the money in the family and build a better Nigeria," Mr. Babaeko said.

Israel Jaiye-Opayemi, Managing Director/Chief Strategist of Chain Reactions Nigeria, said that the year 2023 heralds a boom for the industry and urged members to be well positioned.

"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, including state and federal governments 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 need the services of public relations firms.

"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. I see a good year for a lot of companies and public relations firms," Jaiye-Opayemi said.

Kayode Oluwasona, CEO of 1201 Brandsway Ltd, on his part, predicted that with the elections in view, the economy may be opened. He, however, advised agencies to tread with caution and not to be too hopeful.

"There are implications, it is expected that the government will inject funds into the economy. What has been tied up before will become a bit loose, more spending will be happening. Political spending is like a funeral, they come and go. Political spending in 2019 was not as much as it was in 2015.

"So possibly, we should not even put much hope in political spending because the threshold has been established. The days of those slogans and campaigns when they were new and captivating were fine," Oluwasona said.



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# Brands should be people centric, not customer centric - Ozone Mbanefo

By Zion Rufus



**C**EO O2 Academy, Ozone Mbanefo has reemphasised the need for brands to be more people-centric in their marketing strategies than customer-centric.

Reiterating this during the MARKETING EDGE Fireside Conversation themed “Marketing and brand positioning in a digital age”, Ozone submitted that a people-centric brand will go beyond the transactional relationship to developing a more emotional involvement with their consumers, in order to build a lasting relationship with them even after a purchase has been made.

He said: “The customer is the person who pays for the product the consumer consumes. However, where there is no consumption, the customer has no reason to pay for your product. And this is where you realise the power of the consumers, and why brands need to be more people-centric.”

According to the Provost of the leading brands and advertising school in Nigeria, people-centric marketing shouldn't just end in promotional materials, it should be consistent in the mind of the brand and the minds of the people interacting with the business.

Becoming people-centric requires that brands ditch the product-driven and sales-driven marketing strategy to become more consumer-centric in all their dealings, by focusing their marketing strategies on providing a positive personal experience for their consumers through getting to know them, understanding who they are, their buying behavior, carrying out researches on what they need, and also launching platforms that enable personalised interactions and feedbacks.

Ozone further emphasised that becoming people-centric will drive profit for the brand as it will enable them to

gain a more competitive advantage over others, and as well enable a continuous cycle of engagement, consistent patronage, awareness, loyalty, and even emotional attachment from the consumer to the brand.

In his final submission, he buttressed the significant impact of “word of mouth” and how far it can go beyond creating the perfect ads, sharing that a true people-centric marketing strategy should start outside of a campaign and inside the

business through feeding the consumers with the motivation and support they need by reminding them that there is a brand that cares for them and identifying their needs without simply relying on the products to tell the brand's stories.

“Design thinking is the best thing that can help a brand builder to navigate his consumers. You must understand the pain points and passion centers of your consumers,” he concluded.

## 2023 elections: Rebranding is best PR for parties -Obinna Inogbo

By Oghale Mafuru



**A**s the upbeat to the 2023 general elections gathers momentum, Obinna Inogbo, Founder & Principal PR Executive of Worktainment Limited, has urged political parties to focus on efforts to rebrand themselves in line with the expectations of citizens ahead of the next election. He gave this advice against the backdrop of a perennial trust deficit between the electorates and the politicians.

The PR professional while recounting some of the errors in brand building initiatives of political parties in recent times advised that political parties

rather than try to sell their manifestos and persuade Nigerians to connect with their vision for the country, should build credibility by acknowledging their past failures in terms of delivering good leadership and dividend of democracy with a promise to do better.

“Be honest with the public. Say you have failed. Don't say anything that you've done, don't mention any project, and present younger faces, not the old ones. That is very important. Let the people be younger and let the message be that we have failed. Let the message be that we have failed and we want to do better”, he said.

The PR expert who decried the use of foreign agencies as reputation and campaign managers by politicians affirmed that Nigerian PR agencies have the requisite skills, knowledge and cultural nuances to deliver enduring, engaging, and result-oriented political campaigns.

According to him, engaging the services of indigenous PR agencies will improve significantly on the growth of the sector and the Gross Domestic Product, GDP of the country.

He noted further that the PR profession should maximise the electioneering season to optimise its offerings and reaffirm its position in the marketing and communication business.



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## **MEDIA SOLUTIONS TAILOR-MADE FOR YOU**

# Strategy is everything in marketing, brand positioning – Practitioners

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

If a brand fails to find a priority position in the consumer's mind, it becomes just another product or commodity on the supermarket shelf. For a product or service to attain top-of-the-mind awareness, there must be a strategy to navigate the brand, consumer/ customer journey.

The above was the submission of facilitators at the recently concluded **MARKETING EDGE 2022 Fireside Conversation**, which had the theme: "Marketing and Brand Positioning in a Digital Age", and organised by the **MARKETING EDGE Group**.

The programme, the third in the series, was held at the National Employers Consultative Association (NECA) House in Ikeja, on the 2nd of February, 2021. It was specifically designed to retool the professionalism of the internal staff of the group.

According to John Ajayi, CEO/ Publisher of **MARKETING EDGE** magazine, the Fireside Conversation is the leading publication's way of upskilling its workforce and expanding their capabilities.

"The new normal has imposed imperatives on corporate organizations globally. The Fireside Conversation is our management initiative with the objective of further re-strategising and radically repositioning the publication for continued market leadership and dominance across the Nigerian brand and marketing journalism sphere," Mr. Ajayi said.

The conference was facilitated by notable figures in media and the IMC industry, including Managing Director/CEO, O2 Academy, Ozoemena Mbanefo; Specialised Nutrition Director, FrieslandCampina WAMCO, Dolapo Otegbayi; Executive Director, Media Career development Network (MDCN); Lekan Otufodunrin, CEO of Taijo Wonukabe Limited, Taiwo Obe; CEO, Publicis Groupe/ Redefini Nigeria, Dr. Tayo Oyedeji; General Manager Marketing/Beverage at 7up Bottling Company, Segun Ogunleye; Executive Creative Director/ Chief Operating Officer at Slice Media Ltd, Mobolaji Caxton-Martins; President of Association of Digital Marketing Professionals (ADMARP) and also Vice President, Product Marketing and Growth, Terragon Group, Oti Ukubeyinje, and Strategy Lead, SPV Communication Solution (MTN Nigeria's Marketing Communications Agency) Sherif Lanre Akinpelu.

Addressing the conference forum of participants on consumer journey, Ozone Mbanefo tutored the audience, emphasised the importance of 'a day in the life of the consumer'

He also spoke on the need for businesses to be people-centric in their relationship with consumers/ customers, adding that people-centric marketing shouldn't just end in promotional materials. It should be concerned with the

mind of the brand and the minds of the people interacting with the business.

"Becoming people-centric requires that brands ditch the product-driven and sales-driven marketing strategy to become more consumer-centric in all their dealings. Brands should be focusing their marketing strategies on providing a positive personal experience for their consumers through getting to know them, understanding who they are, their buying behaviour, carrying out researches on what they need, and also launching platforms that enable personalised interactions and feedbacks," he said.

Tayo Oyedeji on his part emphasised rethinking the business model as the key place to build new values in the digital space.

For Lekan Otufodunrin, to market and position in the digital age, brands need to know their target market and consumer, know where they are in the digital space, invest and use suitable digital tools and channels to reach them, have organizational digital policy, and speak digital language.

Dolapo Otegbayi opined that positioning is how the consumers perceive a product or service in relation to competition. She however, advised that it is important to strive for distinctiveness in the mind of consumers.

During his presentation, Segun Ogunleye noted that brands should have insight that drives the intelligence of business strategy.

On his part, Sheriff Akinpelu posited that the very first step for any brand is to identify their objectives, and also emphasised the need for brands to build penetration by increasing their mental and physical availability.

Oti Ukubeyinje, who drew the curtain on the conversation, stated that consumers at different stages of their lives aspire to be better than where they were. He highlighted the need for brands to pay attention to how these consumers' lifestyles are changing and how to adapt their messages to suit them at each stage of the shift.







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# Stakeholders laud MARKETING EDGE's innovations

By Oghale Mafuru

Industry Titans and gladiators from different sectors of the economy have endorsed and extolled the MARKETING EDGE team for pioneering groundbreaking initiatives that inspire innovation, creativity, and excellence across all sectors of the value chain.

Speaking separately at the maiden edition of the MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame held at the prestigious Radisson Hotel, Ikeja Lagos, the highly distinguished professionals lauded the team for being at the forefront of disruptive brand journalism in Nigeria through creative and innovative solutions.

Dr. Biodun Shobanjo, father of modern advertising, and Chairman of Troyka Holdings Limited while commending the team for its novel ideas that heralded an incredible shift in brand reportage, said: "I want to thank John and his team for the wonderful job that they have done. You can see that there is a constant effort to improve on the product quality, content and what they bring to the table generally. They went to television as well and collaborated with TVC. I think one needs to give this guy a lot of credit".

One of the iconic amazons of the

advertising industry, Chief Executive officer of Ladybird Limited and past president of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, Mrs. Olubumi Oke lauded MARKETING EDGE for always being at the forefront of breaking new and noteworthy grounds that have contributed immensely to the growth of the industry.

"I want to commend MARKETING EDGE for the pioneering role. Putting up a Hall of Fame, that says something, especially in the days and age where everything goes into the internet of things" she said.

Former Registrar of the Advertising Practitioner Council of Nigeria, APCON, Alhaji Bello Kankarofi while recounting past work relationship with the publisher and CEO of MARKETING EDGE magazine, Mr. John Ajayi, stated: "I am part of the history of the formation of MARKETING EDGE and this dates back to many years when I became the Chief Executive for APCON. Prior to that, I had a little relationship with the publisher himself, when I was Chairman of Kano Pillars, he gave me wonderful support. Then he had not started MARKETING EDGE. So, what I did when I came into

the office was, I invited him and I told him to do something that I will support him. Today I am happy he is bigger than me and doing very well".

On his part, Group Chairman of Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc, Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi said: "I want to appreciate MARKETING EDGE. What you have done today is proof of one thing; that you have come to stay. I am excited about it. Everything MARKETING EDGE is doing; this is the climax of it.

"Yes, I believed you before but I believe you more now" he concluded.

Meanwhile, Publisher/ CEO, MARKETING EDGE, Mr. John Ajayi in his welcome speech at the event reaffirmed the company's relentless pursuit for excellence, innovation, and creativity in the fulfillment of its corporate mandate of promoting the brand idea and expanding the frontiers of the advertising and marketing communication industry.

In his words: "MARKETING EDGE, a leading source of news and insights on the business of brand management and the management of the brand business, initiated the MARKETING EDGE hall of fame as further proof of our commitment to our payoff line of promoting the brand idea.

"For over ten years, in the near two decades of our exciting sojourn in the special genre of brand journalism, we have impacted greatly in expanding the frontiers of marketing and advertising knowledge while not losing focus for the national political economy.

"As a vanguard media organisation, we have constantly and consistently made innovation the cornerstone of our operation. We have engaged robustly with industries using innovation as a compelling unique selling point in the age of the fast dwindling fortune of the print industry".

MARKETING EDGE has been at the forefront of innovation and novel initiatives. Having started as a bi-monthly publication, the company has diversified into an array of other media offerings such as online, LEDs, and television. In addition to this, the company pioneered the widely acclaimed quarterly summit, the MARKETING EDGE Hall of fame after several years of organizing its MARKETING EDGE Awards of Excellence.



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***MARKETING EDGE on TV : promoting the brand idea.***

# Brands need to understand the metrics of reach - Experts

By Zion Rufus

Experts in Nigeria's marketing communications space have asserted that for brands to grow, amongst other key imperatives, they have to better understand and execute the metrics of reach which includes building salience, penetration, top of mind awareness, and setting trends in the categories they operate.

In their submission during the MARKETING EDGE Fireside Conversation themed "Marketing and brand positioning in a digital age", they agreed that the above assertion can only be achieved when brands immerse themselves in the changing lifestyles of their consumers, the evolution of their buying behaviors and changes in preferences, and investing in the functional attractiveness as well as emotional attractiveness of their offerings to the consumers.



**"Marketing should not be static, because the consumers are not,"** said Oti Ukubeyinje, VP Product marketing and Growth, Terragon.

"Consumers at different stages of their lives aspire to be better than where they were. So you have to pay attention to how these consumer lifestyles are changing and how to adapt your messages to suit them at each stage they shift to."

According to the digital marketing guru, different brands have their own approach to reach especially FMCG brands whose products aren't from the digital consumption category or solely based on digital interaction. It becomes a function of how to constantly reach people with their brand and message at least once per time, and constantly do it to drive salience, which will in turn translate to top of mind.

"That's why sometimes brands will do crazy stuff just to increase memorability, so that the next time they associate that action with that brand or that memory with that brand, when they are at a moment of choice to choose between one

product or the other, the memory you have will help you shape your judgment. So If you have a good memory of the brand or interaction, you will most likely reach for the brand in your moment of choice. That is what you want to translate salience and top of mind awareness into. Top of mind awareness comes to play when consumers have choices, between similar products from different brands and then there is that," Oti shared.

Validating the above information, Dolapo Otegbayi, a seasoned marketer and Specialized nutritions director at



FrieslandCampina buttressed the importance of positioning in the metrics of reach.

She said: "First you need to understand your positioning. Positioning is how the consumers perceive your product or service relative to competition. And it is important that you fight, you strive to get that distinctiveness in the mind of consumers."

"Profile and review your target market, where is your size of opportunity, who will deliver the highest return on investment. Taking COVID for instance, everything has become unusual to a new normal. Life in 2019 and life now, you'd see that a lot has changed, and who are the biggest part of these changes, the consumers, the people. The world is changing at a very fast pace, and It is the onus of the brands



to evolve into the current realities of the consumers," Otegbayi noted.

On his part, Sheriff Akinpelu who shared that the very first step was for brands to identify their objectives, also

emphasized the need for brands to build penetration by increasing their mental and physical availability.

He explained: "Reach is divided into two, there is the physical reach which is physical availability and there is the mental one which is in your mind. Mental availability means that you build a memory structure that allows customers when they are in that space where they have to pick a product, yours comes first in their mind, and not only does it come first, it also compels them to reach for it amongst other choices. So first you understand your objectives, what you want to achieve, and when you know what you want to achieve, then you focus on lifestyle; how consumer behavior has changed over the years."



Segun Ogunleye, General Manager at 7Up Bottling Company advised that brands should be trendsetters and not exist as a "me too".

The marketing strategist noted that the concept of having a target audience or a bulls eye is still very valid."

"You cannot serve everyone," Ogunleye said.

"As a business, do you have insight that is driving the intelligence of the strategy or you are running your business decisions as a "me too"? Have you really profiled the consumers you want to sell to? You have your primary audience. Find out who they are, and what their lifestyles are like. For instance it would be a huge marketing blunder to say because the other brands are on apps, you want to be on apps too. Do you have an in-depth understanding on the sustenance and life span of these apps? Are your target audience on these apps? And does the platform add the same value to your brands? For every time we think that our consumers are standing at the same spot, we as brands are going backward. Consumption pattern changes from time to time."



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# Why brands need to focus on the ethical consumer

By Zion Rufus

**W**ith the growing demand for sustainable products as the world evolves and consumer consumption habits shift, it has become of utmost importance for brands to continually keep up with the changing preferences of their consumers in order to make more effective marketing decisions.

One of the major shifts in consumer behavior is ethical consumption. Ethical consumerism is an activism based on the premise that purchasers in markets consume not only goods but also, implicitly, the process used to produce them and how they affect the society as well as their impact on the environment. Products which fall into the ethical category include sustainable production processes, organic produce, fair trade goods, energy-efficient light bulbs, electricity from renewable energy, recyclable packaging etc.

According to a recent study, 92% of respondents had a more positive image of a company that supported something they

cared about, while 15% stated they would be more likely to pay more for a product or service associated with a cause important to them. Brand marketers, advertisers, and companies must understand what matters to their customers and target market, which ethical issues are important to them, and ensure they are satisfied with the position of the brand on such issues.

To an ethical consumer, consumption is a political act that sanctions the values embodied in a product's manufacture. The ethical consumer movement has challenged marketers ever since, under the basic assumption that brands are selling for maximum profit, not for the greater good.

For consumers that are passionate about sustainable products, or human rights, diversity and inclusivity, brands should address their commitments to such positions and communicate them to their consumers. For instance, brands like Unilever continuously reiterate their commitment to sustainable living, healthy living, diversity and inclusion; Nestle positions itself to fight against racial discrimination.

Packaging is also important to ethical consumers who are more concerned about the ingredients and sustainability; consumers rely primarily on product labeling, so package design and copy are critical. Include essential facts, industry certifications, and initiatives in your packaging and marketing materials to give them the nudge.

A brand's ethical or unethical activities do not seem to have a direct impact on purchase decisions, with the rare exception of significant amounts of negative media coverage, so long as its products are valued.

Leveraging the interest of consumers in issues that affect or impact them directly by communicating your brand positioning and values that are readily available to them, will naturally influence their purchase decisions and buying behavior. Ethical consumers either purchase ethical products and services or in initiate the Gen Z's 'Cancel Culture' on those that have been tagged unethical.

Get feedback from your consumers, as they may have great ideas on how you can more effectively appeal to ethical consumers with your business and marketing practices. However, there is no debate that the ethical consumer market provides a real opportunity for brand marketers; marketers must create context to engage the ethical consumer. Marketers need to understand how the consumer wants to buy and help them do so.



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# Are the media appropriately addressing issues in Nigerian politics?

By Elizabeth Olagunju

**A**s the 2023 elections loom, different electoral activities have begun. It is almost palpable that another election season is upon us. Several contenders have signified their intention to vie for the office of President. And others will still join. A lot of political positioning is already taking place in preparation for a new electioneering season with the same electoral activities, same electioneering process but slightly different candidates and political platforms.

The general elections may be scheduled for February 2023 but political activities have begun to acquire traction as political players begin to warm up for campaigns to sell their candidature to electorates, albeit the ban on political campaigns is yet in place. All the same, the polity is rife with news of politicians decamping to join another party or moving from camp to camp in search of political relevance and acceptability. Party rivalries between the APC and

the PDP have worsened. Banditry, kidnapping, and farmer-herder conflicts have continued to wreak havoc on the federal-states relationship and national security.

The recent declaration by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, former Governor of Lagos State and Leader of the APC to run for the Presidency has been catalytic. Mixed reactions have continued to pour in both in support and against a Tinubu presidency.

Political experts predict that the political environment will be turbulent and toxic all through to the elections and possibly beyond. There is a palpable disconnect between the government in its entirety and the people. Sensing this, one of the presidential candidates, Dr. Kingsley Moghalu described the forthcoming election as the “make or mar election for Nigeria.”

It is instructive that discussions about who succeeds President Muhammadu Buhari are dominated by

religious and ethnic sentiments. We hear things like, ‘it is the turn of Christians to produce the president,’ ‘presidency should be zoned to the south/south east,’ and ‘we don’t want Muslim/Muslim ticket.’ The remark by Nonso Nnamani, the National Coordinator of New Tribe: “We are not seeking for a president for the South East, North East, or South-South, but a president for the Federal Republic of Nigeria,” speaks to the heart of the matter. The parochial sentiments that continue to trail our political evolution is quite sad as it has jettisoned competence in shopping for the candidate for the most important job in the country. The media owe this nation the duty of redirecting thoughts to the issues germane to leadership and national development.

Celebrated as one of the most dynamic in Africa, the Nigerian media has been the vanguard of the Nigerian state. The media has been at the forefront of fighting for the people right from the pre-independence era. Even in post-independence Nigeria, the media is about the only institution that has been truly the people’s refuge and advocate. Thus, it is a good reference case for the importance of the media in politics and democracy. The Nigerian story has demonstrated that democracy and journalism are inextricably linked. Without the media, that is, a free and dynamic media, democracy cannot thrive.

At this critical juncture in the annals of Nigeria however, the media, more than ever before, need to maintain a vigilant watch on Nigeria’s democracy. Beyond the watchdog role, the media must set the agenda for 2023. Nigerians must be made to understand the imperative of competence, integrity, inclusiveness, the rule of law, proper structuring of the country, people-centrism, and good governance. These qualities and attributes must be what we look for as we shop for a president in 2023. The media should assist the nation to rise above parochial and selfish interests, the sorts that have taken us to this sorry state in our national development. The print, broadcast, radio, and television; and even the unregulated social media should take this as a national assignment so that 2023 will make, rather than mar us as a nation.



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# Agency-client Relationship: Trust key to business growth

By Felicia Nwosu



**T**rust, transparency and mutual respect may sound very cheap but they appear very uncommon in the lexicon of most business men, not in the least, service providers in the IMC industry. Yet, trust and transparency remain key and pivotal to increasing the frontiers of business opportunities, especially through referrals. The lack and inadequacy of these valuable qualities and values have caused a wreck in the business of many. As a result of this, some experts in the industry, advocate that agencies should encourage clients to see their agencies as an extension of their own businesses, not just as another service provider. They averred that, the key to building great relationships and achieving great results is to work together as partners to achieve a common goal.

Commenting on the relevance of trust between the agency and clients, creative amazon and Executive Director, Strategy and Innovation at Yellow Brick Road (YBR), Nnenna Onyewuchi, charged agencies in the integrated marketing communications (IMC) industry to re-think their present business models and relationship in order to promote a sustainable client-agency relationship amid the dwindling ad spend in the advertising ecosystem.

The marketing strategist noted that the present economic realities have changed the whole dynamics of client-agency relationship as clients now expect a more holistic and robust relationship from the agencies. Her words: "I think the first step is to re-imagine our relationship with our clients. Many agencies are stuck in a place where they are a vendor; someone focused solely on executing campaigns. What clients want is a business partner. Someone who understands their sales process, the challenges they have with distribution, even internal culture issues. Agencies need to concern themselves with the issues that keep the CEO up at night, not just the CMO. If a client's management sees the agency as useful, as contributing to their bottom line, as opposed to just being a cost centre, that will go a long way to changing the relationship".

Speaking in a similar vein, Ose Osundeko, Head, Digital Marketing at Starcom Media Perspectives, urged both client and agency to encourage true collaboration, describing it as the pillar of every brand success. She also advised that the notion of a subservient relationship that exists between clients and agencies must be discarded as clients are only as good as their agencies and vice versa.

Ose explained that true collaboration should be encouraged in the form of getting the best of minds from the agency and client-side to participate equally by harnessing their uniqueness and sharing information that positively shapes the future of both partners.

The Head, Digital Marketing, charged both partners to work with integrity, reaffirming that integrity fosters a natural trusting relationship that permits open communication, good decision making and a strong moral compass that guides all decisions and actions to be focused on the brand and its needs.

In his submission, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Towncriers Ltd., Kayode Olagesin opined that trust is the pinnacle of any relationship when genuine collaboration occurs between agency and clients. According to him, trust sets the tone for business and propels partners to be willing to be empathic, considerate and loyal.

"The objective of hiring a full-service marketing agency is to build relationships, increase brand loyalty, and make more sales. He opined that mutual chemistry between partners edges out other high-ranking considerations, including understanding of the industry, professionalism and general creativity. "This is a normal thing, as clients at any point in time would want to work with agencies they have chemistry with. It is not all about knowledge on the job. They want to feel that, 'Look, we have the same view; we have the same approach to business and to marketing communication'. So the chemistry is very important in a relationship."

Experiential marketing Amazon, Tolulope Medebem, the Chief Executive Officer of Aster Integrated Marketing, and Vice President of the Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN), is of the view that relationship with clients is a major key element to accelerate the growth of the advertising industry. The agency boss, who emphasised the need for agency owners to nurture good relationships with clients, noted that "technology does not run a business, but good relationships do".

The EXMAN VP stated this while sharing her experience on how she benefited immensely from business opportunities that were birthed out of sustained good relationship during the peak of the pandemic, she said: "I can say that one of the things that has kept us in business so far during the pandemic and even presently, is relationships. All through the period, those that kept working with us were actually those clients that we have relationship with, and strangely this year, based on words of mouth and relationships, we got a couple of new clients as well."

For Ozoemena Mbanefo, founder of Nigeria's foremost adschool, Oxygen Academy, the job of an agency is to proffer solutions for the industry. He therefore urged agencies to work harder at building trust by embracing the philosophy of being a people-centric brand while dealing with business partners.

His words: "When you take your client as a person and you deal with them personally because you understand what they are going through, business opportunities open. Clients come to agencies because they need help and have money to give to agencies for the help they need. Brand experts should understand that every brand that comes to them is like a patient coming to the hospital and what they need is brand health. I have seen people relate with clients on the basis of; So, what do you want? Clients will say, this is what I want and you create what they want and give them. You have to go beyond what the client wants to what they need. We shouldn't just deliver marketing communication; we should deliver business solutions."



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# How brands scramble for Metaverse



**T**he scramble for share of a new reality is underway. Interest in the Metaverse is expanding at an astronomical speed, even as tech behemoths like Microsoft reportedly bid £50bn for video game maker Activision Blizzard. Microsoft correctly identified gaming as a key foundation for Metaverse platforms and it's just the latest move among technology experts that are keen to make the most of the opportunity.

It would be recalled that Facebook also strategically rebranded its parent company as Meta, seemingly staking future growth on grabbing a big share of the space.

However, Sir Martin Sorrell, ad industry icon, recently unveiled S4S Ventures – a VC fund targeting early-stage companies with interests that include exploring commercial models within the Metaverse.

Metaverse is a generic term for experiences that go beyond the physical through connected virtual worlds, offering new ways for people to communicate and interact. There are reports that it is in the earliest stages of its development and could be years or even decades away from being used to its full potential.

Basically, the key technologies that represent the building blocks of the Metaverse have actually been around for some time. The crucial added element in the new reality is that users don't have to do it alone: they can talk to and play alongside friends and strangers alike to their heart's content.

This facilitation of communication and peer-to-peer engagement is at the heart of the Metaverse. At present, there are no rules – Metaverse can truly be whatever anybody thinks it is, and people can do as they feel. It's essentially an undefined space, one that is building its own communities and taking the communication concept of Messenger to a far higher level. While the physical world is built with boundaries, Metaverse offers freedom in the shape of a new level of reality.

Virtual Reality (VR) has a role to play

in the Metaverse, of course and is already being harnessed by the likes of travel brands keen to instantly transport people to desirable destinations. But Augmented Reality (AR) is likely to be the technology that really makes interest in the Metaverse take off. With AR, once tech companies like Apple get their act together and finally launch glasses that allow the wearer to experience a blend of physical and virtual reality, users can take to the streets in their everyday trainers but proudly show off a snazzier pair to passers-by in the Metaverse. This boundless freedom of expression is perhaps its greatest promise.

How far and fast can the Metaverse grow? What is the future reality of

Metaverse and if it's going to be driven by consumers, where does that leave brands?

Mass audiences are already a given.

Execution may, therefore, be the greater challenge. As brands are expected to jump on the Metaverse bandwagon, experimentation will have more merit if launches are made with learning as their purpose.

Until the new reality fully dawns, brands need to keep tabs on what tech companies are doing to deliver new platforms before they dip a toe into the virtual water with content and campaigns that will help them gain a foothold in the fascinating world of Metaverse.

## Unilever commits €5m to global humanitarian response in Ukraine

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

**U**nilever, the leading Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Company, has committed €5m to support the Global humanitarian response in Ukraine. This will come in form of food, personal care and hygiene products to those impacted by the war.

The company has also joined the world to condemn the Russian's state invasion as 'a brutal act of war' against the neighbouring country.

This was disclosed in a statement posted on the company's Instagram page recently by Alan Jope, Unilever's Chief Executive Officer.

He said: "We are deeply shocked by the senseless acts of violence being perpetrated against the innocent people of Ukraine and we condemn the Russian state's invasion for what it is: a brutal act of war against a neighbouring sovereign country.

We join the many voices calling for its end, and hope that peace, human rights and the international rule of law will prevail".

Speaking further, he said: "The



people of Ukraine are utmost in our thoughts at this desperate time and we have been focused on doing everything we can to protect the safety of our 146 employees and their families across the country".

"To support the Global humanitarian response, we are working with NGO partners on the ground to donate €5m worth of food, personal care and hygiene products to those impacted by the war. We have also launched a company-matched global employee giving programme", he added.





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# Brands fight Russia over Ukraine invasion

By Felicia Nwosu



**S**trong reactions have continued to trail Russian attacks on Ukraine, which has generated some ripple effects across global brands that joined the war by getting off the shelves and halting their services in solidarity and sympathy with Ukraine.

In addition to the imposition of various sanctions such as ejection from most international sporting events, air travel restrictions and severed ties, brands are standing up to what they consider as impunity and highhandedness by distancing themselves from anything Russia.

What's more, renowned Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, the largest gathering in the creative marketing

community, has cut off Russia from its global award scheme, meaning agencies and brands from President Putin's Russia will no longer be eligible for a trophy in 2022. Russian delegates will also be banned from attending the festival.

"We stand together with our friends in Ukraine—and our many partners and community members in Russia who strongly oppose the actions of the Russian Government," Lions organizers said in a statement.

"Despite our desire to celebrate creativity from wherever it comes, we have made the decision not to accept submissions or delegations from Russian organizations into Cannes Lions or its associated awards programmes. We will welcome free of charge any and all Ukraine creatives who are able to attend Cannes Lions. Refunds on awards submissions for Ukraine agencies will also be honoured," the statement added.

This reprisal has hit negatively on the world's most powerful leather game, football, as ManUtd is ready to end a sponsorship deal worth £40m as its major sponsor since 2013, Aeroflot airline, has

been banned from operating in the UK amid sanctions on Russia. Aeroflot is the national airline of Russia and flies to 146 destinations across 52 countries but a ban has been placed on all Aeroflot flights within the UK both entering and exiting the nation.

The Ukraine war has also tested the power of tech giants. Many American brands including Apple, Google, Ford and Harley-Davidson, have stopped their sales in Russia. The sanctions by the US have created a situation where brands have taken a step back, not minding the effect on their loyal customers in Ukraine or Russia.

Brands are also pledging cash and action to help besieged Ukraine. Among them is Ikea, which closed all operations in Russia and donated \$22 million for humanitarian assistance and Netflix, which pulled the plug on state broadcasts from the Kremlin.

There is equally a steep increase in prices of products and disruption of supplies as the crisis continues to rear its ugly head against consumers. Beer companies are on tenterhooks as there could be a steep increase in prices of barley and disruption of supplies on account of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

"Ukraine is among the top five global producers of barley, and any major geopolitical crisis in Ukraine could affect global supplies," industry executives and analysts tracking the sector said.

## Cannes Lions bans Russian entries and delegates from 2022 festival

**F**estival Cannes Lions has cut Russia off from its global award scheme following its President Vladimir Putin's invasion of neighboring country Ukraine, meaning agencies and brands from the country will no longer be eligible for a trophy in 2022. Russian delegates will also be banned from attending the festival.

"We stand together with our friends in Ukraine—and our many partners and community members in Russia who strongly oppose the actions of the Russian Government," Lions organizers said in a statement.

"Despite our desire to celebrate creativity from wherever it comes, we have made the decision not to accept submissions or delegations from Russian organizations into Cannes Lions or its associated awards programmes. As an

immediate action, Ascential and LIONS will make a significant donation to humanitarian charities working in the affected region. In addition, while we recognise that this is only a small gesture, we will welcome free of charge any and all Ukraine creatives who are able to attend Cannes Lions. Refunds on awards submissions for Ukraine agencies will also be honoured. A talent directory for affected members of the creative community has been established on the LIONS platform, we encourage the global community to commission and support our friends during these troubled times. Affected members of our community can create a profile here. Our thoughts go out to the people of Ukraine and other affected members of the community at this extremely difficult time."

The invasion of Ukraine has sparked a global backlash against Russia and ally Belarus, with penalties including sweeping economic sanctions, ejection from most international sporting events, air travel restrictions and severed ties with a wide range of corporations.

Brands are also pledging cash and action to help the country. Among them is Ikea, which closed all operations in Russia and donated \$22 million for humanitarian assistance and Netflix, which pulled the plug on state broadcasts from the Kremlin.





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# Dubai Lynx announces IKEA as the Advertiser of the Year 2022



**D**ubai Lynx, MENA's Festival and Awards for creative excellence in brand communications, has announced IKEA as the Advertiser of the Year 2022. Each year, this award recognises a brand that has distinguished themselves through innovative marketing and embracing creative work produced by their agencies.

In 2022, the Advertiser of the Year award will be presented to Al-Futtaim IKEA senior representatives: Vinod Jayan, Managing Director, Al – Futtaim IKEA UAE, Qatar, Oman & Egypt; and Carla Klumpenaar, GM Marketing, Communication & Interior Design, Al – Futtaim IKEA UAE, Qatar, Oman & Egypt at the Dubai Lynx live Awards Show on 16 March 2022, taking place at the Dubai Opera House.

IKEA has won multiple awards at Dubai Lynx festivals in recent years. Notably, in 2020/21, IKEA's 'The Book That Will Change Your Life' by Memac Ogilvy Dubai, took home the Integrated Lynx Grand Prix. And 'Buy With Your Time' also by Memac Ogilvy Dubai was awarded a Gold Creative Strategy Lynx.

Philip Thomas, Chairman of LIONS and Dubai Lynx said, "The Advertiser of the Year award recognises creative excellence, demonstrating the business value of creative communications. We are delighted to award IKEA as this year's Dubai Lynx Advertiser of the Year, a brand that continually innovates through powerful, entertaining and thought-provoking creative marketing, which raises the creative bar for the MENA region and the world."

Vinod Jayan, Managing Director, Al – Futtaim IKEA UAE, Qatar, Oman & Egypt, said: "At Al-Futtaim IKEA, our vision is simple – to make life better at home for the many people. Advertising is an important vehicle for us to be able to reach more of these people, to be able to nurture our relationships with our existing customers and resonate with new audiences. Being named as Dubai Lynx's Advertiser of the

Year is an extremely proud moment for all of us and an accolade that reflects our commitment to clearly communicate with our beloved customers in our market and thereby deliver on our vision."

Carla Klumpenaar, GM Marketing, Communication & Interior Design, Al – Futtaim IKEA UAE, Qatar, Oman & Egypt, added: "As a global brand, IKEA is renowned for its innovation and creative communications. We believe that Al-Futtaim IKEA has embodied this spirit and made it relevant to our local audience with messages that resonate in our region. We always challenge ourselves to enhance the way our brand connects with consumers, leveraging both global and local insight and we believe this is something that can be seen across our campaigns. This is a wonderful recognition for Al-Futtaim IKEA, inspiring us to deliver bigger and better campaigns."

IKEA's vision is to inspire and enable more than one billion people in the UAE to live a better everyday life within the limits of the planet by 2030. The brand mission is to offer a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them. This vision also goes beyond home furnishing. For many years IKEA has focused on economising with resources, making more from less, turning waste into resources, sourcing energy and materials in a responsible way and protecting natural resources to improve the lives of everyone impacted by the brand.

The Dubai Lynx 2022 award-winners will be revealed and celebrated at the live Awards Show, taking place at Dubai Opera House on 16 March 2022. A night of celebration and networking for the entire industry. For further information please visit the Dubai Lynx website.

The Lynx Experience, the newly designed learning and development programme, has been postponed and will now take place from 26 – 27 October 2022. The experience will feature community focused networking, awe-inspiring talks and discussions in a number of venues in Dubai. For more information, visit [www.dubailynx.com/lynx-experience](http://www.dubailynx.com/lynx-experience)



## Domino's to invest £20m in digital adspend

**D**omino's, one of the world's leading QSR, has announced its plans to up marketing spend and invest around £20m in its digital acceleration over the next three years as it looks to create "sustainable growth" for the business.

Domino's said 2021 was a "transformational" year, crediting its developments in digital and the launch of its 'Domin-Oh-Hoo-Hoo' campaign for order growth rising "ahead of expectations".

The campaign, which was supported by increased marketing investment, was launched in May to coincide with the easing of lockdown restrictions and was followed by the brand's first-ever Christmas ad.

It was the first campaign under the leadership of new CMO Sarah Barron, who joined from Costa Coffee in January 2021. Her appointment also saw Domino's bring its digital team under the remit of marketing for the first time.

Domino's described itself as a "truly digital-first business", with 91.2% of sales made through digital channels in 2021. This was helped by the launch of its new app, which enables group ordering and better promotion of deals. The app alone accounted for 42% of system sales, a 2.2 percentage point increase on 2020.

To help drive its digital acceleration further, Domino's has committed to investing around £20m over three years. As part of this it will be investing in personalisation and the development of its ecommerce app, as well as in-store innovation to enhance the customer experience and boost top-line growth.

It has also committed to increasing marketing investment to support new national campaigns and promotions, both of which have been made possible after coming to an agreement with franchisees.

The company said this resolution with franchisees will effectively re-set the relationship and "unlock significant latent potential", as well as driving both short- and long-term growth.

Domino's CEO Dominic Paul said the agreement will allow the company to embrace "a new era of collaboration, with the system working together more closely than ever before".



# Stagwell posts significant Q4, full-year 2021 growth

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



**S**tagwell Inc., a global marketing solution network, has announced its gained 10.4% in net revenue in the fourth quarter of 2021 to \$520 million with organic growth of 11.3%.

According to a statement on the company's website, its full-year 2021 net revenue reached \$1.93 billion with organic growth (which excludes M&A and currency impact) of 14.5%.

For comparative purposes, those numbers are pro forma figures that assume the MDC Partners merger into Stagwell occurred in January 2020. The merger was actually completed in August of last year.

Mark J. Penn, chairman/ CEO, Stagwell, said: "2021 was a breakthrough year for Stagwell. Our full-year results and 2022 outlook are a clear affirmation of the combination and Stagwell's unique position as the challenger that will transform marketing. We delivered pro forma organic net revenue growth of 14.5% for the year and an even more impressive 18% organic growth when excluding our Advocacy businesses, which lapped the 2020 election cycle."

Penn continued: "Our record year was driven by tailwinds across our high concentration of leading digital capabilities, including digital transformation, influencer and global performance marketing; as well as a rapid acceleration in large contract wins. Our robust 2022 outlook reflects our expectation for continued digital strength; continued acceleration in scaled, integrated contract wins; and significant growth in the second-half in our Advocacy businesses driven by an anticipated record year of spend during the 2022 U.S. mid-term elections."

In the same vein, Frank Lanuto, Chief Financial Officer, said that the company reported strong fourth quarter net revenue of \$520 million, representing pro forma net revenue growth of 10.4% year-over-year with 11.3% organic growth.

"Strong operating performance led to pro forma adjusted EBITDA margins of 19.9% for the quarter. Effective cash flow management permitted our continued acquisitions of both minority interests in our fastest growing subsidiaries as well as the acquisition of Good stuff in the UK while lowering our net leverage ratio from the prior quarter," he said.

Fielding questions in a separate interview with **MARKETING EDGE** on why many Nigerian agencies don't make their earnings public, Rotimi Bankole, Group CEO, SBI Stagwell, mentioned that his agencies (SBI & Streams Media) post their growth and earnings regularly, noting that it has never hidden thing from the group's investors.

"It is not a particularly Nigerian issue, most private companies, especially the small ones worldwide are not obligated to show their books to the general public. Sometimes when they share, perhaps it is to help publicise their growth while they seek funding for investors."

"But as long as a private company's owners and the tax man have a full picture of its financial performance, the company is doing its job with regards to disclosure. When it comes to publicly

listed companies, however, their books are routinely published," he said.

"But we at SBI Media and Streams Media regularly disclose our growth to our investors," he added.

Recall that in a bid to deepen its footprint in African marketing service, Stagwell partnered with SBI Media and two other agencies in Africa recently, which transformed it into SBI Stagwell.

The company is also projecting pre-tax earnings of between \$450 million and \$480 million this year and free cash flow growth of about 30%. Penn said that cash will be used for acquisitions, investment in its digital operations and paying off debt.

In the U.S., the company posted Q4 organic growth of 7% and FY 2021 growth of 14%. In Q4, creative and communications contributed nearly half of the firm's revenue (47%). Digital transformation services added 23%, performance, media and data accounted for 21% and consumer insights and strategy contributed 9%.

## Ukraine crisis: Netflix, TikTok halt services in Russia

By **Abimbola Mohammed**

**F**ollowing other brand's pullback in their services to Russian businesses, Netflix is now suspending its subscription video-on-demand service due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, according to reports.



The suspension will also include stopping movie and TV productions, as well as any content acquisitions in Russia. Reports said it had four Russian-language series in production and post-production.

Netflix also recently refused to carry 20 Russian free-to-air propaganda channels that it was required to host under Russian law, according to Variety. One of the channels is Channel One, which has "close links to the Kremlin," according to Politico.

In the same vein, TikTok has also said that its user's platform in Russia has been blocked from posting and viewing videos.

"Given the circumstances on the ground, we have decided to suspend our service in Russia," TikTok said.

Other entertainment companies also pulled back on Russian business, with virtually all major movie studios halting production including Walt Disney, Warner Bros., Sony, Paramount Pictures and Universal Pictures last week.

Netflix, started up in Russia in 2016 and presently has just one million subscribers in Russia. Overall, Netflix has just over 222 million total paid memberships worldwide.

Netflix had earlier announced that it would suspend all future projects and acquisitions from Russia, joining a growing list of companies that have stopped doing business with the country.

# Russia: Noose tightens on economy, oligarchs as sanctions take effect

By Tunde Animasaun



**T**he Russian economy and her moneybags are beginning to buckle as the impact of sanctions and business isolation kicks in. Russian currency, the Ruble, has suffered more than 30 percent decline and is presently worth less than a cent as at Monday. There are indications that things might become critical for the aggressor country as global businesses join the sustained sanctions and renewed efforts to seize the yachts and other choice properties of Russian oligarchs by America and her allies.

President Joe Biden recounted some of these sanctions in a State of the Nation Address where Americans, Republicans or Democrats closed ranks and stood by their President.

"Together, along with our allies, we are right now enforcing powerful economic sanctions. We're cutting off Russia's largest banks from the international financial system; preventing Russia's Central Bank from defending the Russian ruble, making Putin's \$630 billion war fund worthless. We're choking Russia's access, we're choking Russia's access to technology that will sap its economic strength and weaken its military for years to come.

"Tonight, I say to the Russian oligarchs and the corrupt leaders who've bilked billions of dollars off this violent regime: No more. The United States Department of Justice is assembling a dedicated task force to go after the crimes of the Russian oligarchs.

"We're joining with European Allies to find and seize their yachts, their luxury apartments, their private jets. We're coming for your ill-begotten gains," the American President declared.

Leading other countries, President Joe Biden's administration has banned U.S. people and companies from doing business with the Central Bank of Russia, thereby immobilising nearly half of President Vladimir Putin's war chest. Other sanctions

by the U. S. are: ordering 12 Russian diplomats to the United Nations to leave, asking crypto exchanges to help ensure that Russian individuals and organisations aren't using virtual currencies, locking certain Russian transactions from MasterCard and Visa payment networks, and isolating certain individuals believed to be in cohort with Putin. The U.S. said sanctions on the Russian Direct Investment Fund would also extend to its CEO, Kirill Dmitriev, a close Putin's ally.

U. K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson also announced an asset freeze against all major Russian banks, including an immediate freeze on VTB, Russia's second largest bank. He has also instructed ports to block any vessels they believe are owned, controlled, chartered or operated by any person connected with Russia, or by sanctioned individuals. Vessels flying the Russian flag or registered in Russia are also to be blocked. Other measures taken include: the banning of several Russian banks from using SWIFT and is calling for a total SWIFT ban for Russia; sanctioning five banks: Rossiya, IS Bank, General Bank, Promsvyazbank and the Black Sea Bank, stopping all major Russian companies from raising finance on U.K. markets, and also prohibiting the Russian state from raising sovereign debt on U.K. markets, sanctioning more than 100 individuals, entities and their subsidiaries, including Rostec, Russia's biggest defense company, Kirill Shamalov, Russia's youngest billionaire and Putin's former son-in-law, Petr Fradkov, head of Promsvyazbank (itself already sanctioned) and son of former head of FSB Denis Bortnikov, deputy president of VTB Yuri Slyusar, director of United Aircraft Corp and others. There is also an imminent ban on Aeroflot planes landing in the U.K.

Boris Johnson has also banned all exports of goods that could have military use, such as electrical components and truck parts, prohibited a range of technology exports such as semiconductors and aircraft parts as well as goods for the extractive industries, such as oil refinery equipment. There is also a limit of 50,000 pounds (\$67,000) on deposits by Russian nationals in U.K. bank accounts to prevent Russian oligarchs from offloading their wealth into the U.K. through such deposits.

All sanctions also apply to Belarus, the Russian ally in this unpopular Ukrainian venture.

Similar sanctions have been emplaced by the 27 nations that make up the European Union, and Canada. Other

countries that have joined the west in sanctioning Russia include Turkey, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Switzerland, the traditionally neutral nation.

To further tighten the economic noose, Russian businesses are now outcasts while there is an exodus of foreign investments. Following the invasion of Ukraine, leading companies in the world are joining in the economic isolation of aggressive Russia. A couple of days ago, Boeing and Airbus announced the halting of aircraft sales and supply of components to Russia. "With Western lessors also looking to repossess jets that are operated by Russian carriers, the Russian aviation sector is now on a footing that is similar to North Korea and Iran – and similar to where it was under Soviet rule," wrote Vertical Research Partners analyst Rob Stallard.

Major auto and truck makers, including Volvo Cars, AB Volvo, General Motors Co., Harley-Davidson and Jaguar Land Rover, have also cut off exports to Russia. BMW said it was discontinuing local production and car exports to Russia. Other companies that have joined in tightening the noose round the Russian economy are Apple, which has announced a pause in sales in Russia and limiting Apple Pay, Google, H&M Group, Ford which has also donated to humanitarian aids in Ukraine, Nike Inc, which has made purchases on its website and app unavailable in Russia, and MSC and Maersk, two of the world's biggest shipping lines that has suspended container shipping to and from Russia, Nokia and Ericsson both of which has stopped deliveries to Russia. The entertainment giants, Disney and Warner Bros, Canada's online store, Goose, online travel-booking company, Expedia are all cutting business in Russia.

The energy sector which is a strong income earner for Russia is not spared in this economic onslaught. Energy giants have been leaders of the rejection of Russia include, TotalEnergies, Shell, BP, ExxonMobil and Equinor.

Knowing the impact of these fleeing western countries on the economy of Russia, Kremlin has been trying to stop the exodus. Introducing new capital controls, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin is reported to have said that Western companies were taking decisions because of "political pressure," and would be prevented from selling Russian assets until that subsides.

Will the Ukrainian venture be the nemesis of Putin's Russia? Wait on time to tell.



## Burger King's closure of Russia outlets encounters setback



**T**he parent company of fast-food chain Burger King has announced its inability to close shops in Russia as its partner refuses to comply with a directive to suspend all operations in reaction to Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

David Shear, President of

Restaurant Brands International, RBI, owners of Burger King, stated he is not able to close its 800 restaurants in Russia as its joint venture partner has declined.

Mr. Shear said: "We contacted the main operator of the business and demanded the suspension of Burger

King restaurant operations in Russia. "He has refused to do so."

According to him, to enforce its contracts with Alexander Kolobov, the franchisee, it would need the help of the Russian government but "we know that will not practically happen anytime soon".

RBI's entry into Russia a decade ago was through a joint venture partnership with three entities which are Mr. Kolobov, who controls day-to-day operations, private equity and asset management firm Investment Capital Ukraine, and Russia's state-owned VTB Bank which has been hit by Western sanctions.

Meanwhile, the President of RBI said the company has begun the process of disposing of its 15% ownership stake in the joint venture but that it will take "some time" based on the terms of the agreement.

Burger King, last week said it had suspended all corporate support for its business in the country, following a host of other brands including rival McDonald's that are seeking to cut ties after Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

## Accenture to support displaced Ukrainians with \$5M, telehealth

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



**A**ccenture, including its big digital marketing arm Accenture Interactive, has announced its pulling out of Russia citing the Ukraine invasion by Russia as the reason. The company has a total of 2,300 employees there, accounting to Accenture.

Making the announcement, the company wrote: "We will be providing support to our Russian colleagues, While Accenture does not have a business in Ukraine, we will continue our efforts to help our Ukrainian colleagues working around the globe at Accenture and their extended families; we are providing telehealth for those in Ukraine, and helping resettle family members who leave Ukraine."

Accenture said it was donating \$5 million to nonprofit relief organisations working to help people in Ukraine and those being displaced into Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic."

The company is also matching

donations from employees.

Other holding companies continue to evaluate options. Interpublic, for example said, "we are assessing the most appropriate course of action that is both responsive to the gravity of the situation and also seeks to take into account the welfare of our colleagues." It has about 200 employees in Russia.

"As indicated at the outset of this unprovoked war," IPG added, "our primary focus continues to be remaining in regular contact with our affiliate partners in Ukraine in order to determine the most effective ways for us to provide support to them, and the need."

# IPG joins global brands' Russian exodus



**I**nterpublic Group, IPG, the global marketing solutions company, has joined other global brands to suspend operations in Russia. This was contained in an internal memo to IPG's global employees by the Group's CEO, Philippe Krakowsky.

Krakowsky said that the decision was taken after a careful study of the impact of the Russian invasion on Ukrainians and the company staff in both Ukraine and Russia.

"Recent and escalating attacks on civilian targets, including hospitals, make it regrettably clear that the trajectory of the conflict is escalating, and the war could well go on for some time. Therefore, we have decided to suspend our operations in Russia", Krakowsky said.

Backgrounding the seeming delay in suspending operations, he said the Group was wrestling with the issue of how to reconcile the fact that discontinuing "our operations in Russia could mean abandoning our approximately 200 colleagues there, many of whom we've been fortunate enough to work with for

decades."

Recounting efforts at striking a balance between company's culture and value on one hand with being there for colleagues in Ukraine and Russia and its responsibilities as a global corporate citizen on the other, the IPG boss said "when the invasion began, we immediately applied all international sanctions and informed clients in Russia who are prohibited parties that we would no longer continue working with them. Because we have never owned a media business in Russia, we did not have significant concerns that our media buying was either fueling the local economy, or funding media being used by the state.

"Essentially, we hoped that by supporting our colleagues in Russia we could live up to the part of our DNA that values and seeks to protect our people across IPG, yet also live up to the international sanctions against the Russian regime."

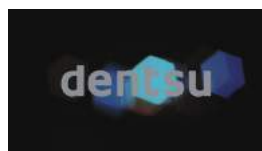
Meanwhile, the IPG boss recalled that following the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the company's focus has been on "doing what we can to help our associates there. we feel a sense of responsibility to do whatever possible on behalf of people whose lives are being upended and threatened."

Acknowledging the good work of IPG employees at alleviating the impact of the war on the people, he said, "Some of the stories that have emerged these past two weeks are truly remarkable. We've seen

IPG people in nearby countries drive to the border to physically assist and provide transportation to individuals and families as they leave Ukraine. Some among us have offered to help refugees get settled as they arrive in a new country, and still, others are hosting displaced Ukrainians in their homes. Several of our agencies in Eastern Europe have made the amazing gesture of opening their doors to anyone fleeing the crisis so that they have a place to work. Our teams are also working on the logistics required for refugees to access housing and medical services. Across IPG, our company has already donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to humanitarian organizations focused on addressing the crisis. Some of our agencies are providing direct monetary support to our affiliates in Ukraine, as well as assistance with IT and other operational needs. For the month of March, IPG is also matching individual gifts from IPG employees to organisations providing assistance to Ukrainians impacted by the war."

Expressing pride in the war relief efforts of the Group's people, he concluded that the "amazing things our people have been able to accomplish, on the ground, to help their Ukrainian colleagues and the Ukrainian people. The kind of work individuals across IPG, and organizations within IPG, have been doing these past two weeks is something we should all be proud of."

## Dentsu joins list of global brands quitting Russia



**D**entsu, the Japanese international advertising

and public relations holding company has joined the growing list of global brands that have suspended operations in Russia in response to the invasion of Ukraine. In a statement made available to the press, a company spokesperson said: "Dentsu International announces today that we are in the process of transferring ownership of our joint venture in Russia to our long-term local partner who will operate independently moving forward."

Stating the reason for the spokesperson

declared: "Dentsu stands unequivocally with Ukraine and the global community who are calling for the restoration of peace. In these unprecedented times, as a global business, we will continue to prioritise the safety of our people and the needs of our clients.

"Our thoughts continue to be with everyone whose lives have been profoundly impacted."

The spokesperson reiterated Dentsu's commitment to alleviating the impact of the war on its people in Ukraine and the generality of Ukrainians supporting the humanitarian efforts especially the Red Cross Society. He said that Dentsu would further donate ¥100m (\$840,000) to humanitarian efforts in Ukraine: "This is

in addition to the £250,000 (\$330,000) that was already provided as urgent aid to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society on February 25.

"In Ukraine, we operate via affiliation with a local partner and we care deeply for the welfare of our 500 affiliate employees. Our Dentsu teams around the world, and particularly in EMEA, have stepped up to provide humanitarian support to those impacted in Ukraine including transporting team members and their families from Ukraine borders to Poland, securing job transfers and secondments to other areas in our network, and providing legal and housing support."

Dentsu is now the sixth major advertising company to withdraw, or begin cutting back, its business operations in Russia, following announcements over the last two weeks from WPP, Accenture, Havas, IPG, and Publicis.

The company employs 1,500 people in Russia via a joint venture with OKS Group.



# Campaign announces judging panel for Women Leading Change Awards 2022



**C**ampaign's Women Leading Change Awards has announced the judges for the Asia-Pacific 2022 Awards.

Now in its 6th edition, the Awards which was introduced to celebrate the achievements of the region's business leaders, change makers, trailblazers, and women who have shown outstanding leadership and fostered groundbreaking innovation in the media, advertising, PR, and marketing industries, is a part of Campaign's commitment to promoting the advancement of diversity, inclusion, and equality in the marketing communications industry.

The Women Leading Change Awards continue to recognise excellence among Asia Pacific-based individuals, teams and companies and champion the advancement

of talents within the media, advertising, PR, and marketing industries.

"We are honored to have an esteemed judging panel including industry experts and client marketers from across the region for the 2022 Awards," Campaign said.

The judges include: Abhinav Sharma, Head of Colleague and Client Services, Asia Pacific, Citi; Adrian Warr, CEO, Southeast Asia, Edelman; Amrita Randhawa, CEO, Singapore and Southeast Asia, Publicis Groupe; Ashutosh Srivastava, CEO, GroupM Asia Pacific; Atifa Silk, Managing Director, Haymarket Media Asia; Danielle Jin, Senior Vice President, Marketing APAC, Visa Worldwide; Deepa Dey, Head Comms & Sustainability – Nutrition &

Special Projects, Hindustan Unilever; Heeru Dingra, CEO, Isobar India Group; Linda Yan, Director of Corporate Affairs & Engagement, North Asia, L'Oréal; Mae Loon, MD, Head of APAC Communications, Credit Suisse AG; May Seow, Managing Director, Head of Digital Content, Standard Chartered Bank; Melissa Wong, Head of Marketing, FrieslandCampina Singapore; Minali Shah, Director, Global Marketing, Abbott; Rahul Asthana, Managing Director, Kimberly-Clark; Rose Huskey, Chief Client Officer, APAC, Wavemaker; Sapna Chadha, VP of Marketing, Google India and SEA, Google; Siew Ting Foo, Chief Marketing Officer, Greater Asia, HP Inc; Stephanie Brown, Global Brand Strategist, Intuit; Sudesh Thevasenabathy, Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Asia, Manulife Asia; Taiwing Tian, Co-Founder, Switching-Time; Wendy Walker, Vice President Marketing, APAC, Salesforce.

Applications are open to individual nominees, teams and companies which have demonstrated outstanding leadership, fostered groundbreaking innovation, driven change in their respective industry, and making an impact to the community during the eligibility period.

Entries close Tuesday, 29 March 2022. Shortlists will be announced Wednesday, 11 May, 2022. Winners will be announced Wednesday, 1 June, 2022.

## Ascential plans £1.5bn demerger



**G**lobal data and analytics company and the parent company of the Cannes Lions, Ascential Media company has responded to media speculations of a possible demerger of its digital operations.

Earlier in the week, news reports had made rounds that Ascential was working with investment bankers on a breakup that

would see part of the company shift its stock market listing across the Atlantic to New York in an attempt to accelerate the creation of value for shareholders.

In response to the claims, the media company said in a release: "We have noted recent media speculations regarding possible changes to the Group's structure. As demonstrated on a number of occasions, Ascential's Board regularly evaluates the optimal organizational and capital structure for the business to continue both the successful delivery of the Group's strategy for the benefit of our customers and to maximize shareholder

value.

However, the company has confirmed that it is in the early stages of evaluating the merits of a managed separation of "certain assets" of the Group.

"As discussions are exploratory at this stage, they may or may not lead to the Board making a decision to undertake a managed separation of these businesses in due course. The Board is committed to open and transparent engagement with all of its stakeholders and will communicate further if and as appropriate," the statement read.

# How to shape customer relationships in the new age of experience

Customers now are so different from those even a few years ago, with more technology literacy, increased demand and the desire to have a relationship with the brands they buy from. If you're looking to get the edge over your competitors by reimagining your approach to data, measurement and loyalty.

Brands need to transform their data strategy, from a media-led narrative focusing on quantity of data, to one that focuses on depth of knowledge and understanding of customer needs, passions and motivations. Building insight into each of your customers' needs will help you to know when to deliver personal interactions, and drive more engagement.

Moving away from just the customers' experiences on screen towards a more omnichannel brand experience, both before and after a sale, is key to driving connection with your customers. Practicing funnel fluidity helps ensure you're capturing potential customers at every opportunity.

The customer journey is now in the buyer's hands; they choosing how and when to engage with your brand. Your job is to meet them where they are, which involves finding, knowing, engaging and providing value to customers through new funnel logic.

In today's environment, experiences are just as important to a customer as the actual products you sell. Changing your thinking to view experiences as just another product offering can help add to your chances of making a sale.

For example, if you have a product demonstration on your website that drives a customer to ask a question (meaning you gain their contact details, reason to buy, location and propensity to purchase), the product you have on offer didn't drive that interaction – it was driven by the customer's experience of watching the product demonstration. Offering more experiences allows you to reach more customer touchpoints, enabling you to make more meaningful moments with your customers.

It can be daunting to know where to start with measurement – poor measurement frameworks can limit leaders' vision and, by extension, the success of the business. Leaders should focus on ensuring the measurement framework in place aligns with business goals, and creating the right customer measures based on what will make a difference. By tracking metrics such as performance, experience, satisfaction, word of mouth, growth, churn, etc, you can meaningfully connect the customer experience to business performance.

Once you have planned a strategy that has a clear and realistic goal, with a mapped link of causes and effects, you must make sure your measurement strategy is aligned across departments. Your customers don't just engage with the marketing team – their data also exists across sales, commerce and services – so each department must work together. This might mean realigning data and technology, strategies, and ways of working, but ensures you are all working towards measurement that ultimately grows the business.

Once the strategy is in place, assess how and what you measure, as well as the capabilities required to successfully define, develop and utilise measurements in your business. Assess your benchmarks to track progress against the most valuable comparison points in the market, and your capabilities to measure.

Analyse the measurements you already have in place, define your KPIs and capture details about any data limitations that may prevent progress towards those KPIs.

Finally, no business is successful without evolution. Your strategy should be continuously evaluated to ensure you're getting the most out of your KPIs. Priorities change, so your strategy should shift to align with the business's short, medium and long-term goals. Put roadmaps in place to make sure you can be proactive about implementing measurement practices, to support fast, agile evolution.



Just offering customers convenience will no longer cut it – they now want immersive, entertaining experiences that deliver emotional connections based on shared values. Customers want to be understood. At the very least, you should be offering frictionless interactions and seamlessly aligned channels – and if you aren't, you're a generation behind the rest. The next 20 years will see a shift from convenience to relationship building.

Relationships with customers that are meaningful and valuable to both parties will be the factor that makes you stand out from your competitors. When all the world's a store without a closing time, building a relationship with your customer will help you turn that one-off sale into a lifetime of transactions.

So how do you nurture that relationship? By treating it like a human relationship; offering consistency, communication, creativity and authenticity.

Consistency allows your customer to know what to expect when they engage with your brand. They are more likely to feel comfortable giving their money to an organisation that constantly delivers on their promises. Similarly, ensure you have a two-way dialogue with your customers so they feel they can provide feedback in the knowledge that it will be considered and potentially acted upon.

Creativity is one area that can really provide your brand with a unique identity. Surprise and entertain your customers with your creativity – spice things up. Finally, 'authenticity' is a buzzword for a reason. Be clear about what your brand's values are, communicate them and align your strategy towards them.

*Culled from Marketing Week*



# Ukrainian Creatives fight back with Information Campaigns and Practical Humanitarian Aid



Summing up the results of the third week of the war in Ukraine, we can once again say that a human being is the most adaptive and survivable creature on earth. Who would have thought that we, the people who yesterday complained about burnout, mental health problems, “severe deadlines” (if the project is given less than three weeks), will now be able to create projects under constant shelling? Without a permanent place of residence, or moving from city to city every few days. All this has become the reality of our agency.

This is when illusions have passed, fear and confusion have passed, as well, and clarity has come. The clarity that this is not a threat, not blackmail of Putin, but the clarity that the old man is ready to make bloody bets to achieve his imperial ambitions. Also, the clarity that the pseudo-powerful second strongest army in the world suffers more losses in two weeks of “special operations” than in all the years of the Syrian war. At the end of the second week of the war, there was confidence

that we would win, which is confirmed by the huge number of losses of the Russian military.

This war is hard to imagine in the 21st century, but it takes place right in our homes and on our streets. This war will forever change the creative industry, not only in Ukraine, even if it seems that creatives in other countries are not affected. The European economy is too tightly connected for events to not affect the consequences for the brands represented in the European market, and, as a result, the creative agencies that run them. It is likely that, if not immediately, then gradually, the approach of brands to strategic planning will change.

Change is something you never expect. Imagine, yesterday you were developing campaigns to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere and fought for tolerance. Today you are sitting in the basement of a bomb shelter with your children. It does not fit well into the usual civilized European world. We are all used to the fact that the war is taking place somewhere

far from our homes, somewhere in Syria, Africa, Iran. Today it is happening close to the borders of Poland, all over Ukraine, which now looks like Europe during the Second World War and where Russian troops are shelling the largest nuclear power plant in Europe.

We are sure that we, Ukraine, will win. We will stand. Ukraine rallied as a nation and acted as a human shield for Europe. At the military registration and enlistment offices, there are queues of volunteers and most get refused. People want to, but cannot get into the army, because the military does not have time to train people without experience. Someone goes to volunteer, someone tries to contribute to this war effort with their profession. Our incredibly, as it turned out, persistent President called on everyone to take their front, to contribute where you are the best.

The creative industry in Ukraine is actively helping to fight on the information front. Many agencies in Ukraine have joined this information war. In less than two weeks, our agency creatives made six state projects to deter Russian aggression and promote humanitarian aid to the army and other social and military issues.

In parallel with this, our creatives weave nets, help in volunteer headquarters, and organize humanitarian aid to cities. Everyone united for the sake of helping each other, for the sake of victory.

Ukraine will survive, but the country's economy will take time to recover. Already, all our clients have stopped their projects – during the war, people do not think about buying new sneakers, but about having water and food in the bomb shelter for the next day. The creative industry is now focused entirely on charitable projects in defense of the state, but these projects do not allow for paying salaries to creatives.

Our agency still has a small financial safety net to support the staff, but it is not known if it will last long enough in these conditions. Business in Ukraine will take time to recover from such a vicious attack, but after any sunset, there is always dawn. Quite a bit of time will pass and we will be able to brush off these events and you will again see our projects on the awards circuit.

*Written By: Ilia Anufrienko, Founder & Creative Director at Bickerstaff.347, Kyiv*

# Accelerating SMEs' growth through PR

By **Ralph Tathagata**

**S**mall and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are considered the backbone of economic growth in all countries, and are strategic as well as essential for accelerating global growth and development.

According to the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), a large percentage of all registered companies in Nigeria are constituted by small scale businesses and many have been in existence for a long time. SMEs constitute about 90% of businesses in Nigeria, creating more than 70 per cent of employment which contributes 10% to the country's GDP.

Even though SMEs play such an important role, there is also a high failure rate. It is estimated that close to 75% of SMEs fail within their first two years of existence, particularly in developing markets. This high failure rate could also be a contributing factor to determining which marketing communication media should be prioritized by SMEs.

Marketing communication efforts within SMEs are largely influenced by the environment in which the business operates, the skills and resources of the business, and the characteristics of the owner.

Access to the market remains one of the single biggest challenges that SMEs face in the country and the need to use PR to help small businesses find and grow their client base cannot be overstated. No client wants to do business with a small business owner who has no track record and has never delivered for an actual client.

For most small businesses that can point to fancy marketing campaigns, billboards, or a vast array of clients, marketing communication is, therefore, seen as a vital activity for the survival and success of SMEs.

By being able to point to the coverage, immediately makes it easier to open a door for them. As the clients achieve small, incremental wins, the agency should start building out case studies that are their own form of PR and share these with other industry partners as well.

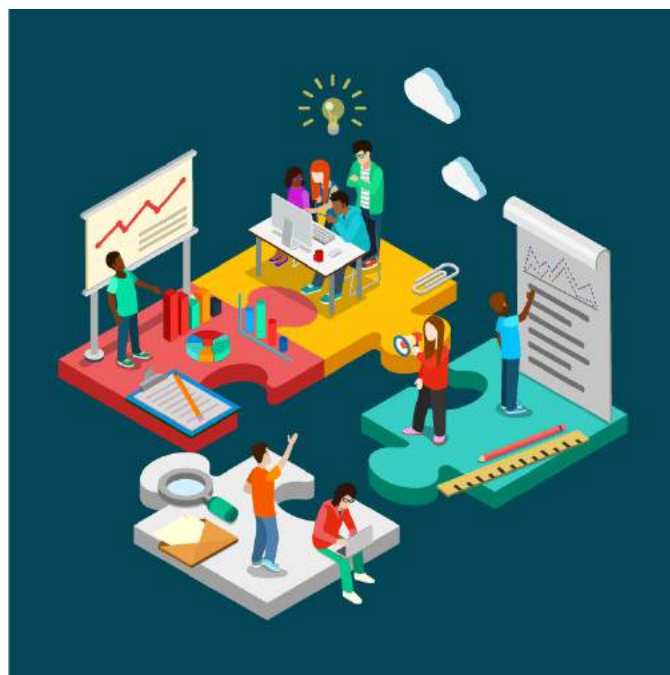
Momentum has to be maintained because it is one of the most powerful forces in the world; but many small businesses simply can't get the flywheel turning. One step forward and then they fail to capitalise on this. The link between PR coverage and access to

the market must be clear.

Today, however, the communication landscape has evolved due to technological advancements. As a result, there are many more communication tools that can be used by SMEs to conduct marketing communication activities of the business.

In a larger business, the marketing and sales or business development activities are two separate functions that theoretically should integrate or align. In a small business, many entrepreneurs find it easier to hide behind the softer elements of marketing but don't have a follow-through strategy to evidence their success.

Business development inside of a small business is not easy and getting in the door is a very real challenge. SMEs should, therefore, have a strategy that combines PR and business development activities in order to find it much easier for market penetration.





# MTN's **We Move** inspires young Nigerians to do more

By **Ralph Tathagata**

**A**part from influencing buying and consumption behaviour, marketing and advertising have the ability to shape aspirations, drive social change and move the entire society forward. When brands paint an empathetic picture of societal challenges, they play a role in redefining what is considered insurmountable, sparking national conversations and firing up the dying embers of people's ambition, especially the youth. Simply put, marketing and advertising can work as a morale booster, an accelerator for social and economic change.

In addition to attracting attention, generating publicity, unifying marketing strategy, and reinforcing a company's brand, a campaign slogan could become a mantra for social change.

The storyline of MTN's **We Move** commercial embodies the foregoing and even more, as it has become Nigerian millennials' way of expressing courage in the face of daunting challenges. Aside from eliciting some interesting reactions on social media, the campaign has addressed subtle but significant issues tugging at the heart of young Nigerians. Blurring the gender line, many have fallen in love with **We Move** because it has shifted the status quo and beliefs that women belong to the kitchen or men can't prepare sumptuous meals.

What's more, the interaction between the visual and audio production of the commercial remains one of the most captivating artistic creations seen in any recent campaign. Without any spoken words and just a mixture of good music, expressions, and great acting, **We Move** remains the most relatable TV commercial in recent times.

According to MTN Nigeria, **We Move** campaign inaugurated earlier in 2021, has motivated many Nigerians to look inward for opportunities, set goals, grow their interest in various activities, make plans for their future, and develop their talent regardless of the challenges life throws at them.

The campaign, it was also revealed, involved MTN team visiting locations across Nigeria to ask people to share experiences of how they overcame their challenges.

Today, **We Move** has become a common catchphrase Nigerians, especially the youths find themselves saying when they refuse to



be held back by difficult situations, anxiety, rejection, heartbreak, and all other negative vibes that come with adulthood.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) the unemployment rate in the country stands at 33% which is currently the second-highest in the world. Nigeria has one of the world's youngest populations with a median age of 18, which implies that a sizable number of youths are either fresh graduates or still in higher institutions trying to get their lives on track and make sense out of it.

For many of these youths, the **We Move** storyline speaks of rejection, hope, tenacity, creativity, and ultimately, turning one's passion into a venture when one's dream job fails to come along as envisaged.

**We Move** campaign has meritoriously won both the Lagos Advertising & Ideas Festival (LAIF) award and the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) 2021 award at separate events in Lagos. As a result of its success, the campaign bagged Campaign of the Year awards at the ADVAN awards for Marketing Excellence (West Africa).

Speaking to **MARKETING EDGE** in an interview, Sheriff Akinpelu, Strategy Lead, SPV Communication Solutions, one of the brainpowers behind the campaign, said: "The entire concept about **We Move** campaign is based on the reality of current situation in Nigeria, the rate of unemployment, devaluation of naira, insecurity etc. which is giving worries about life."

According to him, the campaign depicted the basic societal truth that people seem to be shying away from, which is the fact that not everyone will have the

opportunity to get a white collar job.

"Some people will have to work in the informal sector of the economy. One of the guys in the campaign is a graduate. While he was in school, he cooked well, some paid him to cook for them. After graduating from school, he never thought of going into that direction of cooking because his parents have expectations of him and he does not want to work in the informal economy.

"But if we look at the situation of the country, we need to look into what we know how to do best. Everyone has something within that makes them special. It is just for us to identify it and look at how we can use that thing to progress in life.

"In the campaign, the protagonist is a wonderful cook, despite the fact that he graduated from the university and couldn't secure a job. He quickly looks into what he can do best and tap into it to grow and progress in life," he explained.

"The role of MTN in that campaign is to show that we understand what Nigerians are going through, especially the youth. We want them to believe in themselves and not to give up. They should have a deep thinking and identify what makes them unique and tap into it.

"MTN will be with them along the journey, irrespective of what they discover in themselves, MTN will be there to make sure they achieve their dreams. I feel elated and humble to be one of those who worked on the project," Mr. Akinpelu concluded.

To further demonstrate its altruistic features and capabilities, MTN Nigeria's **We Move** campaign has proven that a commercial can create a place where profit, motivation and social good overlap.



# Can we reason with ADVAN?

For some time now, relationships between the agencies and other service providers in the integrated marketing communications sector as well as their advertisers have been very frosty. The relationship which is satirically referred to in recent times as master-servant has been largely hinged on mutual suspicion, distrust and dis-respect. Unlike in the past when the client companies and their service agencies enjoyed very cordial relationship built on trust and mutual value creation, the reverse has been the case these days. Long gone and forgotten are the days of long-lasting relationships where it would take a major blow up for the partnership to be at risk. Today, the situation has changed completely such that it has become very, very fragile. A very good observer of the gradual and final collapse in the relationship between the agencies and the clients will readily confirm that both parties are to be blamed.

In the past, the advertisers saw their service providers as valued partners and as such accorded them due respect on their inputs towards building enduring brands that will achieve bottom-lines and profitability. Then, agencies' creative and strategic ideas count more for the average advertisers who saw their agency partners as people with the right solutions to their brands' needs. They gave them the right briefs on their brands' needs while the agencies of old were full of ideas and were solutions providers to clients' brands

marketing challenges.

At issue in today's relationship between the clients and their agencies is the issue of trust and transparency. Most clients have developed erroneous perception for the agencies as mere profiteers who charge more than their services are truly worth. Some clients believe though erroneously that agencies over-invoice, while some are more fixated about the budget being allocated to execute the right campaign that will engender good results for the brands out there in the market place. This they do at the expense of the real value. While it is not out rightly incorrect that some agencies are culpable of unethical business practices, it is however not enough to allow this type of negative perception and stereotyping to remain dominant a feature in managing client-agency relationship. To worsen matter, most clients treat agencies shabbily by not respecting contract terms on engagement. It is not uncommon in this clime for clients to sack their agency partners at their whims and caprices without regard for engagement terms and tenure. In some cases, some of these clients maybe chronic debtors who would always want to experiment with every Tom, Dick and Harry agencies in town with a view to getting different ideas for their brands.

Since most clients now take the agencies for granted, the agencies on their parts have abandoned the culture of loyalty.

Let it be stated that the client reserves the right to hire and fire whoever they feel

can work on their brands. However, such rights should not be abused in relating with the agency partners. Most troubling and worrisome is the fact that most of the agency's contracts are terminated when a new marketing director or commercial director takes over from a former holder of that position on the client's side. The moment a new marketing director takes over the marketing function of the company, the next thing on the card is how to replace the existing agency with subsisting contract or call for a pitch-review of the company's brands advertising business. In that situation, the new CMO may not be keen on the value being offered by the subsisting handler agency before he assumed the new office, rather what concerns him is how to put his own "Man Friday" in charge of the business. While this type of action achieves purpose sometimes, most often, when you put the person you know and you can trust in charge of a business, it may not achieve any beneficial purpose for the business. It therefore means that this action is taken as a vendetta or in pretext for hidden selfish and egoistic purposes. If this is done, the exercise will fail to achieve altruistic corporate goal and brands over-all benefits and value-inputs would have been held in abeyance.

As the clients and their agencies struggle to evolve workable and more respectful and mutually beneficial relationship, advertisers in Nigeria are raising another fundamental issue that appears to be troubling and affecting





a functional and cordial agency-client relationship. Aside the known and existing challenges hampering good agency and client relationship, President of Advertisers Association of Nigeria, (ADVAN) Mr. Osamede Uwubanwen has expressed fear and concern over what he termed as "cross-functions amongst agencies in Nigeria. The ADVAN president had noted that "there are agencies that are crossing functions amongst sectors of the industry with member agencies of one sectoral groups picking contracts from another sectoral group whereas they are not part of that group ". He enjoined the regulators to look into this development as he considered it unhealthy for the brand. While the ADVAN president maybe right about his fears on cross functions amongst agencies, he should also spare some moments about what some clients are doing these days all in their bid to cut costs and save more money for their brands and organizations. Specifically, client companies in recent times are beginning to establish full service agencies within their organisations thereby dispensing with out-sourcing their brands communications briefs. These days, clients go the whole hog by poaching professionals and specialists in the different IMC sectors and

recruit them as paid employees.

The development has continued to deprive the agencies of skilled manpowers to do their jobs. While it is the agencies that recruit and train their workers, the client companies no longer recruit and train personnel to feed their human resources needs. Rather, they go ahead to poach the best and the brightest professionals on the agency side and ware-house them for their own selfish goals. This practice has further contributed to the dearth of true professionals in the industry as agency workers recruited by the client companies are usually paid jumbo salaries as bait.

The ware-housing of media buying business and other agency services by the client companies is a major ache that may witness sudden collapse of many integrated marketing communications services companies. This fact was corroborated recently by the Founder/ CEO of Eskimi, Vytautas Paukstys during a recent Quarterly Virtual Summit by MARKETING EDGE. According to Paukstys, "advertisers are starting to move media buying-in-house. He stated that "as brands continue to strengthen their in-house expertise, agencies are compelled to offer more by delivering

a wider range of services, with data and technology capability, flexible talent, and strong relationships with the tech platforms emerging as dominant requirements". Continuing, Paukstys said: "We are now beginning to see a hybrid model where brands are managing digital media themselves and using agencies as a consultancy even as their in-house operations grow fast. "What is happening is that agencies would also be looking for a new model and how they can find their place in this market which is changing rapidly as brands continue to take control", Paukstys revealed.

For a fact, agencies run on profit made from clients consultancy. Now that today's advertisers are getting wiser ware-housing IMC services, it goes without saying that agencies too on their parts will expand their operations to generate enough revenue to run their operations. It is not surprising therefore that today's agencies engage in cross-functioning amongst themselves if only to stay afloat. In the past, it was considered unethical for advertisers to be the one going direct to the media for placement of their advertisements, today, advertisers have jettisoned this rule as they go direct to the media for placements across the media platforms ostensibly to save more from the advertising budgets.

As the popular proverb goes, "since men have learnt to shoot without missing, birds have learnt how to fly without perching". In other words, whatever the agencies are doing to be able to remain afloat and in business, are due to their experience with the clients trying to deny and deprive them of expected services in organisations which would have in turn given them profit. Besides, agencies can cross-function because in today's modern economy, the language that is gaining currency is not "Core Competence" rather it is multiple competences. That agencies want to be everything to all clients is due to the reality out there in the market that to survive the heat in the market and industry, the agencies are tuning into multiple competences so as to continue to be relevant. The earlier the advertisers realize the veracity in this statement and learn how to live with it the better. It needs no further argument in any way that

# MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame, industry's acme honour debuts

**T**he Nigerian marketing communications ecosystem has witnessed another groundbreaking first from MARKETING EDGE, the premier brands and marketing industry magazine with the debut of its Hall of Fame in February.

Conceived as the acme of honours in the marketing communications industry and the national ecosystem, MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame made a glamorous entry in a select and very elitist event attended by the shakers and movers of the industry and the creme-de-la-creme of the Nigerian society.

The honourees who were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the inaugural edition came under 11 categories, viz: Brand Experience Torch Bearer, featuring Felix King Eiremiokhae and Tunji Adeyinka; PR Torch Bearer, featuring John Ehiguese; Advertising Torch Bearer, where Lanre Adisa, Steve Babaeko, Bunmi Oke, and Rotimi Bankole were featured; Media Pacesetter featuring Emeka Okeke; Marketing Pathfinder, featuring Iquo Ukoh; Advertising Pathfinder, where we have Alhaji Garba Kankarofi, Udeme Ufot and Jimi Awosika.

Other categories are; Media Pathfinder featuring Ayo Oluwatosin; PR Pathfinder, where Yomi Badejo-Okusanya was featured; and Corporate Pacesetter, where Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi, Alhaji Abdulsamad Rabi'u, and Funmilayo Omo, all from the corporate world were featured.

Leading the pack are the fathers who are in two categories, Father of Modern Brand and Marketing where George Thorpe reigns and Father of Modern Advertising where the big masquerades, the forerunners of yesteryears, the propellers of today's journey and the leading lights into the future, Dr. Biodun Shobanjo and Sir Steve Omojafor reign in their imperial majesty.



Going by responses and feelers from industry players and watchers, MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame has not only lived to its billing, it has, in keeping with its commitment to promoting the brand idea, raised the bar for the industry as a whole.

Dr. Biodun Shobanjo, the doyen of advertising said: "I really need to commend John Ajayi. For those of you who are entrepreneurs you would understand that branching out is very difficult; extremely difficult. It was something I went through for forty-two years and I know what pain it is really, particularly in a profession where people pay you money and it can be very frustrating sometimes.

"I want to thank John and his team for a wonderful job they have done because it is a full time effort to be able to improve on the product quality and content. The content they bring to the party generally is very commendable; they even go into television as well and collaborated with TVC. I think one needs to give these guys a lot of credit. On behalf of all the inductees, we thank John and his team for a wonderful evening."

Similarly, Steve Omojafor said: "I need to congratulate John for his effort and the success that he has made today. On behalf of all the inductees, I wish John and his team warmest congratulations. What you have done today is the beginning, because you have started this business and there is no turning back."

"In the same vein, Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi said: I want to appreciate MARKETING EDGE; it was indeed a great honour to be so inducted. What you have done today has come to stay. One thing about success is that it is a journey not a destination; what MARKETING EDGE has done today is a challenge for them to do much more",

Indeed, MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame maiden edition has really demonstrated in action the true meaning of what Nigeria's popular artiste, Patorankin meant when he sang "Celebrate Me", a song whose lyrics is filled with deep reflection: "Celebrate Me, now when I dey alive, appreciate me, now when I dey alive, no be when I leave this life, you go come dey fake am for my back."





# MARKETING EDGE MAIDEN HALL OF FAME IN PICS



# Only Disruptive Leadership can make Nigeria claim its Promise of Greatness

## -Prof. Pat Utomi

*Professor Pat Utomi is a Professor of Political Economy and a management expert. He is the Founder of Centre for Value in Leadership. He has been acknowledged to be a consummate professional who has passion for dignity of the human person and the spirit of enterprise.*

*A Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants of Nigeria, Utomi is also a professor at the Lagos Business School and has served in senior positions in government. He is a sought-after advisor in both private and public enterprises. This cerebral scholar and exemplary corporate leader was the Keynote Speaker at the maiden edition of the MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame which held recently. Below are excerpts from his address.*

**P**ermit me to start by recalling that at independence, Nigeria's output per person was about twice that of China. Unfortunately, however, nobody would have believably predicted that I would live to see a mind boggling reversal of fortunes in just one generation!

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping literally took the reins in China; and he began to say to China, "you must stop believing this nonsense about the intellect as threat to progress just the way Nigerian politicians mock knowledge as theory and impractical today. These ideas of False Consciousness significantly explain why Nigeria is where it is today.

Intellect is what will get us far,  
Deng kept canvassing.

Our intellectuals have to have a strong place in the (Communist) Party, he insisted. I am pleased to advise everyone who cares in this audience to go and read the speeches which he (Xiaoping) gave in 1978, especially the

ones at the December Communist Party Congress.

As China began to respect the intellect (and intellectuals) more, and, brought about massive progress in just one generation (of about 30 years) the turnaround made China's output per person to now become 30 times of that of Nigeria! That is leadership at work.

Leadership is about sacrificial and visionary pursuit of creative solutions for the advancement of society.

Leaders find problems; and they find ways of not only solving them, but affecting the tone of culture around that process such that progress becomes sustainable. We can talk of so many other examples, such as Brazil, and a host of others where laggard performance was turned around through the emergence of more purposeful leadership. This must indicate that a turnaround is possible with the Nigeria project if leaders of the right stuff show up.

As a graduating student in the late 70's, my focus was largely on Latin

American economies; we saw what happened there (in Latin America).

In 1979, I met a certain Brazilian professor who was literally in exile, in Chile. He was working at Economic Commission for Latin America; and was a leader of a school of thought that was referred to in International Political Economy as Dependency Theory.

In those days Dependency theorists were called 'Dependistas' in Latin America.

I met this celebrated Professor at a conference in New York, and I said to him, you know what, my problem with dependency theory is that, it is elegant theorizing by you and others. As a student I love it but as an economic growth activist I don't see a redemptive part for the people of Brazil in all that theory suggests. I don't see how it solves the problems of people of Brazil.

Anybody who might have been here when President Henrique Fernando Cardoso came to speak some years ago at the Anyia-Osigwe Lecture, here in Lagos, would remember the exchange





between him and I. I asked him if he remembered the precocious African student who asked him this question in 1979, and he laughed.'

Guess what? He went back to Brazil after the years at ECLA. On return to Brazil, he became the country's minister of foreign affairs at a time the Brazilian economy was a basket case; with inflation running so high such that if you entered a store, the prices of goods might change three times before you finish shopping. It was really awful.

Interestingly, he was in New York as foreign minister to give a speech when he got a call from his (country's) president, asking, Professor Cardoso, would you like to be finance minister? Meanwhile, the lifespan of a finance minister then (in Brazil) was like three months, they kept changing them because they blamed them for the bad shape of the economy. He (Cardoso) said to the president, calm down, as we say in

Nigeria, calm down, can we talk about this tomorrow? He (the President) said okay, fine. When Cardoso got back to his hotel his wife called him by his first name, Fernando, three times, and he said yes sweetheart, what is the problem, my darling, what have I done? She said how can you accept to be finance minister? Cardoso immediately retorted, What do you mean, accept what? I have not done any such thing. She then informed her husband that they (the Brazilian government) had announced it already. You are the new finance minister.

Fernando Cardoso decided to do the job; but who Cardoso was would not determine what he would do. What determined what he did was what was best for Brazil. He brought together Brazil's brightest young economists and asked them to quarrel as much as they wanted; but they should let him into their thought process. He would embrace and use his prestige among his

people to advance whatever that was.

Of course, we know that brought inflation to a critical halt and Brazil began to grow; and, of course, they later insisted he must become president!

It is a globally acknowledged fact that President Henrique Fernando Cardoso, set a new course for Brazil and then he was succeeded by a remarkable trade unionist called Inácio Lula da Silva. Poverty was being eliminated at the rate of several million people a week at a point in time in Brazil's history. Brazil is now one of the top economies in the world. That is what leadership is about.

I will not stay with just foreigners or with broad national themes in leadership. Let's come to industry. I was not joking when I talked about people like Chief Biodun Shobanjo. They did really disrupt the industry; and that disruption must continue. I was a young youth corps member, I served my NYSC in a troublesome place called New Breed magazine, working for Chris Okolie, and I watched the Insight Communications of this world begin in the mid 70's, and late 70's, Chris Okolie himself was a great disruptor, no matter what you thought of him. One day he was so angry with everybody and called the place and shook them all up. Every assignment, it was this (then 21-year-old) youth corps member who was getting it done. And just one day, he announced me as the editor of the magazine at age 22! Of course, a couple of days later, I left the country to a graduate school and he said I should continue editing the magazine from the US. That was the kind of crazy person Chris Okolie was.

But leadership matters and we need a lot of leadership and disruption to let Nigeria claim its promise which is to be a great country that will finally remove the shame of the Black man.

I heard Mr. Ajayi (in his welcome address) quote how mediocre pursue publicity and the people of excellence hide in obscurity. If you are going to affect culture, you cannot hide in obscurity, and so, marketing geniuses are fundamental to effectiveness of leadership in extending the reach of those who have excellence in them.

I thank you all for coming to honour people of excellence.

You may have extended the frontiers of marketing communications. Leaders Bridge troubled waters. Branded, their effect and impact extend possibilities exponentially.

# PROFILES OF **MARKETING EDGE** **HALL OF FAME** HONOREES





# MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame Honorees



## DR. BIODUN SHOBANJO

The doyen of Nigerian advertising, Dr. Biodun Shobanjo is literally and metaphorically the African re-incarnate of David Ogilvy, as he boasts 5 decades of impactful contributions to Nigeria's Marketing Communication industry (IMC).

As a marketing communication practitioner par excellence, Dr. Shobanjo cut his teeth at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, now Federal Radio Corporation, in 1964 as a studio manager. He left in 1971 and joined the American-Nigerian agency, Grant Advertising where he rose to the post of Deputy Managing Director before his 30th birthday.

He co-founded Insight Communications (now Publicis Groupe/ Insight Redefini) in 1979 which has now become an integrated part of the Troyka Group, the holding company for Redefini (the communication group for Insight Publicis, Quadrant MSL, Media Perspectives, All Seasons Media, LCC and Leo Burnett Lagos). Meanwhile, the Troyka Group has 4 companies operating under it, namely: Insight Redefini Limited, Serengeti OOH Limited, Halogen Security Company Limited and Black Onyx Properties Ltd.

As a believer in people, Dr. Shobanjo's business style has favoured a mentoring ambience which has spawned protégés who are leading lights of the advertising and marketing communications industry in Nigeria.

At each stage of his career, he has continued to create sustainable impact and influence. For example,

he has always been passionate about elevating the market value of his employees' talents by showing a genuine responsibility to reciprocate the value they are adding to his success as a leader.

Apart from his iconic achievements in the advertising industry, comprehensively referred to as Marketing Communications, which embraces the trinity of advertising, public relations and publicity, a total package arrangement for marketing goods and services in the modern era, Dr. Shobanjo also has a good heart that manifests in his readiness to give a helping hand to the needy - 9 individuals and institutions, including tertiary institutions such as the Obafemi Awolowo University and the University of Lagos. Dr. Shobanjo is an exponent of quiet philanthropy who simply gives with his right hand without letting the left hand get wind of it.



## SIR STEVE OMOJAFOR

Sir Steve Bamidele Omojafor is a leading light in the Integrated Marketing Communications industry, whose name is synonymous with the sector in Nigeria. The accomplished veteran was the former Chairman of Zenith Bank and also a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN). His extensive knowledge of mass communication and social marketing is invaluable to the national response to mitigate HIV, TB and other communicable diseases.

As one of the pacesetters and founding fathers of advertising in Nigeria, Sir Steve joined the industry in the early seventies after a two-year stint as a journalist with Daily Times. His remarkable journey began

at Lintas in 1972, where he was tutored and mentored by other giants from his era such as industry titans, including Chief Moemeke, Olu Falomo, and Segun Ogundumi. From there, he rose through the ranks to become the Managing Director.

He was the former Group Managing Director/ CEO of STB-MCCANN – a leading marketing communication company providing services to multi-national companies. He is also the chairman of the Board of Trustees of Augustine University in Epe and the chairman, Board of Trustees of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria.

Sir Omojafor is a director of several companies in Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. He is well known for his philanthropic activities through his tireless involvement in many non-governmental organizations. For example, he is Director, Bloom Cancer Care and Support Center; Trustee, National Association of Handicapped Persons; Golden Pillar (Goodwill Ambassador), National Cancer Prevention Program and Member, National Society for the Blind. He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Marketing (NIMARK) and also a Fellow of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (AAAN).

The iconic adman, who has made indelible marks in the industry, is a proud alumnus of St Gregory's College. The legend of advertising earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the prestigious department of Mass Communication of the University of Lagos in 1972 with specialisation in marketing communications. As a touch bearer in his chosen field, he also attended several advertising seminars and workshops in the United States of America, including a short programme at the Columbia University, New York; Australia, Holland, United Kingdom and around Africa.

Fondly known as Omo Jesu by admirers, friends and colleagues, Sir Omojafor is a major pathfinder in the IMC industry and over the years has brought his depth of experience to bear on major iconic brands in the Nigerian competitive market. He has been active in the promotion of brand ideas and also contributed significantly to the growth of the industry.

These outstanding feats and landmarks have earned the agile septuagenarian to be conferred with the national merit award of the Officer of the Order of Niger, OON for his numerous contributions to the growth of the country.



### DR. AKIN OGUNBIYI

Osun State governorship aspirant, Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi is the Group Chairman of Mutual Benefits Assurance PLC, a conglomerate of nine subsidiaries and over 5,000 employees.

The Nigerian businessman and politician also sits as the Chief Executive Officer & Associate Director at Finance & Insurance Experts Ltd. He is also on the board of Infrastructure Bank Plc and Elephant Group PLC and Associate at Chartered Insurance Institute and Member of Institute of Directors. His conglomerate encompasses insurance firms, oil and gas industry and real estate amongst others.

He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Directors, Fellow West Africa Insurance Institute, Banjul, Gambia and also a Fellow of the Risk Managers Society of Nigeria.

Dr. Ogunbiyi is a graduate of Agricultural Economics from the University of Ife. He is also an alumnus of the famous International Graduate School of Management, University of Navarra (IESE) Barcelona, Spain where he obtained an Executive Masters in Business Administration. In addition, he is an alumnus of Lagos Business School and Saïd Business School of the University of Oxford where he attended the Oxford Advanced Management & Leadership Programme.

### IQUO UKOH

Iquo Ukoh is a quintessential professional and multi-dimensional marketing Advisor and Expert. She is a distinguished Fellow of Nigerian Institute of Marketing of Nigeria and a highly respected veteran within the West African Marketing Communications space. She has served as the 1st Vice President of Advertisers Association of Nigeria and other committees in the Advertising/ Communication sub-sector like Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON).

Having managed many global brands for Nestle Nigeria, she has strong flexibility in adapting global strategies to local application delivering accelerated market growth. Iquo is passionate about people hence her customer-centric, people-centric and insatiable drive to understand them more and more.

Iquo has extensive experience in Business Strategy, Marketing Strategy and Implementation. Result focused and strong people leadership skill with several years of experience in Marketing and General Management in Nestle Nigeria, the Amazon has developed many successful managers in the field of marketing in Nigeria.

Iquo is currently the CEO of Entod Marketing, a marketing consultancy company with rich experience, practical expertise in helping brands and businesses drive sustainable growth within the African continent.

Iquo is also the Founder of 1gfoodplatter.com a Nigerian food blog that has made notable impact in the Nigerian food space. She has served and still serves on the board of several companies in Nigeria.



### GEORGE THORPE

George Thorpe is an industry leader whose pace-setting industry leadership remains inspirational to younger generations. Mr. Thorpe is a guru in Nigeria's marketing communications firmament whose accomplishments in the sector still shine very brightly. His specialties include market segmentation and portfolio strategy development.

Mr. Thorpe began his marketing career at Lever Brothers, now Unilever, in February, 1979. He later switched to Pfizer as Marketing Manager in 1982. He was the Managing Director of Sterling Health Nigeria from 1988 to 1995, and later in 1995, he established Market Space, a provider of marketing consultancy and training services.

His brainchild, MediaReach, was established in 1999 as a media independent to set new standards in transparency and accountability. It has since championed a more scientific approach to media planning in Nigeria with the use of audience data and proprietary software. The agency has since become the flagship agency in its category and a consistent industry leader, which also birthed PHD Nigeria, another wave making media agency in the country.

Mr. Thorpe was the Chairman of MediaReach from inception until 2015. He has, over the years, been spending most of his time overseeing Market Space with the aim and passion to help develop capacity and raise the next generation of marketing communications leaders in the country. He is indeed a trustee of posterity.





## JIMI AWOSIKA

"The human being is the only dynamic in nature". So believes Jimi Awosika, the Managing Director of Troyka Holdings.

Born to the family of Samuel Kokumo Awosika (an Ondo man popularly called SK), and Adetoun Awosika (nee Balogun) a Lagosian, Jimi's journey to the business of communications started with his education at Government Demonstration School, Surulere Lagos, St. Joseph's College, Ondo, Government College, Ibadan, and the University of Lagos, Akoka where he earned a B.Sc in Mass Communication.

His professional career started early at the old Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation where he often worked in the newsroom as a vacation jobber. Upon graduation from the University of Lagos, he was posted back to the NBC for his service year and stayed on full-time for another 18 months as a senior sub-editor working mostly in radio.

In 1976, he met Mr. Shobanjo, the man who would go on to have the most important impact on his life. In 1977, Mr. Shobanjo hired him as an account executive trainee at Grant Advertising where he worked on brands such as Fay Paper Products (a leading range of tissue paper products at the time), Nasco Foods, Nasco Soaps and Detergents, Nasco Fiber Products, Maggi cubes, Maggi sauce, Cerelac, Nido and Milo amongst many others.

He left Grant Advertising in October 1979 when Mr. Shobanjo decided to set up Insight Communications in 1980, a move that forever altered the course of advertising practice in Nigeria. Starting

off as a Senior Account Executive, Jimi worked his way up to become a board director in 1983, Chief Operating Officer in 2000, and Managing Director in 2005.

Jimi believes that everything in nature is shaped for and around the human being. He understands that to get the best out of anyone, you have to create an enabling environment for them, hence on becoming MD at Insight, he insisted on having a director with a direct reporting line to the Chief Executive on the executive committee to represent employee interests.

Married to Omolara Dabiri on February 18, 1980, with five children who are all accomplished in their own fields, Jimi relaxes by reading and counts classics such as "The Complete works of Shakespeare", "The Anthology of Longer Poems", "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe, and "ErinkeRindoNinu Igbo Elegbeje" by D.O Fafunwa amongst his favorite books. He particularly likes Thomas Hardy's "Far from the Madding Crowd" and is an enthusiastic fan of Peter Enahoro (Peter Pan) who he fondly calls 'Pa'.

Jimi is a widely travelled man and recipient of many local and international awards.



## UDEME UFOT

Udemefor Ufot holds a BA in Industrial Design from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Certificate in Management from Swedish Institute of Management and Chief Executive Programme of the Lagos Business School (LBS). He worked in Insight Communications from 1984 to 1989 where he left as Deputy Creative

Director (Art) to join CASERS in 1989 as Creative Director. Six months later he co-founded SO&U in 1990, now one of Nigeria's leading marketing communications groups with a strong reputation for professionalism and creativity where he is currently Group Managing Director. At SO&U, Udemefor contributes to policy formulation and management.

Udemefor has held several executive positions in the Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (AAPN) including Vice President and President in 1997 and 1999 respectively. He serves as Board Member of the Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG), Nigeria's leading public/private sector economic think tank where he chairs the board communications & media subcommittee. He is also a private sector Co-Chairman of the Policy Commission on Tourism, Hospitality, Entertainment, Creative Industries and Sports, (THECS) of the NESG.

He is a member of the Leadership team of M&C Saatchi Africa.

He is also Chairman of the Advisory Board of School of Media & Communication, Pan Atlantic University, Lagos.

He is a past President of the Lagos Business School Alumni Association (LBSAA), past Chairman of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), as well as member of the Board of Special Olympics Nigeria.

Udemefor is currently the Board Chair of LEAP Africa, Nigeria's leading non-profit for development of leadership and entrepreneurial skills amongst youth in Africa.

He is also Chairman of the board of Ibom Icon Hotel and Resort, Uyo, one of Nigeria's leading conference, golf and leisure resorts.

In recognition of his services to the nation in the Corporate Sector, he was awarded Member of the Order of the Federal Republic, MFR in 2014 by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

He is married to Dorothy Udemefor Ufot SAN and they are parents to Aniekana and Dorothy Jnr.



## JOHN EHIGUESE

John Ehiguese (popularly known as JE) is the Founder/CEO of Medicraft Associates, one of Nigeria's leading Public Relations consultancy firms, and the exclusive Nigeria affiliate of the FleishmanHillard global PR network. Before establishing Medicraft in September 2003, he worked as an Account Director at C&F Porter Novelli (Nigeria), with direct responsibility for co-ordinating PR support for the market roll-out of MTN, Nigeria's largest telecoms network.

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

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

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

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

Organization (ICCO).

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

Ehiguese was awarded the Most Outstanding PR Personality of the Year 2019 and the Lifetime Achievement Award 2021 by LaPRIGA. He was awarded the Most Outstanding PR Practitioner of the Decade by Marketing Edge magazine in 2021.

He was also recently appointed the Chairman of the Training & Education Committee of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Lagos State Chapter.



## DOZIE MBANEFO

Dozie Mbanefo is the Managing Director of New Crystal Communications Limited and unarguably one of Nigeria's marketing communications best and brightest practitioners.

Mbanefo's position as an advertising practitioner worthy of emulation can be credited to his over 20 years experience in outdoor advertising during which time he founded New Crystal Communications, a major outdoor advertising company with offices in the major cities of Nigeria and advertising coverage reaching all the corners of the country and most West African countries; attained national prominence

and reckoning in 2018 when he was conferred with the National Productivity Order of Merit award by President Muhammadu Buhari; received several trainings on Advertising and Marketing in Europe, America and Nigeria; and nominated for Creative Leadership in Outdoor Advertising practice by MARKETING EDGE Brands & Advertising Excellence Awards in 2018.

Sir Mbanefo has gathered a lot of experience working on multinational and government accounts across several brands, ensuring that the accounts in his control have the best. He has also been involved in development of data and tools for accessing efficiencies of Out-of-Home Advertising.

Beyond rhetoric, New Crystal Communications Limited's unique and superb services speak volumes for his professionalism and this is evident in the array of blue chip companies, federal, state government and other agencies it has worked for.

Dozie has received several awards in Nigeria and overseas for papers delivered in advertising, entrepreneurship and engineering. He was an ex-officio member of OAAAN.

Exercising market leadership as well as a deepened brand positioning, Mbanefo has led his organization from cradle to global prominence even as he pulled his digitally savvy OOH advertising company through the storms of 2020's pandemic which also shook the experiential and outdoor advertising industry and caused ad spend to fall drastically.

Dozie Mbanefo also sits as the Managing Director of DLK Oil & Gas. He is also a member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON).

He was a newly inducted fellow at the just concluded APCON Fellowship Induction.

New Crystal Communications was launched in 1998. The organisation initially started out as a printing and public relations firm in 1994. The company's portfolio covers both the public and private sectors like banking, telecommunications, Oil companies, Electronic manufacturers, Local, State and Federal Governments, Hotels, Breweries and many other high profile sectors. The company ensures quality service that surpasses expectations.





## EMEKA OKEKE

Emeka Okeke is the Founder, Group Chief Executive Officer, Media Fuse Dentsu Aegis Network Nigeria, and Director of Dentsu Aegis Network Ghana. Emeka is responsible for the development of Dentsu Aegis Network's global and local service brands in Nigeria.

With almost three decades of experience spanning the Print Media, full service creative and media agencies notably in Nigeria and Ghana; Emeka launched Ghana's first Media Independent Agency Network – Premier Media Company Ghana in 1999 (now Vizeum Ghana, a division of Dentsu Aegis Network Ghana) to pioneer the development of professional media planning and communications practice in that part of Africa.

In 2014, Emeka led Media Fuse Dentsu Aegis Network to win the Fastest Growing Agency Network Award at the 2014 Marketing World Awards and won for himself the Media Entrepreneur of the Year award at the same event. He also won the Outstanding Leadership Award in Advertising at the 2nd Edition of DAAR Awards in 2017, Emeka earned the for his contribution to modern advertising practice in Nigeria and 2018, Advertising Professional of the Year in West Africa in Ghana from Marketing World Awards 2018 as well as Outstanding Media Advertising Leadership Award from Marketing Edge.

A Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria and a member of different industry professional bodies, Emeka is one of the leaders of the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria, (MIPAN), where he is an ex-officio member of the body's executive committee. He is also an Alumnus of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Lagos Business School, and IESE University, Barcelona, Spain.



## YOMI BADEJO-OKUSANYA

Yomi Badejo-Okusanya is the Group Managing Director, CMC Connect (Perception Managers). YBO, as he is popularly called, is a renowned veteran in the Marketing Communications industry with over 30 years to his credit.

He started his career in 1988 with CT & A, a Lagos based advertising agency and rose to become Director in 1991. He later founded CMC Connect Limited in 1992.

The company was established which was established the game in the communication industry has evolved from a Public Relations firm to a full-service communications group comprising of CMC Connect BCW (Strategic Communications and Public Relations Business), Re-ignite Public Affairs (Public Affairs Business) and iOctane Digital Experience Agency (Digital & Technology Solutions Agency).

Located in Nigeria, Africa's largest economy with a wide reach across the continent, CMC Connect has strategically offered result-oriented solutions across markets using a project management approach.

He is widely known to be one of the premier public relations practitioners in Nigeria with experience in the areas of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs, Perception Management, Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations & Crisis Communications.

He has handled Corporate Communication activities, Issues, Advocacy & Crisis briefs, Government and Legislative Relations, and Public Affairs Management for high profile clients, including the JAGAL Group, Airtel Nigeria, International Monetary Funds (IMF), British American Tobacco Nigeria, Transcorp, Renaissance Group, Federal Inland Revenue Service, Peugeot Nigeria Ltd, Shell, Virgin Nigeria.

He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and was a past Chairman of NIPR, Lagos State Chapter. He is the current President of African Public Relations Association (APRA) and he is on the board of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) and several other blue-chip companies in Nigeria.



## LANRE ADISA

Lanre Adisa is the founder/Chief Creative Officer, Noah's Ark Communications, a leading independent agency. The brain behind the success of the leading creative agency is a passionate brand-builder, whose excellent track record, comes with a career spanning over 30 years.

The Juror for Cannes Lion festival is an experienced creative entrepreneur with a demonstrated history of working in the marketing and advertising industry. As a part of his role, he has been working on some of the most visible local and multinational brands in Nigeria with thriving firms in Advertising, Public Relations and Content/Production

His determination and affluent experience in the space earned him the position of the Creative Executive Director at Waseet/ Advise Nigeria, where he was responsible for steering the organization and managing its operations. Prior to this, he was the Executive Creative Director, with TBWA\ CONCEPT, a position he played a key role in setting and driving the future direction of the company's creative strategy

The APCON member and fellow, having unleashed his creative firepower, has also functioned as an Associate Creative Director at Insight-Grey Insight-GreyApr, spearheading and developing work that has meaningful and measurable impact, while achieving marketing/strategic goals.

As a Copy Group Head at the renowned MC&A: Saatchi & Saatchi, the brainbox of creativity, led the agency to its next phase of growth by overseeing that all creative produced met the standard set by the agency and the client.

The creative powerhouse boss is an alumnus of the foremost School of

Media and Communication, Pan Atlantic University, where he obtained a Certificate in Leadership & Corporate Governance in media and communication. He also has a B.A. (Comb. Hons) in Linguistics/ English from the historic University of Ilorin.

The icon of LAIF has been involved in initiatives to promote Nigerian advertising internationally, and has remained an active participant in the team that started the Lagos Advertising & Ideas Festival (LAIF). He served for over a decade on the Management Board of LAIF Awards. He was also on the jury of the African Crystals Festival in 2016. In 2018, he became the first West African to serve on the Cannes Lions jury. In 2019, he was on the jury of the Loeries in South Africa. He served as the president of the Heritage jury of the debut Pitcher Awards.

The advertising industry veteran has flair for activities such as acting, creative writing and campus journalism.



### STEVE BABAECO

Outstanding Creative Personality of the Decade, Steve Babaeko is the Chief Creativity Officer /CEO, X3M Ideas and President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

Steve emerged the AAAN President in 2020 during the body's virtual 47th AGM/ Congress while the Covid-19 pandemic rocked the industry which earned him the nickname "The Pandemic President".

He has placed the Nigerian ad market on the global scope being the first Nigerian to sit on a panel at Cannes Lions Festival of

Creativity in France. He was also recognized by Forbes Africa as one of the two leading marketing communications voices in Africa.

For more than two decades, Steve Babaeko has continued to create some of the most iconic marketing works in Africa. He has also worked extensively with top agencies including 141 Worldwide, Mc&A Saatchi & Saatchi, and Prima Garnet Ogilvy.

Steve Babaeko has also contributed to the creation and development of some of the most iconic works in Africa and beyond, such as the "Proudly Nigerian" campaign for British American Tobacco, the "Now You're Talking" campaign for Etisalat, "You Need A New Bank" campaign for Diamond Bank and many others.

Steve recently, through the Association of advertising Agencies of Nigeria, AAAN, entered into a strategic partnership to launch the Nigeria National Chapter of the UNstereotype Alliance, to dismantle harmful stereotypes across local advertising industry.



### FUNMI OMO

Funmilayo Omo is the Managing Director, Enterprise Life Nigeria, a subsidiary of the financial services group, Enterprise Group. An astute insurance professional, she brings in over 30 years of experience into this role.

Prior to joining Enterprise Life, Funmi spent most of her formative career in African Alliance Insurance Plc until her appointment as the Managing Director in 2017. As MD, she championed the digital transformation of the company, ushering the company into the digital era, unlocking opportunities for its growth. Before that, she developed and successfully launched micro insurance as a strategic business unit

and pioneered the design of the annuity products of the company boosting the annuity product range of African Alliance Plc to become one of the top 3 market players in the industry. She also pioneered the design, modelling, and marketing of Takaful as the pioneer Family Takaful Office in Nigeria.

Funmi is an alumna of the China European Business School and the Lagos Business School. A chartered insurer, she is a Member of the Institute of Directors (IOD), an Associate Member, Chartered Insurance Institute, London, Associate Member, Certified Pensions Institute (Nigeria), and Associate Member, Nigerian Institute of Management.

She currently serves on the Board of Freedom Foundation. Until 2016, she served on the Board of Trustees, Ajaokuta Steel Complex, Axiom Air and National Iron Ore Mining Company (NIOMCO), as well as on the Boards of Frenchies Food and PAL Pensions Alliance.

Funmi has received numerous awards for her contribution to the insurance sector. In 2019, she was recognised as one of the top 100 women CEOs in Africa by Reset Global People, a UN and Ghanaian Presidency initiative.



### AYO OLUWATOSIN

Ayo Oluwatosin is a consultant in marketing communication with interest in media strategy, research and campaign evaluation. Ayo has over three decades of quality experience in the management of the marketing communication process primarily in West Africa with collaborative initiatives across the continent. He was a former Associate Director Media-Rosabel Leo Burnett Group.



Ayo was the founding MD/CEO of Starcom Media, part of the StarcomMediaVest Group (SMG), West Africa in 2000. Under his leadership Starcom Media became one of the leading Media Independent Agencies (MI) in the West African sub-region; working with best-in-class clients such as Procter and Gamble, Heineken, Nestle, Coke, Samsung, Redbull and several other global brands, with high retention rate.

P&G and Heineken were retained in Starcom Media (later Media Seal Ltd.) for ten years each. Ayo's main responsibility as pioneer MD/CEO of Starcom Media was to create a brand that clients and media partners would understand as inevitable for their business success.

A fellow of the Advertising profession (APCON), Ayo was the first President of the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), where he was deeply involved with others in setting up of the industry standards of practice (SOP) as the practice of media independent was evolving in Nigeria then. Oluwatosin has been a resource person at industry training/manpower development programmes for several years.

Ayo is a member of the Association of Communication Scholars and professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN), a body set up to advance the scholarly study and practice of communication through the pursuit of excellence in academic research and professional practice in Nigeria. Ayo has been involved in a number of collaborative studies and research works beyond the prism of marketing communication. Ayo is also an editor.

Ayo holds a master degree in Communication Art from the University of Ibadan. Also an alumnus (CEP-14) of the Lagos Business School and has attended the IESE Business School, Barcelona programme on Developing Leadership Competencies.

As an attestation to his professional competence Ayo has won several industry awards including the APCON Fellowship Award for the Best Advertising Practitioner – Media Independent Category 2006. Other awards and recognitions have been given to Ayo for his industry and community services. This includes a number of honorary Rotary awards.

To the glory of God, Ayo is a mentor to numerous stars in the marketing communication firmament today.



### BUNMI OKE

Mrs. Olubunmi Oke is the Chief Executive Officer/Lead Consultant of Ladybird Ltd, a budding new generation advertising agency in Nigeria. Before founding her own agency Bunmi, as she is fondly called, was the pioneer Chief Operating Officer/Executive Director of one of the leading integrated marketing communications agency in Nigeria – 141 Worldwide (now NITRO 121) (an international agency which is a member of the WPP group, the largest communications group in the world).

In that capacity, she led a prolific team of professionals and built the agency into a prominent world-class advertising agency in Nigeria, handling several multinational accounts including British American Tobacco – West Africa Area, Etisalat Nigeria (now 9Mobile), SWIPHA, First Bank of Nigeria, Multichoice/ DStv, Cadbury Nigeria Plc, and many others.

Parading a career which has spanned more than 30 years, this Amazon of the Nigerian Advertising industry has traversed the industry with such gut and gait as to have risen to being the 17th (and 2nd Female) President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), a Council member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), and a Fellow of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, (APCON) and she is also a Council member at WIMBIZ.

Bunmi is a British-born Nigerian (with over 30 years' experience). She started her career in advertising at Grant Advertising (a McCann – Erickson affiliate) in 1986, where she worked as a PR Executive/Account Management trainee. Joining LTC (now JWT) advertising in 1989, her exceptional organizational and presentation skills resulted in her rising through the ranks rapidly over 10 years to become the first female client service director.

Mrs. Oke went to some of the best schools in Nigeria, being an alumnus of the University of Lagos, Queen's College, Yaba,

and Holy Child College, Obalende, all in Lagos.

This advertising Amazon is well travelled and has attended several business and advertising courses in Nigeria and abroad. She was also a recipient of the 2011 Vital Voices – Wimbiz & Exxon – Mobil ToT EinH training in Uganda programme, for a female marketing communications specialist in Nigeria.



### ABDUL SAMAD RABIU

Nigerian billionaire industrialist Abdul Samad Rabi, CEO and Chairman of BUA Group boosted his profile in the world richest men raking as 574th richest man in the world, with an asset worth \$4.5 billion, thus positioning him as the 6th on the African continent, and the second in Nigeria.

Abdul was born in Kano in the north-western part of Nigeria, where he obtained his early education. He attended Capital University in Columbus, Ohio and returned to Nigeria at the age of 24 to oversee the family business. This was when his father Isyaku Rabi, was being detained by the administration of General Muhammadu Buhari for allegedly not paying rice import duties.

He established BUA International Limited in 1988 for the sole purpose of commodity trading. The company imported rice, edible oil, flour, and iron and steel.

In 1990, the government, which owned Delta Steel Company, contracted

with BUA to supply its raw materials in exchange for finished products. This provided a much-needed windfall for the young company. BUA expanded further into steel, producing billets, importing iron ore, and constructing multiple rolling mills in Nigeria.

A few years later, BUA acquired Nigerian Oil Mills Limited, the largest edible oil processing company in Nigeria. In 2005 BUA started two flour-milling plants, in Lagos and in Kano. By 2008, BUA had broken an eight-year monopoly in the Nigerian sugar industry by commissioning the second-largest sugar refinery in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2009 the company went on to acquire a controlling stake in publicly-listed Cement Company in Northern Nigeria and began to construct a \$900 million cement plant in Edo State, completing it in early 2015.

Abdul Samad Rabiou uses the BUA Foundation for his philanthropic activities. These include the construction of a 7,000-square-meter paediatric ward at the Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital and the construction of the Centre for Islamic Studies at Bayero University Kano amongst several others.



### ALHAJI BELLO KANKAROFI

Born in Kano, Kano State, Nigeria on October 22, 1954 and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communications, Bayero University, Alhaji Bello Kankarofi started his career as a commercial salesman with the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) 1974-1978. He joined the Kano State Broadcasting progress

rising steadily from the Corporation (Radio and Television) in 1978 where he made an outstanding career position as a Commercial Officer in 1982 to the position of Director, Commercial Service in 1993 and appointed managing director of Radio Kano in 2003.

An active member of the advertising profession and a of the broadcasting sector of the industry in the Advertising professional and regulatory Council for about 9 years, Alhaji Kankarofi became a Fellow of the profession in 2004.

He was appointed Registrar/Chief Executive Officer of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), a professional Council and government regulatory agency for Advertising practice in Nigeria, in 2006.

He has established networks across the world in the course of his career, including Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Madagascar, Egypt, Senegal, Uganda, Togo, Botswana, South Africa, Gambia as well as the United Kingdom, France, China, Italy, Amsterdam and United States of America.

Alhaji Kankarofi is presently the Chairman, Federal Task team on Audience Measurement, Chairman, Advisory Committee Kano Sports Development Plan, Trustee/Patron Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) and a Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN). He is quite astute in organising and coordinating big public events, especially those involving government and Advertising industry dignitaries.

### ROTIMI BANKOLE

Rotimi Bankole is a result-oriented professional with more than 13 years media planning and buying process improvement and strategy experience.

He has worked on some of the most important businesses of the decade, including First Bank, Konga, and Turkish Airlines. Widely recognised as a leader of the new generation of media strategists, he continues to win the most prestigious industry accolades, including Media CEO of the Year, which was bestowed on him in 2021 at the Marketing Edge Brands and Advertising



Awards of Excellence.

Currently, SBI Media under Rotimi Bankole manages high profile accounts such as Tecno Mobile, Infinix, Itel, and Synix. Other brands in the company's portfolio are 9Mobile, Sterling Bank, Access Bank, Saudi German Hospital, Boomplay, Palm Pay, Ulesson, Oride, Opay, Binance, Shareit, Bankly, and others.

In 2021, the agency was named fastest growing media agency in Nigeria by the global media analysis company, RECMA, and voted media agency of the year by Business Day newspaper.

A fellow of the Nigeria Institute of Strategic Management, Bankole was earlier this year inducted into the prestigious Nigeria-Britain Association while SBI Media became a corporate member of the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce.

Bankole is a graduate of The Polytechnic, Ibadan and the Lagos State University where he studied Mass Communication at the undergraduate and communication studies at the post-graduate level, respectively, Masters in Communication Studies, Lagos State University,

His Masters of philosophy (MPHIL) in Public Relations and Advertising is currently ongoing at Lead City University. Aside from these, has taken executive courses at world class institutions such as John Maxwell UK and the Lagos business school.

Bankole's purpose in life is to make a difference in the world by being a model citizen focused on sustainable business practices and service to humankind.





## DR. FELIX KING EIREMIOKHAЕ

Dr. Felix King Eiremiokhae, an entrepreneur and a philanthropist of note, is from a very humble background. Dr. King's life has been a true definition of the power of hope and faith. After earning a Diploma Degree in Management, he relocated from Edo State to Lagos to pursue an interest in the entertainment industry; an industry in which he made an impact before pursuing other interests.

Apart from his business interests, Dr. King also has a huge appetite for knowledge acquisition which led to his decision to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration despite his busy schedules and life achievements. He was also conferred with Doctor of Philosophy

(Human Letters) by Trinity University, Georgia, USA in 2018.

In the year 1998, while pushing his career in the marketing and advertising space, Dr. King helped to set up the operational structure of a South African marketing company called Direct Marketing Communications (DMC) which would later be known as EXP Marketing.

After spending about 7 productive years (with awards and recognitions to show) in EXP (his last designation being the General Manager, Operations), Dr. King decided it was time to call it quit with the company and pursue his personal aspirations.

In 2006, having resigned from EXP and in a bid to actualize his lifelong aspirations and goals, Dr. King incorporated Oracle Experience Nigeria Limited (widely known as Oracle), a West African multinational brand experiential company. The company has established its self as the largest experiential marketing agency in Nigeria, creating extraordinary experiences for corporations like Coca-Cola, Heineken, Nigerian Breweries, P & G, Nestle, FrieslandCampina WAMCO, Multi choice/ DSTV, Mouka Foam, Flour Mills to mention but a few.

In 2011, in a bid to expand its operational activities beyond the shores of Nigeria thereby catering for the needs and demands of clients and consumers alike, Oracle opened operational branches in Ghana and Cameroon under the

supervision and guidance of Dr. King. Both operational branches have also made significant impacts in their respective countries. In 2019, the company shifted its focus from a solely experiential marketing company to a full service creative agency.

As a business man of repute known for his penchant for taking risks, Dr. King decided to venture into the manufacturing world having already successfully made an invaluable impact in the marketing and advertising space. In order to actualize this new dream of his, Dr. King incorporated Mayor Biscuits Company (MABISCO) in 2014, a confectionaries and Foods company that produces one of the finest biscuits in Africa. Today, the company's products are among the leading biscuits in the markets across Nigeria.

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

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

## HEINEKEN COMMENCES UEFA TROPHY TOUR IN LAGOS, ABUJA WITH SEEDORF



# MARKETING EDGE HALL OF FAME HONOREES' REMINISCENCES AND RESPONSES



## DR. BIODUN SHOBANJO

It is a privilege to have been inducted into the MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame. So, I want to on behalf of my other colleagues who have been so inducted, like to thank MARKETING EDGE and the entire management and staff. Anybody who knows John Ajayi very well, will know that he is a very restive man. Very restless, extremely professional and never gives up.

I personally like to commend him because to think that he only started this journey about twenty years ago. I mean those of you who will remember Tumishe Adekunle and, of course Azuka Awuka, a very brilliant writer; and Lekan Babatunde. Those were the guys who reported what we do in our business and you look forward every week to find something very interesting.

After a time, there was a lull. In fact, it was as if marketing, PR and such businesses had gone into doldrums. We didn't have specialized journalists who were given the subject matter and that gave some of us a lot of concern. Out of blues, I don't know what John was thinking, I think then he was working with This Day newspaper at the time. And then, he started on this journey and as those of you who are entrepreneurs will know that branching out is always difficult, extremely difficult. I went through it for about forty-two years and I know what pain it is really.

Particularly in a profession where you don't even make money, it is really very difficult and can be very frustrating sometimes. Those of you who are in it know that there is no backing up.

I want to thank John and his team for the wonderful job that they have done. You can see that there is a constant effort to improve on the product quality, content, and what they bring. They went into television as well and collaborated with TVC. I think one really needs to give this guy a lot of credit. Well thank God I am out of it. So, you guys have to contend with him. Sometimes he may write something that is not so flattery about you. You just have to accept. It is a marriage between you and the guys on the other side, the media guys who are reporting what you are doing.

I will like to plead that many people join John so that there will be more diverse coverage and reportage of the things that we do, particularly with the way the business has gone now. It is so dynamic and we also need people who understand technology to report on the kind of things that you guys are doing because you can't give what you don't have. So, if you don't understand the subject matter, you will not be able to cover it properly. So, on behalf of all of us, I will like to thank John and his team for a wonderful evening.



## SIR STEVE OMOJAFOR

I want to say thank you to John and his team at MARKETING EDGE. We first knew about John when I knew he was working with a gentleman called Akin Adeoya and both of them combined so effectively to cover the industry. He ran into trouble a lot of times. I will never forget when I blacklisted them completely and said your feet must never step into this agency anymore. I think it had to do with STB McCann winning Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited account; and they so exaggerated the figures and the new client called me up and said, who told you I was spending this kind of money with you? I said not to worry; so I call John and Akin and said to them, you guys have to be much more discerning. Ask for people's views. Ask them what the true situation is and not be as sensational as you have just been in this matter. Of course, we

made up because we needed to encourage them.

John has since taken up the mantle; and he has come a very long way. I want to congratulate him for the effort he has put in and the success that he has made as at today.

So, on behalf of all the inductees today, I want to say to John and his team warmest congratulations. What you have done today is just the beginning because once you have put yourself in this business, there is no turning back. So, I want to say congratulations, keep up the good work.





## DR. AKIN OGUNBIYI

If the corporate giant has spoken, I don't know what else to say. I want to appreciate MARKETING EDGE. It was indeed an honour to be so inducted. What you have done today is a proof that you have come to stay. You know one thing about success? It is a journey, it is not a destination. So, what you have done today, will challenge you to do more.

Pat Utomi spoke about leadership; I just want to encourage each and every one of us here to reflect very deeply on what he said.

Our politics in Nigeria, for example, we look at politics as something that is for the boys and that is why our country is what it is today. If you will take up the challenge of leadership, you have to be involved in politics. I am involved in politics now, I have seen it, it is so rough; but I

tell you as rough as it is, there is a place for you and me. Again, I want to thank MARKETING EDGE and on behalf of all the inductees, I say thank you, thank you and thank you.



## STEVE BABA EKO

I thank MARKETING EDGE. And, in doing so, I have a confession to make. When MARKETING EDGE first told me about the Hall of Fame, of course I was very curious to know what it is all about. So I ask them who will be inducted. When they started reeling out the names, I said I don't really understand. One thing I want to say is that I see the passion of the founding fathers of our industry.

Just to see Sir Steve Omojafor, who is the Chairman, Board of Trustees for AAAN (Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria) always showing up. For me, I find that to be very inspirational. Also, I must single out for mention Dr. Biodun Shobanjo. What I find very instructive today is that quite a good number of people that were inducted today on the advertising side actually passed through Troyka Group. They have set the pace for us and actually as a president, I feel so honoured to be inducted today and I look forward to the

next generation because again, just talking around it, it is about leadership, just what Prof. Utomi said. The mantle has fallen upon our generation and we also must be very conscious of the kind of baton we are going to pass to the next generation. For me, that is important and having us come here, carrying us along with the industry's greats, just shows the next generation that it is possible.



## BUNMI OKE

Thank you very much, MARKETING EDGE as always. I am very honoured because first and foremost, I like the fact that you are not gender biased. You recognize women even though, as one can see, we are still few that made it; but I think more importantly, it tells us that when you work hard, and you make your impact, it is noticed. Look up to God, do your best, be a professional and I think it will encourage a lot of other women too to continue to realize that someday, you will be recognized.

I humbly consider it a great honor haven spent over thirty years in the industry. I will say thank you very much to MARKETING EDGE. One thing which I always want to commend you for is your pioneering roles. Putting together a Hall of Fame is yet another pioneering effort by you. That says something, especially in this time and age when everything goes on the internet of things. So, I will just bask in the hall of fame euphoria and enjoy the attention.



## ALHAJI GARBA BELLO KANKAROFI

I am part of the history of the formation of MARKETING EDGE; and this dates back to many years when I became the Registrar/Chief Executive of APCON. Prior to that I had a little relationship with the publisher himself, when I was Chairman of Kano Pillars; he gave me wonderful support. Then he had not started MARKETING EDGE. So, what I did when I came into office, was to invite him and I told him to do something that I will support him. Today I am happy he is bigger than me and doing very well.





# NIGERIA'S INNOVATIVE BRANDS TO WATCH IN 2022



# Staying ahead of the curve via innovation

By **RALPH TATHAGATA**

**A**s the world crossed the two-year mark of COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy has rebounded from the depths of mid-2020. The International Monitoring Fund (IMF) projected global GDP to grow 4.9% in 2022, a downtick from the 5.9% growth expected in 2021, but still formidable.

However, for brands or businesses to be part of the projected global growth, they must reinvigorate, reposition, innovate and promote new values and growth. Brand or business leaders that come up with, or listen to creative ideas, and then use strategic planning and decision-making to implement the new product or business ideas successfully are said to be innovative. When a brand or business innovates, it can either improve its existing products, processes, or methodologies, or it can create new ones from scratch.

According to Howard Schultz, chairman and chief executive of Starbucks for over 20 years, "Innovation must be disruptive. And by disruptive, I mean disruptive. You have to fracture and break the rules and disrupt."

There isn't just one way for brands and businesses to innovate. From revenue to business and to industry models, successful innovation helps brands stay ahead of the competition. When organizations choose revenue-model innovation, they may choose, for example, to create innovative products, stop selling certain products, make changes to their supply chain, sell to new customers, or change the prices of their offerings.

Meanwhile, business-model innovation involves business owners looking at their overarching business model for places to implement innovative solutions, their business processes, their business strategy, their mission statement, the technologies they use, and the businesses that they partner with. When organizations choose business-model innovation, they may choose, for example, to create a strategic alliance with another business, to update the software that they use, to accept venture capital financing, or to go from selling at a physical storefront to selling online.

On the other hand, industry-model innovation involves business owners looking at their industry model for places to innovate the industry they currently work within and what potential industries they could transition to. When organizations choose industry-model innovation, they may choose, for example, to market their product to an entirely different industry or even to create a new industry to align with their mission and products.

In this innovative edition of **MARKETING EDGE** magazine, we present to your reading delight reasons innovation is important for brands and businesses. In this groundbreaking copy, our revered readers will encounter inventive Nigerian brands and businesses that are religiously deploying innovation for growth and consistently increasing their bottomline.

Some of the brands that are featured in this edition are those

that are digitalizing and taking advantage of new technologies to process innovation. With the help of these technologies, they have been able to optimize their businesses and gain advantage over competition.

With globalization and a rapidly changing market, there are more competing brands than ever before. Any brand that fails to innovate will not add value and will definitely plateau. Only innovative thinking can help brand owners predict the market and keep up with the ever-changing and dynamic customer needs and behaviour. So any brand that doesn't innovate will watch its innovative counterparts bring new ideas to the marketplace, and will have to scramble to keep up.

Brand innovation that occurs before competitors can allow for a larger sustainable competitive advantage, can be maintained over a longer period of time by the leading innovative brand. Innovating ahead of competitors leaves your loyal customers with the opportunity to be the first ones with the latest and greatest product on the market. It must be noted, however, that innovation isn't a guaranteed success. There are several factors that may prevent innovation from being successful, and brands have to keep those factors in mind before taking the leap.

Innovation also takes time, and the time that businesses spend innovating is time that they are not using to focus on their current products, marketing, and sales. In order not to risk failing to meet their quotas and falling behind on their schedule, losing profits and the trust of customers and investors, brands and businesses must implement their innovations quickly.

Also, in this edition, our readers are presented with insights from brands and businesses that are not only culturally relevant, adaptable, and flexible, but with brands whose innovations relate to current trends and events even as they continue to create meaningful connections with consumers/ customers.

For some of the brands featured in this edition, growth and expansion mean extending into new categories while refreshing their assets with an updated, contemporary style to re-engage consumers/ customers and staying relevant in a fast-paced culture. For others, the expansion translates into spreading out their capabilities and offerings to attract a wider clientele and allowing for incremental growth. It simply means grabbing any opportunity to showcase new growth and expansion.

As you turn the pages of this creative editorial offering, you will notice how brands and businesses use key consumer insights to better understand consumer needs, and also stay ahead of competition. Ultimately, understanding what consumers want, keeping pace with their dynamic behaviours, and knowing what competition is doing will always help innovative brands and businesses stay ahead of the curve, and avoid market stagnation.

Happy reading!



Mr. Patrick McMichael is the Group CEO of Eat'N'Go Ltd, a leading restaurant group and a game-changing brand in the Nigerian Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) sector.

With almost 30 years of working with Domino's and becoming Nigeria's CEO, Patrick McMichael has led Eat'N'Go to the apex within the market. Under his leadership, the company has expanded its three brands - Domino's Pizza, Cold Stone Creamery and Pinkberry Frozen Yogurt to over 150 outlets across the geo-political zones in Nigeria. Remarkably, the Eat 'N' Go brands have taken the lead in the Quick Service Restaurant sector and have become the dominant brand within the food industry.

In an exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE's **RALPH TATHAGATA** (Managing Editor/Divisional Director); **TUNDE ANIMASAUN** (General Editor); **OGECHI ODIGBO**, (Deputy General Manager, Marketing); **FELICIA NWOSU** (Correspondent) and **OGHALE MAFURU** (MARKETING EDGE ON TV Anchor Person), the cerebral CEO x-rays the sector; reflects on the journey of his brands and the expectation of consumers and other stakeholders going forward.

# WE DO THINGS THAT NO OTHER BRANDS WOULD CONSIDER DOING

## Eat'N'Go boss

**W**hat is your assessment of the business environment for the QSR sector in the past year?

The QSR sector in Nigeria has gone through a lot of growth in the past year.

The influx of local and international brands into the market is evident that the industry is probably one of the fastest-growing in Nigeria despite its peculiar challenges. For all economies globally, the past year was challenging as the world

was slowly recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the way businesses are conducted across the world has changed because we are finding ways to adapt to the post-pandemic norms. Various sectors of the economy are



gradually opening up and countries around the world are cautiously relaxing the restrictions that were put in place because of the pandemic. We also felt the impact of the pandemic and went through the challenges. It was a recovery process for the entire organization however, we have been able to maintain the lead within the sector by adapting to the changes ushered in by the pandemic and ensuring that we still give our customers the world-class and unparalleled experience that the Eat'N'Go brand is known for.

### What will you identify as challenges that the sector had to grapple with in 2021?

In 2021, the effect of the pandemic forced some brands within the sector to shut down outlets and others could only operate at half capacity. The rising cost in food prices also did not fare well for the industry during the time. I think Nigeria seemed to be less touched by the pandemic compared to countries like the UK, US, Netherlands and many other countries in Europe and Asia. We recovered very quickly although we had a very sharp downturn with the lockdown which caused us to make some very significant changes within the structure of our business and the delivery of our products. We were determined to keep the spirit of our customers and all stakeholders high during that downtime and by developing and using different channels for service delivery, we were able to keep still give our customers the deserving experience. In the Quick-Service business, decisions are made very quickly and when we speedily made the necessary changes, we bounced back significantly. I think a lot of businesses in Nigeria and globally had those same challenges. Those that were able to react swiftly were the ones that had the best through the pandemic. The industry has now dealt with the challenges. The current growth in the industry was reported by Agosto in the 2021 QSR report which estimated that the industry grew by zero point two percent during the period. For Eat'N'Go, our optimism and our customer-centric culture spur us to constantly evolve and develop new ways to better improve our service delivery.

### Were there other challenges that the sector had to deal with aside from the COVID-19 that you would like to talk about?

Every society has its peculiar challenges and Nigeria does have hers. The period during which the EndSars protest lasted was quite a challenging time for us as it



was for every other business across the cities and towns in Nigeria. Just while we were getting out of the weeks of government-imposed lockdown to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we were hoping to somehow get back to some sort of normalcy in carrying on business, the protest came running in with a bang and within that period, we lost five of our stores. For some months after the EndSars protest had calmed down, some of our stores didn't start trading because they were badly damaged during the protest. That entire incident cost us to lose revenue in rebuilding, repairing and fixing the damaged stores and even the personnel managing the stores. Interruptions like that which of course is not unusual in any society can adversely impact businesses. It was rather unfortunate that the EndSars protest came at a time when businesses were struggling to get on their feet. It was sort of a double hit in 2020 but with the resilience and determination of Nigerians and Nigeria as a nation, we always find ways of rebounding and successfully, in some areas, the country has repaired from the hit. 2021 was a good year for Eat'N'Go. We were able to raise the second tranche of funds through the Public Debt market and I can confidently say that we are the first company to complete the full bond program. That speaks a lot about not just the growth of the QSR business in Nigeria but the strength of Eat'N'Go as a forward-thinking organization.

### How will you describe your expectations for this year and going forward?

While preparing the 2022 budget in September/October of last year, we were

very optimistic about what this year would bring us. As part of the functions as the Chief Executive officer, I met with several high-level professionals in the banking sector to get their views on the financial state of the economy for the year. With that information, we put together a robust budget. So far, this has supported us in carrying out a good trade this year but we are also on the lookout for challenges as well. No one could have predicted the current happenings in Europe and its ripple effect would likely cause a stir across industries and economies globally and locally. The hike in the price of petroleum products particularly in the price of diesel, in Nigeria today is one way we feel the ripple effect. As a business that depends heavily on the consumption of diesel, the tremendous price change is part of the challenges we face because the current difference in price was reflected in our budget but we prepare for situations like these. This hike in prices will also impact the cost and supply of food in Nigeria. Not so long ago, I read an article about possible food scarcity in June this year amid the election season which is fast drawing close, it appears that the year may be challenging. The positive is that in our business which is the business of food delivery, people need to eat and we are a company that does not simply provide food solutions, we give an experience alongside. Although some challenges are looming around, we are that organisation that brings fun to the table and we would only get better at doing so.

**As a brand that has continued to reinvent the wheel through innovation, what is Eat'N'Go doing to consolidate on previous efforts to**

## reposition the brand?

We like to begin with having an understanding of what the customers think of the brand. To get this right, we had to conduct research before and during the pandemic and currently, we are in the process of conducting another research project. We are a customer-centric organization so, it is all about what the customers are saying about us as a brand and as a service provider, what they think about our competitors and what they want us to deliver to them. When we look at our clients and fashion more innovative ways to better build our business to support our customers, it is their opinion that drives us because their opinion matters. As an entrepreneur, it is first best to think from the customer's angle then walk back to satisfy their demands. There are too many companies that think about what new product they want to launch, what customers will appreciate, particularly, what they as an organization want. At Eat'N'Go, we have a different drive and because we do, we look at what the customers want and develop on that. In the middle of the pandemic, when we did the research for Cold Stone Creamery, we got our customers' feedback from which we launched a whole new menu which we called the "More Love". It was indeed very successful. In 2019 when we relaunched Domino's pizza, it was evident from listening to our customers that they wanted more affordable products, small eatings and a bit more different toppings than already existed. For us as Eat'N'Go, it is most valuable to employ innovation to satisfy our customers. We also look at innovations that the customers may like but have not thought about and bring them to the market. Our recently launched Catfish Pizza is an example. We started the product in some test stores over a period and it was successful. This gave us the confidence to launch it as a national product and the feedback we have received so far has been positive. We want our customers to see that we are innovative and we would do what no other brand would consider doing. I can believe we are probably the only pizza company in the world that have Catfish pizza. Although the idea took two years to think through and phantom how to could get it into a pizza, the idea came from simply seeing a Catfish farmer and realizing that it is a delicacy within Nigeria. This is the sort of innovation we want the Eat'N'Go brand to be known for. We will be innovative with flavours and products that people would never think can be done but that is still fun, different and are worth the conversation and worth trying.

## How would you assess the growth of the company since it launched in Nigeria as the master franchisee of Domino's Pizza, Cold Stone Creamery and Pinkberry Gourmet Frozen Yoghurt?

It has been a fast growth. We now have 178 stores and we operate in two countries – Nigeria and Kenya as the master franchisee. We see that we will continue to grow within Pan Africa. Going to Kenya for us was a giant step, the first step into the international markets. Our first success was built in the Nigerian space where we were able to build a solid team. We have been truly lucky with brands and customers that want to try our products and were able to scale across Nigeria. Indeed we are lucky because many businesses have tried building their numbers and scaling the Nigerian market but they have been unsuccessful. We, on the other hand, do it conservatively and aggressively at the same time which most certainly sounds absurd but it is simply so because we look at a lot of data that helps us in deciding where best to expand. In addition to all of these, our stores are company stores so, we have a strong training and development program which supports our teams and allows us to develop people who stay with us for a long time, can properly run our stores and guard our business.

## Last year, Eat'N'Go reached a milestone of over 150 stores in Africa after opening 9 outlets across different geographical zones in Nigeria. What are your business expansion plans this year?

Our plan is simple. Continuous growth across Nigeria and Kenya. We have a plan to end this year with 210 stores and maybe more in countries we currently operate in. One thing we are pretty excited about is our expansion of Cold Stone Creamery into the Ghanaian market. At the end of 2022, we will be a Nigerian company with a Pan African outreach. That is what growth this year would look like for us.

## How does your vision for premium food delivery alongside quality customer service align with your products?

The great thing about our product is that every customer can design what they want. We are a consumer-focused business and our products and services reflect that. We present several flavours, opportunities, and



**For us, going into Kenya was a very big step, the first step into an international market; but first and foremost, the success has been built in Nigeria; we have built a solid team, you can see here in our office, we are very lucky, we have brands and consumers that want to try our products and we have the ability to scale across Nigeria.**

options to our customers but in the end, we let them choose whatever they want to build that would satisfy their immediate cravings whether it is their pizza, ice cream or yoghurt. Our service is our niche and we are proud of it because we invest a lot in training and development programmes for our staff even before they can speak with our customers. We ensure that all new employees go through a minimum of 2 weeks of training before they are allowed to interact with any customer. This is the extent to which our customers are critical to our business. In Domino's Pizza, we guaranteed a 25 minutes door-step delivery but what is most exciting is that we are



going to up the ante this year. We have a target to be the first Domino's Pizza globally, to offer a 20 mins door-step delivery. Who would have thought you could do that in Nigeria?

### **Tell us about your CSR initiatives and how they have helped to promote your corporate brand-building efforts?**

Starting with the last part of that question, our CSR is not about building the brand, it is about helping the children that we set out to help. We have chosen the Slum2School organization because we feel that we have a very similar DNA structure. We want to support children to get an education and be successful for themselves and society. We also employ people, provide training and career opportunities for our staff so they dare to climb the career ladder within the organization. With this, we are confident to promote from within the ranks in the organization. So, you can find a staff who started as an attendant and has grown to become a store manager and even up to becoming a regional supervisor. The reason we do this is that we are sure our team is properly trained and have imbibed the organization's ethics and structure which are what strengthens our brand. We had also started a school where we help support children to be enrolled to develop their skills and potentials and for the first time this year, we are employing some of these kids whom we have helped through high school. With this, we are not only helping the child but helping the country develop a better and more stable future.

### **What are your host community's impact plans for this year?**

We ensure that every store we open works with the community. We employ from within the community and we have a community liaison officer within the communities we operate in. We also give back to the communities regularly by supporting sports activities, charity events and many others.

### **How is your brand responding to the accelerated shift to digital and technological penetration?**

At a recent conference, I spoke of the speed at which the digitization of Africa is pacing with Nigeria taking the lead as one of the fastest-growing economies within the tech space. With this speed in mind, we are devoting our time and attention to digitising our company so that all functions and silos are digitally connected to be more efficient with providing the right services to our customers at the comfort of their homes, schools or offices using or various digital platforms. As technology improves, we will also improve with it so we can evolve with our service delivery and meet the changing demands of our customers.

### **How is Eat'N'Go positioned in the QSR category?**

Within the Nigerian market, we are positioned at the top because we have worked hard to grow and expand our business. Not so many companies have had the aggressive expansion we have enjoyed in Nigeria and we have well-positioned our products and services. Across our business, we currently have over three thousand employees and eleven commissaries where we produce ice-creams, dough and pizza. We also have a fully integrated



logistic team and a distribution centre that sends our products across the country. I think we are well-positioned for growth and to continue taking the lead in the QSR industry in Nigeria. When a lot of businesses were concentrating on business growth, we spent a lot of our time building the infrastructure that will allow for business growth because, without relevant infrastructure, we will be unable to do the kind of expansion and scaling we are doing currently.

As a customer-centric brand, what are your plans to improve on your portfolio and value offerings this year?

First, our customers want a great product and we are focused on making sure we sell products that our customers can enjoy whether it is in-store or delivered to them. When they express satisfaction with the taste of the product from any of our brands that is valuable to us. Second, our customers want service. They want to know that when they walk into any of our stores, they are greeted and respected, their orders are taken politely and correctly and they get the right product. Third, our customers don't want to pay too much. So, we are focused on providing a lot of offers to our customers. This can be seen on our digital and traditional media platforms to allow our customers to gain access to our best deals. It is the combination of value for money, great service and great products that keep our customers always wanting and coming for more. We do all we can to deliver on all three to keep satisfying our customers and staying in business.

# Nigeria's energy drinks market still volatile

## – Titilola Adedeji

**Titilola Adedeji** is Nigerian entrepreneurial Amazon and the Founder and General Manager of Amber Energy Drinks Limited. She is a dynamic Business Growth expert and a serial entrepreneur with vast experience in Negotiations, Building successful business models, Manufacturing, International Procurement, providing exceptional Customer Experiences and Managing HNIs.

Her company's flagship brand, Amber took the nation's energy drinks sector by storms in 2020 and inspired a paradigm shift and instant disruptions in the sector as a result of which the sector has not remained the same again.

In this exclusive interview with **FELICIA NWOSU** and **OGHALE ABIKELE MAFURU**, she reviews the Nigerian energy drinks sector, zeroing in on her product, its performance and projections into the future.

### **W**hat is your assessment of the Nigerian Business environment?

I think the Nigeria business environment is unique. It has a lot of pros and cons. For the pros, we have the number of people we need in terms of Nigeria's population. We have a resilient sort of people. For the cons, we have logistic problem, regulatory problems. I mean any problem you can think about, we have it in Nigeria, and so if you ask me how the market is, I think it is a very unique market

### **What is your assessment of the energy drink segment of the market?**

As you said, it is a volatile market, and every day, new drinks keep popping up and we are grateful to NAFDAC, because they are trying to rid out the ones that don't have NAFDAC registration numbers and even with that, it is a lot because everyone is looking to invest in Nigeria and not everybody understands the market. People just pump in goods and expect it to be good. We are a people who are a majorly consumer country, so everybody is looking out to try something, and with that, we have to constantly stand in their face to tell them this is the best drink for you. The energy drink market, I will say, it's like a jungle

### **What are the major issues that the energy drinks market is grappling with?**

The major issue is the deflation of the Naira, it is a major issue, and people want to consume but do not have the economic power to do that. I can talk about Amber brand; we stand on quality, so how do you weigh quality versus the people being unable to afford what you have to offer, so that is a big problem for us. Then you have logistics, constant stopping at the port and you have officials disturbing people bringing things in goods. There are delays and then lack of infrastructure. We cannot produce in Nigeria; we can't, because we don't have the infrastructure. Then, lack of maintenance culture, I mean, you bring something to Nigeria and the first thing an average Nigerian will do is to find a way to spoil it. How do you deal with these? We came to the Nigerian market and we are asking them, we want to do this; you have to help us to do

better.

### **Tell us about the launch of Amber into the market and what necessitated your decision to venture into this?**

It is purely our love for Nigeria, we love Nigeria, we love Nigerians and we think Nigerians deserve better. If you look at all the other energy drinks, they are not solely for Nigerians by Nigerian. Amber is, I will boldly say maybe the first to be made by Nigerian and for Nigerians. One because, we understand what the average Nigerian wants or needs and we are bent on not compromising on quality, because Nigeria has been known to be a dumping ground. You look at some of the drinks that come in, they don't pass through the right check to get into Nigeria, and because we don't have enough quality control, people just consume them. Amber wants to change that narrative, we want to ensure that Nigerians understand that we value them; we are not just going for a substandard thing because it is available.

### **How long have you been in the market and what is your experience so far?**

We are a bit over 18 months. I think the Nigerian market has been very interesting, very challenging and very motivating as well. It makes us want to do more and better. In terms of when we just came in, we came in in the bang of Covid-19, everything was locked down, and everybody was depressed. We are known as fun loving people, everyday happy moment, so we decided look, when everybody is down why don't we just tell them that we are here for you. If you look at our campaign, it says; Amber dey for you. It means that every step of the way, we are here for you. When we came in, with few CSR activities, to help people boost their morale. At that time, lots of people have lost their jobs, they couldn't eat, we were giving commuters free rides home with free drinks so that they could refresh themselves as they go home, that was interesting. Then we got to the market and obviously no competitors, so we came in, and they were like who are these ones, unfortunately we are here to stay, so they have to deal with us.

### **What is your competitive advantage?**





I will say it's our people and our product, the set of people that work with us, and the understanding of the brand. Our product is the best in the market and I dare say that, once you taste Amber, it is an immediate switch because we now realize that for us, it is healthy. We have reduced sterile level in it. We have Gurana which gives you a bye-product of caffeine, so the synthetic caffeine in it is reduced, because it is not healthy. Amber cares about the health of the consumer but many people don't care about the well-being of the consumer. We are interested in the consumer. We want them to live long to keep drinking Amber, because it is a legacy drink, so these are the things that we have put in place.

#### **What more plans are you looking at in terms of projection?**

That is our secret. I won't tell you that. What I will tell you is that we are a legacy drink, so we are here for the long run, so you are going to be seeing us forever and in terms of growth, we will ensure that we are constantly available everywhere and anywhere, just keep looking out for Amber everywhere you go.

#### **Tell us on how impactful the Amber CSR initiative has been?**

With all our initiatives so far, we have reached over 25 million people I will say, and Amber empowerment programme set to help people who are out of job or don't even have jobs, so this is supposed to help alleviate that stress, so we give you a trade

finance loan where you come, you sign up the app and we give you to the value of N100, 000 and we also teach you how to sell and you can then go and be a distributor and then be financially independent. We are looking out for the average Nigerian to be the best you can be while drinking Amber obviously.

#### **How are you leveraging technology and of course to sell your brand and boost your equity?**

For us, we make sure that we are available on every platform. Technology has helped us, because with just one click, you can reach the globe and everyone is apt in getting information. The consumer is also getting information from everywhere, so we are thinking, how we can ensure if we are relevant or not, so we are using the tools as much as we can to remain relevant.

#### **Who is Titilola Adedeji?**

I will say I am a God fearing woman, a serial entrepreneur, lover of people, and I am very resilient and very focused. I enjoy working. For me, It is all about work and ensure that I see smiles on the faces of people around me, however I can.

#### **Are you also facing the challenge of forex, what do you think government could do to make business easier?**

Obviously we are facing that problem, forex, is going off the roof while Naira is going down. It is devaluating every day. The roads are not better. We are paying tax but not seeing the result of the taxes paid because, it is not any easier. Minimum wage is not nice, but thanks to Amber, we are good people, we try to make sure that our staffs are okay. I think the government should basically just do the basics for Nigerians, which are roads, security, and electricity first, and after that, we can build on it. If they can get the basic amenities right first, at least, we can say okay, we are seeing the results of the tax we are paying, once we get that, we can then start to advise on other things that we are dreaming.

#### **Where do you see Amber in the next 5-6 years' time?**

Pan-African, away from Nigeria, but we will start from Nigeria first.

#### **How did your background, training and the exposure you have acquired prepared you for this journey?**

I always say this, every day is learning, every event, occasion or experience you go through is preparing you for tomorrow and the future. I am taking all my experiences and I am still learning from everyone, including my staff. Having an open heart and being resilient, that is the most important thing. For me, I think it is my resilient and my love for Nigeria and my believe in Nigeria, because Nigeria is actually a good place. If you sit down with Nigerians and talk with them, you will understand that they are actually good people. It is because of their circumstances and their desperation to live and survive.

We are trying as much as possible to do what we can, and for me, my background has helped me because I understand how people think, and I have been able to work here and abroad, so I can bring my bit of experience from where I have travelled and infuse it to what we have here.

#### **What do you have to tell your consumers?**

First of all is Amber dey for you, make sure you drink Amber and look out for it everywhere and there is always something exciting happening with Amber. Keep engaging with our social media which is @drinkAmber, Instagram: @drinkAmber, so trust me, Amber dey for you.

# OUR BUSINESS IS PREMISED ON TECHNOLOGY

## – Papyrus boss



**Richard Iweanoge** is the Chief Executive Officer, Papyrus Digital Solution Limited. A seasoned professional with 25 years cognate experience in commercial business spanning business strategy, business development, consumer sales, distribution channel development, consumer marketing and brand management, his experience cuts across several FMCGs and telecom companies.

He was at MTN Nigeria for 19 years; and while there, he played diverse management roles such as Senior Manager, Sales Channels; General Manager, Consumer Sales; General Manager, Business Development, Sales & Distribution; General Manager, Consumer Marketing, amongst others. He spoke with exclusively with **MARKETING EDGE** recently. Excerpts:

**W**hat is your assessment of the business

**environment last year?**

I would say that it was a lot better than 2020 because in 2021, we already knew what was up with COVID; we knew the impact it was going to have. So we were





**One of the things we are proud of being a Nigerian company is that we built our solution to really suit our environment. We did not import the solution; it did not come from the western world. We looked at our environment and we said how can we build a solution to solve the problem that is uniquely Nigerian? When I mentioned that already built into our platform the ability to work offline, that is what that meant.**

a lot more prepared in 2021 compared to 2020. So, our plans actually aligned to the reality of COVID unlike 2020 when we did not know what was coming. As such, my assessment is that the business environment for those who planned was tough but not totally unexpected; it was not as surprising as what happened in 2020.

### **What were the Challenges you had to grapple with as a digital solutions company?**

Perhaps I should start by saying that we should not forget Nigeria is still a Third-World country. So we have not really gone fully digital. When you live in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt, you will think we are fully digital; but the rest of the country still struggles with access, with people just having basic access to internet and digital equipment.

As a business, because we a field force management automation system, we find that a lot of our customers who have field reps in far places still struggle with basic access and I think that is what we will struggle with whether it was a COVID year or without COVID. Third world countries struggle with access when it comes to digital solutions.

We have already built some things to manage our own platform. So you can work offline on our platform which means you can do your work on a digital device without having internet connectivity and anytime you get connectivity maybe when you get home, you can upload your information and we preserve the date stamp, the time stamp and location stamp for all your activities. So we solve that problem for our own platform; but it is a general challenge that all digital companies face.

### **How did you respond to those challenges?**

One of the things we are proud of being a Nigerian company is that we built our solution to really suit our environment. We did not import the solution; it did not come from the western world. We looked at our environment and we said how can we build a solution to solve the problem that is uniquely Nigerian? When I mentioned that already built into our platform the ability to work offline, that is what that meant.

With our solution, you don't need to have internet connectivity to carry out your work. As long as you have your Smartphone, we enable you do your work offline and whenever you have connectivity, you can upload your

information and we preserve the critical information of that work for you. So the platform recognizes when you did, where you did it and all that.

Other aspects of the challenges with digital engagements in 2021 are that we used to have a lot of in-person engagement with customers all of which we obviously have had to move to online. As such, most of the meetings we have are now holding online. We rarely do in-person engagements anymore. But if we must do, we ensure we respect all COVID protocols. We are working more remotely now. We are engaging with customers remotely online. Almost all our meetings are happening on video-conferencing platforms unlike before when we used to go do demonstrations to you. This has also forced us to move a lot of our contents in terms of how our solutions work online. That way, we can point customers to how-to-do videos and websites on how to solve some of the problems you are having.

In summary, a lot of things have been moved digitally and where we could not move it, we had to find creative solutions on our platform to enable people work remotely without being in-person.

### **There has been an accelerated shift to digital; how would you assess the impact of technology on your business?**

I think the shift to digital would have happened with or without COVID. It was inevitable and eventually, the world will go digital. What COVID has done is to accelerate that process.

If you ask me in a comical way, it is actually a good thing for the world. What would have taken us 10 years took us two years to accomplish.

Remember that Papyrus came alive because we truly believe in the power of technology. We believe that there are so many things that technology could do to enable businesses to be more efficient, to get more insights into what is happening and impacting on their business. We choose the space of field work. Our platform is a field Force Management automation platform. Companies were investing heavily on recruiting sales people across the country and had no view or clue what those guys are doing across the country and the teams themselves had no digital solutions they could use to make their work easier. There are so many things in that whole space that makes it ripe for innovation and for technology to play a role. So with this platform, where you have a team of sales people across the country, it is clear you have view of what they do



every day. You know who their customers are who they are selling to; who they are talking to and what they are talking to that person for. You build that institutional knowledge about all your customers across the country into the company's database. Even if your rep in a particular territory leaves, the next person who goes there can read up on all that happened in the past and know where to take off from; to know the customers, their phone numbers, address and everything. You know all the products they have bought from you and literally everything that happened in the field. It becomes predictable, where your sales are happening, who your customers are, who your reps are seeing, who you need to be paying more attention to and things like that.

So when you asked the question around the impact of technology on our business, our business is premised on technology. That is the whole point. We saw that opportunity and we thought that it was something we should key into and we are glad that our customers are also seeing the benefits of moving in that space. Technology is all and all for us and we are happy with the way it has impacted our business.

**As an innovative brand that**

**is constantly seeking new solutions for clients, FieldMax Pro is your flagship solution; tell us about its impact in the out gone year.**

When I joined Papyrus, the mandate from the board was simple; it is to make the first Field Force automation system in Nigeria and we must extend to the rest of Africa as well. I knew it was not going to happen in one day, in one year; but that was like a long term vision of what we needed to achieve.

I have been surprised by a couple of things. For one, what I assumed to be pretty obvious and clear is not always obvious to a lot of people you engage. So it was not as simple I thought it would be.

That notwithstanding, we actually made quite some progress. We find out that we had to educate and handhold a lot of the potential clients; we have to bring them to a point where they appreciate and become aware of the solution to the challenges they are having with managing their field force. So, things that should happen in one week, we found them happening over three months and six months because there is a whole process of engaging the potential clients and for them to internally also come to the point where

they are able to commit resources and investment in this direction.

For some of them, their assumption is: this is the way it has always been and is always going to be. You are going to have sales reps in places where you do not know what they do and you rely on the report they send to you to know what is happening there. Then we show up to say there is a better way to do this and show you all that is possible. They are always wowed by what is possible and the next selling becomes how they can get their own management and board to commit resources necessary for them to invest in this solution and adopt the solution.

My happiness is that there is no single client that we engage that said no we do not think we need this. It has always been the case of we absolutely need this but we do not have the budget now, can we see how we can work with you over time and see how we can transition to your platform. So, it is a longer term, longer process than I imagined it to be; but I am happy we are making so much progress.

Also, in the course of the year, we started having activities in Ghana. One of our clients who has operations in Ghana took us to Ghana and we had to do some work there for them.

From my personal point of view,





**I think the shift to digital would have happened with or without COVID. It was inevitable and eventually, the world will go digital. What COVID has done is to accelerate that process.**

**If you ask me in a comical way, it is actually a good thing for the world. What would have taken us 10 years took us two years to accomplish.**

therefore, the mandate I had was to create awareness for this service which we are doing effectively; and get more clients which we are getting. The numbers are looking very good; and more importantly to go international and we have started the process to move international with Ghana as our first stop. Hopefully, other countries will follow.

Just to summarize it: yes, FieldMax Pro is still our flagship solution. In the last year we have made a lot more progress than where we were the previous year. Have we gotten to where I thought we could have been? No, it turned out to be more challenging than I had imagined; but we definitely are making progress in strides beyond what I think the board thought was possible before I joined.

### **What is your projection for this year as a digital solutions company?**

I think some of the initial signs for 2022 are looking like it is going to be a lot more challenging than 2021. Why do I say that? Suddenly it is looking like we are going back to square one with the Omicron variant of COVID. Companies are going into lockdown again. Companies that we thought have gradually opened up and begun to have normal operations are shutting down all over again across the world. Did we think this would happen? It was always within the space of what was possible. So we are not totally surprised.

What I am saying is that it is slightly going to be a repetition of what happened in 2020 and 2021 in terms of the lockdowns, the work from home, the reliance on digital platforms for engagements and things like that.

For FieldMax Pro and for Papyrus as a company, where do we think we would be? Let me start with the internal things we have done. The development teams have learnt so much in the last two years. They have learnt so much in terms of what customers really need. When you imagine these platforms, you come up with concepts on how you think it should be but as you begin to engage customers and they give you feedbacks, you begin to learn how customers really want it to be; and over the last two years, the guys have really built an enhanced platform to align the solution to the feedback we keep getting from consumers in terms of what they really want. Internally, I think we have positioned and built the platform to reflect what the customers really want and I think that is always a good thing. Externally, what excites us is that our customers are seemed really satisfied

with the solution when they start using it. Of course, there will be bumps here and there that we need to fix but generally speaking our customers are very satisfied.

What we are noticing is that when they are satisfied, they talk to their friends and their friends call us and we are beginning to see people calling us to say: Where are you; are you the one providing this service for this company; can you come talk to us; let's see what you have; we might just need your service?

We think that when you come to that point; you are beginning to position yourself for growth. So we are excited when we get calls from people we did not even pitch to in the first place.

Therefore, 2022 is looking as a year we are going to accelerate our growth based on the fact that we have customers who seem to like our solution and are recommending us to others; and I think that is what the company is positioned for.

So, this year we are looking at accelerated growth and when that happens, then 2023 and beyond will be about consolidation and we will begin to move more international. We are pretty excited about the possibility of accelerated growth in 2022.

### **What are the new innovations your company will explore this year?**

I like this question because technology never stands still; there is always something happening that you want to take advantage of. Let me speak into one specific area that has caught our attention and that we really are looking at closely. It is the machine learning and Artificial Intelligence to make the work of the field rep a lot easier. One of the things the field rep has to do when he is engaging a customer in a retail store, for example, is to check out if his products are on display in the store and to compare that with his competitors just to be sure that customers are able to see his products in the store. The way we currently do it is to go into the store and you count the number of your products that are on the shelves and the number of your competitors' products that are on shelves and you record that in the app.

Recently, we have seen the development that are happening around machine learning and artificial intelligence and we are beginning to develop a way for you to just point your phone at the shelf, take a picture of it and the solution should be able to tell you, your own products that are there, the numbers of the products there and those of your competitors.

It makes the job of taking an audit of

your product in a shop so much easier, faster and simpler. It is a new development we are working through and we hope that in 2022 we should have that solution ready.

Imagine a field rep who normally goes to a retail shop and had to physically count the numbers of his products on the shelf and enter that information, now will go there and just point his camera at the shelf and take a picture and the system will tell him exactly the number that is there and that of his competitor; and that is all he has to do. It just makes the work faster using technology to solve a seemingly difficult problem.

This is just one of aspect of us taking advantage of the development in technology to enhance our service. There are so many other ones we are looking at; but this example put a sense to how we keep looking at the environment, see what is possible out there and see how we can adapt that to our solution.

### **How is Papyrus ns Digital Solutions Company positioned in the tech space?**

There is so much going on within the tech space. Lots of activities within the financial services space which we are not playing in; but there is a lot of innovation happening in that space but we have chosen to play within the space of field work because we thought it was right for technology to begin to enhance what is happening there.

Obviously, we are not alone. There are a lot of companies that play in this space. We will like to think of ourselves as the one that is out there with the most comprehensive solution in terms of how you manage a field force using technology in a way that makes it easy for the field reps to do their work and at the same time give management really good insights into how and what their reps are doing out there in the field.

We do not anticipate that we will be alone forever. We do not expect to be alone; but we think innovation will always happen and there will be people who will take advantage of that innovation. People will choose the space they want to play in and that with whatever technology solution that they have.

We will play in this space and we do not worry about competition because we think if we continue to build the solution to meet our customers' requirements, then there is no reason to fear anymore. You worry if you think your solutions do not meet your customers' needs because they

only look out to find other solutions if they do not think that what you have is meeting their needs.

Thua, my constant worry is that Papyrus is constantly building and improving all the time to meet the customers need but speaking from the high level around technology and that whole tech space within Nigeria, it is heartwarming to see that Nigerians are taking to technology and, in my view, we are leading Africa and moving to the rest of the world what is possible with technology even from a Third-World country like Nigeria.

We must not always import solutions into Nigeria because those solutions are not built with the reality of our own situation. We always have to adapt those solutions to our environment, whether it is a payment system, a Field Force management system. Whatever system you want to build must be built with the clear view to solving our unique peculiar nature as a country or as a continent. So it is exciting seeing all the innovations happening within that space and all the people that are coming up with solutions within the space. Lie I did say, there are lots of activities in the financial system; but we think there are other areas and platforms to play and we have chosen one of those areas to play as Papyrus.

### **To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your tech solution this year?**

Not to the extent we imagined it to be. Because it is technologically based, it is easy to deploy, engage and use. The only area we think COVID-19 really impacted our activities is where the field reps in those communities who had to use this solution actually had to do physical visits to outlets like retail stores, hospitals, pharmacies or something like that.

Even in that area, it is clear that if you respect the COVID-19 protocols, you don't have anything to worry about. So the field rep is wearing a mask and is going to a customer who is wearing a mask and they are physically distant when they engage then, there should not be a problem.

The only aspect I think that has changed in my view is the engagements we used to have with our customers. Forever, meetings used to be physical. If you go to someone's office, boardroom, you all sit around a table. You debate and argue and agree. Now we all do that online. But in

terms of the actual business, the solution itself and how people are using it, I think the impact has been quite minimal. It's not something we have given a thought to in terms of worrying that it is impacting on our solution.

### **You became the CEO of Papyrus Digital Solutions last year, tell us the impact you have made in the company since you mounted the saddle**

(Laughs) I will like to think that I have made a lot of impacts. I was a bit surprised at how something that looked obvious, like a no brainer... We had to take a lot of time to handhold a lot of companies to the point where they are committing resources to it; but I get it. If you make your business plan for a given year and you do not factor in investment in Field force automation, for example, and then we walk in and make a presentation to you. You do not just turn around and say change the plan and the budget for the year and make the money available. There is a process you have to go through as well. It is clearly a long process.

Mind you, it is not a commodity we are selling. It is a service. Companies need to budget for it. So the engagements are positive because nobody has said we do not want or need your service. It is always about how do we re-allocate the resources of the company to accommodate this new paradigm that you are bringing to us.

Besides that, I am happy with the engagements; I am really happy with the team. My tech team is fantastic. The commercial team is fantastic. Our customer support which I thought was weak we have really enhanced it now and we are able to serve a lot of customers. Our pace of innovation and pace of solving whatever comes up in terms of solution has really improved.

This year, going into 2023, I think the focus will begin to move to go international more aggressively than what we have done last year because we need to conquer Nigeria first; then we can begin to move to other countries. I think we are in a good place. At least the assessment from the board seems that they are happy with the work we have done so far. I report to them, and that is what really matters.





# ORIJIN

## *Innovatively orijinal*

**O**rijin is a Nigerian alcoholic beverage from the stable of Guinness Nigeria PLC. A rich blend of bittersweet flavours of specially selected African herbs and fruits, combined to give a bitter-sweet taste.

Launched in 2013, Orijin Ready to Drink (RTD) went on to become the fastest-growing innovation brand in Diageo history.

In developing this product, Guinness was inspired by the fact that across Africa, there was a melting pot of different cultures: energetic, unique, and interconnected; dating back to centuries or even millennia but which are still very relevant today and will be around for many years.

Orijin being a success story since its launch, had more than 50 percent of the market for non-beer bottled drinks with a similar alcohol proof, according to data tracker Nielsen Nigeria. The brand which is inspired by the tradition of herbal drinks in Africa began the production of Orijin Zero, a non-alcoholic variant of the drink in 2016.

A stronger liqueur version of the drink, called Orijin bitters, is available in 20 cL and 75 cL sizes, with an ABV closer to 30%.

The popularity of the beverage within Nigeria, and its recent exportation to other countries in the region, have prompted competing breweries to look into a similar beverage.

As a successful brand that has gained market tractions since inception, Guinness decided as part of effort to expand the brand portfolio, to launch Orijin Tigernut and Ginger variant into the market. The new blend as its predecessors Orijin RTD, Orijin bitters, Orijin Zero and Orijin Herbal Gin is an authentically Naija drink for those proud of their heritage.

Orijin Tigernut & Ginger combines the finest bitters from across Africa with the sweetness of fruit extracts such as zesty orange and now the refreshing kick of Tigernut and Ginger to ignite consumer's taste buds. The brand continues to celebrate, to create value and delight consumers.

Orijin's success in the Nigerian market has not gone unnoticed as the brand has received several awards which include Nigerian – British Chamber of Commerce Awards Innovation in Business; ADVAN award for Marketing Excellence Innovation Category; and MARKETING EDGE Outstanding Brand for Marketing Excellence.

TOSIN ADEFEKO IS THE FOUNDER/CEO OF AT3 RESOURCES LIMITED, A YOUNG BUT WAVE-MAKING PR CONSULTANCY FIRM IN NIGERIA. SHE SPOKE EXCLUSIVELY TO MARKETING EDGE ABOUT THE HEIGHTS TO WHICH INNOVATION IS TAKING THE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY TO IN THIS DIGITAL AGE, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

## **H**ow would you define innovation in this age of new normal?

Innovation is now more critical in the post-covid world than ever before. As it is often said, a crisis presents a choice – to see the danger in the crisis or the opportunity the crisis presents. So, I personally choose to regard this as a period with many

now under pressure to communicate; to reach out and shake hands with their consumers and audiences on a more open platform, no holds barred. As a result, businesses and brands need to always be on the alert, to consistently pay attention to what people are saying about their brands.

Digital technology has democratized access to information and practically given a voice to all and sundry. We all know this

# INNOVATION IS AT THE CORE OF THE FAST CHANGES THAT NOW ABOUND

## TOSIN ADEFEKO

opportunities. Innovation can happen in unconventional ways as we have seen post-pandemic; the world has evolved in many ways - from the way we work to the way we play, the way we shop to the way we sell, the way we travel and interact with others; our connectedness is now amplified.

On a professional level, the way brands interact with their consumers to the way consumers respond has also evolved. Things are changing, faster than ever and innovation is at the core of all these. To your question, innovation still remains change; be it incremental, disruptive or radical. Essentially of utmost importance is being able to adapt to the times and staying relevant in the grand scheme of things.

## **How does that definition apply to your own sphere of the marketing communications ecosystem?**

The marketing communications industry in Nigeria has flourished for decades through many seasons, even the pandemic as destabilizing as it was, was really just that – a temporary setback. Considering that all industries were affected collectively it just meant that we also had to go back to the drawing board. To a large extent we have all embraced the new normal. As a matter of fact, I see more future-forward programs across board; innovation in product development, improvement in services, more opportunities to collaborate and generally speaking a seismic shift from our former 'one size fits all' approach to solving problems.

Let's take a minute to x-ray the digital landscape. As far back as the early 2000's, social media started to gain momentum and digital platforms increased with the aid of technology. During covid, we all depended on technology for literally every facet of our lives. In a digital-driven world, brands and business leaders are

has its pros and cons; small businesses are now better empowered with tools to help them communicate on a small budget and scale whilst bigger brands just have to find creative ways to cut through the noise. It is quite interesting times we live in.

## **Where, in your view, is the place of innovation in the convergence occasioned by digitalization?**

Again, as I said prior, in this digital world the kinds of problems that need solving are different so as communications strategists we also have to think beyond the usual, which invariably means a convergence of varied competencies. To be very honest, everyone is tired of too many specializations, clients just want solutions and value. The idea that one agency can solve all problems and 'Do it All' is a farce to say the least. As businesses rebuild post-covid, the ideal proposition will be where collaboration can happen seamlessly. The ability to present a clear strategy, on-demand attention and seamless execution is what clients desire to fulfill the speed required to respond in a connected world. Our clients are dealing with a cacophony of global problems; agility and this collaborative approach in proffering solutions to their communications problem is the route to travel.

## **What is your assessment of the Nigerian marketing communications industry in the outgone year (2021) from the perspective of innovation and innovativeness across board?**

The most noticeable trend in the marketing communications industry was our ability to adapt to changes in the approach to marketing. In 2021, the whole world slowed down, in the process, social media basically dominated every aspect of our lives.





Considering that the bedrock of communications is consumer behavior that simply meant we had to change our strategies in more ways than one. Brands quickly realized the importance of speaking to their customers as humans instead of as data points within a demographic. Another significant aspect of the marketing and communications industry that really improved in the past year is the deployment of data in the creation of strategy. Data is now more accessible than it was in the past and this means professionals can derive more robust insights that go on to inform more relevant marketing communications campaigns.

### **What picture of the current and coming years does this paint for the industry?**

In this and coming years, it is obvious that more digitally focused marketing will be deployed with more brands adapting to and leveraging digital media. However, people typically assume that this ultimately means the eventual death of traditional advertising, but I don't believe so. Or, at least, I don't agree that digital advertising will obliterate traditional advertising. Instead, I think that we will see more of a hybrid approach to engaging various consumers. I mean, we manage communications for a technology brand that owns many of the social apps we all use, but even they still find it useful to engage other key stakeholders across traditional platforms.

### **What are some specific innovations that your company has brought to bear upon its offerings and innovations in 2022 and how are these impacting your brand positioning?**

Our mission, since inception, has always been to support brands in their quest to connect; so, our goals haven't changed. We simply continue to look for incremental ways to help our brands and businesses thrive in a connected world. A big part of this is investing in talents; we are constantly looking out for new talents, training the ones we have and encouraging them to live our mantra. Of course, with great talents you can expect great ideas, services and varied experiences especially for those who entrust their brands to us.

Our ultimate goal is for our clients to experience business transformation so we love it when they see and call us communications partners, not just a PR agency that supposedly just helps to distribute press materials.

### **Did the innovations pose any challenges? If yes, what challenges? And if no, why not? How did you surmount them?**

Given the context of change happening globally, whatever challenges we experienced paled in comparison. As I said earlier, we simply looked for opportunities to first and foremost thrive and subsequently to grow. Obviously, some clients hesitate to embrace solutions that are unconventional but all we needed to do was demonstrate expertise and with all sense of humility, we do have talent that have worked on global accounts that cut across multiple industries. It is more or less a 'been-there-done-that' scenario, and where we cannot support, we have solid partners to collaborate with.

### **What new innovations should your stakeholders look forward to from your company in the coming years?**

In the coming years, we are focusing on approaching problems with unique perspectives, leveraging data-driven insights, and utilizing modern and improved tools to achieve this.

### **Is there the possibility of any new blue ocean(s) resulting from such innovations?**

Opportunities always abound, and as creative people we must continue to seek new frontiers. We are constantly searching, researching, disrupting the old and unveiling the new. If I tell you now that we have all the answers of course I would be fibbing; the only thing I know for sure now is the importance of communications has been brought to the forefront of corporates, governments, brands, etc. It is no longer the days of yore when communications experts were brought into the discussion last. What that means for us is we can express our ideas from the early stages. It can only get better from there.

### **What would you want our readers to know about you?**

I am a corporate executive and entrepreneur with over 25 years multi-sectoral experience in Nigeria. I have led and delivered outstanding business results across industries - financial services, print/broadcast media and now marketing communications.

I founded AT3 Resources Limited in 2018 as sole consultant from my dining table. As you can imagine I'm excited to have grown the team to a group of 15 executives helping key clientele which include global corporates like META (Facebook), many local conglomerates and influential private clients with their strategic communications.

I like to describe myself as dogged, focused and resolute in pursuance of my goals. However, I do not compromise living my life to the fullest. I love to talk, teach, travel and LIVE!



# Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria, Nestlé's Exemplary Strides

**N**estlé Nigeria PLC, one of the largest food and beverage companies in Africa which, for almost six decades, has been delighting consumers in Nigeria with high quality nutritious food products, recently launched a project to Empower Rural Women in Nigeria. This is with a view to helping them to scale up their retail businesses through training, mentorship and grants in form of Nestlé products. The project is targeting 300 rural women across all the geo-political zones of the country

With the launch of this new project, Nestlé's aim is to make significant contributions to the wellbeing of Nigerians. This is very much in keeping with its corporate purpose of enhancing quality of

life and contributing to a healthier future of Nigerians.

In the first phase of the project, the company provided three times the monthly turnover of each of the 50 selected female retailers in form of Nestlé products.

Speaking at the launch of the project in Abuja at its take-off, Nestlé Nigeria's Commercial Manager, Mr. Khaled Ramadan said: "Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria" is aimed at making significant contributions to the wellbeing of the 50 retailers selected in this first phase, who already have a business relationship with Nestlé. We are confident that the support we will be providing through training, mentorship and grants will go a long way towards helping them improve their standards of living by increasing their sales outputs.



*Wassim Elhousseini,  
MD/CEO Nestlé Nigeria PLC*

We are excited to see the start of the implementation of this first phase of the project and look forward to the eventual scale up to reach more women across Nigeria."

Continuing, Ramadan said, "Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria is designed to help the selected retailers scale up their businesses and sustain the new level of up to three times the size of their existing business", adding, "Training will be provided by our implementation partners with a track record of helping rural dwellers access information and skills to improve their standards of living".

He disclosed, too, that the retailers would also be linked to one-on-one mentors for additional guidance and consistent support to ensure their success.

Also speaking at the launch of the new project, Phranklin Audu, Lead Trainer & Head of Partnerships at Straplan Advisory Ltd, said, "For Nestle, the overarching goal is to ensure that these 50 selected participants are able to triple their income and ultimately improve their livelihoods".

According to him, selected from 3



*Khaled Ramadan, Commercial Manager, Nestlé Nigeria PLC*





**1) Khaled Ramadan, Commercial Manager, Nestlé Nigeria PLC (2) Bamidele Aina, Branch Manager, North Central, Nestlé Nigeria PLC (3) Bukola Jide-Ekunseitan, Regional Sales Manager, Abuja Region, Nestlé Nigeria PLC (4) Phranklin Audu, Lead Trainer & Head of Partnerships at FDConsults**

area districts in Abuja- Kubwa, Nyanya and Gwagwalada, the rural traders would undergo a period of business coaching and mentoring to help them strengthen their business process in a bid to scale their businesses.

He then commended Nestlé for such a laudable project and expressed the hope that the project would be sustained and replicated across other states and regions of the country.

Speaking the minds of the beneficiaries during the flag-off of the project, Mrs. Clementina Irandi said, “I am beyond happy and I do not know how to express myself for being one of the 50 women chosen to participate in this empowerment by Nestlé. The free goods and training we

received today will be particularly helpful in taking my business to the next level. I thank Nestlé for everything they have done for me and my family”.

From Abuja, Nigeria’s federal capital, the Nestlé Empowering Rural Women train moved to the South West region of the country where an additional 50 women were to benefit from the second phase of the project.

Nestlé Nigeria’s Commercial Manager, Khaled Ramadan was not present at the event in Osogbo, Osun State but was represented by Mr. Dele Olukayode, Rural Development Manager, Nestle Nigeria Plc. His words: “We are happy to fulfill our promise of expanding Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria to reach more

women in other parts of Nigeria. We are pleased with the progress made by the first 50 beneficiaries who currently enjoy the training and mentorship provided by Nestlé and her implementation partners – Straplan Advisory Ltd. They are reporting faster turnover and increased revenue as well as stronger visibility of their outlets within their locations”.

He added, “We are therefore confident that the 50 selected retailers in South West Nigeria will also reap the full benefits of the support we are providing through training, mentorship and grants.”

Corroborating the Commercial Manager, Phranklin Audu, Lead Trainer & Head of Partnerships at Straplan Advisory Ltd, remarked that “Following the successful implementation of the pilot phase, the rural women empowerment project from Nestlé Nigeria in its second phase sees rural women from the South-Western Region (Osun & Ekiti States) benefiting from the economic and social empowerment initiative”, adding, “We commend the Nestlé team for sustaining this initiative”.

A South West beneficiary, Mrs. Bashiru Hairat expressed her gratitude to Nestlé in these words, “I want to thank Nestlé for doing a lot for my family. I am so happy that I was selected to participate in this program. The grant will increase my business and incomes which will enable me improve my standard of living and that of my family”.

The next ‘port’ for the Nestlé Nigeria Empowering Rural Women Project “ship” to berth was Nsukka and Obolo-Afor, both in Enugu State, South East Nigeria where the project was launched very recently. Here, too, a set of 50 rural women were selected to benefit from the empowerment initiative; thus bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 150 from three geo-political zones.

Speaking on Nestlé’s contributions to empowering women within her value chain at the South East event, Khaled Ramadan said, “At Nestlé, we believe that by contributing to the health and wellbeing of our communities, we create shared value for all stakeholders while contributing to the growth of our business”.

He said further, “Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria project” is our way of improving the livelihoods of women in the rural areas by helping them scale their businesses to three times its current volume within three months. Our ambition is to empower 300 of these women who are retailers within our distribution channel.”



**Phranklin Audu, Lead Trainer & Head of Partnerships at FDConsults**





*Some beneficiaries of the project*

The Commercial Manager then disclosed, “We have received very positive feedback from the first 100 beneficiaries of the program who are based in the suburbs of Abuja and Osogbo. They are reporting faster turnover and increased revenue as well as stronger visibility of their business outlets within their locations. We are therefore confident that our interventions through training, mentorship and product grants are a right mix for success”, adding that “By improving the household incomes of the rural women, Nestlé is helping to improve their access to adequate nutrition, good healthcare and good quality education for their families”.

While commenting on the outcome of the program so far, Lead Trainer & Head of Partnerships at FDConsults, Phranklin Audu, said, “It is a delight for me to see the progress already made by the beneficiaries of “Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria project”, adding, “The reports of increase in turnover and profits are very encouraging”.

Continuing, Audu said, “Following the successful implementation of the first and second phases, I am happy that 50 more women are joining the program today. FDConsults is privileged to be a part of this success story and remains focused on helping each beneficiary attain her highest potential. I encourage each participant here today to take full advantage of this unique opportunity to grow her business”.

The words of Mrs. Peace Eze, a beneficiary from Obolo-Afor in Enugu State very loudly speak to the resonance of the initiative and the excitement it is generating among the beneficiaries. She said, “I am very happy to have been selected to benefit from this program. I am going home with good news. With what we were taught today, I now have the knowledge to support my business to grow. With the help of the goods that Nestlé is also giving to us, I have everything I need to make my business succeed. I thank Nestlé for this important initiative; it will help all the women benefiting from the program a lot”.

It would be recalled that the beneficiaries of “Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria project” receive grants by way of Nestlé products valued at 300% of their current monthly sales. They also participate in training and mentorship programs which equip them with the requisite skills to scale up and sustain their businesses. These programs are delivered by the implementation partner, FD Consults, which also works with each retailer over 3 months post training to help them succeed. Each beneficiary retailer is linked to a one-on-one mentor for guidance and consistent support.

The first phase of “Nestlé Empowering





Rural Women in Nigeria project” which was launched in the suburbs of the Federal Capital Territory in August 2021 reached 50 beneficiaries while the second phase launched in Osogbo in October 2021 added 50 more women to the program. With this launch in Enugu State, the program now includes 150 beneficiaries, halfway to the target the company set for the initiative. “Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria project” is one of the Company’s Creating Shared Value (CSV) initiatives to contribute towards building thriving communities by improving livelihoods.

Significantly, Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria is designed to help rural women retailers scale up their businesses and sustain the new level of up to three times the size of their existing business. It is one of the Creating Shared Value initiatives that Nestlé deploys to help build thriving communities improving livelihoods.

The training and mentorship elements of the project are provided by Straplan Advisory Ltd who has a track record of helping rural dwellers access information and skills to improve their standards of living. Each beneficiary retailer is linked to a one-on-one mentor for guidance and consistent support over three months to ensure their success.

On its part, FD Consults, which is working with each retailer over 3 months, post training, to help them succeed has a track record of helping rural dwellers access information and skills to improve their standards of living.

The first phase of Nestlé Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria was launched in the suburbs of the Federal Capital Territory in August 2021; and has since moved to the South West and South East of the country.



**1). Henry Esiaba, Marketing Services Manager, Nestlé Nigeria PLC (2) Victoria Uwadoka, Corporate Communications and Public Affairs Manager, Nestlé Nigeria PLC (3) Khaled Ramadan, Commercial Manager, Nestlé Nigeria PLC**



# UAC Foods Re-launches Supreme Ice Cream in grand style



*Dele Ajayi, Managing Director, UAC Foods Limited, giving the keynote address at the Supreme Ice-Cream relaunch event held in Lagos.*



*Adebola Williams, General Manager, Marketing, UAC Foods Limited, unveiling the new Supreme Ice-Cream logo, label and tub at the Supreme Ice-Cream relaunch event held in Lagos.*

## UAC

Foods Limited, makers of the leading Supreme ice cream brand, has unveiled a refreshed look and identity for its Supreme ice cream, heralding a new era for the brand. The refreshed look and identity were unveiled during a re-launch event held at D'Podium International Event Centre on Thursday, March 3, 2022.

The event was attended by key stakeholders of Supreme ice cream and UAC Foods Limited, including distributors and franchisees, who witnessed the unveiling of Supreme ice cream's new look. The unveiling includes a refreshed logo and label, as well as an upgrade in the product tub from a creamy yellow to an exhilarating white look.

Delivering his keynote address at the event, Managing Director of UAC Foods Limited, Mr. Dele Ajayi, spoke extensively about Supreme ice cream's commitment to the continued delight of its consumers with its exciting range of flavours.

He said, "Since inception, UAC has been committed to supplying Nigerians and the world with high-quality products that provide our consumers with the nourishment they need. The vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry flavours of our Supreme Ice-cream brand show our unfailing dedication to provide unique and delicious ice cream to our beloved consumers."

Ajayi went further to highlight the impact of this commitment on UAC's manufacturing process thus: "This commitment is the reason we continue to seek and adopt improved approaches that ensure our products are not only delicious but good for the body and the environment. We have taken advantage of the latest technology in our effort to reduce our carbon footprint and save energy, by





[L—R] Sam Amoforitse, Manufacturing Director, UAC Foods Limited; David Anaizia, Financial Director, UAC Foods Limited; Hadiza Abdullahi, General Manager, Supply Chain, UAC Foods Limited; Dele Ajayi, MD/CEO, UAC Foods Limited; Adebola Williams, General Manager Marketing, UAC Foods Limited; Christopher Towaju, General Manager Sales, UAC Foods Limited; Dayo Adeeko, General Manager, Human Resources, UAC Foods Limited, showcasing the new and refreshed logo for Supreme Ice-Cream, at the Supreme Ice-Cream relaunch event held in Lagos.

installing a solar hybrid photovoltaic (PV) system with a capacity of 800 kWp, one of the largest solar installations in West Africa. This provides UAC with clean energy, saving up to 2,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year. Today is a testament to the continuous drive for improvement with the refreshed look of our Supreme ice cream brand.”

Supreme ice cream’s new look and packaging were unveiled by the General Manager Marketing of UAC Foods Limited, Adebola Williams, who elaborated on the journey of Supreme ice cream’s operations from its inception to re-launch, and the brand’s desire for its consumers to ‘Taste The Joy In Every Supreme Moment’.

She stated that “A brand that does not evolve will die. Our hope for the future for Supreme ice cream is reflected in our new look and identity. The new Supreme ice cream logo stands for what we are as a brand and what we would be for the future. It is bolder, modern, and reassuring. The heart represents where

we want our consumers to place us, at the heart of their world, which is the life beat of anyone. The splashes are the different flavours of life and the joyous moments we want to promote. For us, Supreme ice cream depicts a celebration of life’s joyous moments. We want consumers to celebrate the awesome moments in life with Supreme ice cream.”

Brand Manager for Supreme ice cream, Ponnile Alabi, also expressed gratitude to key stakeholders who had contributed significantly to the growth of the organisation, while appreciating franchisees and distributors for their commitment to the UAC brand.

In her words, “The past few years have been tough with a lot going on around the world; but I stand here today honored to assure you that tough times never last, only tough people and tough brands do. Supreme ice cream has definitely proved itself as a resilient brand. Together, we have overcome these tough times and have come out stronger than ever. Today, we herald this strength with the official

unveiling of our refreshed identity and packaging.”

With its renewed look, Supreme ice cream promises to keep innovating to better serve its esteemed consumers, employing the best of technology, people, and processes to ensure that consumers can live every moment in a joyful state and celebrate the joys of life.

Supreme ice cream joined the UAC family as its ice cream brand in 1994, with three key flavours; the vanilla strawberry flavour, vanilla chocolate flavour, and the vanilla flavour. In 2013, the on-the-go pouch range of Supreme ice cream was introduced in six variants before the tubs were upgraded in 2014 to a creamy yellow colour.

For 28 years, Supreme ice cream has continued to evolve in its flavours and packaging, as UAC Foods champions processes to better satisfy its consumers and give consumers the opportunity to taste the joy in every Supreme ice cream moment.

# MARKETING EDGE Q1, 2022 VIRTUAL SUMMIT

## - An eclectic review



*Vytautas Paukstys, Co-founder and CEO of Eskimi*



*Adekemi Alegbeleye, Business Lead, Dentsu X Nigeria*



*Dr. Omotola Bamigbajye Elatuyi, Head of Marketing Sub-Saharan Africa, Pladis Global*

By **Tunde Animasaun**

**T**he much-publicized MARKETING EDGE Stakeholders Quarterly Virtual Summit, the first for the year 2022, lived up to its billing as it was yet another stellar outing for the organisation. The Summit, which was a six-hour-long affair, had participants glued to their screens as there was no dull moment.

Approaching the theme, *Maximising Marketing Efficiency in the Age of Changing Consumer Behaviour*, from different, varied, yet interesting and educative angles, the presenters' mastery of the subject, delivery style, and audience engagement, did not allow for drudgery or boredom.

Kick-starting the Summit, delectable Oghale Mafuru, anchor, MARKETING EDGE on TV, introduced the two lead speakers, Vytautas Paukstys, Co-founder and CEO of Eskimi, Cherry Eromosele, the ageless matriarch of the marketing profession and one of the few CMO's in the Nigerian ecosystem and the moderator of the lead sessions, Emmanuel Agu, Group Marketing Director, Jotna Nigeria Limited (The LaCasera Company).

Mr. Paukstys' presentation was very interesting and straight to the heart of the matter. As a data cruncher by profession, he reeled out hard data to back up his submission that the digitisation of business is now a reality. The Eskimi boss, using current data and research outcomes, showed that digital spend surpassed the traditional. "Originally traditional brands are becoming digital, creative is going digital, all screens are going digital and brands are not only data-driven, but they are also looking for better ways to gather and access data and make them more actionable."

Bringing the data reality closer home, so the audience could relate to it well, Vytas, as he is popularly called, said that Nigeria has witnessed a dramatic increase in online penetration and usage. Giving details about the Nigerian digital trends, he said that internet penetration is around 53 percent and there has been a dramatic increase since the outbreak of COVID-19 with sustained increment. He revealed that 85 million Nigerians are online for at

least 4 hours a day, a huge captive audience that any brand would only ignore at its peril.

"It is a fact that more than 50 percent of Nigeria's population is online. How much of the media spend is online?" He asked rhetorically. "The truth is that consumers are moving to digital but brands do not follow... yet," he stressed.

The Eskimi boss continued: "Much of the marketing budget is already on digital; traditional brands are becoming digital-first. Basically, 50% of media consumption is online, and as a result, 50% of the budget has shifted online. Consumers have moved to digital; brands have been forced to follow."

Participants responded to the presentation by applauding Vytas. Some of the feedback include - "Awesome and insightful presentation," Tunde Bakare, "wow! Insightful presentation," Ibidunni Banjoko. "Insightful ... so impactful," Oyindamola Are. "Very good presentation and Impactful knowledge shared," Ehiosasumwen Tina Ojo. "Awesome presentation!" Felicia Okereke. "Wow! Awesome presentation, thanks for sharing this with us," Abimbola Mohammed, and "Thank you, Vytas," Adedotun Adegbite.

Taking the baton from Vytas, Cherry Eromosele, Group Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Interswitch and the second lead speaker gave a 360-degree presentation touching on the implications of the topic for the client, marketing communications professionals, and the customers. It was comprehensive in content, pedagogical in delivery with examples drawn from the Nigerian market, especially from what she did at Interswitch, even as her presentation became a vicarious experiential journey for the participants.

How, for instance, can one forget some of her opening statements like: "Marketing starts and ends with the customer", her averment that "Customers are now sophisticated and very demanding", or her didactic definition of marketing as "Making every spend count in a way that delivers consumer satisfaction and support business continuity?"

Mrs. Eromosele advised marketers to arm themselves with industry and market trends. The industry trends, according to her, are purposeful marketing driven by the ultimate and emotive



'why'; ability driven by speedy responses to consumer needs, and human connection and participation that enhance the consumer experience through meaningful engagement. The consumer trends include Convenience i.e. seamless shopping and payment; 'phygital' (fusion of physical and digital), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR).

Throughout the presentation and almost with every statement and slide, she delivered marketing nuggets that served as reminders that participants were being facilitated by a Chief Marketing Officer that's worth her weight in gold.

The participants were so wowed by the presentation that they couldn't hide this in their feedback. "Let's give it to Cherry for an explosive presentation," Tobi Adekunle. "Great one, Cherry," Adedotun Adegbite. "Thanks so much, Cherry," Ralph Tathagata. "That was brilliant, Cherry. Great scope, great depth," Adedayo Adefila. "Thanks, Cherry. That was explosive!" Sirajudeen Animasaun. "Brilliant presentation from Cherry, lots of insights!" UC Aku, and "Thanks, Cherry, for this beautiful session," Ruth Boyle.

The session was moderated by Emmanuel Agu, the versatile Group Marketing Director, Jotna Nigeria Limited, makers of La Casera, who did a good job of coordinating the session and bringing out the highlights of the two presentations. He also complimented the presentations with brilliant infusions and nuggets for further crystallisation.

The second session which featured an impressive array of eggheads in the marketing communications ecosystem as panelists was coordinated by the indefatigable Maureen Ngwu, then Business Director but now the Managing Director, Media Seal.

Moses Mogbolu, Products Group Manager, Vitafoam Nigeria Plc, took the navigational slant in his presentation by advising brands to have the right marketing roadmap.

According to him, it is difficult to deliver results without the right roadmap. The best way to do this is by evolving with the consumer and global trends using technology as a navigational tool.

"Technology is driving us to an era where we need to evolve with the consumer behaviour, evolve with the consumer trends because the business that exists is the business that understands the need to be proactive. Marketers need to find out how customers define service excellence because it's all about their satisfaction," he said.

For Ilyas kazeem, Group Marketing Director, Eat'n'Go Limited, the man with professorial cadence and diction, marketing prioritisation is a practice driven by innovative solutions to client needs. He advised that every marketer should have an understanding of their customers, walk in their shoes, understand their trigger points, trends, and the role of their brands in the lives of consumers.

To maximize efficiency, he said: "Practitioners should know the tools, the trends and how to optimise all channels effectively, including open rates, click rate optimization with strong contents. They should employ storytelling effectively to drive customer affinity for better customer understanding."

On her part, Omotola Bamigbaiye Elatuyi, Head of Marketing at Pladis Global, highlighted that consumers are not static, noting that they are changing individuals that move along with a changing world.

"Marketers should set objectives to reach and engage with customers, develop suitable profiles to enable all devices and platforms," she said.

Noting that the customer journey is very important, she said: "Follow your customer from point A – Z, scale up what works and what doesn't work, and create meaningfully connected channels."

"Consumers will always find reasons to shift but marketers

need to go ahead of them to know what to do. Customers must be at the centre point of what all marketers do. Marketers should leverage the power of diverse analytic approaches, take advantage of people base marketing practices and make comprehensive reviews of their marketing performance," she concluded.

Hinging his presentation on the three perspectives of purposeful marketing, mobile imperatives, and efficiency-driven mindset, Adebayo Adefila, Head, Digital Strategy, Africa, PZ Cussons said these involve deliberate efforts on business planning, use of data, content, and media optimisation to attain marketing objectives.

For Adekemi Alegbeleye, Business Lead, Densu X Nigeria, understanding consumer behaviour is key to marketing. She said that consumer reaction is driven by motivation, need, or want.

According to her, consumers also react to media around them which is driven by content and technology. The changing consumer behaviour is however fueled by technology as consumers now have access to content across platforms and their choice of platforms is driven by convenience, relevance, and the need for interaction. Hence brands need to continue to evolve with the consumer and ensure that marketing needs are structured in a new way.

Emeka Obia, Lead Strategy & Planning, Leo Burnet, while harping on the impact of the pandemic on the evolution of consumers, affirmed that the online community is becoming increasingly critical with SMEs, smartphones, 3G, and broadband penetration being on the increase. He noted that there are a lot of opportunities in the online landscape and that brands must endeavor to move rapidly to that space to engage with them. He revealed that some of the themes driving the change are cryptocurrency, mobile population, influential social media, and the youth population. As a result of the rapid adoption of technology, expectations from the consumer's point of view are growing and that technology is fueling it.

Reviewing the Summit at the end of the day, John Ajayi, Publisher, and CEO, MARKETING EDGE said: "The overwhelming participation by players across the marketing communications industry home and abroad, the rich repertoire of the content generated and disseminated coupled with the passion and zeal exemplified by both facilitators and participants are silent feedbacks that we cherish. We appreciate and will reciprocate it while striving to better ourselves in the quest to promote the brand idea."



Maureen Ngwu, Managing Director, Media Seal Limited



## SCOUT MEDIA LIMITED – WORKING WITH CLIENT TO DELIVER ON CORPORATE AND MARKETING OBJECTIVES



Scout Media Limited is a young and dynamic media company that specialises in media buying, including Above-the-Line, Media strategy, planning & implementation, consumer insight, process evaluation and optimisation, Out-of-home and ambience branding.

Its Corporate Strategy is to work with clients to deliver on corporate and marketing goals and objectives in a timely fashion. The company handles the accounts of Vitafoam, Cowbell, DStv, Elkiis Super Oat, Fair money, Loya milk, Onga, Promasidor, StarTimes and Sunvita accounts and many more.

Leading the charge at Scout Media as its Chief Operating Officer is Bunmi Makinde, a graduate of Mass Communication with more than 15 years in the marketing communication industry. Her forte is in media business, strategy, buying and monitoring.

Adept at creating and implementing innovative media campaigns to increase revenue for both client and the agency, Bunmi, as she is simply called, has managed successful relations with the agency's key clients and monitor their attitudes and distribute information to build goodwill.

The media advertising Amazon designs and executes business process reengineering and relationship management programs for client's brands. A persuasive negotiator with demonstrated experience in relationship management both with client contact & supplier, she has the desire to meet clients' expectations. She has worked on several accounts like Reckit Benkiser, Dufil, Elkris Food, Etisalat, Diageo and Guinness brands.

Until joining Scout Media Limited, Bunmi had worked at UB40 Advertising, Centerspread Advertising, DKK Advertising, mediaReach OMD and Algorithm Media, where she managed multinational brands, and so many others.

She is an alumni of London Corporate Training School accredited by British Accreditation Council and is a professional member of APCON,

At Scout Media, Bunmi Makinde has responsibility for the day to day running of the agency. She is a member of the Management Team and is responsible for taking overall business decisions as it relates to the operational part of the business. Currently, she works on Promasidor, M&B and other adhoc clients.

Delivering on set business goals (internal & external) is her mantra; and will always ensure this is achieved at every given time. Bunmi is very sociable and loves to relate with people of like-minds.



# UBA partners Cellulant to deepen market penetration across Africa



Africa's global bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc and leading Pan-African Payments Company Cellulant (Cellulant.io) have entered into a strategic partnership that will deepen its market penetration and extend payment services for merchants and consumers across 19 key African countries in which UBA operates. These countries include Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Senegal.

This collaborative initiative stands as one of the primary tools in bringing together Africa's fragmented payments ecosystem, ensuring Cellulant's Payment Gateway, Tingg, is available to a vast number of merchants and consumers in each of these markets.

With over US\$15bn in gross value payments are processed by Cellulant across the shared markets, which is the focus and this partnership has the scope to expand the numbers significantly.

Akshay Grover, Group CEO, Cellulant elatedly announced that, "We are delighted to welcome the United Bank for Africa as a new banking partner. "As the payments landscape in Africa continues to evolve, we believe that FinTech's and banks need to have a deeper collaboration in expanding opportunities that will help ease

payments & collections for businesses and their consumers across all sectors of the economy."

"The partnership with UBA extends our unparalleled reach across the continent and gives merchants and consumers in our shared network the opportunity to enjoy streamlined digital payments services directly through their bank."

While David Waitthaka, Chief Revenue Officer at Cellulant, noted that the joint efforts of both brands will further create more windows for financial inclusion.

"Our partnership with UBA is an opportunity to further simplify the payment experience for businesses looking to collect payments online or offline. This is particularly impactful for businesses who face daily administrative challenges because of the industry's fragmentation." The platform enables merchants to receive, view, and reconcile all their payments via a single application programming interface (API), cutting out the need to sign up for multiple payment providers, including mobile money and mobile money operators (MoMos).

This simultaneously streamlines businesses' administration processes while expanding the range of payment options they can offer to consumers, ensuring maximum choice and flexibility both offline and online.

"By offering a one-stop-shop payments

platform through UBA across the 19 countries it is present in Africa, we are opening up the possibility for merchants to seamlessly accept payments from a huge range of payment methods (banks, mobile money and cards), whilst managing all their back-office processes in one place. Local, regional and global businesses can now focus on growth and expansion across Africa."

Also, Oliver Alawuba, Group Deputy Managing Director, United Bank for Africa, expressed the bank's readiness for the partnership.

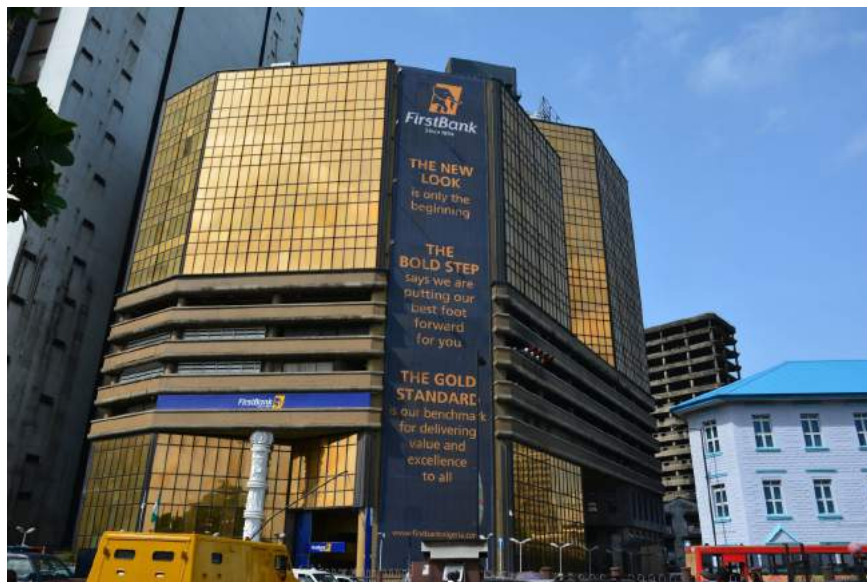
"We are happy to welcome Cellulant to Nigeria for this MoU signing and most importantly into UBA's expansive landscape. UBA is ready; we are indeed set to dominate the entire digital banking space in Africa. "Our bank, as you know, is one of the largest financial services institutions in Africa, providing services to over 25 million customers in 23 countries 20 of which are on the African continent. This speaks to our strength and capability in terms of delivering innovative digital solutions to the last mile".

He continued, "As the needs of our customers change, we are consistently adapting innovative solutions and partnerships to provide them with excellent and convenient services. With our strategic partnerships, we can accelerate the drive for financial inclusion and economic wellbeing of Africans on the continent. As a customer focused bank we are dedicated to ensuring first rate customer service to all our customers as well as fashion out the best possible ways to ease the way they transact".

Alawuba during the signing ceremony at the UBA House in Lagos, noted that "Collaborating with Cellulant will allow for maximum impact when it comes to changing lives and introducing smarter ways for people to make payments in Africa".

The announcement is the latest in a line of new partnerships for Cellulant, as it continues to expand its network with leading financial institutions like UBA. The company's payments platform, Tingg, now available via 120 banks, is a one-stop payment gateway for multinational corporations, mid-caps and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) alike.

# FirstBank rewards customers in its Visa Gold Cashback Campaign



“Being the first financial institution in the country to hit the issuance of 10 million ATM cards, we remain resolute to leave no stone unturned in ensuring that our customers are at an edge in experiencing safe, convenient and rewarding digital banking services, regardless of where they may be across the globe, he concluded.

## About FirstBank

First Bank of Nigeria Limited (FirstBank) is the premier Bank in West Africa and the leading financial inclusion services provider in Nigeria for over 127 years. With over 750 business locations and over 150,000 Banking Agents spread across 99% of the 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria, FirstBank provides a comprehensive range of retail and corporate financial services to serve its over 30 million customers. The Bank has an international presence through its subsidiaries, FBNBank (UK) Limited in London and Paris, FBNBank in the Republic of Congo, Ghana, The Gambia, Guinea, Sierra-Leone and Senegal, as well as a Representative Office in Beijing.

The Bank has been handy at promoting digital payment in the country and has issued over 10million cards, the first bank to achieve such a milestone in the country. FirstBank's cashless transaction drive extends to having more than 10million people on its USSD Quick Banking service through the nationally renowned \*894# Banking code and over 4.5 million people on FirstMobile platform.

Since its establishment in 1894, FirstBank has consistently built relationships with customers focusing on the fundamentals of good corporate governance, strong liquidity, optimised risk management and leadership. Over the years, the Bank has led the financing of private investment in infrastructure development in the Nigerian economy by playing key roles in the Federal Government's privatisation and commercialisation schemes. With its global reach, FirstBank provides prospective investors wishing to explore the vast business opportunities that are available in Nigeria, an internationally competitive world-class brand and a credible financial partner.

FirstBank has been named “Most Valuable Bank Brand in Nigeria” six times in a row (2011 – 2016) by the globally renowned “The Banker Magazine” of the Financial Times Group; “Best Retail Bank in Nigeria” for seven consecutive years (2011 – 2017) by the Asian Banker International Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards and “Best Bank in Nigeria” by Global Finance for 15 years. Our brand purpose is always to put customers, partners and stakeholders at the heart of our business, even as we standardise customer experience and excellence in financial solutions across sub-Saharan Africa, in consonance with our brand vision “To be the partner of the first choice in building your future”. Our brand promise is always to deliver the ultimate “gold standard” of value and excellence. This commitment is anchored on our inherent values of passion, partnership and people, to position You First in every respect.

In furtherance of its appreciation of customers, whilst promoting the adoption of mobile payment solutions in the country, FirstBank is rewarding holders and customers of its branded Visa Gold card in its ongoing Visa Gold card. The promo which will have over 300 Visa Gold cardholders rewarded is scheduled to end on 25 March 2022.

Each month, the first 50 customers with an average transaction value below \$150 in the last 6 months will be rewarded with 10% cashback on transactions carried out on POS and across the web. To qualify to be rewarded, the card must be used at least 3 times monthly on POS/Web (within the campaign period) with a minimum cumulative spend of \$300. The maximum transaction value for purchase cashback is \$500.

In addition, the first 50 customers – monthly – with an average transaction value above \$150 in the last 6 months will be rewarded with \$50 when they grow their total transaction value by 50% monthly through PoS and Web payments. The maximum transaction value for purchase cashback is \$300. 50 inactive Visa Gold cardholders in the last 6 months are not left out when they use their cards at least 3 times monthly on PoS and Web. With a minimum cumulative spend of \$150, they are entitled to 10% cashback on transactions.

FirstBank Visa Gold card is an international premium credit card issued in partnership with Visa International. It is Bank's dollar-denominated card for customers in the mid-affluent segment and is accepted for payment at over 29 million locations and cash withdrawals at over 1.8 million ATMs worldwide.

The card which is accepted globally is secured with chip and PIN technology. Its transaction limit is \$1,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000 for ATM, POS and Web respectively. It is available in the self-funded and credit variant. It is denominated in US Dollars with a life span of 3years.

“Appreciating our customers for their patronage is very important to us as we encourage the increased adoption of the Visa Gold card”, said Mr Chuma Ezirim, the bank's Group Executive, e-Business and Retail products.



# AAAN emplaces professional indemnity insurance for members

By Zion Rufus



**P**resident of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, Steve Babaeko has disclosed the Association is making plans to provide professional indemnity insurance for its members.

Babaeko, who made this disclosure in an interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, also revealed that the umbrella body has put together a 'robust' induction program for its newly admitted members.

He said: "Apart from the one-on-one conversation that I have had with prospective members, the reach out program of our association is getting better. Our improved programs also make it more attractive to be a member of AAAN. For the new members we have a robust induction program and we also

get them to be covered by the professional indemnity insurance we are about to put in place."

Addressing the issue of quacks in the industry, the AAAN President said that as for his association, measures are being put in place to prevent the influx of quacks into the ad industry.

"Not everyone that applies gets to be a member," Babaeko shared. "Considering that there are benchmark criteria that are set by the membership committee, those must be met before an agency is deemed qualified to join. Just pure quality control to ensure that we get agencies that are best in class."

It should be recalled that the issue of quacks in Nigeria's marketing communications ecosystem is a

longstanding conversation that has occasioned several disciplinary actions in a bid to curb their practice. On its part, to crackdown on charlatans and individuals parading themselves as professionals, the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, (APCON) announced its plans to introduce in April 2022, a new vetting regime which will permit only licensed advertising organizations to apply to the Advertising Standards Panel (ASP) for vetting.

In his final submission, the President revealed: "AAAN will continue to reach out to practitioners on the fringes of our association to join us before they get into conflict with APCON laws."

## Fidelity Bank finances ultra-modern rice milling factory



**T**he Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele has joined the Managing Director of Fidelity Bank Plc, Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe and a host of dignitaries including two state governors to commission a 400 metric tons per day mega rice mill in Kano state constructed by Gerawa Group of Companies.

Speaking at the commissioning of the

mill and the foundation laying of additional 560 metric tons rice mill, the CBN Governor stated that before 2015 Nigeria had less than 10 functional integrated rice mills with a combined capacity less than 350,000 metric tons, but with the coming of President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration, the statistic has grown to over 60 integrated mills with a combined capacity of over 3 million metric tons.

The CBN governor added that there are about 10 new integrated mills scheduled to be commissioned this year emphasising that the growing number of integrated mills have been complemented by hundreds of small-scale mills located across the states of the federation in an effort towards boosting the nation's food security.

He explained that the private sector investment that has been unlocked in the establishment of these rice mills are testimony of the conducive environment created in the rice value chain through the CBN-led initiatives and stakeholders' cooperation.

Commenting on Fidelity Bank's support for the project, its Managing Director/CEO, Mrs. Onyeali-Ikpe, who was represented at the event by the Bank's Executive Director, Northern Businesses, Hassan Imam, said, "At Fidelity Bank, we are known for facilitating transactions such as this where the impact is phenomenal and often on a national scale. We are pleased to be associated with this project because of its potential to not only improve the lives of many small-holder farmers in Jigawa, Kano and environs but to also develop the country's rice value chain and ensure food security."

The chief host at the well-attended event and Chairman, Gerawa Group of Companies, Alhaji Isa Muhammed Gerawa stated that the establishment of the rice mill was a testimony of the efficacy of the federal government's agricultural development policies in encouraging farming and other related activities with support from the CBN. He added that the intended 560 metric tons capacity rice mill will be completed in November 2022.

The occasion was graced by the Executive Governors of Jigawa State, Mohammed Badaru Abubakar and of Kebbi State, Abubakar Atiku Bagudu; captains of industries and heads of corporate organizations.

# Fidelity Bank GAIM 5 Promo: 10 more Customers become Millionaires



L – R: Onyeka Kurume, Team Lead, Retail Bank, Fidelity Bank Plc; Genevieve Nwaoche, representative of the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC); Ukpai Ibe, Head, Savings and Sales, Fidelity Bank Plc; Oyinkan Kusamotu, Senior Legal Officer, Lagos State Lotteries & Gaming Authority; Meksley Nwagboh, Divisional Head, Brands and Communications, Fidelity Bank Plc; Uche Obodoekwe, Group Head, Property, Procurement & Vendor Management, Fidelity Bank Plc; and Osita Ede, Divisional Head, Product Development, Fidelity Bank Plc at the third monthly draw of the Get Alert in Millions Season 5 (GAIM 5) Savings Promo held in Lagos on Tuesday.

Leading financial institution, Fidelity Bank has reiterated its commitment to enriching the lives of its customers as it announced the third set of 10 millionaires in its Get Alert in Millions season 5 (GAIM 5) promo.

The third monthly draw of the campaign which held in Victoria Island, Lagos on Tuesday, 22 February 2022 had representatives of regulatory organisations in attendance include:

Ms Oyinkan Kusamotu, Senior Legal Officer, Lagos State Lotteries & Gaming Authority. Genevieve Nwaoche, representative of the National Lottery Regulatory Commission and Onifade Abiodun, representative of the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.

Giving the welcome remarks at the draw, Dr Ken Opara, Promo Chairman and Executive Director in charge of Fidelity Bank's Lagos and South-West Directorate who was represented by Lanre Showunmi, the bank's Chief Digital Officer, said, "We launched the GAIM 5 promo to reward our esteemed customers for imbibing a healthy savings habit and in demonstration of our commitment to improving their well-being. We have earmarked a total of N125million as cash prizes in weekly, monthly, and grand draws which would hold till July this year when the campaign would end. Till date, we have rewarded 670 customers with various sums of money including 650 customers that have won N10,000 each in the weekly consolation draws and 20 customers who have won N1million each in monthly draws respectively."

Launched in November 2021, the GAIM 5 promo rewards Fidelity Bank customers for maintaining a savings account with the bank. According to the bank, every N2,000 in a customer's account stands for a ticket in the draws with higher number of tickets increasing the customer's opportunity to win a share of the N125million earmarked as prize money for the season.

Speaking on the Bank's commitment to enriching and rewarding customers, Ukpai Ibe, Head, Savings and Sales, Fidelity Bank Plc, stated, "At Fidelity Bank, we continue to find different ways to reward our customers. Since we commenced the FPSS and SWEETA loyalty reward campaigns 7 years ago, we have given out over N4.1b as loyalty cash reward to 10,280 customers."

Fidelity Bank is a full-fledged commercial bank operating in Nigeria, with about 6million customers who are serviced across its 250 business offices and digital banking channels. The bank is known for exceptional customer service and digital innovation.

## Nigeria's tax earnings decreases by 26% in Q4, 2021

The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics has stated that Nigeria's earnings from Company Income Tax (CIT) for Q4 2021 stood at N347.81 billion, a decline by 26.39% on a quarter-on-quarter basis from N472.52 billion in Q3 2021. This revelation was part of the bureau's report for February 2022.

Giving a breakdown of the income, the bureau indicated that local payments recorded were N258.85 billion, while Foreign CIT Payment contributed N88.96 billion.

According to the report, the decrease was the result of decreases in collections in some critical sectors of the economy. These include; administrative and support service activities (-72.15%); agriculture, forestry and fishing (-34.52%); arts, entertainment and recreation (-25.31%); education (-1.61%); financial and insurance activities (-5.52%); information and communication (-4.33%); manufacturing (-23.21%); and mining and quarrying (-7.56%).

Irrespective of the above, positive growth was recorded in some other sectors.

"On a quarter-on-quarter basis, positive growths were recorded in accommodation and food service activities (116.01%); activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies (128.92%); activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods and services-producing activities of households for own use (563.56%);

construction(33.32%); electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply (84.68%); human health and social work activities (31.47%); other service activities (37.28%); professional, scientific and technical activities (51.47%); public administration and defense, compulsory social security (29.46%); real estate activities (17.99%); transportation and storage (2.04%); water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (26.08%); and wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (13.91%)" the report stated.

In terms of sectoral contributions, the top three largest shares in Q4 2021 were information and communication (N51.05 billion) with 19.72%; manufacturing (N45.09 billion) with 17.42%; and financial and insurance activities (N31.06 billion) with 12.00%. Conversely, activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use (N189.45 million) with 0.07%; water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (N328.58 million) with 0.13%; and activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies (N447.01 million) with 0.17% were top three lowest shares in Q4 2021.

However, on a year-on-year basis, CIT collections in Q4 2021 increased by 17.61% from Q4 2020.



# Microsoft to empower 10,000 African startups



In the bid to accelerate the growth of 10,000 African startups and fast-track investment in their ecosystem over the next five years, Microsoft is establishing industry alliances and partnerships with venture capital investors that will facilitate access to \$500 million in potential funding.

Under the remit of its recently established Africa Transformation Office (ATO), the giant tech company stated that the funding will come from a network of venture capital investors, who will dedicate a portion of their financial support to startups in the Microsoft network.

The technology powerhouse's recently launched global Founders Hub will now be available to African startups through the ATO. The Founders Hub is a self-service hub that provides startups with a wide range of resources, including access to mentors, skilling content, tools like Microsoft Azure and GitHub, and go-to-market and business support.

Microsoft is also creating new partnerships with accelerators and incubators across Africa, including Grindstone, Greenhouse, FlapMax and Seedstars to provide industry-based startups with access to markets, technical skills and funding opportunities.

According to the company, these partnerships will provide Africa startups with access to skilling programs, access to markets, including opportunities to co-sell with Microsoft, and access to technology,

with support from Microsoft's engineering and product teams for co-innovation opportunities.

Microsoft has already established partnerships with several key venture capital investors, including Banque Misr, Global Venture Capital and Get Funded Africa, and the intention is to grow this network of venture capital investors in the next five years to increase funding and enable them to scale up and drive economic growth. This is because it believes the vibrant African startup market is well placed to become a cornerstone of the continent's digital economy, supporting local innovation through relevant solutions to societal challenges.

The Managing Director, Microsoft Africa Transformation Office, Wael Elkabbany said, investments into Africa's startup ecosystem are growing at an exciting pace and there are more than 640 active tech hubs across Africa, accelerating innovation and creating employment, particularly among the youth

"Currently the African startup market represents less than one percent of total investments worldwide. This needs to change."

He revealed that Microsoft's endeavour to dramatically scale its impact will be driven by an overarching strategy with three key focus areas. The Founders Hub includes opportunities for startups to sell to Microsoft's corporate and enterprise customers.

Gerald Maithya, Startups Lead, Microsoft Africa Transformation Office also said: "Our partnerships with key African accelerators provide crucial support to accelerate growth-stage startups with their business development and market expansion plans."

Microsoft will partner with B2B-focused startups, scaleups, "soonicorn" (businesses with the potential to become unicorns) and unicorns across a range of leading African industries, and those concentrated on working with SMEs.



## MTN wears a new look, changes tagline

MTN, Africa's telecom giant, has embarked on a major rebrand and repositioning, scheduled to take place on 27 February.

The revamp exercise will see MTN's logo refreshed and simplified with its "Everywhere You Go" tagline changed to 'Yello'.

According to MTN, the new logo has been submitted to the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) for approval as can be seen outside MTN's offices near the 14th Avenue off-ramp to the N1 freeway in Johannesburg.

The new logo sees 'MTN' written in normal block letters and in blue with an oval of the same colour around it, while the Yellow background seems to be a lighter shade of yellow than the older logo.

In a statement, Nompilo Morafo, MTN Chief Sustainability and Corporate Affairs Officer, said the new look aligns with the group's evolution from a telecommunications company to a technology company.

"Our commitment and focus to accelerate Africa's progress sees MTN revealing a refreshed brand identity and campaign from 27 February," Morafo said.

The rebrand will be group-wide, and not just outside MTN's Johannesburg headquarters, according to the telecom giant.

# MTN Public Offer oversubscription activates allocation of additional 86.25 million shares



**M**TN's public offer of 575 million units of shares in Nigeria has recorded an over-subscription up to 139.47%. The Offer which commenced on the first day of December 2021, was completed on 14th December 2021.

The telecom leader revealed in a public statement that the offer was oversubscribed with valid applications for a total of 801.97 million units, which led to the activation of the approved 15% over-subscription clause of an additional 86.25 million MTN Nigeria shares.

The company further disclosed that in line with the innovative incentive structure of 1 free share for every 20 purchased, subject to a maximum of 250 free shares per investor, an additional 4.28 million MTN Nigeria shares will be allotted to qualifying investors who hold the shares allotted to them for 12 months till 31 January 2023.

MTN shared: "In all, 661.25 million MTN Nigeria shares were allotted. A total of 126,720 retail investors submitted valid applications and received full allotment; and institutional investors including pension funds, insurance companies, asset managers, corporates, and foreign portfolio investors that participated in the bookbuild were allotted 72.09% of their applications."

"The Offer is a landmark transaction and a true reflection of Nigerian investor confidence in MTN Nigeria. It marks the first time a digital application platform was used to democratize investing in a public offer and maximize investor participation across the country. More than 89% of retail offer subscribers applied through the PrimaryOffer platform (mobile and web), and 114,938 new Central Securities Clearing System (CSS) accounts were opened by first-time investors."

The Offer was implemented by way of a bookbuild to qualified institutional investors and a fixed price offer to retail

investors. This includes Nigerian pension funds representing approximately 6.5 million Nigerian contributors. Following the successful completion of the Offer, MN Group's shareholding in MN Nigeria reduced by 3.25 percentage points, from 78.83% to 75.58%. In line with the innovative incentive structure of 1 free share for every 20 purchased, subject to a maximum of 250 free shares per investor, an additional 4.28 million MN Nigeria shares will be allotted to qualifying investors who hold the shares allotted to them for 12 months till 31 January 2023.

Ralph Mupita, CEO of MTN Group said: "We are pleased that this Offer has given so many Nigerians the opportunity to become owners of MTN Nigeria. With over 6.6 million Nigerians directly or indirectly becoming shareholders in MTN Nigeria, the objective of broadening the shareholder base, and creating shared value has been achieved. We are proud that our Offer was the first Nigerian public offer to use the digital application platform, PrimaryOffer, which enabled wider investor participation across Nigeria. We thank the Nigerian authorities for their support of this Offer. We remain

committed to playing our humble role in driving digital and financial inclusion in Nigeria over the medium."

Commenting on the Offer, Karl Toriola, CEO of MTN Nigeria said: "We are delighted to welcome so many new shareholders to the MTN family, up 11.6 times from the number before the offer. It has been inspiring to see so many Nigerians, many of whom are young, acquire shares for the first time, and use a digital platform to do so. This is the beginning of a journey to broaden our shareholding and there will be more opportunities to participate. We are pleased with the level of digital innovation we championed with this offer with the active collaboration of our lead issuing house and the various regulatory bodies. Deepening retail participation in Nigeria's capital markets is a process, and we are off to a great start, demonstrating the role digital platforms can play in expanding access. I am particularly pleased that we completed this transaction in an accelerated time frame ensuring new shareholders can realize value almost immediately through participation in our 2021 full-year dividend.

## 5G network will become operational soon



**F**ifth-Generation (5G) network will soon be deployed and become operational as winners of licenses will be handed the spectrum between now and the next six months.

Aliyu Usman, Head, Space Services, NCC disclosed this at a dedicated panel session of 2022 AfricaNXT Technology Conference themed "Moving Forward Steadily: Socio-Economic Significance of

Deployment of 5G Services," and held in Lagos recently.

Usman said the license confers 10-year tenure and a minimum of five sites for the licensees to deploy.

According to him, the commission would make the 5G spectrum available to the winners of the license within six months, which commenced from February 24, 2022, the deadline for the payment of the license fees.

He also disclosed that NCC is working with the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) to develop a risk management framework, which would see that the commission creates a market for ethical workers.

During the panel discussion, the NCC team espoused further the advantages of the 5G network. Babagana Digima,



Team Lead, Nigeria Office for Developing Indigenous Telecoms Sector (NODITS), NCC, reiterated the fact that 5G will enhance mobile broadband, boost its offering by a 200-fold increase in mobile speed.

Digima said further that the network will accelerate both broadband and narrowband Internet speeds, which are currently, low in the country.

Explaining why NCC was not too stringent on earlier rollout, he said the NCC is aware and putting in place what is required to effectively explore the commercial benefits the service would offer. He said already, about one billion devices that would support the 5G network would be made available in 2022.

Aliyu Usman, Head, Space Services, NCC, shed more light on the advantages of the 5G network. He said the 5G network is smarter than the previous generations of technologies and would impact several sectors of the economy significantly. According to him, agriculture, education, security, and health sectors would benefit the most from the network. He, therefore,

called on, startups and the technology ecosystem to use 5G to create more innovations.

According to him, vulnerability test and security design architecture for the technology would also feature in the risk management framework.

He disclosed that telecoms sector CSIRT in the framework would also be instituted to check if there are threats to the network.

Furthermore, Tony Ikemefuna, Head, Fixed Network and Converged Services said 5G technology offers an extremely low latency rate, which is the delay between the sending and receiving of information. He said from 200 milliseconds for 4G, “we go down to 1 millisecond (1ms) with 5G. The network is even faster than the brain, which processes information at 10 milliseconds.”

According to him, everyone will benefit from 5G, including the older people. He stressed that with the technology; there would be fibre-like connectivity, which will usher in a new wave of creativity in the country.

## Globacom rolls out bumper Mi-Fi, router packages to its subscribers

**G**lobacom, one of the leading telecommunication companies in Nigeria, has rolled out bumper bonuses in Mi-Fi and router offers to its subscribers.

The Subscribers are to enjoy up to 60GB and 180GB respectively in the newly unveiled Glo Mifi and Router offer by the company, which will run all through the year, 2022.

In a statement, Globacom said: “Any customer who purchases a Glo MiFi or Router from any of the 91 Gloworld shops across the country will be rewarded with bonus data of up to 60GB for the Mifi and 180GB on the Router.”

The statement added that the new offer was introduced to give its esteemed customers unprecedented value for money and a delightful browsing experience on its reliable and super-fast Glo 4G LTE network.

The Digital Solutions Company said that all its customers would need to do is to buy a new Glo MiFi device from any Gloworld retail outlet and insert the registered Glo SIM that comes with it and

they would receive the free 30GB once the device is switched on and the balance of 5GB per month for six months. The same process applies to those who purchase the Router. They will get 120GB free data immediately when the device is switched on and the balance of 10GB per month for 6 months.

The Mifi and Router have the capacity to connect up to 10 Wi-fi-enabled devices including Tablets, Laptops, Smartphones, Computers, Smart TV and Game Consoles at once, will be useful for businesses and homes as well as for individual use.



## ng. switch no longer negotiable - NIRA

**T**he Nigeria Internet Registration Association, (NiRA) has commended the approval of a National Policy on the Nigerian Government Second-Level Domains following a presentation by the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Ibrahim Pantami. The approval, according to Muhammed Rudman, President NiRA has made the ng. switch by government agencies ministries and parastatals (MDAs) is non-negotiable.

Rudman said that the need to switch over to .ng is no longer negotiable given the significant role it plays in the country's digital economy agenda.

“The National Policy as adopted by FEC is apt because for years NiRA has been pushing for the government to accelerate the adoption of the second-level domain (.gov.ng, .edu.ng, .mil.ng) under the country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD.ng).

“So, what the Minister has done is commendable because the main objective is to eliminate the use of private emails for government business and official correspondences by the end of the year 2022”.

Predicated on the need for all ministries, parastatals, and officials to jettison the yahoo and Gmail domain addresses to embrace the .ng domain, Rudman believes that adoption will strengthen public confidence in the use of digital technologies and participation in the digital economy. He explained further that the policy is in line with the implementation of the Nigerian e-Government Master Plan, approved by the Federal Executive Council in August 2018.

The Master Plan has the vision to create a world-class open and digitalized government that connects with people to drive efficiencies in public administration, the responsiveness of civil services, and transparency in governance leading to improvement of the quality of life of Nigerians.

Giving insight into NiRA and how

# Digital is our current reality – Dr. Tayo Oyedeji

By Abimbola Mohammed

**D**r. Tayo Oyedeji, Chief Executive Officer of Publicis Groupe/ Redefini Nigeria, has affirmed that digital is not the future, but the current reality of the marketing communications industry. He noted that people spend more time on their cell phones than they did a few years ago. He recalled that



agencies that believed digital was the future of advertising are now operating with a digital reality.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, the industry egghead, while affirming the role of digital in Nigeria's Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) industry and a shift in media consumption, noted that Nigerian agencies are good at strategy, creativity, but still

struggle with implementation.

"I think, by far, we are probably the most strategic and most creative people in the advertising industry. The only place where we struggle is in the implementation. On the strategic level we are really good, we can be compared to the best in the world; on creativity we are amazing but sometimes the production behind our creativity hinders our creativity," he said.

Speaking on new insights that accelerated the shift to digital and its impact to the IMC industry, Dr. Oyedeji said people now

live their lives on the digital screens.

"A few years ago, we used to say that digital is the future of advertising, but our current reality is that people wake up in the morning and the first contact is their cell phones. People literally consume media on digital screens and the internet. So as professionals, the first thing we do at Insight and all our other agencies is to institute a model that we are no longer traditional in our mind set. We think digital first and then leverage traditional media because for people, digital is number one."

According to the agency boss, at the planning stage, digital used to take between 2 to 3 percent of the whole budget, but now it is getting close to 30 percent of the whole budget as brand owners are beginning to see that people are digital first.

"Yes, when I came in 2010, digital had two to three percent of the whole budget; right now it's getting closer to 30 percent. Brand owners are beginning to understand that people are digital first and our job as advertising professionals is to know where the people are. So, digitals just help clients to reach their consumers in the digital space from social media to everything that has to do with the media," he revealed.

Speaking on what will drive adspend in the year 2022, Dr. Oyedeji said: "I think the largest source of spend is going to be technology, primarily because it has the potential to scale anything and everything. We are beginning to see scale even in Nigerian finance."

He hinted that his agency has just started a digital only agency, which is its first stand alone, digital agency in Lagos.

## Brands cling to first-party data as third-party cookies phase out - Ukubeyinje

By Oghale Mafuru



**I**n order to mitigate the challenges that accompanied the extinction of Third-Party cookies, the digital advertising ecosystem has been seeking an effective and result-oriented approach to access consumer data for marketing campaigns. Oti Ukubeyinje, President of the Association of Digital Marketing Professionals and VP Product Marketing and Growth at Terragon Group, revealed that

brands are beginning to take the bull by the horns by leveraging first-party data to optimise marketing efforts for sustainable revenue growth.

Ukubeyinje said further that the clamour for no thirty-party cookies was necessitated by the overwhelming call for consumer privacy. This has led to digital advertising shifting from third-party toward a privacy-driven approach. According

to him, investing in first-party data is, therefore, a strategy that brand owners are enthusiastically willing to explore.

"For brands to survive there will be a continuous push for First Party data. So, brands will increasingly invest in building direct relationships with consumers that they can interact with on an ongoing basis without relying on third parties, world gadgets or other platforms."

While affirming that the first-party data avails brands the opportunity

to understand their customers because it is based on actual interactions with your brand across the vast array of consumer touchpoints, it offers the types of insights that enable them to recognise, relate and respond to customers in more meaningful and valuable ways.

"If you check FMCG brands and banks, there is a race to get to your first one million owned first-party data that you collected with the consent of consumers so you can advertise to them through non-advertising channels. So, you go deeper into messaging and communication instead of advertising."

"Brands will increase investments in tokens to create a value exchange system between themselves and consumers. So how do I create interesting tokens and currencies so that the more you interact with my brand, the more I reward you beyond the core product so we can have a relationship?"

Ukubeyinje advised digital marketers to be more strategic and innovative in their value offerings to sustain relevance in the face of the push for privacy and as well as other challenges in the digital space.





# Oil prices soar as West mulls Russian crude ban

**A**s the United States and its European allies are discussing a ban on Russian oil imports, industry analysts are of the view that this might bring further spike in the prices of oil. It is believed that a ban on Russian oil could push prices to \$150 per barrel all-time high as it hit more than \$130 per barrel recently following rumours of a possible embargo of Russian crude oil.

“A boycott would put enormous pressure on oil and gas supply that has already felt the impact of increasing demand,” analysts from CMC Markets said.

Anthony Blinken, the U. S. Secretary of State alluded to this when he told NBC, “We are now in very active discussions with our European partners about banning

the import of Russian oil to our countries, while of course, at the same time, maintaining a steady global supply of oil.”

“The goal is to isolate Russia and to make it impossible for Putin to finance his wars,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told CNN on Sunday. “For us, there is a strong strategy now to say we have to get rid of the dependency of fossil fuels from Russia.”

Europe is heavily dependent on Russian gas and crude. There is therefore the need to seek an alternative source of fuel for Europe. The willingness of European governments to explore the ban option could be interpreted to mean that a viable alternative has been found.

Meanwhile, U.S. Congress is also

working on its own set of sanctions targeting Russian oil, even though the United States imports roughly 200,000 bpd of Russian crude and about half a million in refined products that may be difficult to replace because of sanctions against Venezuela and Iran.

Analysts are however warning that a ban on Russian oil would push prices even higher.

“Prices are likely to rise in the short term, with a move toward \$150 a barrel not out of the question,” the analysts also said, “Such a move will put further pressure on global economies, pushing inflation higher, leaving central banks debating how quickly rate hikes should be implemented.”

# Global Money Week: Fidelity Bank to empower 4,000 students



**F**idelity Bank Plc has tutored 4,000 students in 36 schools across Nigeria on the value of managing financial resources effectively to improve their economic well-being. This initiative, organized in collaboration with Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN), is part of the activities celebrating the Central Bank's (CBN) annual Global Money Week (GMW), which promotes financial literacy on a global and local scale.

The theme of this year's GMW, "Build Your Future, Be Smart About Money," emphasized the importance of ensuring that young people are financially conscious from an early age. It also aims to ensure that they gradually acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to make sound financial decisions, achieve financial well-being, and develop financial resilience.

Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe, Managing Director/CEO of Fidelity Bank Plc, kicked off the seven-day celebration on March 24, 2022, by speaking about money matters at Bestline Distinct College in Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital. Staff of the bank would also teach in select schools across the country during the celebrations.

Mrs. Onyeali-Ikpe, who was represented by Ayoola Alabi, Regional

Operations & Service Supervisor (ROSS) for South-West 2, Fidelity Bank Plc, pointed out that the financial institution would not relent in its efforts to actualise the federal government's financial inclusion objectives by enabling more young Nigerians, particularly those in underserved communities, to participate in the formal banking system.

"Our children are the future and sharing such information with these young ones will help them develop into better adults. It will give them the ability to plan for their financial independence. For us as a bank, education and youth empowerment are major pillars of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy. We are always searching for opportunities to give back to communities where we operate," said Alabi.

While reiterating the bank's unwavering commitment to educating Nigerian children on money matters, Alabi stated that financial literacy among Nigerians, particularly the youth, would promote economic growth and development. Students who paid close attention to the lecture were then tested orally and subsequently asked questions to gain a better understanding of various financial topics.

Pastor Omodara David, Proprietor

of Best Distinct College, stated that the program would broaden the minds of both students and teachers for the future. "The knowledge gained here will make them successful in the future. What I have learned has opened my eyes. Immediately after the program, I will open accounts in the bank and allow Fidelity to manage the school's account," said David.

Speaking in the same vein, the senior prefect of Best Distinct College, John Chinmaya, who thanked the bank for the gesture, stated that the program will teach students how to save, budget, and bank properly to save for the future, as well as assist them financially and academically. "We are going to tell our parents about the things we learned here today and it will surely be beneficial to them," he explained.

On her part, Victoria Abuka, Team Lead, CSR, Fidelity Bank Plc, emphasized the importance of financial literacy, stating that children need financial education to bring about economic change in the country and around the world. "If you have financial awareness, you will be able to manage money, know about money, invest, and become self-sufficient, as well as contribute to the economic development of the country."

Fidelity Bank concluded the event by presenting corporate gifts to the school's administrators.

Photo caption: Regional Operations & Service Supervisor (ROSS) – South-West 2, Fidelity Bank Plc, Ayoola Alabi (3rd from Right) presenting a gift to the Proprietor, Bestline Distinct College, Ado-Ekiti Pastor Omodara David (3rd from left) and his wife, Margaret Omodara as Programs Officer, Junior Achievement Nigeria, Chiamaka Nwokenna (1st left); Team Lead, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Fidelity Bank Plc, Victoria Abuka (2nd left); Branch Leader, Ado-Ekiti Branch, Fidelity Bank Plc, Ikeolu B. Akinropo (2nd right) and the School Principal, Mrs. Igwe Chioma Nkechiyere look on during a training workshop for students of Bestline Distinct College to commemorate Global Money Week 2022 in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State recently.



# FirstBank partners with CDC/BII to support women and small business owners with a US\$100 million credit facility



**FirstBank**  
Since 1894

**F**irst Bank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier and leading financial inclusion services provider, has announced its partnership with CDC Group, the UK Government's development finance institution on a US\$100 million finance facility to FirstBank. This new facility will direct funding to women-owned and led businesses as well as to local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

The deal will support FirstBank to deliver financial solutions that help to address the challenge of limited access to capital faced by underbanked and underserved groups in the country. As part of the new facility, a minimum of US\$30 million will be allocated in the form of credit lines to women entrepreneurs. The facility will also support FirstBank's 'FirstGem' gender-focused services offering, which takes steps to promote gender inclusion by improving lending and support to female entrepreneurs.

The new partnership between CDC, which will be renamed British International Investment in April, and FirstBank demonstrates a shared mission to spur sustainable, productive and inclusive growth in Nigeria.

CDC's commitment will facilitate an expanded offer by FirstBank to its clientele, which will accelerate financial inclusion and increase opportunities for marginalised groups, including an estimated 59 million unbanked Nigerians, to participate in the country's formal economy. As such, the partnership will capitalise on the FirstBank's expansive network of over 700 branches and 150,000+ agents, leveraging its market leading expertise to scale financial solutions to

underbanked entrepreneurs and populations.

In addition, CDC/BII will support FirstBank with a technical assistance programme which will build on the Bank's knowledge base of the women-led and women-owned businesses in its portfolio, strengthening the Bank's technical capabilities and ability to reinforce its commitment to gender-based initiatives. This will enable the Bank to further leverage the facility to provide vital funding to scale business growth across Nigeria's market – increasing job creation and improving livelihoods throughout the country.

The facility's target to increase financial inclusion and opportunities for women, qualifies this facility under the 2x Challenge – a commitment by the development finance institutions (DFIs) of the G7 to mobilize capital to support increased economic empowerment for women in emerging economies. Moreover, the US\$100 million commitment aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 Gender Equality and Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Nick O'Donohoe, Chief Executive of CDC Group, said: "Promoting financial inclusion is a key component for advancing sweeping productive and sustainable growth across both rural and urban areas in Nigeria. This facility will channel CDC's flexible and long-term capital toward expanding the financial solutions made available to women entrepreneurs, who are often the drivers of small business ideas and services to their communities.

"Our commitment demonstrates a deepening of British partnership with Nigeria's businesses, as we collaborate to unlock the potential for entrepreneurial success and economic growth across the country."

Adesola Adeduntan, Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer, FirstBank said: "Beyond the mutual benefits this partnership offers to both organisations, this transaction offers yet, another occasion for FirstBank to contribute immensely, to the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals.

"Enabling financial inclusion for SMEs has been a strategic priority for FirstBank over the last 128 years. Similarly, FirstBank has been at the forefront of financially empowering women-owned and women-led businesses on the continent. This partnership with CDC/BII offers a fantastic opportunity to accelerate the momentum.

"At FirstBank, we remain ever committed to fostering financial inclusion, creating wealth for the underserved, enhancing access to quality education and health care, improving lives and empowering women."

# Mikano Motors excites auto market with 'Game-Changer' SUV Geely Azkarra



color combination to suit different moods; jet-throttle inspired electronic gear shift; two sporty functional exhaust pipes and rear air diffusers; auto-fold side mirrors with LED signal indicators; dial pad drive mode selector; Valeo full LED headlights; rear LED lights with dynamic signals; Brown Italian Nappa leather seats; twilight full panoramic sunroof; and a wireless charging pad for Android and Apple.

At launch, the electric motor gives 225 Nm of torque at a speed of 1,000 rpm ensuring an instant restart of the engine. The 48V EMS battery which provides a maximum assistance of 10kw and 50Nm of torque is charged by the kinetic energy from braking.

Karima Okunola, Marketing Manager, Mikano Motors said: "The Azkarra SUV is a luxury SUV, with no corners being cut in terms of its manufacturing. From the design to the actual technology, it runs on, it sets it completely apart from any competition, especially in Nigeria. The Azkarra is the first of its kind; it is best in class for technology, best in class for premium features, best in class for the quality of the materials used in its production. The Azkarra is what we like to refer to as a premium mild hybrid car; this means that the car runs on a partly electrical and partly conventional fueling system. When the Azkarra is in motion, it is noticeably smoother, the driving is smoother, the engine and transition is smoother. And for us, the new Azkarra is indeed a game changer."

After the unveiling, members of the press, esteemed Geely customers, and auto lovers were treated to an impressive test drive. The motorcade of beautifully decorated Azkarra SUVs in all their colors took off from the Showroom in VI and made its way to the Mikano International Karamah Industrial City on the outskirts of Lagos. The 52-minutes journey caught the attention of other commuters on the highway who were altogether impressed by the off-road capabilities of the sleek vehicles.

The Geely Azkarra is available in white, red, silver, ash-grey, black, and blue colors.

By **Zion Rufus**

**S**uperior automotive company, Mikano Motors has launched the 'Geely Azkarra', a game changing mild hybrid luxury SUV from the stables of Geely Nigeria.

Aptly dubbed 'The Game Changer', the Geely Azkarra which is available in two distinct models, 'Geely Azkarra Pro Platinum' and the 'Geely Titanium', was unveiled at a ceremony held at the Geely Nigeria's flagship showroom in Victoria Island, Lagos on Saturday 9th April, 2022. The reliable and versatile SUV was tastefully designed to enhance driving experience for both the drivers and the passengers.

Commenting on the launch of the Azkarra in an interview, Ralph Haidar, General manager, Mikano Motors said: "Geely is the new era of products coming with the technology of Volvo and Mercedes Benz. We have been operating for more

than a year, with more than 1500 units sold in the market; the satisfaction rate we have is really impressive, and our golden rule in the business is to put ourselves in the place of our customers and then we do it right, because once you put yourself in the shoes of your customers you will definitely do it right. We decided to launch at this time because we believed this is the right time for Nigerians; our Nigerian customers deserve a decent product at a very affordable tag price. With climate, sustainability in our focus, we assure you that the fuel efficiency of the Geely Azkarra as well as its carbon emission are best in class."

Powered by an innovative 48V Electric Motor Synergy mild hybrid system, the new Geely Azkarra features a 360 degrees camera view and 3D mode for enhanced driving safety; turbo charged EU6 GDI + mild hybrid(co-developed with Volvo); 6-way power adjustable driver's seat; ambient lighting with 42



# Hyundai Santa Fe named Large SUV of the Year at British 2022 What Car? Awards



Hyundai's fast start to 2022 continues at pace with a third major awards success in January. The Hyundai Santa Fe has been hailed 'Large SUV of the Year' in the prestigious 2022 What Car? Car of the Year Awards. The What Car? judges also named the Hyundai i10 'Best Small Car for the City' and the Hyundai TUCSON 'Best Family SUV for Practicality' in the magazine's 'Best Buy' categories, in which Santa Fe also won 'Best Plug-in Hybrid for Big Families'.

The new Hyundai Santa Fe, provides ample seating for a family of seven, drew praise from the What Car? judges for a raft of improvements, which have elevated the elegantly styled, high-technology SUV to another level.

What Car? Editor, Steve Huntingford, said: "Hyundai has proven that small changes can make all the difference, with the addition of hybrid and plug-in hybrid power options turning this already good large SUV into a great one. Running costs are reduced and refinement improved. Plus, you still get a well-controlled ride, outstanding value for money and a nicely finished interior with seating for seven."

Offered with a range of highly efficient petrol engines that ensure impressively low running costs, the Hyundai i10 benefits from the same sophisticated technology and intelligent safety systems found on the marque's larger models. Backed by a five-year unlimited mileage warranty, like every Hyundai, the i10 is designed and engineered to meet whatever challenges the road throws at it, a fact that was clearly not lost on the What Car? road test team when putting the car through its paces.

What Car? Editor, Steve Huntingford, said: "Living in the urban sprawl demands specific attributes from a car. These include light controls to take the effort out

of manoeuvring, for example, as well as a peppy engine and a ride that's comfortable enough to soak up potholes with ease. And the Hyundai i10 excels in all these areas. However, don't go thinking that it's only good at low speeds – once the road opens up, it impresses with nicely weighted steering and plenty of grip."

Before being hailed, What Car? 'Best Family SUV for Practicality', the Hyundai TUCSON's industry accolades included Car Buyer 'Car of the Year', Auto Express 'Mid-Size SUV of the Year' and Scottish Car of the Year 'Best Family SUV', the Hyundai Tucson offers a broad range of cutting-edge petrol, mild hybrid, hybrid and plug-in-hybrid drivetrains, combined with, as What Car? highlighted, unmatched family appeal.

What Car? Editor, Steve Huntingford, said: "Growing families can breathe easy with the Hyundai Tucson, knowing that even in a field of outstanding rivals, none can come close to beating it for sheer family friendliness. There's simply masses of space inside, whether you're talking about how much room your passengers will have to stretch out, or how much you can fit into the boot. What's more, its rear seats recline if anyone fancies a snooze, or the backrests can fold down in a versatile 40/20/40 split."

Hyundai's blind spot detection technology, which effectively endows the driver with an additional pair of eyes by alerting them to vehicle's hidden in the wing mirror's 'blind spot,' took the runner-up spot in the What Car? 'Innovation' category. Hyundai's success at the 2022 What Car? Car of the Year Awards continues a remarkable start to the new year for the brand, with the Hyundai IONIQ 5 Named 'Car of the Year' by Company Car and Van and overall winner in the 2022 Company Car Today CCT 100 Awards earlier in January.

Ashley Andrew, Managing Director of Hyundai Motor UK, said: "Hyundai's success in the 2022 What Car? Car of the Year Awards is especially gratifying as it highlights the appeal of our vehicles, from our smallest car, the i10, to our largest SUV, the Hyundai Santa Fe. It really reinforces the strength of our current range which offers customers a wide range of choice to suit their individual needs."

# PAN Nigeria ditches Peugeot for Higer and Cherry

By Janet Rojumbokan



PAN, leading automaker in Nigeria, has ditched Peugeot following a report of the sale of its Kaduna State-based factory. The automaker, however, refuted the claim that it has been bought over. Meanwhile, it emphasised that it has only ceased to be an assembler of Peugeot vehicles.

PAN added that its factory has evolved as a multi brand assembler of reputable international brands.

Pan Nigeria, which recently named Taiwo Oluleye as its acting managing director, said it would be rolling out new vehicle models designed to meet the high expectations of its target market.

After about four decades of running the Peugeot assembly plant, PAN announced it has opted for two Chinese brands, CHERY AND HIGER.

"PAN has already signed deals with leading Chinese companies, Chery Automobile and Higer bus company, which specialise in the production of passenger cars and commercial vehicles.

"Cherry is a leading manufacturer of sport utility vehicles and sedans, while Higer is a reputable producer of mini and city buses," the automaker said in a statement.

"We have a wide range of exciting new products ranging from pickups, buses, sedans, Suvs, and ambulances which will be produced in our plant to serve the needs of the important segments," the statement added.

PAN stated that the assembly of multiple brands at its plant would increase capacity utilisation, create new jobs, and promote local content development.

# Cannes Lions to present The Lion of St. Mark, the Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award, to Colleen DeCourcy



**C**annes Lions has today announced Colleen DeCourcy as the recipient of this year's Lion of St. Mark. The award will be presented to DeCourcy for a lifetime of service to creativity in communications at the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity which takes place 20-24 June 2022, in Cannes, France.

Colleen DeCourcy, former Chief Creative Officer and President of Wieden+Kennedy, is one of the creative industry's most inspiring leaders. A creative trailblazer, DeCourcy first joined Wieden+Kennedy as global executive creative director in 2013 and announced her retirement from the agency and the advertising industry in 2021. DeCourcy has spent her career leading innovative companies and advocating for a more equitable industry. She was named one of Fast Company magazine's Most Creative People in Business, honoured with the Fearless Voices award by the organisation She Runs It, and in 2019 was selected as the creative leader of the decade by AdWeek magazine.

Since 2013, Wieden+Kennedy and its network of global offices has amassed 149 Lions at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, one of W+K's most successful eras. This includes five Grands Prix: four for W+K's seminal creative work with Nike, including the epic 'Nothing Beats a Londoner' campaign by Wieden+Kennedy London, winning the inaugural Social & Influencer Lions Grand

Prix in 2018; and in 2020/21 Nike's lauded 'You Can't Stop Us' by Wieden+Kennedy Portland, was awarded a highly coveted Film Lions Grand Prix.

Alongside receiving the Lion of St. Mark in 2022, DeCourcy will represent the Festival as Jury President for Glass: The Lion for Change, the award that celebrates culture-shifting creativity. At previous festivals, she has stood as the Titanium Lions Jury President (2019), Jury President for the now-retired Cyber Lions (2017), as well as serving on both the Titanium Lions jury and the Cyber Lions jury across multiple years.

Commenting on receiving the Lion of St. Mark, Colleen DeCourcy, says: "I'm drawn to the fact that creativity – regardless of who or where it comes from – can change this industry and our world. If I'm proud of anything, it's that I've been able to create space for people to unlock their own creative potential, showing there is room for all of us here."

Susie Walker, VP Awards & Insights, LIONS, commented: "We're thrilled that Colleen DeCourcy will be honored with this year's Lion of St. Mark. A creative pioneer, she has advocated for parity in the industry throughout her influential career, demonstrating creativity as a driver for change. We would also like to thank Colleen for bringing her creative expertise to one of the festival's most vital awards, Glass: The Lion for Change, as Jury President this year."

Philip Thomas, Chairman, LIONS, commented: "Colleen DeCourcy is not only a hugely influential creative leader, she has been vital to the Lions, bringing her immense creative prowess to the jury rooms and Festival stages, over many years. Under Colleen's creative leadership, Wieden+Kennedy has delivered brave, boundary-breaking, multi-Lion-winning work. Her creativity has truly inspired the global industry to raise the creative bar. We're absolutely delighted to present Colleen DeCourcy with the Lion of St. Mark at the Festival."

Colleen DeCourcy, will be honoured with the Lion of St. Mark at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, which runs from 20-24 June, in Cannes, France.



## Glo hires Toni Kan as Head of Public Relations

**T**elecommunications company, Glo has appointed renowned author and public relations expert, Anthony Kan Onwodi as Head of Public Relations.

Popularly known as Toni Kan, the award-winning wordsmith who kicked off his career as a journalist and editor, can boast of over two decades of experience spanning banking and finance, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals and government amongst others.

With a proven knowledge of corporate relations and communications, business strategy, and thought leadership, Kan has served and extensively managed the PR accounts of big companies including Seplat Petroleum, GE Nigeria, Emzor Pharmaceutical, Resource Intermediaries, Aart of Life Foundation, Shell/LIMGE project, as well as content provision for dstv.com Nigeria and Ghana.

Also worthy of note, Toni Kan handled PR for the dual listing of Seplat Petroleum on the NSE and LSE, and launched the Visafone Brand. Within 6 months, the Visafone Brand won the "Telecom Brand of the Year".

He is an author of over 20 books and short stories including Nights of a Creaking Bed which was noted for exploring themes on African sexuality. He was the winner of the NDDC/Ken Saro Wiwa literature prize, awarded by the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), in 2009.

Toni Kan studied English literature at the University of Jos and earned an M.A in English literature at the University of Lagos in 1999, graduating at the top of his class.



# Dangote Sugar appoints Oscar Mbeche as Group Chief Financial Officer



**D**angote Sugar Refinery Plc. has appointed Oscar Mbeche as its new Group Chief Financial Officer. Mbeche in his new assignment is expected to execute the company's finance strategy in support of its overall business plan and strategic directions.

He is an astute Finance Executive, a qualified Accountant, Internal Auditor and Management Consultant. He holds an MBA from the prestigious University of Oxford and has over 30 years work experience across FMCGs (Manufacturing and Distribution), Hi-Tech, Accounting and Auditing, Oil & Gas, and Banking & Finance.

His international experience includes having worked in or managed projects in 25 EMEA countries including Nigeria, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. He is commercially oriented and has commendable track record in Governance, Integrated Risk management, Compliance, Internal Audit, and Process Optimization.

The financial expert was formally the Group CFO for Philia Group (Geneva, Dubai and Singapore) and was responsible for the Group's Finance Department in eleven countries. He brings to Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc his wealth of experience in all aspects of Financial Management, Fund Raising, Corporate Finance, Trade Finance and Financial Reporting.

# Glover appoints Layode as CEO



**L**eading digital assets marketplace, Glover has appointed Damilola Layode as its Chief Executive Officer.

Prior to his new appointment, Layode whose career journey spans marketing communications, business development, digital strategy, and transformation has served extensively as Head of Strategy and Partnership at Patricia Technologies, Manager, Growth, and Marketing at OPay, and Snr. Partnership Manager at Big Cabal Media amongst other techs and startup companies.

Commenting on his appointment, Layode said: "Joining Glover is an exciting opportunity for me career-wise. At a time when the world is experiencing the

emergence of this new asset class, it's great to be in a position where I can champion conversations around this innovative means of storing and exchanging value. The pioneering spirit within the organization is a value I share and the mission to bring financial opportunities to Africans through product offerings that aid in seamless customer experience in the e-commerce and fintech space is one that I buy into completely. Personally, my mission is to expand growth across the business, consolidating the company's gains as a market leader in the SSA region, while transitioning it to a globally revered marketplace for digital assets."

Launched in 2021, Glover is a digital assets marketplace that was inspired to facilitate the buying and selling of GiftCards, conversion of excess Airtime to Cash, the ease of payment for utility bills through its Refill services, in addition to a one-stop-shop for E-tickets. Overall, Glover is keen on creating a financial ecosystem that propels personal and business growth through the creation of financial services that promote ease, and convenience. The company has gained a foothold as one of the fastest-growing startups in Africa. It currently operates out of Lagos, Nigeria, with a presence in Ghana, and plans to expand across the entire continent.

# Kevin Johnson steps down as Starbucks CEO

**K**evin Johnson is retiring from his post as CEO of Starbucks next month after spending five years in the saddle and will continue to serve as a Starbucks partner (employee) and special consultant to the company and Board of Directors through September. Johnson, who has served on the Starbucks Board of Directors since 2009, joined the Starbucks leadership team in 2015 as president and chief operating officer. In 2017, Johnson was named President and Chief Executive Officer, succeeding founder Schultz. He has been serving as CEO since 2017, when Howard Shultz, Founder, Starbucks left the company to pursue a political ambition of challenging former President Donald

Trump's reelection by running as an independent candidate.

Johnson will be succeeded by Howard Schultz the man from whom he took the baton in 2017 Starbucks Board of Directors has been engaged in continuous CEO succession planning, assisted by Russell Reynolds Associates, and hopes to e through with the selection process by the Fall. Meanwhile, to ensure seamless stewardship of the company until a permanent successor is named, the Board has appointed Howard Schultz as interim Chief Executive Officer, effective April 4, 2022. Schultz will also rejoin the company's Board of Directors.

"On behalf of the entire Board, I want

to express our sincerest thanks to Kevin for his leadership of Starbucks. Kevin and the entire executive team stepped up to the challenge of the pandemic and navigated one of the most difficult periods in modern history. The economic certainty provided to partners during the early months of the COVID shut down, as well as during mandatory quarantines, underscores our core values and will be an enduring legacy for the company. During Kevin's tenure, Starbucks scaled an industry-leading digital offering spanning nearly 45 million Starbucks Rewards members in the U.S. and China," said Melody Hobson, Independent Starbucks Board of Directors' chair.

Johnson will be remembered for his People Positive, Planet Positive, and Profit Positive framework that provided a better world for Starbucks partners, farmers, customers, and the communities it serves. He expanded the company's reach through the Global Coffee Alliance with Nestlé, which now operates in nearly 80 markets, and established and executed the Growth at Scale agenda that significantly increased shareholder value.

Commenting on his retirement, Johnson said: "A year ago, I signaled to the Board that as the global pandemic neared an end, I would be considering retirement from Starbucks. I feel this is a natural bookend to my 13 years with the company. As I make this transition, we are very fortunate to have a founder who is able to step in on an interim basis, giving the Board time to further explore potential candidates and make the right long-term succession decision for the company," said Kevin Johnson. "I have enjoyed every minute of the job and am proud of what we have achieved together. It has been an honor to serve the 400,000 Starbucks green apron partners around the world and I want to thank them for their service, resilience, and optimism."

As interim CEO, Schultz will focus on setting an innovation framework, while also coaching and onboarding the next permanent CEO of Starbucks. "Our success is not an entitlement. We must continue to earn the trust of our people and our customers every day by how we deliver the Starbucks Experience, how we treat each other, and how we act as responsible community members and corporate citizens. With the backdrop of COVID recovery and global unrest, it is critical we set the table for a courageous reimagining and reinvention of the future Starbucks experience for our partners and customers," commented Schultz.

# Omnicom taps Kochenash as CEO, eCommerce

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**



**G**lobal leader in marketing communications, Omnicom Group has appointed Frank Kochenash as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), eCommerce Omnicom to lead, strengthen and accelerate the Group's eCommerce offering and unlock client growth.

Kochenash will work across Omnicom's networks and practice areas, advancing the Group's eCommerce strategy and product offering. He will report to Sophie Daranyi, CEO of Omnicom Commerce Group, and work closely with the media, commerce and precision marketing teams.

Commenting on the appointment, John Wren, Chairman and CEO of Omnicom Group stated that Frank's appointment reflects our continued focus on eCommerce innovation and investment to deliver holistic retail investment strategies that integrate brand demand with product conversion for our clients.

Most recently Kochenash was president, eRetail for the North America region at WPP's Wunderman Thompson.

He is a senior executive with an exemplary track record of planning, launching, and growing key business units for digital and retail industry leaders. Able to drive teams past obstacles and capitalize on windows of market opportunity via confident leadership, effective goal-setting, and the application of bold performance management practices. Trusted throughout career by CxO and senior leadership teams to hold responsibility for mission-critical marketing, product development, operational improvement, and organizational change initiatives.

His areas of expertise include: Digital marketing, Performance marketing, Digital technology, product management, Profit/Loss responsibility, High-performance team building and leadership, E-commerce, International expansion, Outsourcing and off-shoring operations, Market research and customer insights, Analytics and Strategic planning visioning and goal-setting.

"I'm very excited to start my new role at Omnicom as CEO, eCommerce, Omnicom. There's a strong vision and a fantastic team here. I'm thrilled to be a part of it and eager to start working with Sophie, Flo, and the whole Omnicom team to grow eCommerce," said Kochenash.



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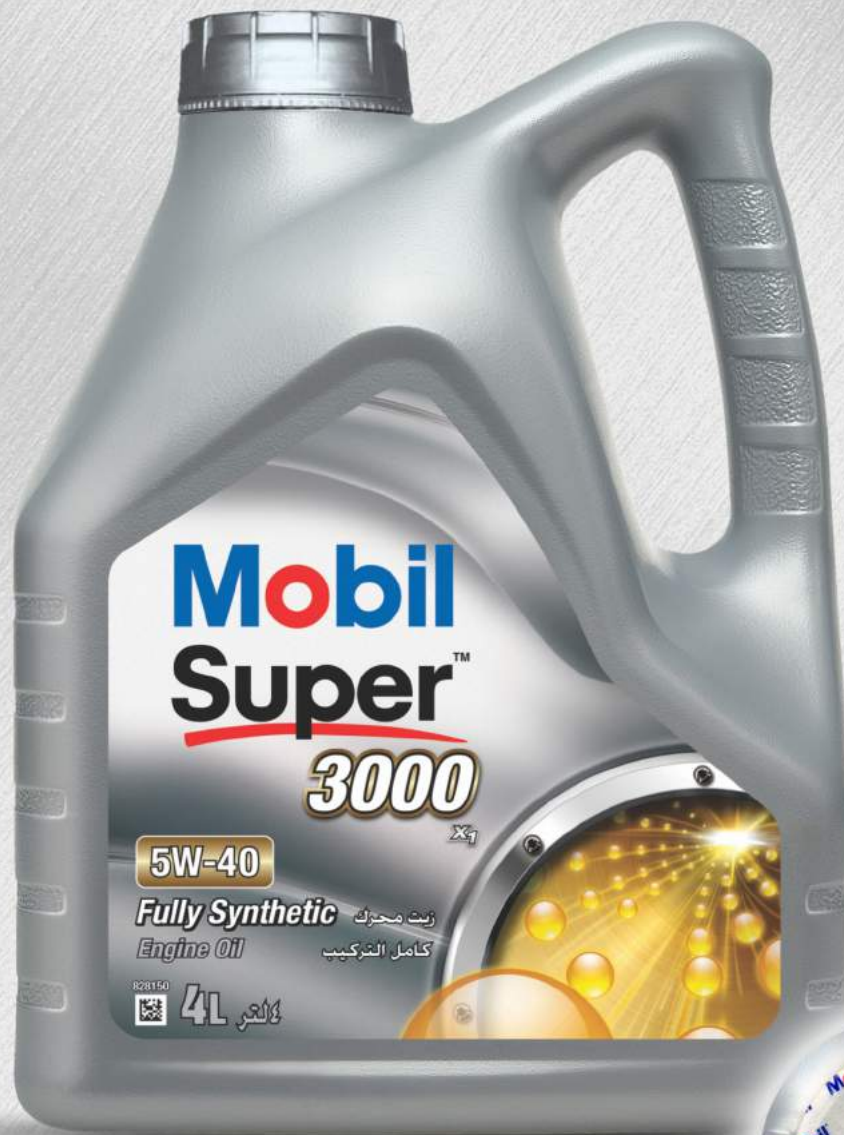
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