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Issue 78, August/September 2022

N2000 US\$ 6.5

ISSN 1597-1201

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MARKETING EDGE historical trajectory

By **Temitope Akanle**

A brand is said to be a collection of beliefs, associations, narratives and relationships that collectively influences a consumer's decision to select one product or service over another.

For 19 years and still counting, **MARKETING EDGE**, Nigeria's foremost brand and marketing publication as a brand, has succeeded in advancing brand awareness and relationships, while breaking new grounds. In the realms of advertising and marketing journalism, **MARKETING EDGE**, which debuted in 2003, has since risen to prominence through its mantra of "Promoting the Brand Idea."

In the cutthroat Nigerian media landscape, **MARKETING EDGE** does not only break industry news, but also exercises authority over all leads, while maintaining the crown of being Nigeria's leading authoritative brand and an award winning marketing magazine.

Founded by John Ajayi, an ace journalist with over 30 years' experience, who was also a trailblazer on the advertising and marketing beat where he established his illustrious reputation as an authority in covering the multibillion Naira marketing communications industry, **MARKETING EDGE** was established out of a deep commitment to Nigeria's development of the marketing communications sub-sector.

Ajayi, an English Language graduate of the University of Lagos and a master's degree holder from the same university, has worked for some of Nigeria's most prestigious media outlets, including *TheNEWS* magazine, *THISDAY* newspaper, and *The Comet*.

Driven by the belief, that the process of building a brand entails the continuous communication of a story through visual imagery and



consistent messaging across many platforms and media, **MARKETING EDGE** has built, and is building, multiple platforms to increase client awareness of products and services and to foster relationships with them. The organization has developed multi-media channel platforms that deliver great value enhancements and exceptional product offerings. These media channels include **MARKETING EDGE** publications (print), **MARKETING EDGE** on TV, **MARKETING EDGE** Online, **MARKETING EDGE** Daily Newsletter, and some of the daily most cutting-edge news headlines on LED billboards.

In retrospect, **MARKETING EDGE** on TV was launched in 2018 with the express purpose of advancing brands and marketing reports and also providing a kaleidoscope of events and advancements in the Nigerian IMC industry. Since its commencement, the program has regularly featured the best competitors, gladiators, and professionals in Nigeria's competitive brand management industry. It has consistently provided businesses and brand owners with excellent possibilities to engage with their target market in an effort to stay top-of-mind and win brand loyalty and customers.

A special analytical news feature section called "Brand in Focus" is included in the half-hour television program, which is known for featuring high calibre industry celebrities discussing industry-related

topics. Mr. Ajayi had said in an interview that, "MARKETING EDGE on TV's mission is to provide professionals from across the marketing, advertising and media communities with the creative firepower they need to attract and delight consumers".

Following this launch was the re-launch of the **MARKETING EDGE** website in 2020. Due to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic and the realities of the digital age, organizations all over the world have had to alter their operating structures and in order to show how this brand serves this objective, **MARKETING EDGE** revamped its website in line with its vision of running a world-class business in a post-digital era. All of these initiatives were created with the intention to advance its brand awareness while breaking news in the current landscape of brand journalism, which includes the marketing and advertising platforms.

What's more, as part of his continued pursuit of excellence, **MARKETING EDGE** created the National Marketing Stakeholders Summit and the Brand and Advertising Excellence Awards in 2013. The initiative serves as a platform for honouring outstanding individuals and corporate organizations in the creative field as well as creating an atmosphere for stakeholder engagement to help the IMC sector move forward. The program, a two-in-one industry initiative, is created

with the dual goals of advancing marketing and advertising skills while promoting the brand idea.

The **MARKETING EDGE** Brands and Advertising Excellence Award has established itself as a seminal event in Nigeria's IMC sector because it offers a singular forum for vigorous intellectual discussion and recognizes practitioners for their dedication to excellence in branding and marketing.

The organization has been hosting and still hosts annually and quarterly, very significant marketing conferences that spark new dialogues on trends in marketing management and the management of marketing businesses. There are, as well, fundamental selections of themes that are relevant to the problems that the market is currently facing and to all the responsibilities that marketing executives or CEOs must currently complete.

The annual and quarterly summits feature panels of very intelligent industry thought leaders and experts who have been tried and trusted to provide the correct compass in charting highly enlightened routes for players in the marketing services business. The forum also offers a place for people to interact and share ideas for potential solutions, giving brand owners and consumers a chance to talk face-to-face and improve the mutually beneficial nature of their respective businesses, ultimately leading to a win-win situation.

As part of Corporate Social Responsibility, **MARKETING EDGE** has been supporting and reaching out to orphans in Lagos State consistently for ten years during the Christmas seasons. Many orphans benefit from this significant and admirable effort, which has helped keep hope alive in the lives of the less privileged in the society.

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been expanding tremendously across markets, sectors and geographies. Through a multichannel platform that includes Digital (online), Television, Print, LED (Digital Out-of-Home), etc., the magazine keeps dispersing exclusive reports on brands, marketing, and advertising in Nigeria and throughout the globe and is not prepared to relent.

The exemplary MARKETING EDGE Awards is gearing up for its 10th anniversary celebrations slated for 16th September, 2022 at the exquisite Harbor Point Hall in Victoria Island, Lagos.

The glamorous event will host the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu as the Award Keynote Speaker, who will address professionals in the marketing communications industry; and Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, who will grace the event as the Special Guest of Honour.

Last year, Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu was conferred with the honour of "Outstanding Political Brand Icon of the Year" at the MARKETING EDGE Awards of excellence 2021. Similarly, Ekiti State Governor, John Kayode Fayemi was also honoured as the Outstanding Political Brand Personality of the Decade.

This year, the summit will be led by an impressive selection of iconic personalities, including Guest Speaker, Tolulope Adedeji, Marketing Director, ABInbev, West Africa; Emeka Chris Okeke, Group MD/CEO, MediaFuse Dentsu International and Director of Dentsu Ghana; Ozone Mbanefo, MD/CEO @02 Academy, Bamigbaiye Omotola, Marketing Director, Pladis Global (McVitie's); Tunji Adeyinka, MD Connect Marketing Services, Franklin Ozekhome, CEO & Head of Futures, Identity Africa, Tink Africa & Bschoo, Ralph Idu, CEO Poke Media, Vytautas Paukstys, CEO Eskimi, Daniel Gyefour, Regional Head of Marketing Africa, PZ Cussons, amongst others.

Lagos Ehingbeti summit holds in October

By Abimbola Mohammed



Plans are underway by the Lagos State government to organize the 2022 Ehingbeti Economic Summit on 11 and 12 October, 2022. The summit will be attended by corporate players, public service officials and trade missions, and will also launch a 30-year Development Plan for the state.

The theme for this year's Ehingbeti summit is: "Lagos 2022-2052: Charting the Paths to Sustainable Socioeconomic Growth, The Future is a Hope We all Have."

Recall that the Ehingbeti summit was earlier scheduled to be held in August, but has now been rescheduled to hold on October 11 and 12, 2022.

The plans were made known by Sam Egube, Commissioner, Lagos State Ministry of Economic Planning & Budget during the pre-summit stakeholders' engagement at Eko Hotel and Suite, Lagos.

Egube noted that the Lagos Development Plan (LSDP) 2022-2052, which would be launched at the Summit, will be an all-encompassing master

plan that clearly articulates initiatives that will drive Lagos' ambition to become Africa's Model Mega City, a Global, Economic and Financial Hub that is safe, secure, functional and productive.

According to him, the Lagos Economic Summit (EHINGBETI) dates back to 2000, borne out of the strong desire by the state government to accelerate economic growth and development of Lagos, and is now firmly established as a credible forum for the stimulation of economic growth in Lagos State.

He added that, from its early stages, the Summit has been an avenue for the private sector to evaluate the implementation of key initiatives that were agreed as resolutions at the various summits.

He said the 2022 Summit will seek to engage with high-powered speakers and thought leaders on the strategic dimensions and focus areas of the LSDP 2052 and provide opportunities for engagement with the audience to formally launch the LSDP 2052.

Egube said this year's event will encapsulate Lagos' vision to become Africa's Model Mega City, a global, economic and financial hub that is safe, secure, functional and productive, and will dovetail into the LSDP's strategic dimensions and objectives of making Lagos the city of first choice to live in.

Other expectations include a clear common roadmap for implementation of the LSDP 2052, including the buy-in from key private sector stakeholders in supporting the plan and its objectives, official launch of the LSDP 2052 by unveiling it to the public and engaging a wide audience on the plan's vision, strategic dimensions and objectives.

The Lagos State government, he said, has implemented 193 out of 206 resolutions from Ehingbeti since its inception, adding that, over the last 20 years, recommendations from Ehingbeti have helped the state government to focus on areas that concern the citizens, investors, and businesses with positive results achieved.

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NIPR inducts new Fellows at 2022 AGM

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**



The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) has inducted new fellows at the 2022 Annual General Meeting that was held recently at the International Conference Centre, Abuja.

Some of the inductees are Comfort Nwankwo, chairman NIPR Lagos State Chapter; Maryam Sanusi, Chairman NIPR FCT Chapter; Reuben Muoka, Director, Public Affairs Nigerian Communications Commission; Omoniyi Ibiatan, Head Media Relations Management at Nigerian

Communications Commission; Hadiza Umar, Head of Corporate Affairs and External Relations at the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA); Edward Adebajo, GMD/CEO at Publics Limited & Public Affairs; Azuka Ogugua, a Deputy Director in the Public Enlightenment & Education Department of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC); Adelabu ADEYEMI-ADEJOLU, immediate past Ekiti State Chapter Chairman;

Eddy Megwa, NYSC Director, Press and Public Relations; Emeka Mgbemena, Deputy Director, Press and Public Relations; and Akinwumi Ricketts, Chairman, Board of Directors, Nigerian Ports Authority, amongst others.

Speaking at the AGM after the investiture, the NIPR President noted that new Fellows of the Institute were selected after a rigorous screening exercise of candidates aspiring for the Fellowship of the Institute by the Fellowship Advisory Committee.

“In addition to the regular upgrade, the Institute had opened a special membership upgrade window “in response to the yearnings of members, to facilitate the processing of the upgrade of NIPR members who had lost precedence or proper categorization due to circumstances beyond their control,” he said.

Commenting on the induction, Omoniyi Ibiatan said: “I consider it a privilege to be inducted along with my boss, Reuben Muoka, Director

Public Affairs, Nigerian Communications Commission.”

According to him, the fellowship of NIPR is coveted and so it’s natural for every member of NIPR to have an eye on being a member of the Board of Fellows. “By the spirit and letters of NIPR Bye-Law No.4 on Election of Fellows of the Institute, the highest membership grade in the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) is the grade of Fellow.

“The basis for NIPR’s being is to register members, set parameters of knowledge to acquire to qualify to practice, regulate the practice and development of the PR profession as well as monitor professional conducts.

“I consider it an honour and a privilege to be inducted to the top echelon of the PR profession in Nigeria,” he said.

Also, Edward Adebajo said: “In addition to my other professional qualifications, I will now have the honour and privilege of being addressed as a Fellow.”

Eat’N’Go marks 10th anniversary, shares outlook

By **Zion Rufus**

Nigeria’s leading fast-food franchise, Eat’N’Go has concluded its 10th anniversary celebrations as it rolls out fresh projections in terms of growth, expansion plans, innovations, and market penetration pan-Africa.

The celebrations featured moments of thrill and laughter as the corporate team walked guests and members of press down the memory lane of the past decade.

Speaking to **MARKETING EDGE** in an interview on some of the major wins and challenges of the past 10 years, CEO Eat’N’Go Limited, Patrick McMichael explained that although there were different shocks that could naturally have crumbled most companies and altered their growth stories, Eat’N’Go is proudly standing



and forging ahead.

He said: “The wins are that we are still here and we are still growing in 2022. Even in our worst times we are still growing, and that growth is coming because there is customer demand; customers like our products. We are a fun business. When things are good, we are there and it’s fun. When things are bad, we are there, and it’s fun. The customers are

rewarding the good services provided by our teams across our different stores by allowing us to grow, and that is exciting for us.”

Eat’N’Go, the master franchisee for the Domino’s Pizza, Cold Stone Creamery, and Pinkberry Gourmet Frozen Yoghurt brands has remained resilient in its focus and commitment to continually deliver high-quality food and services to Nigerians.

Before the company stepped into Nigeria in 2012, the idea of pizza was still largely a foreign concept and a “treat for the rich”. However, since 2012, Eat’N’Go has now expanded to a total number of 190 outlets pan-Nigeria. The fast-food chain prides itself as a company that puts its customers first, as it sticks with values that favour its customers, localizes its menu, and also gives back to the

community.

Patrick continued: “We have become more effective as an organisation; we use technology better. The bigger that we get, the more the ability we have to embrace more technology. We will continue to evolve our image and innovate our products at the same time, and as well expand across Nigeria. The business that we were in 2012, is not what we are this 2022, and it is definitely not what we will be in 2032.”

Eat’N’Go commenced operations in August 2012 with the opening of its Saka Tinubu store with the brands Domino’s Pizza and Cold Stone creamery, which received instant validation from the market. It has since expanded to several regions across the country, including Port Harcourt, Abuja, Enugu, Ilorin, Akure and Ibadan.

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Lagos Chamber appoints MARKETING EDGE as agent for Trade Fair

By Oghale Mafuru

The Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, LCCI, organizers of the annual Lagos International Trade Fair and the annual Information Communication Technology and Telecommunication, ICTEL has signed a Memorandum of Understanding, MoU with MARKETING EDG, leading brand-centric, marketing and advertising company as marketing agent for its annual events.

According to the MOU signed by Mr. Taiwo Seriki, Director, Trade Promotion Lagos Chambers of Commerce and Industry and John Ajayi, Publisher/ CEO of MARKETING EDGE Group, the pact is effective from 2022 to 2024 within which

MARKETING EDGE will be responsible for all its marketing activities ahead of the annual events.

It reads: "The LCCI has considered and approved the appointment of MARKETING EDGE as marketing agent to source for exhibitors, sponsors, and partners for LTTE"

MARKETING EDGE, a pioneer marketing and advertising company has over its almost two decades of existence has continued to expand the frontiers of the marketing industry in Nigeria in line with its vision of promoting the brand idea. As an iconic brand, it has led the path for disruption, innovation

and creative excellence in the Nigerian marketing and advertising eco-system.

Recall that the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), had announced that it will hold the 8th edition of the Information, Communication, Technology, and Telecommunications (ICTEL) Expo on the 31st August and Thursday 1st September, 2022.

The event, which will be hybrid and will have the theme, "Ensuring efficient digital infrastructure in Nigeria" will take place at the Muson Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

Responding on his company's appointment for the

most popular and premium Lagos Chamber, the publisher said he is most delighted to partner with the chamber on its most popular yearly trade fair which usually attracts a galaxy of who is who in the Nigerian Corporate community. He added that the appointment has again learnt credence to the market leadership of the MARKETING EDGE which has become renowned as the business destination of first choice whenever marketing and advertising issues are concerned.

His words on the appointment: "For us at MARKETING EDGE, we are greatly delighted at this appointment as this again provides us with a veritable platform for demonstrating our skills and competence."

"Besides, we see this singular opportunity as a great honour to show the world our market leadership with unrivaled skills and competence. We thank the board and management of LCCI for this great honour and privilege," Ajayi disclosed.

Spectranet Launches Voice Over LTE (VOLTE) with WiTel Desk Phones



In line with its tag line "Do More", Spectranet, the WiFi Network, recently launched another innovative service - Voice Over LTE, the latest in voice technology with WiTel desk phones, specially designed to provide both Voice and Data Connectivity.

During the product launch at Spectranet's Ikeja Head Office, this latest product offering - Spectranet WiTel, was described as the All in One Magic Box - a Portable Wireless Desk Phone acting as an internet modem and a desk phone.

During the demonstration of the product, Mr. Nommy

Paul, CTO at Spectranet Limited, mentioned that one of the most significant features of the VOLTE-powered WiTel desk phone is the distinct high-definition voice call. "The most noticeable benefit consumers will experience with WiTel is an improved voice quality during calls made from Spectranet WITEL Desk Phone to other networks".

Each WiTel desk phone comes with a Dedicated 7-digit landline number unique to its owner. The phone has a host of other features like - Quick dial facility for kids, an Internet connection for up to 10 devices, an Inbuilt battery with

up to 4 hours standby time and a Phone book that can store up to 800 contacts.

WiTel Desk Phones will benefit families with kids and the elderly at home. Asides from providing WiFi connectivity to the entire family, the desk phone will enable them to make calls effortlessly using the Quick Dial facility.

The unique landline line number will enable small and medium businesses like restaurants, beauty salons, and advertising agencies and traders to publish this number as a permanent number for customers to call. While also using the inbuilt internet modem to provide internet connectivity for their staff

Speaking during the launch of WiTel, Mr. Ajay

Awasthi, Chief Executive Officer of Spectranet, said that the launch of WiTel is a significant step for the company, as the introduction of the product is the first of its kind in the Nigerian market.

"We expect WiTel to enable various businesses to create an identity for themselves with the unique seven (7) digit landline number and help increase customer call-ins."

He added that WiTel is a must-own and a go-to gadget for families with working parents and younger kids at home. This will help them stay connected to the kids when they are back home from school.

He concluded that the combination of voice and data in one device is now the new normal, and this will be of great advantage to subscribers who intend to reduce call and data costs for their homes and businesses.

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OAAN proposes billboards as collateral

By Felicia Nwosu



The Out-of-Home Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) has made known its intention to propose to the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, to approve the use of billboards as collateral to enable easy financial access to its members in the execution of projects.

Emmanuel Ajufo, President of the Association made this revelation during the Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM), themed: 'OOH Business and Nigerian Regulatory Laws' held in Lagos. The two-term president said his Association will be seeking a positive nod from the apex bank to approve members'

billboards as collateral to help the admen fast-track business transactions in a much easier procedure.

Ajufo said OAAN is canvassing and requesting that CBN grants its members the consideration

of accepting billboards as collateral from practitioners who want to access funds to further business growth.

"We are therefore going to pursue the recognition by the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, to use our billboards as collateral. As an Association, we will continue to push for things that will bring sustainable growth to the industry and out-of-home advertising business."

The AGM, which provided an opportunity for the executive to give the account of the stewardship of their second tenure to members also served as an avenue to rub minds with relevant external stakeholders

and to exchange views with members while sharing their thoughts on business matters

"Our engagements with our major stakeholders are beginning to yield fruits but it will seem that we still have a long way to go. We have enjoyed a good relationship with our ARCON, regulator, we still count on your support as the challenges facing us can only be fully contained with a united HASG.

According to him, huge progress has been recorded as a result of various engagements and partnerships with signage agencies while re-emphasising the need for continuous engagement for further consolidation that will project both parties as partners in progress.

"While we do not have anything against the signage agencies earning income from their services to us, we should not be seen as the State Government's major source of IGR after all. We believe that Signage Agencies should rather focus on how to ensure sustainable growth of the industry.

The President reaffirmed LASAA's initial position and promise when it was launched, which was to elevate hoardings to the status of real estate where we can use our billboards as collateral to source for funds, "but several years, after, there was a policy summersaults which made this laudable initiative impossible to realise."

Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, Registrar, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, now, Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, ARCON, while delivering his goodwill message, assured OAAN members of the support and the continuous efforts to develop a framework that will help the advertising business in the country.

"However, notwithstanding the challenges they are going through as a sector, they should keep pushing as the Council will continue to support them by involving policies that will sustain their growth as well as protect their investment.

Recalling the onslaught by signage agencies, he said on the Kaduna issue, the State Signage agency has agreed to a meeting, "OAAN leadership has agreed to a meeting and as the regulator, we are facilitating the meeting and I am sure if the three of us sit, we can look at the ways of ensuring that we resolve the issue without resulting to court."

Budweiser, others lead Premier League sponsors

The English Premier League is set to kick off its 2022/23 season with Budweiser headlining the competition as the Official Beer Sponsor in a global multi-year sponsorship.

The Premier League season will begin this Friday 5th August 2022 when Crystal Palace hosts Arsenal and will end on Sunday May 28, 2023. The game starts about a week earlier than initially slated due to the 2022 World Cup which takes place in November and

December in Qatar.

The Premier League will take more than a month off for the World Cup starting in mid-November, and resume on December 26 after the World Cup final.

Earlier, The Premier League and Budweiser had announced the continuation of their "exciting" partnership.

Commenting on the partnership, the AB InBev beer brand had said: "As a brand that celebrates and supports the pursuit of dreams, Budweiser

has nothing but admiration for football fans, who spend a lifetime in pursuit of glory, no matter what. And because of that, it proudly sponsors the Premier League. Budweiser's mission is to recognize and reward the contribution fans make to football. To inspire them to never stop dreaming. Because when fans find the fortitude to keep dreaming, it gives the players and the world something bigger to play for."

The 2022-23 Premier League will be the 31st season

of the Premier League, and the 124th season of top-flight English football overall.



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Babaeko lauds Preetesh for award inclusivity

By **Oghale Mafuru**

Following the visit of the Chief Executive Officer of the Loeries award, Preetesh Sewraj to Nigeria for the 'Loeries Nigeria Forum', the President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, AAAN, Steve Babaeko has extolled the leadership of the award for facilitating camaraderie and participation of other countries in Africa.

Speaking to **MARKETING EDGE**, the president stated that the AAAN will work assiduously with the award executive board to drive creative excellence in Africa. He, therefore, called for synergy among stakeholders to enhance the value of the award on the continent and globally.

He said: "A shout out to the CEO of Loeries, Preetesh. I mean before he came on board, everybody knew I was a vocal critic of the Loeries. The way they existed before, they were not ready for any kind of Pan- African collaboration. They still saw themselves as a South African award but with Preetesh on board, I think he has been deliberate in cultivating the rest of Africa which is why he is getting the warm handshake from across the Niger, from us".

The AAAN boss who decried the insufficient representation of Africans at the Cannes awards maintained that the continent must build a local award that will have global relevance, acceptance, and recognition noting that at the Cannes awards, the cultural differences limit the chances of Africans clinching the prestigious award.

"Let's build our own local



and continental awards that will be credible on a global scale as well so that the people who really understand the language of our creativity will be at the table to judge the award. You can do any creative stuff from an African point of view, if it goes to Cannes, there is only a sprinkle of black faces in the room where they will be judging the award so they don't understand the language of our creativity.

According to him, understanding the cultural nuances is vital to the effective assessment of creative works as well as being judged credibly.

"They don't understand the code or the cultural nuances driving the creativity. There

is no way we can win. It is not a fair contest. That is why we say instead of competing with each other, let's collaborate and uplift the value of our awards on the continent and that is what we are doing with Loeries" he stressed.

Recall that Preetesh Sewraj was hosted alongside other industry stalwarts at the prestigious Radisson Blu Hotel, Lagos for the Loeries Nigeria Forum, where the focus was to inspire deep creative thinking among practitioners to reposition the advertising ecosystem for growth.

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INTERSWITCH COMMENCES INTERNSHIP TRAINING

Interswitch, the broad network and robust payments platform have been instrumental to the development of the Nigerian payments ecosystem and provide Interswitch with credibility to expand across Africa has commenced the Interswitch Academy to give fresh graduates and young professionals the workplace experience of their desire.

The latest Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative from the company has been in the works for a while but kept under wraps until it came to fruition.

Making the big announcement on their LinkedIn handle, the payment company said: "Today, we officially welcomed the first cohort of the Interswitch Academy, an initiative we birthed as part of our continued efforts to support interns in Africa.

Designed for fresh graduates and professionals looking to transition into a new workplace, the internship programme is exclusive to individuals with no more than 3 years of experience."

The quarterly programme is aimed at providing eligible youths with the workplace experience necessary to jumpstart the careers they desire.

In the first few weeks, interns will undergo knowledge-sharing and technical sessions to gain the skills necessary to become part of a larger team. Working on real-life projects to support the organisation, the programme provides interns with the opportunity to gain direct practical experience with Interswitch Group.

Oasis restates commitment to delivering positive impacts on Ikeja

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

The Nigeria Police Co-op Multipurpose Centre, known as Oasis Centre Ikeja, has restated its commitment to delivering a one-of-a-kind project that positively impacts the capital of Lagos, Ikeja area and beyond.

Mall D'Oasis Shopping Centre Limited, a commercial development company, said that it is poised to leave a signature of excellence, satisfaction and quality across its various real estate developments.

"The Oasis Centre is a state-of-the-art lifestyle development, situated along Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, in Ikeja. A joint development between the Nigeria Police

Cooperative Multipurpose Society Limited (POLCOOP) and Mall D'Oasis Shopping Centre Limited (MDO), the

Oasis Centre, Ikeja is a unique mixed-use development and the first mixed-use space in Nigeria that will have three distinct development types in one building".

This Oasis flagship development will include a retail section with a variety of 42 distinct retail brands that will operate from its ground and first floor.

A business section offering flexible M.I.C.E. options on the second floor, for board meetings, general meetings and other events.

A 5-star hospitality component across four floors offering leisure and accommodation for 200 rooms. Other features include executive lounges, gymnasium, spa, wellness suite, infinity pool, all day dining, and a rooftop bar with an open terrace view, overseeing the skyline of Ikeja.

"In this city within the city of Lagos, Mall D'Oasis is set to enhance the quality of the hospitality industry with the introduction of Wyndham hotel brand – the signature brand of the largest hotel franchisor in the world, with over 8,900

hotels, 812 rooms, in over 95 countries.

"Wyndham is a respected name in the upscale service industry and like every Wyndham Hotel around the world, Wyndham Lagos, Ikeja will deliver comfort that exceeds expectations, with thoughtful services and amenities tailored to make guests make the most of their stay, in ways that are more enjoyable than they can imagine.

"The Wyndham Lagos, Ikeja at the Oasis Centre Ikeja is the anchor of the Centre and the first hotel of the Wyndham Hotels and Resorts in Africa. Lagos will join cities like London, Dubai, Brussels,

Madrid, Istanbul, Delhi, Athens, Milan and many others, and become one of the global locations that bring exceptional

value to travellers.

"Guests of the hotel, patrons of the retail and business spaces within this Oasis Centre, Ikeja; will enjoy 24/7 power supply, good road network – starting with a slip road to the centre, ample parking, excellent security systems and processes; all the elements of a great city, designed with the complete comfort and success of its occupants in mind.

"Whether for business or pleasure, the Oasis Centre, Ikeja is the perfect destination. Each component is designed to complement the other, to give an enriched lifestyle experience. It's simply an ecosystem that works: it is safe, functional and elegantly styled for business, retail and leisure purposes.

"Strategically located in the heart of Lagos, the 5 mins drive to the Lagos International and local airports is simply one of the astounding features of this innovative lifestyle development. The wholesome, tranquil comfort and convenience the Oasis Centre Ikeja is designed to deliver, is best experienced."



NB'S MARKETING, SUNDRY EXPENSES GROSS N85B IN H1

The marketing, distribution, and administrative expenses of Nigerian Breweries Plc have risen to N84.896 billion naira in the first half of 2022 from N31,858,961 spent in 2021. This was revealed in the just-released half-year report of the Group.

The increase represents over 100 percent increase in marketing and distribution expenses.

Explaining the reasons for the increase, the report stated that "Marketing, distribution, and administration expenses were driven by the increase in commercial activities, rising diesel prices, and higher wages arising from collective labour agreements."

The half-year report showed a Profit Before Tax (PBT) growth of N26.05bn at 115.8%, while its Profit After Tax (PAT) stood at N19.08bn at +142.8%. Net Revenue also grew by 274.03bn at +31%, with Gross Profit at N118.688bn at 52.4%. Its Operating Profit, on the other hand, has also improved as it stands at 80%, with earnings per share having N237 kobo at +44.3% growth in the period under review.

The report signed by Uaboi G. Agbebaku, the Company Secretary, stated further that, "Our business continues to build momentum and deliver consistent profitable growth even in the context of a very challenging operating environment. Our best-in-class portfolio of brands provides a unique platform that positions us well to lead and grow the beer and malt category and drive superior long-term value creation."

IMC experts weigh industry Challenges

Ibidunni Banjoko

Experts in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) industry have weighed the challenges affecting each sector that need attention for the growth of the business.

Some stakeholders in the industry spoke with **MARKETING EDGE** on recent developments in the industry.

Commenting on the challenges, Steve Babaeko, President Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) stated that infrastructure has been a major challenge for every SMEs starting from power. Agencies fall within the SME space. The cost of power to run operations in a day is so high and it is because of the passion that we have for our profession that makes us continue in business.

He also noted that human capital is another issue. "You will train young people hoping that they can work with you for at least two to three years but their mind is far from that. All you will hear is that they are on their way to Canada or somewhere else. We can't blame them because they feel the country is not conducive for them and this keeps increasing every day. All these have a negative impact on the business.

On his part, Emmanuel Ajufo, President Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) said: "The major challenges affecting the industry are, multiple taxations, billing for vacant billboards, registration of non-ARCON or OAAN members by the signage agency, the planned concessioning of 7 major roads in Lagos and the lack of LASAA board that will oversee and monitor the activities and transactions between the Lagos State Signage Agency and Outdoor agencies and the pulling down of billboard structures of OAAN practitioners by LASAA."

Rotimi Bankole, CEO, SBI Media believes that financing is a challenge for many agencies. Clients have long pay cycles that hamstring start-up agencies from funding other projects. Also, professionalism is being gradually eroded. The barrier to entry in many aspects of our business is extraordinarily low." Those are just the major issues."

He continued: "The first one can be better fixed through better management of cash flow and financing. A lot of organisations try so hard to hold on to as

much working capital as possible because it is insanely expensive to obtain financing from banks. That's why their invoice processing often takes as long as 90 days or 120 days. Now, if they don't pay agencies, agencies struggle to serve other clients because money is tied up in multimillion naira projects that are yet to be paid for. When agencies are buoyant enough to serve more than just a couple of clients, that's when agencies can truly grow.

"As for the second challenge, rather than create a closed system that may restrict new people from participating, let's follow the tech industry's example and make the latest knowledge available to as many people as possible, on both the agency side and the client side. Then the buyers of the service we provide must insist on global best practices".

In the same vein, Eniola Mayowa, COO, Stepcraft Associates stated that PR practice is yet to attain its place, noting that in developed countries, PR

practitioners relate with their clients like doctors.

"We need to take the profession to the enviable height where it is respected. PR is the ability to predict the trend, not the client telling the practitioner what to do.

"For a lot of us, we are just waiting for a client to tell us what to do. No, I should scan through the environment and tell you what is trending. PR is the ability to predict trends, it is not about getting clients in the news. I always tell people it's about the ability to predict trends. What happened last year? What influences what happens out there, what are the behavioural patterns of people and how do they respond?", she asked rhetorically.

She mentioned that NIPR as the regulatory body needs to project the practice, and do more in terms of education and exposing practitioners to global best practices.



WHY SOME BREWERIES, BEER BRANDS GO EXTINCT

By **Abimbola Mohammed**

The list of extinct breweries and beer brands is a long one.

However, some may have vanished for a variety of reasons. While some went into extinction because they couldn't meet up with tax payment, lack of funds, and harsh government policies, others disappeared as a result of fundamental mismanagement from owners of the companies.

The world has seen an exponential increase in the production of beer since the dawn of the 1900s. Many breweries and beer brands have been born and many have also disappeared. As technology advances and production methods improve, beer brewing and marketing continue to evolve.

MARKETING EDGE intelligence reveals why and how some breweries and beer brands vanished from the market landscape. The following are some of the major breweries and beer brands that went extinct:

Bendel Brewery:

Bendel Brewery Limited was established in 1971 by the Mid-Western Government headed by General Samuel Ogbemudia and was first known as BAUWL Brewery. It had an initial installed capacity of 100,000.00

hectolitres per annum. The Brewery was commissioned on 1st October, 1974 but did not commence production of Henninger beer until April 1975. It was launched as Crystal beer in 1976 after the brand Henninger failed to hit its expected target. Under the new name, the brand flourished.

It is important to note that for many years the Brewery recorded substantial profits and paid dividends to the State Government. The Success of Prof. Alli's government from 1979 to 1983 was greatly enhanced by the financial contribution from Bendel Brewery.

Golden Guinea Breweries Plc:

Golden Guinea Breweries first opened for business in 1963, in the post-independence Nigeria. The company was then known as Independence Brewery Limited. It started with an annual capacity of 1 million gallons. In 2003, the firm suffered a fire outbreak at its facilities which damaged equipment leading to the shutdown of the company. The company is located in Abia State.

The Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM) recently gave a grant of N3.6 billion to the management of Golden

Guinea Breweries Plc in an attempt to get the company back to life. In 1971, the company changed its name to Golden Guinea Breweries and four years later, it was revamped and an extension built by the German firm Coutinho Caro which later participated in an equity offering issued by the firm.

The new investor, Pan Marine Investment Limited, has promised to bring the company back to life in 2018. The company holds franchise rights to produce and market Golden Guinea Beer, Holsten Brewery's Bergedorf premium lager beer and Bergedorf Malta in Nigeria. Production at the brewery was hampered by a fire incident in 2003 but recent attempts have been made to resuscitate the firm. The company held franchise rights to produce and market Holsten Brewery's Bergedorf premium lager beer and Bergedorf Malta in Nigeria.

Sona Breweries:

Sona Group sold its flagship subsidiary, Sona Breweries

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PERCEPTION MGMT AND TRAVAILS OF TWO PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSONS

By **Tunde Animasaun**



The build-up to the 2023 elections will reach a crescendo this month, September, when campaigns will start in earnest. The two major contenders, in the presidential elections, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressive Congress and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples' Democratic Party, are therefore arming their high command with the people who supposedly possess the head (cognitive capacity) and hands-on (experience) for the job.

Of major interest to us as marketing communications practitioners and a company committed to promoting the brand idea, is the recent appointment of the spokespersons of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Campaign Organisation, and Atiku Abubakar Presidential Campaign Organisation, Festus Keyamo, and Hon. Dino Melaye respectively.

Festus Keyamo, SAN, a learned fellow who has plied his trade up to the Supreme Court, social crusader, activist, and a scion of the Gani Fawehinmi School of the public defense, a wordsmith with impeccable oratory and writing skills, and columnist with national dailies comes with an impressive and intimidating C.V. As the Director, Strategic Communications in President Muhammadu Buhari's Presidential Campaign Organisation during the 2015 and 2019 elections, he gave a stellar performance of promoting his principal and selling him to Nigerians. He is therefore returning to familiar grounds, the terrain and topography with which he is well acquainted with.

His Achilles' feet may however be this impressive resume. We should also not lose sight of the fact that irrespective of his natural gift and proficiency, he is not

a professional image maker and brand builder. Image-making is not just about anything. It is about everything. In public relations business, being vocal, and having oratorical prowess count, but caution, courtesy, and diplomacy are key.

Perception management goes beyond mere theatrics or undue comedies that sometimes border on infantile radicalism. Diplomacy, tact, and wisdom are key ingredients in purposeful and value-driven image management.

While Dino Melaye may not have the training and natural proclivity of Keyamo; the geography graduate of the Ahmadu Bello University is however not a political neophyte. He came to the political limelight when he became a member of the House of Representatives, representing Kabba/Ijumu federal constituency in Kogi State, and in 2015 he was elected as the Senator representing Kogi West Senatorial District. He is however more popular for his political shenanigans. His appointment to that sensitive office seems also premised on 'reward for loyalty' rather than competence, "what informed his selection is the fact he is a very strong supporter of Atiku," said Audu Mahmood, Director General, PDP New Generation.

However, his garrulity and recklessness, if unchecked, may cast a dour shadow on his principal. A spokesperson is not a man who needs to be constantly checked and kept in line as may be the case with Melaye

These are the 'imperfect' men who will project, defend, sell and promote their respective principals. They will try to manipulate the perception of the voting public in favour of their principals towards earning their ballots on Election Day.

Beyond being the mouthpiece of campaign organizations, therefore, the spokespersons' real job description is serious brand building and perception management. Of all the skill sets required to creditably excel at the job; these two are most likely to impact the fortunes of their principals directly.

Perception management was

coined by the US military which described it as, “Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviours and official actions favorable to the originator’s objectives. According to them, perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations.” Extrapolating this for general usage, it means perception is the conveyance or denial of selected information to influence audiences’ emotions, motives, and decisions based on truth projection.

Evidently, the best fit for this job goes beyond a mere gift with words, oratory or written. It is a professional job that can best be handled by professionals. In climes from where our type of participatory democracy was borrowed, the job of the image maker is either given to a consultant (firm) or a time-tested professional. For instance, in 2016, Donald Trump appointed Hope Hicks, a communications and public relations consultant as the director of Communications. With her skill and dexterity, she turned the tide against an incumbent party whose candidate, Hilary Clinton, was the wife of a former President and wrought such communications magic that eventually led to Trump’s success at the polls. She was also the communications director and director of strategic communications in Trump’s administration and it was not until her resignation in 2018 that Trump’s image started plummeting.

As it stands now, both parties have sacrificed professionalism in the choice of their image makers. However, the effect of this can still be mitigated by fortifying the communication directorates with seasoned professionals as consultants. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu is not new at this. He did it in Lagos by creating political brands out of

relatively unknown men who later occupied the number one seat in the state.

As the 2023 elections draw nearer and issues in the polity are crystalising, the party with the stronger communication and image-making machinery is most likely to have the

day. This is especially so because both the ruling APC and the opposition PDP come with political baggage. What will make the difference is how each is able to touch the passion points and ease the pain points of the electorate.

WHY SOME BREWERIES, BEER BRANDS GO EXTINCT

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to Nigerian Breweries in 2010, as a result of the intense competition in the brewery segment of the Nigerian market. Sona Brewery produces Maltonic, Gold kanterbrau, Tusk, Williams Dark Ale and Goldberg Lager Beer.

Some of its brands like Goldberg and Life beer and other value brands formerly on the stable of Sona Breweries have continued to perform well and have been largely responsible for helping NB Plc post strong growth despite the recession.

Pabod Breweries Limited was founded in 1978. The company’s line of business includes the manufacturing of malt beverages such as beer and liquors. The company’s beers are produced and distributed in Africa, enabling beer dealers and individuals to access a wide range of services for their operation and consumption. Pabod Breweries Limited was one of the three brewing companies in Nigeria owned by SABMiller prior to the October 2016 acquisition by Belgian brewer AB InBev. The company is located in Rivers State. In December 2017, AB InBev completed the merger of its three breweries in Nigeria – Pabod Breweries Limited, International Breweries plc and Intafact Beverages Limited. They were all folded into the name International Breweries Plc.

Mopa Breweries, Ltd:

Mopa Breweries is a Nigerian brewery founded in 1980 by Chief J. Adewale Bello in Kogi State, Nigeria. The brewery is based in the town of Mopa in the Mopa-Muro Local Government Area. In 2005, the Canadian company Alexis-NextGen bought a controlling interest. The company produces One Lager, a popular lager, Lion Stout, and non-alcoholic malt beverages.

Standard Breweries:

Standard Breweries was established in 1981, the company was located at Km 12, Alomaja Village, Ijebu Old Lagos Road, Ibadan, Oyo State, Ibadan, Oyo, Ibarapa Central. The company produced Club Lager. The company is owned by Late Chief Bode Akindele.

Harp Premium Lager is a Nigerian beer brand with Irish roots first brewed in Nigeria Established in 1974. Nigerian beer brand with Irish roots, Harp was first brewed in Nigeria by Guinness Nigeria in 1974 over 40 years of brewing excellence.

Premier Breweries Plc (PREMBREW):

Premier Breweries is a food & beverages company based out of Harbour Industrial Layout, Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Stagwell posts 16% organic growth, cites digital transformation

By Abimbola Mohammed



Stagwell Inc., a global marketing solution network, has announced net organic revenue growth in the second quarter of 16% versus the prior year period on net revenue of \$556 million. The growth, according to the company, is attributed to digital capabilities, research and investment in content and people.

According to a statement on Stagwell website, for the first six months of the year, organic revenue growth was 19.6% on net revenue of \$1.082 billion. The company reaffirmed its full-year organic growth outlook of 18% to 22%. While the Q2 growth came on top of 29% organic growth in the second quarter of 2021 for two-year aggregated growth of 45%.

In an exclusive interview with *MARKETING EDGE*, Rotimi Bankole, Group

CEO, SBI Media, noted that the Network growth is as a result of innovation, digital transformation, research and content investment growth.

His words: "Stagwell Global's latest stellar result accentuates its rapid growth driven by digital transformation, research and investment in content and people. In the African region, we believe the group will accelerate its efforts through the kinds of partnerships we are part of and other initiatives that such a collective alliance can bring to bear."

Mark J. Penn, Chairman/CEO, Stagwell, said: "Stagwell is executing exactly as we said we would, and doing so profitably. We delivered significant organic net revenue growth of 16% in the second quarter, which has the toughest comparisons of the year. Our high-growth

digital capabilities expanded to 57% of net revenue and grew 28% organically versus the prior year period. Due to our unique mix of digital and creative capabilities, clients now recognize Stagwell as a serious alternative to legacy incumbents and we are now a regular contender in many of the largest global pitches."

He continued: "Our disciplined financial management and strong cost controls allow us to maintain leading margins, even while making smart investments in our corporate infrastructure to scale the network. We are optimistic about the back half of the year as our world-class advocacy businesses prepare for a record cycle of US political advertising spend and our year-over-year comparisons ease. We remain very confident in our full-year guidance of 18-22% organic net revenue growth and \$450-\$480 million of adjusted EBITDA."

A big part of the growth story is getting top clients to spend more, said Penn, noting that the average revenue spent

for the firm's top 25 clients is now \$6 million versus \$4.5 million a year ago. The firm's digital capabilities now account for 57% of its net revenue.

For the second quarter, organic growth at the company's integrated agencies network was 9.3%. Growth for the media network, including Assembly, was 33%, while the communications division (PR) was 27.9%.

In the same vein, Frank Lanuto, Chief Financial Officer, said: "The Company reported strong second quarter results with GAAP revenue of \$673 million, net revenue of \$556 million and Adjusted EBITDA of \$111 million. Pro forma organic net revenue increased 16% over the prior period and Adjusted EBITDA margins remained strong at 20% of net revenue as we remain diligent around cost controls. Our balance sheet is in a good position and should benefit as we head into the seasonally strong back half of the year when we expect cash flow to increase significantly."

Chevrolet, McCann launch ad campaign

Exploring the best of creative imaginations to bring to life a groundbreaking approach to car advertising, Auto company Chevrolet China and ad agency McCann Shanghai have collaborated to release a brand video for the Chevrolet "Black Bowtie" logo.

Themed "Born Powerful", the campaign readily communicates a message of strength, value, and resilience which is expected to strike a chord with young Chinese people's pursuit of individuality, as well as to strengthen their recognition of Chevrolet, even as

the brand essence of the Black Bowtie resonate and carve a place in their lives.

The campaign features a three-minute film directed by filmmaker Fu Binbin and shot in the style of a sci-fi blockbuster. Each scenario depicts fundamentally "black" substances and how the color black is assimilated into people's everyday lives and aesthetic consciousness.

Executive creative director of McCann Shanghai's Chevrolet team, Yaho Yeh said: "We looked at all the things that the colour black stands for, all the history



and mythology. From coal fires to black iron forged into tools by early settlers, to the oil that is the lifeblood of the industrial age, and to today's era of science and technology, black is considered by many to be the most advanced and the purest aesthetic of human beings. Through different imagery, the goal was to convey that black itself is a symbol of innate power. This is encapsulated in the essence

of the Chevrolet brand: Born Powerful."

Chevrolet has also built a series of Black Bowtie pop-up stores, in order to provide a more tangible brand experience. The team found a black carbon nanotechnology paint that absorbs more than 99.8% of the visible light that hits its surface, creating the ultimate black finish.

Publicis ups PepsiCo Asian deals to \$500m

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



Publicis Groupe has, again, won PepsiCo Media business, for other parts of China Asia; Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia. The combined billings amount to \$71 million thereby pushing the value of their Asian deals with PepsiCo to \$500 million.

With the new additions, Publicis Groupe has added nearly \$500 million in new business from PepsiCo in Asia this year, starting with China,

where it won a pitch with nearly \$290 million in billings up for grabs in the first quarter.

Lilly Yip, CMO at PepsiCo Asia Pacific, said: “We would like to thank the incumbent team at Mindshare for their years of work as well as our agency partners that participated in the review. Publicis Media was selected after a very thorough and competitive pitch process. Their expertise in the areas of importance to our business,

like data, digital, analytics and commerce saw them emerge as our partner of choice.”

In the same vein, Amrita Randhawa, CEO of Publicis Groupe Singapore and Southeast Asia said: “We are excited to be appointed PepsiCo’s media partner in this very dynamic and fast-growing region. We really respect the process that PepsiCo ran for its thoroughness and desire to discover the best from the agencies participating. Our entire team is incredibly motivated by the opportunity to create industry-leading work for these iconic brands in the future.”

According to Arthur Sadoun, Chairman, and CEO of Publicis Groupe, “H1 2022 came in at an all-time high for the Groupe on all KPIs. Our reported net revenue growth in the first half was +19.1 percent. It was up by +10.4 percent on an organic basis, implying

+11.3 percent on a 3-year basis, versus pre-pandemic levels. After a strong start to the year, we recorded in Q2, an increase of +21 percent of our net revenue and organic growth of +10.3 percent, which was way beyond expectations.

Recall that last week the same company also won the PepsiCo Indian portfolio account which was estimated to be nearly \$90 million in annual expenditures. The pitch competition was between IPG Mediabrands, Dentsu, and Omnicom Group.

Publicis Groupe created PLUS+ by Publicis, a dedicated business unit, inspired by PepsiCo’s brand aspirations of Faster, Stronger, and Better.

PepsiCo Southeast Asia region appointed Publicis Groupe as the media agency for its portfolio of food and beverage brands, following a competitive pitch that began in April. GroupM’s Mindshare had previously serviced the account.

In India, PepsiCo markets brands including Pepsi, Mirinda, Mountain Dew, 7UP, Uncle Chipps, Quaker, and Tropicana, as well as snack food brands like Lays and Kurkure.

Publicis Groupe had early announced an organic growth of +21 percent of revenue for the second quarter.

Global stars join youths at Kigali Summit, demand action to end malaria

Global changemakers including David Beckham, Pierre Aubameyang, Yemi Alade, Eliud Kipchoge, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie came together with youth voices from across the globe to demand urgent action to end malaria, as they

delivered the Zero Malaria Starts with Me – Draw The Line Against Malaria campaign petition to world leaders at the Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases in Kigali, Rwanda.

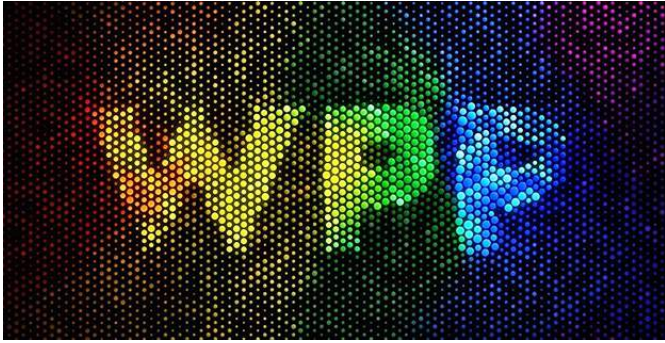
Global leaders, led by African Heads of State, made



the first in a series of significant pledges to accelerate progress against malaria and NTDs, with commitments totalling more than \$US4 billion, including

funding from governments, international organisations, philanthropists, and the private sector.

WPP H1 2022 results reveal strong client demand, broad-based growth



Multinational advertising company WPP has released a strong half year result with broad-based growth across its creative, media and public relations businesses as well as sustained demand from clients.

The H1 result revealed

8.9% revenue growth, organic growth of 12.5% to \$6.7 million (5.5 million pounds) and a pre-tax profit increase of 12% to \$682 million.

Commenting on the results, Mark Read, Chief Executive Officer of WPP, said: "This reflects the improved competitive position of our

creative businesses, with their growing capabilities in commerce, experience and technology, our continued strength in media and the resurgence in demand for strategic communications advice from our public relations agencies."

For the second year running, WPP was awarded most creative company at Cannes Lions earlier in June for the quality of its work in all areas, spanning film, digital, media, commerce and creative business transformation.

Read continued: "It's a testament to our investment in creativity and the talent of our people, and I am committed to making WPP

the most creative company in the world. Our clients are continuing to invest in WPP's services, which reflects our attractive industry exposure in technology and healthcare, our broad global footprint, and the importance of what we do for their businesses. The actions we have taken over the last four years leave WPP much better positioned with a more uncertain economic environment ahead."

The interim results also showed strong client demand across most segments and regions, and transformation programme on track to deliver expected £300 million of annual savings this year over a 2019 base

£637 million share buybacks in H1, total of £800 million to be completed in 2022; 15.0p 2022 interim dividend declared, +20%; Full year 2022 LFL revenue less pass-through costs growth now expected to be 6.0-7.0%; headline operating profit margin up around 50 bps.

Meta to modify live shopping feature on Facebook



By Nicole Okolie

Live video shopping feature is one of the many features of Facebook and it has allowed businesses to create in-store shopping experiences to the online world. A few days ago in a blog post, the company announced the closure of its live shopping feature starting on October 1, 2022.

Meta, however, noted that live shopping functionality will remain on Instagram.

"Beginning on October 1, 2022, you will no longer be able to host any new or scheduled Live Shopping events on Facebook. You will

still be able to use Facebook Live to broadcast live events, but you won't be able to create product playlists or tag products in your Facebook Live videos," Meta announced.

The live shopping feature was designated to give brand creators an interactive way to sell items, showcase new products, interact with users of products, gain new customers and procure a faster way of selling products without having to be there physically.

Nonetheless, Facebook has announced that it is now shifting away from live video shopping to focus on Reels

as it is said that "consumers" viewing behaviours are shifting to short-form video," leading Meta to shift its focus more to the short-form video format Reels on Facebook and Instagram. However, live shopping functionality will remain on Instagram.

According to report, the Livestream video shopping functionality became publicly available on Facebook two years ago, following a series of smaller trials and beta tests. The feature opened up another revenue stream for creators and gave creators and brands an interactive way to sell

items, connect with viewers, and potentially gain new customers.

Meta further said: "If you want to reach and engage people through video, try experimenting with Reels and Reels ads on Facebook and Instagram. You can also tag products in Reels on Instagram to enable deeper discovery and consideration. If you have a shop with checkout and want to host live shopping events on Instagram, you can set up Live Shopping on Instagram."

Customers can switch because of single bad experience – *Kihn*

By Abimbola Mohammed

At a recent webinar held by Adage in collaboration with Salesforce, a cloud-based software company, Martin Kihn, Senior VP, Product Strategy, Marketing Cloud, Salesforce, advised marketers to find a way to deal with consumers as they are growing less tolerant to any kind of fruition, while patronizing any brand or product.

According to Kihn, consumer behaviour and expectations have changed in the past few years as they expect their needs to be considered at every point in time, with personalized experience when dealing with brands even though they are reluctant to share their personal data.

“The thing is that consumer behaviour and expectations have changed overtime, they expect personalization but also don’t want to surrender data for personalization. I think they have become more and more demanding over time without knowing. We as marketers have heard that one or two to three customers will immediately switch because of a single bad experience, so they are less tolerant to any kind of fruition in any service, not only in marketing,” he said.

Kihn believes that marketing had a harder time than other functions because of the pandemic, and that marketers had to adapt to something which was not predicted. He noted that consumer behaviour and attitudes have changed over the last two years.

Analyzing the growth in the ecommerce sector in the last



two and a half years, he said: “In the last two years, there has been sixty-five percent growth in ecommerce sales because of the massive switch to digital, also opening of different new channels that in the past weren’t particularly digital. An example is car sales; because you could do hand to hand purchase of vehicle and it could arrive at your lawn, you don’t have to go to showroom anymore.”

Speaking to the challenges and key obstacles that prevent most marketers from assessing their data with the speed necessary to drive conversation across categories, and what changes marketers implement now to achieve the speed they need to achieve their goals, he said: “Information shows that there has been some decrease in investment and that is because we live less of our lives in real-life and this is because consumers are now aware of data. About five to fifteen years ago, most of us didn’t think of what data to be collected specifically or in any deep way. But now we are aware or need to be aware that regulators made us aware of data that has been collected.

“We have seen forty-eight percent of responses from brands specifically about data privacy, so it raises the premium of trust with a particular brand. To present them as a trusted but also transparent brand, to be clear about the data they are collecting, but also showing you what the purposes we are using it for, and I think that is common now in the mainstream consumer.”

Speaking on how marketers will gather data or analyze data in the cookie-less future and how the changes will affect strategies, Kihn said: “That is why there has been emphasis on how first-party data is collected from customers in a transparent and open way. This is part of the exchange of value that is important for media and media targeting. For media, you need a core set of first party IDs as a seed to send over to the intermediate networks in order to find targeted people, because the future of cookies is in some way in the customer data.”

CARAT BEATS COMPETITION TO VODAFONE’S £400 MILLION BRIEF



Carat, a dentsu Group affiliate, has been announced the winner of the competitive bid to recruit a media agency for the telecommunication giant.

Vodafone has completed the competitive pitch process for its media planning and buying account, worth a reported £400m globally.

It has renewed the contract with dentsu’s Carat, with the new deal coming into force in January.

Vodafone started the international review of its media planning and buying earlier this year, with Carat invited to take part along with a number of selected agencies.

The win will see Carat manage its media across 15 territories, including the UK – which is worth £53m in billings alone.

Carat began work with Vodafone in 2019, having taken over from WPP’s MEC, which later merged with Maxus to become Wavemaker. It had held the brief since 2014, although during that period Vodafone had taken “significant” elements of its media in-house, including digital media buying.

It was shortly after this that dentsu restructured its operations, relocating a number of key roles to its Northern offices.

PMG, Initiative grab Nike's \$1bn global media account

As part of its standard operating procedures to ensure it continues to have the best-in-class paid media agency partners around the globe, Nike has announced the winners of its global media account. The account, which is estimated to be worth \$1 billion covers the Nike and Jordan brands in all major markets, and is being split between independent agency PMG and Interpublic Group of Cos.' Initiative.

PMG will handle North American media duties as well as global digital capabilities, while Initiative will handle integrated media globally.

In a statement, Nike said: "We have concluded our review of agency partners who provide paid media strategy and execution (planning and buying) for brand advertising and performance marketing.

"This is part of our standard operating procedures to ensure Nike continues to have the best-in-class paid media agency partners around

the globe. We thank all our agency partners, especially those with whom we have had long-term relationships, for all the work we have delivered together."

The iconic footwear brand confirmed PMG will be its integrated media agency in North America as well as become its global digital capabilities partner. Initiative will handle integrated media globally, including in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Asia Pacific, and the Latin America regions.

Wieden+Kennedy, which remains Nike's creative agency of record, previously handled media planning in North America. Nike also worked with other shops such as Within, which previously handled some performance media duties for the brand. Wieden may retain some business in North America, according to multiple people close to the situation, but Nike did not confirm that report.

Wieden+Kennedy,



Initiative, and PMG all referred calls for comment to Nike. R3, the consultant that ran the pitch, declined to comment.

The move represents a loss for WPP's Mindshare which handled a bulk of Nike's business outside the U.S. as well as Stagwell-owned Assembly, which also handled performance media for the brand in Europe and Asia.

GroupM, Dentsu, Omnicom, Stagwell, Havas, Media.Monks and Within all participated in the Nike media review, which began in December, according to multiple people close to the

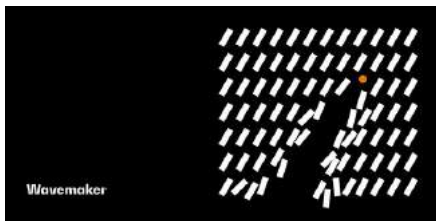
situation.

While Initiative will be charged with global campaigns in Asia, there are still parts of the business that are up for review in the region, according to multiple people close to the situation. WPP, Publicis, and Dentsu are believed to be pitching for business in the Greater China region which includes Hong Kong and Taiwan. Dentsu, WPP, and Publicis declined to comment.

This is a significant win for Fort Worth, Texas-based PMG, which has clients such as Best Western, Kohler, Gap, and Apple. This move also further consolidates more of Nike's business under Initiative, which won Converse's global media account in 2018.

Nike reported worldwide spending of \$3.1 billion on advertising and promotion, also known as "demand creation expense," in the fiscal year ended May 2021, according to the Ad Age Datacenter. "Demand creation expense" consists of advertising and promotion costs, including costs of endorsement contracts, complementary products, TV, digital and print advertising and media costs, brand events and retail brand presentation.

Wavemaker wins Wipro Consumer Care account



Wavemaker Malaysia has won the media business of Wipro Consumer Care (LDW) Malaysia.

The appointment, which comes after a competitive pitch, includes strategy, planning, buying, and content innovation.

According to Wavemaker, its Provocative Planning methodology "showcased a strong understanding of the consumer care category dynamics & purchase journey which laid the

foundation for its consumer-centric strategy, ideas & plans."

"We are truly excited with this partnership as the client not only valued our integrated marketing capabilities and strategic vision, but also our passion and energy," said Wavemaker Malaysia's General Manager Sheley Lim.

"We're looking very much forward to thriving together in this growth journey."

Dwaraka Ayengar, Wipro LDW's Chief Operating Officer, said: "We are in a very exciting phase right now at Wipro LDW. We have weathered the disruption caused by Covid well and are now all set to accelerate our growth plans.

"We have launched a lot of new products/brands and at the same time are creating new news in our existing portfolio. We feel that Wavemaker with their strong

capabilities in both digital and traditional media will help us to unlock the growth potential for our brands."

Christine Ho, the Head of Marketing & E-commerce of Wipro LDW, added: "Wavemaker offers a powerful suite of tools to provide insights that assist in the planning of our upcoming campaigns. They were extremely clear in outlining the project and scope of work while providing a solid content marketing plan, strategy, and system that aligns with our overall media marketing goals.

"The similarities in terms of attitudes and values make them a good cultural fit, which is an essential ingredient to an effective relationship and to ensure the creative work we produce, aligns with our brand direction. I see that as a real shift in the opportunities available."

Consumer apathy, economic headwinds top ad industry concerns

By Zion Rufus



Economic crisis, inflation, consequences of the war in Ukraine are some of the most peculiar issues currently facing the global economy. However, some top professionals in Nigeria's marketing communications industry have highlighted bigger challenges facing the industry. Some of these challenges include ad fraud, dearth of third party cookies, economic headwinds, talent migration and shortage amongst others.

Identifying talent emigration and shortage as a rising concern, ADMARP President, Oti Ukubeyinje pointed that the pandemic and the current economic crisis has prompted people to rethink their careers, work ethics, wages, and location. According to the professional, this has fueled the demand for greener pastures, remote/hybrid jobs, and increased wages.

Validating the President's premise, Lanre Basamta, Group head, mobile financial services, Interswitch pointed

out that competition for talent is now so stringent, that it has become more challenging to win the battle.

He shared: "In Nigeria the biggest challenge is that we are losing our talent to greener pasture pursuits or foreign climes such as UK, Canada, US and more."

The marketing professional further explained that the current inflationary pressures and economic headwinds have adversely affected the business world.

"Global inflation is affecting our ability to support our systems from a forex perspective. Licenses we have to pay, wages and salaries of team members outside the country which are typically in dollars also have to be paid. Not forgetting the attendant consequences of a devalued Naira makes it all the more challenging," he said.

Digital ace, Franklin Ozekhome on his part consumer apathy, financial liquidation, and short term planning as some of the

pressing issues in the ad industry.

He said: "Consumers are overwhelmed with the same series of electronic, online and mobile advertisements

all seemingly communicating commoditized stories, themes and narratives. Most of the top spenders in marketing fail to empathise with the current realities faced by Nigerians – high inflation, evolving needs states, and changing lifestyle priorities of the average Nigerian. In a changing world where consumer cultures keep evolving with attendant impact on behavior and purchase power, brands seem to forget that awareness and attention alone does not cut it anymore. It's business as usual, and it's telling on sales, product consideration, repurchase ratio, likeability, and brand equity. There's so much noise out there that consumers fail to distinguish ideas, messaging, and content themes."

Commenting on financial liquidity, Ozekhome explained that the traditional business model for remuneration is adversely affecting small and upcoming agencies. The digital expert explained that sometimes, major projects have to be refinanced by agencies through banks with a steep interest rate, and payments tend to exceed agreed timeframe.

Omnicom reports 11% growth in Q2 organic revenue

Omnicom Group has once again raised its organic revenue forecast for the year while reporting an 11.3% increase in second-quarter organic revenue, with growth in every discipline and region. However, second-quarter organic revenue decreased in the Asia Pacific region due to COVID-19 lockdowns.

This marked the holding



company's fifth consecutive quarter of organic growth.

Organic growth is a key financial measure that factors out acquisitions, divestitures and effects of exchange rates.

Despite the organic revenue growth, the advertising conglomerate's revenue fell 0.1% from a year earlier, which it attributed to the negative impact of foreign exchange rates and its withdrawal from Russia.

Second-quarter net income increased 0.1% to \$348.4 million.

Organic revenue increased across all of Omnicom's fundamental disciplines from a year earlier: 8.2% for Advertising & Media, 21.0% for Precision Marketing, 11.2% for Commerce & Brand Consulting, 36.6% for Experiential, 9.3% for Execution & Support, 15.8% for Public Relations and 9.2% for Healthcare.

Organic revenue increased across all regions, except Asia Pacific, which the holding company says is due to the COVID-19 lockdowns in China. Organic growth came in at 10.7% for the U.S, 12.5% for other North America, 12% for the U.K, 15.1% for the rest of Europe, 4.7% for Asia Pacific, 14% for Latin America and 28.3% for the Middle East & Africa.

Omnicom now expects full-year organic revenue growth of 6.5% to 7%, with margin strength continuing, John Wren, chairman and CEO, said on a conference call. That's up from an April forecast calling for 6% to 6.5% organic revenue growth. In February, it predicted 5% to 6% organic revenue growth for the year.

Publicis Groupe will report its second earnings on July 21. Stagwell will release its results on Aug. 4 and Dentsu Group will follow, releasing its results on Aug 10.

Omnicom shares rose 7.6% to \$72.50 in after-hours trading following the release of the results.



Global alcoholic beverage market to grow by 10.01%

By Felicia Nwosu

The volume of the global alcoholic beverage market is expected to grow annually by a 10.01percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR 2022-2025) which will amount to US\$1,484.00bn in 2022, where, 6.6% of total revenue is predicted to be generated through online sales.

In 2021, the global beverage alcohol exhibited a positive outlook accelerated by the recovery from the pandemic which had a negative impact on alcohol consumption in the previous year, and was projected to grow in volume by +2.9% by the end of 2021. With the experience of the pandemic, the globalisation of production and marketing networks has permitted the alcohol industry to increase global integration of production and marketing and to diffuse sophisticated technologies for producing and

marketing its products rapidly around the world.

With the estimation that revenue in the alcoholic drinks market will amount to US\$1,484.00bn in 2022, the market is therefore expected to grow annually by 10.01% (CAGR 2022-2025), where the beer market leads as the largest segment with a market volume of US\$563.90bn in 2022. The average volume per person in the alcoholic drinks market is expected to amount to 35.75L in the same year. This report when compared globally has the largest revenue generated in China (US\$319.80bn in 2022).

The market for Alcoholic Drinks market is expected to show a volume growth of 7.5% in 2023.

The forecast has also spanned into the next three years, speculating that by 2025, 44% of spending and 26% of volume consumption will be

attributable to out-of-home consumption such as bars and restaurants.

In the same year, the volume is expected to amount to 312,660.8ML.

According to International Wines and Spirits Record, IWSR, it is noted that there will be a steady increase in consumption all through 2025, compared to 2023, whose forecast will witness total beverage alcohol consumption to return to pre-Covid levels.

This recovery will be accelerated and boosted by the industry pivoting rapidly in key markets, the momentum of e-commerce and RTDs, and the increasing sophistication of the at-home occasion in many markets. The two fastest-growing categories, according to IWSR forecasts, are no-alcohol spirits and RTDs.

Unilever reports 8.1% half year sales growth

Unilever has announced an 8.1 percent growth rate in the first half of 2022. The multinational revealed this while stating its results for the first half of 2022.

In a statement from Alan Jope, The Global CEO, the growth was attributed to an underlying 9.8 percent price and 1.6 percent volume.

Statement from Alan Jope
 “Unilever has delivered a first half performance which builds on our momentum of 2021, despite the challenges of high inflation and slower global growth. Underlying sales growth of 8.1% was driven by strong pricing to mitigate input cost inflation, which, as expected, had some impact on volume. We are now raising our sales guidance for the year. The underlying operating margin was on track at 17% for the first half.

“We have made further progress against our strategic priorities. We are maintaining strong investment in our brands, supporting 9.4% underlying sales growth in our billion+ Euro brands. eCommerce sales now represent 14% of turnover, up from 6% in 2019. Of our three

priority markets, the USA and India again grew strongly, while sales in China were affected by the lockdowns in the second quarter. We continue to reshape our portfolio, completing the sale of the global tea business ekaterra, and the acquisition of Nutrafol, a leading provider of hair wellness products. Prestige Beauty and Health & Wellbeing, now 4% of Group turnover, again grew double-digit, Alan Jope revealed in the Statement.

Giving a breakdown of the report, the Statement indicated that growth was broad-based across all Divisions. Price has sequentially stepped up over the past two quarters, reaching 11.2% in the second quarter, which had, as expected, some negative impact on volume.

“This was more pronounced in Home Care, which was particularly exposed to rising input costs and took the highest pricing action, leading to underlying sales growth of 10.7%. Beauty & Personal Care grew 7.5%, driven by price and continued strong growth in Prestige Beauty and Health & Wellbeing, which is Unilever’s vitamins, minerals, and supplements business. Foods



& Refreshment grew 7.3% with slightly negative volume at (0.9%), although volumes were flat excluding ekaterra. Ice cream out-of-home and Unilever Food Solutions showed strong double-digit growth in the first half, compensating for lower growth of in-home ice cream.

“Emerging markets grew by 10.0% with a 12.1% contribution from price and volume at (1.8%), including an estimated adverse impact of around 70bps from the lockdowns in China. Pricing in Latin America was strong at 19.1% with volumes contracting by (4.8%). South Asia grew strongly through both price and volume. Turkey delivered double-digit volume growth by managing dynamically through

a high inflation environment. Developed markets increased by 5.5%, with 6.7% from price and (1.2)% from volume. North America grew 8.7%, helped by strong performances of dressings and our businesses in high growth areas such as Health & Wellbeing.

“Turnover increased 14.9% to €29.6 billion, which included a currency impact of 5.6% and 0.6% from acquisitions net of disposals. Underlying operating profit was €5.0 billion, up 4.1% versus the prior year. The underlying operating margin declined by 180bps to 17.0%. Gross margin decreased by 210bps which reflected the very high inflation in input costs that was only partially mitigated by the strong pricing action and savings delivery.”

Jope is hopeful that: “This major change to Unilever’s operating model is an important further step that will underpin the delivery of consistent growth, which remains our first priority. The challenges of inflation persist and the global macroeconomic outlook is uncertain, but we remain intensely focused on operational excellence and delivery in 2022 and beyond.”

Diageo acquires Vivanda

Diageo announced that it has acquired Vivanda, owner of the FlavorPrint artificial intelligence technology behind several Diageo projects, aiming to match consumers with the right Diageo-owned alcoholic product.

Diageo has used Vivanda’s system since 2019 in the former’s “What’s Your Whisky” platform and more recently in the Journey of Flavour experience at a Johnnie Walker sampling location.

According to Diageo, the acquisition will enable its company to expand FlavorPrint technology to other categories. “And it will support the continued development of our advanced analytics and digital marketing capabilities, providing a deeper understanding of consumer taste preferences and helping to unlock further opportunities in innovation and personalised consumer experiences.”

Launched in 2019, “What’s Your Whisky” has been rolled out across 21 markets and is available in 16 languages. It

has been integrated into the physical stores and e-commerce platforms of a number of Diageo’s key customers in Europe and North America, as well as across direct-to-consumer channels such as malts.com to enable purchase recommendations.

The Journey of Flavour experience at Johnnie Walker Princes Street in Edinburgh tailors the drinks that visitors sample during their 90-minute tour to their palates. There are more than 800 flavor combinations available in a dispensing system.

Vivanda’s team will join Diageo and its founders, CEO, Oli Fuchs, and CTO, Matt Corish, will provide ongoing consultancy services to continue building on the success of the FlavorPrint technology.

According to Cristina Diezhandino, Chief Marketing Officer at Diageo, a comment said: “We know consumers are looking for more personalised, interactive experiences and that they are increasingly



engaging with our brands digitally as well as in person. We’re delighted to welcome Vivanda to Diageo and we are looking forward to working together to connect with consumers in more innovative ways that help shape the future of how we socialise in person and virtually.”

Oli Fuchs, Co-founder and CEO, Vivanda, also said: “We are very excited to join Diageo. Vivanda set out to create innovative technology which connects consumers with products through sensory insight. We are proud of the excellent engagement we have received from consumers and are looking forward to connecting millions more people with their new favourite beverage and creating the digital standard for taste.”

Resilience tips for Marketing Managers



As a marketing manager, your role involves meeting needs and expectations that come from several directions simultaneously. You manage upwards by keeping your senior managers informed, making proactive suggestions, and making sure your team's work is visible and recognised. You manage sideways, aligning marketing with other departments such as sales and spotting opportunities to make a difference across the business. And of course, you also manage down through your reporting lines. It's your role to empower and support your marketing team, ensuring that they feel motivated, productive, and able to contribute.

This makes the manager role a demanding one at any time. However, 2020 is not just any time. In every direction, our colleagues have new needs that we have to anticipate, understand and do our best to meet. And we most likely have to do this while no longer sharing an office space with them. It can feel as though there aren't enough hours in the day. And if we're honest, for much of the last few months, there haven't been.

The remote working time crunch – and what it means for managers

The rapid pivot to remote working has left marketing managers with calendars

blocked out by video calls and other forms of virtual catch-up. This was the experience of virtually every manager that we interviewed for LinkedIn's new Marketing Manager's Survival Guide, which sets out strategies for managing and planning effectively in today's disrupted times.

The managers that we spoke to have risen to the challenge of helping their teams to adjust, and making themselves visible and available in the same way they would be in the office. However, they've quickly discovered that scheduling virtual happy hours or virtual walk-ups ends up blocking out a lot more time than simply grabbing people for a chat.

In the same way, marketing managers have spotted the opportunity to build relationships with colleagues in other teams; colleagues who have more demand for content or digital communication skills – and are more interested than ever in the value that marketing delivers. They've risen to the role of keeping senior managers informed and embraced the value they can add to business strategy. However, all of this comes at a cost in terms of time and energy levels. And it does so at a time when all of us, managers included, have worries about the future – and are feeling the pressure to do more with less.

This is why resilience is quickly becoming one of the most important skills that marketing managers can possess. As LinkedIn's Senior Content Marketing Manager for APAC, Utah Kim, puts it: "Remember the cabin crew announcement in flight advising you to put on your oxygen mask first before helping others. Managers need to take care of themselves so that they can be the best manager they can be to help the team navigate through uncertainties and challenges."

What is resilience – and how can you acquire it?

The LinkedIn Learning instructor and Kellogg School of Business Faculty Member, Tatiana Kolovou, defines resilience as, "the ability to not fold under pressure even if you don't feel calm and confident, to be able to sustain energy throughout highly demanding tasks and to be able to quickly pull yourself together and bounce back, even when you're experiencing a major setback." As such, it's one of the most important capabilities when facing adversity and seeking to recover from it.

The resilience expert and author, Gemma Leigh Roberts, argues that the disruption to working life that we've all experienced this year is adding a new dimension to the value of this capability. Resilience, she says, won't just help you to bounce back – but to bounce forward, helping to draw positives from experiences that seem inherently stressful. "We can take the information that we get from learning how to get through the process to get better in the future," she says. "We can take things from the situation we're now in to be happier, healthier, more productive and more high-performance."

For marketing managers, resilience is crucial to coping with the personal stresses and pressures that we face amid uncertainty – but it's also crucial to our ability to help others find a way to stay productive. "At a time when people crave consistency and stability, a leader must embrace the fact that the only constant is change," says LinkedIn's Senior Director

of Marketing, Ryan Batty. “Change is a necessity. Helping your teams understand that will enable them to develop the agility and adaptability they need not only to make it through times of uncertainty, but to thrive well beyond.”

Maintaining energy levels: the keys to resilience

Resilience, like any skill, can be acquired and strengthened through practice. It can be learned but it must also be earned. And the way to earn it is by committing to safeguarding your own energy levels – no matter how many demands on your time there are.

“You probably know how you best restore your energy,” says Tatiana Kolovou. “You either get it from people around you, something extroverts do, or you prefer to have quiet alone time in order to restore, something introverts do. However you restore your energy, be sure that you practice this important routine during potentially challenging times. You will be better equipped to manage stress if your energy tank is on full load.”

In other words, the best method for managing energy levels and resilience varies with each individual. It’s crucial to understand how you best operate, and to be compassionate to yourself in designing a routine that aligns with that. One of the most striking features of *The Marketing Manager’s Survival Guide* is the range of individual coping techniques that managers have developed. Here are the top tips they shared for staying resilient that could work for you as well:

Prioritise staying rested, well-nourished and hydrated as much as possible

You can’t separate resilience from physical health and wellbeing. The better rested, nourished and hydrated you are, the more responsive and alert you are mentally – and the better able to adapt to new things. Neuroscientists like Dr. Tara Swart warn that the performance of a sleep-deprived brain starts to resemble that of someone who’s been drinking. It means you’re less tolerant – and less able to learn. To build resilience, and react calmly to new and unfamiliar situations, you need to try and keep your body on as even a keel as possible.

There are times when this will feel really difficult. The demands of the last few months mean that many of us have been forced to get by on less sleep each night. Struggles sleeping have been one of the widest reported effects of lockdowns. What’s important though, is to aspire to be as kind to your body as possible. If you’ve

had a tough few weeks, try to schedule some leave to allow yourself to recover. Pay even closer attention to diet and lifestyle with a view to keeping your body healthy. And be as disciplined as you can about exercise. Your resilience ultimately depends on these things. Give yourself permission to prioritise them.

Plan a routine that works for you

Remote working creates plenty of additional challenges for managers. It’s important to balance this by embracing the other side of the remote working package – the potential for flexibility.

Try planning key tasks around times of the day when you feel most naturally energised. If you’re a real morning person, perhaps plan for early starts when you’re raring to go and have fewer interruptions – but balance this by giving yourself a clear time to stop working at the end of the day. Use strategic breaks from tasks to increase productivity and keep your mind fresh. Switching between exercise and work is a great way to look after your physical health while using your working hours more efficiently. Several of the marketing managers featured in our survival guide have adopted the tactic of blocking out time in their calendars for exercise or family commitments. They are working longer hours – but still ring-fencing non-negotiable time that’s important for helping them perform.

Schedule your dopamine hits

Celebrating moments of success is a vital part of coping with challenging times. Doing so encourages the release of the hormone dopamine, which is associated with feelings of pleasure and joy – but also with motivation and a sense of reward. Regular hits of dopamine don’t just make us feel better; they also help us to stay focused and keep looking forward. Part of the feeling of being overwhelmed and ground down by workload comes from being denied these moments. That’s why resilience experts advise trying to plan your calendar in a way that ensures you complete a few tasks (large or small) each day. Ticking off objectives regularly will help to boost morale – and equip you to cope with the longer-term demands you’re working on.

Prioritise to maintain focus and flow

“If you look at my calendar, it seems pretty horrendous,” says Upali Dasgupta, the Marketing Director Asia for customer experience managing platform, Sitecore – and one of the marketing managers featured in our survival guide. “There are calls every day and often no time for

getting work done. I’ve been responding by scheduling time for thinking in my calendar so that people can’t book meetings then. I try to spend time thinking about my priority for the week ahead and try to reschedule meetings that don’t align with that priority so I can focus more effectively.”

Ask for things you would never normally ask for – you might be surprised at the response

In many businesses, the profile of marketing has never been higher and its role in protecting revenue streams and customer relationships has never been more valued. The flipside of this is that marketers have to do more with less resource – fielding increased demands from across the business at a time when budgets often have to be pared back. This creates obvious pressures. As marketing rises up the agenda internally though, you might find that other forms of support are available.

“Content production has been a real pressure point,” says Veronica Valdes, Marketing Manager for the recruitment outsourcing firm, Resource Solutions. “My team need to produce a lot more content in a lot less time and with fewer resources. I’ve been trying to figure out where else in the business I can leverage support from – reaching out to teams that have a bit of spare capacity at this point. That could involve training a PA up on Instagram or taking content that our Learning & Development team has created and adapting it for an external audience. It’s all helping us to stay agile and responsive in a changing situation.”

Greater flexibility and imagination in how teams can help one another out is becoming one of the hallmarks of businesses’ response to professional life during the pandemic. The relationship of marketing to other functions is changing – and there are positive to be found there as well as new pressures. When marketing managers are able to build up their own resilience levels, they give themselves and their teams the best chance of leveraging those opportunities.

Would you like more advice and support for managing through uncertain times? You’ll find it in *The Marketing Manager’s Survival Guide*, which is packed with insights and experiences from businesses large and small. It’s available for free download now.

Source: LinkedIn

MARKETING EDGE Awards celebrates decade of excellence with Sanwo-Olu as Keynote Speaker

By Zion Rufus



H.E. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Executive Governor, Lagos State



Guest Speaker, Tolulope Adedeji, Marketing Director, AB Inbev, West Africa



Emeka Chris Okeke, Group CEO, MediaFuse Dentsu International.



H.E. Prince Dapo Abiodun, Executive Governor, Ogun State



H.E. Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, Executive Governor, Ekiti State

Undoubtedly the most glamorous event in Nigeria's marketing communications industry, the exemplary MARKETING EDGE Awards is gearing up for its 10th anniversary celebrations slated for 16th September, 2022 at the exquisite Harbor Point Hall in Victoria Island, Lagos.

The glamorous event will host the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu as the Award Keynote Speaker, who will address professionals in the marketing communications

industry; and Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, and his Ekiti State Counterpart, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi who will both grace the event as Special Guests of Honour.

Last year, Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu was conferred with the honour of **"Outstanding Political Brand Icon of the Year"** at the MARKETING EDGE Awards of excellence 2021. Similarly, Ekiti State Governor, John Kayode Fayemi was honoured as the Outstanding Political Brand Personality of the Decade.

Commending the MARKETING EDGE Awards at its 9th edition, Sanwo-Olu had acknowledged the contributory efforts of MARKETING EDGE in repositioning the integrated marketing communications profession in Lagos and Nigeria at large.

Expressing his profound appreciation for the prestigious recognition, he said: "I say, thank you very much for your roles in making the marketing communications profession respectable. I cannot deny that our nation, our state and indeed the industry have benefited immensely from your professionalism, ingenuity, and knowledge."

This year, the summit will be led by an impressive selection of iconic personalities, including Guest Speaker, Tolulope Adedeji, Marketing Director, AB Inbev, West Africa; Emeka Chris Okeke, Group CEO, MediaFuse Dentsu International and

Director of Dentsu Ghana; Vytautas Paukstys, CEO Eskimi; Bamigbaiye Omotola, Marketing Director, Pladis Global (McVitie's); and Franklin Ozekhome, CEO, Identiture/ Founder, Tink Africa & Bschoo amongst others.

MARKETING EDGE Annual National Marketing Summit of Brands & Advertising Excellence Awards is recorded as the greatest convergence of industry legends.

The iconic two-in-one event which debuted in 2013 is an initiative of MARKETING EDGE, Nigeria's leading industry magazine.

The award was conceived to reward excellence across the nation's integrated marketing communications spectrum. The awards ceremony has become the acme of events in the calendar of industry stakeholders in Nigeria and a talking point globally.

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Promoting the brand idea... Issue 72, August/September 2021 | N2000 US\$ 6.5 | ISSN 1597-1201 | www.marketingedge.com.ng

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Keeping pace with technology is vital for agencies

By Ralph Tathagata

Different organisations react to innovation differently. For organizations focusing on faster deliveries, reduced spendings, and enhanced user experience, adopting new technology is absolutely essential. For agencies, whether it's for providing clients with up-to-date work, taking advantage of ad tech tools, or finding new platforms, one of the simplest ways to stay updated with tech is to make sure they employ and empower people who are interested and excited about tech, and are able to influence the direction of creativity.

However, with technology changing rapidly, keeping pace can seem impossible because contemporary ad tech tools, social media trends, and hardware might be different within a space of one year.

Recently, experts in Nigeria's Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) industry had

an interactive session, which focused on data and technological adoption. According to the agency practitioners, contemporary agencies need to be adaptive, evolving, trendy and value-oriented while ensuring and building a reliable and valuable client partnership for sustainable growth.

The marketing communication professionals asserted this position during a panel session of the 2022 Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria's (MIPAN) Annual General Meeting (AGM), which had the theme: "The Role of Data and Technology in Economic Development".

With the rapid changes in the tech world, how can agencies make sure that they're keeping pace? More importantly, how can they tell if they're investing in the right technology and skills?

Among the agency technical decision makers, while the role is

sometimes filled by the Chief Technology Officer or the project managers of development teams, it is very important to have tech-proficient people in other creative and leadership positions.

There are many benefits to having these tech decision makers handling different segments of a creative agency. Not only will this allow for the cross-pollination of ideas, but these leaders' interest in tech will likely spread to others.

What's more, it's also important to give employees the space and opportunities to explore new technologies on their own. This exploration is better when self-directed, since they'll be more likely to follow their interests and the specific trends that are relevant to their work.

Therefore, agencies should consider investing in hardware that's just for tinkering and experimenting. For instance, some of the latest

hardware includes the Google Tilt Brush, which allows users to draw in 3D via virtual reality.

Keeping up with technology isn't just about giving employees access to cutting edge hardware. Technological innovation can also stem from software, platforms, and online tools. A complementary path would be investing in additional training and career direction for employees who are interested in technology and internet culture. This could mean sending employees to tech events and conferences or paying for additional training.

From ad tracking solutions to new ways of leveraging social media, it can be easier and more affordable to try new technologies if the clients are willing to test new tools and techniques with the agencies.

Meanwhile, agencies should keep in mind that just as they would pitch a new strategy or concept to a client, any new technologies they pitch should be aligned with the client's goal.

Finally, agencies can use themselves as labs for testing new ideas. When these tests prove successful, their innovations can be an easier sell to clients. As long as agencies have a long-term strategy in place, innovation will become second nature.



Amusan: the next new big brand to reckon with

By Felicia Nwosu

Tobi Amusan, Nigeria's latest world record breaker in Commonwealth

Games is gradually becoming a strong brand to reckon with, not just within the continent, but across the globe. The sports champion, having broken another world record, emerging a Gold winner in the 100m hurdles event at recently held Commonwealth Games, while setting a new bar for games with a record of 12.30 seconds in the process, has gradually re-positioned her brand equity in the eyes of global companies. This remarkable feat, blended with her recent victory some few weeks back, when she broke the World Record with her 12.12 seconds semi-final win before going on to win the world title in Oregon with 12.06s wind-aided time, has further added an edge to her brand as she is smoothly building enthusiastic fan base fueled by a newfound fascination with her craft.

Her journey to stardom took several grilling hours of daily strenuous workout and practice has finally paid off. Soon, she will start reaping the sweet rewards of those rigorous work in the form of brand



endorsement. Amusan, like the biblical rejected stone, which later became the cornerstone will soon be the most sought-after for endorsements by global brands. Following her victory, some big brands in Nigeria have continued to show their solidarity with various congratulatory messages including those that rebuffed the campaign targeted at investing in her and her colleagues.

The first African to win a Gold medal at the World Athletic Championship in the women's 100m hurdle, through her success, is developing a strong brand story and brand personality that is redefining her brand equity in today's sports world. Now, many brands are keen to ride on her success while sports lovers are

keenly watching to see who will make the first move.

Kola Oyenyin, Founder, Venia Group in his excitement over the victory said, "We preach and say when your season of appearance comes, all of a sudden the whole world knows your name. Once it starts, even you can't stop it. Tobi Amusan is an example of that right now. As the commentator said, she's forgotten how to lose. In just two weeks, Tobi Amusan:

- World Champion
- World Record Holder
- Commonwealth Champion (Hurdles)
- Commonwealth 4 x 100m Champion

Amazing! I hope this encourages someone to keep putting in the work, and remain consistent. Even God

honours consistency, it's an unbroken principle. Thank you for giving us something to cheer about. God bless her and God bless Nigeria!

Madu Ibrahim, a Lieutenant Commander in Nigerian Navy, in his comment said, "As John Wooden said "It is too late to prepare when the opportunity presents itself"...indeed Amusan's shine is a reflection of her years of preparedness.. perhaps. if not for her preparedness, she would have missed the opportunities provided to write her name in gold...thank you, Tobi, for making Nigeria proud and for reiterating the need for adequate preparation so when the opportunity comes we won't be left biting our fingers. Enjoy your well-deserved fame and victory."

WE ARE PRIMED FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF OUR CORPORATE EVOLUTION

BRANDS OPTIMAL BOSS

Otis Ojeikhoa is one of the leading lights in the experiential marketing sub-sector of Nigeria's marketing communications industry.

A professional cum entrepreneur, Otis, as he is simply called, is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Brands Optimal, a front-running experiential marketing agency in Nigeria, with footholds in Nigeria and Ghana. The agency was founded in 2010 (but it started operations in 2015) on the principle of doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways.

Before founding his own company, this iconic experiential marketing practitioner had garnered over 15 years marketing and sales experience with nine of those years in Senior Management positions. He was Country Sales Manager at Kodak and Managing Director at Brand Footprint.

It is on record that Otis designed and executed successful major brand-building campaigns for such clients as P&G, Airtel, Cadbury, La-Casera, SABMiller, Pernod Ricard, Diageo, Coca-Cola, Reckitt, and Guinness from Strategy to Execution, Monitoring and Evaluation.

As should be expected of such a deeply experienced and vastly exposed egghead, Otis has been recognised, honoured, and celebrated through several awards. These include, but are not limited to, Experiential Marketing Personality of the Year award which was conferred on him by MARKETING EDGE, Nigeria's Numero Uno, and award-winning brands, advertising, and marketing-focused magazine. He recently added another feather to his colorful cap with the Business Excellence Award at the just concluded Voice Achievers Award 2022 in Banjul, Gambia.

The international Awards ceremony recognizes distinguished Africans and friends of Africa, who have through their professional careers and services positively impacted on human lives.

Commenting on the Awards in an interview with MARKETING EDGE, Ojeikhoa said: "Of all the acknowledgements that I have received, I can say this is one of the most honorable. This award encourages us to do more as a team; to employ more people, to help people grow individually, to help people liberate their creativity,

and to unlock the potential in each and everyone of us to be able to do way more than we are doing; first, for our respective selves and secondly for the business."

The Voice Achievers Award is designed to mentor people to aspire for excellence in all facets of human activities, The Voice Achievers Award recognizes governments, institutions, entrepreneurs as well as charities, social enterprises and businesses that are making proven positive social or economic impact on Africans.

Notably too, the Brands Optimal boss recently launched the Arogi Trauma Care Foundation (ATCF) with a mission to make free counselling and therapy accessible to traumatised individuals, and to bring healing to those who are hurting while helping people lift up burdens of pain by transforming their lives.

Speaking on this, Ojeikhoa said: "Through the financial contribution of Brands Optimal, Arogi is touching lives in immeasurable ways. We have been challenged to make Brands Optimal an excellent business leader and incubator of business excellence, to take the company beyond the sphere of this country, and to touch many more lives outside of our current domain."

"We have continued to empower the people around us to be better human beings to show excellence in kindness, empathy in nurturing, and also in mentorship, so that people can look back and say if not for these people, I wouldn't be where I am."

Continuing, he said, "In the last 3 months, we have over 781 people who have received one form of help or the other for their emotional and mental health experiences. It is amazing how many people are depressed, how many people are unhappy, how many people have not been able to heal from difficult emotional traumas. So this award is an encouragement for us to do more and ask for more help to be able to reach out to more people. And in all of the acknowledgements that I have received, I can say this is one of the most honorable."

Quite significantly, Brands Optimal underwent a corporate rebranding recently which is still being applauded across the industry and even beyond the shores of Nigeria. The rebranding forms the crux of this exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE's AMOS OLADELE, ANIETIE UDOH, and ZION RUFUS.**



Congratulations on the recent rebranding of your agency, Brands Optimal. Let us into what inspired the rebranding.

I think what we have done basically is look at the next phase of Brands Optimal. That is what instructed the rebranding; we asked ourselves, after seven years, what is the next phase? Ideally, we should have had that look like two years ago when Brands Optimal turned five, but it is still better done late than not done at all. So, we needed to refresh the look of the brand, and the next five years of Brands Optimal, that is, what are we going to be doing next? Taking those into consideration, we realized that we needed not to change our policy direction, or vision, but to establish new pillars and structures that will help the vision to be more emboldened. That was why we went about rebranding, which wasn't so elaborate by external look, but internally, a great deal of work has happened, and somewhat a great deal of restructuring has taken place. In doing so, we are now better able to harness the opportunities we see within the next five years. That was actually what instructed the rebranding.

The rebranding effort has seen changes in our outlook in terms of brand designs, logos, colors, and icons, all have changed. We want our brand to be more fluid, more flexible, and of course, more futuristic. That has inspired the new design and icons of the brand. It has also brought to life two new instruments by which we can achieve our policy objectives, vision, and goals.

Can you share with us the symbolism of the rebranding exercise and what they actually intend to communicate?

We wanted to make our outlook simpler yet more powerful; so we created a simple fluid and flexible logo. If you see the logo, it has an infinity sort of sign; but you can identify it as Brands Optimal. The colors have become just two colors to make it simpler to the eye, and again also represent the fact that it doesn't have to be complicated to be powerful.

We are no longer a small agency by any consideration; be it experiential, headcount, depth and wealth of experience, or billing, we cannot consider ourselves a tiny agency anymore. But we wanted to be that strong, yet simple in our approach; quick, flexible, fluid, and very agile. That is the symbolic embodiment of our logo.

Your office is also reflecting some kind of rebranding; does it mean there is also architectural content to your rebranding efforts?

That is just growth. We couldn't fit in the smaller space that we had before and thankfully by God's divine support, we were able to acquire the entire building. So we thought that by the budget we have available work in the space that will again represent the flexibility and simplicity of our internal principles, and they are done in such a way that it supports the camaraderie and team spirit within the team we've got. We have a slumber area where they can sleep if they are tired, we have a play area where they can take a break and play, and the office is even more spacious with flexible creative yet simple designs. It coincided with the period that we also tried to relook the business.

To your various strategic stakeholders, what will differentiate the new Brands Optimal from the old?

A lot. In terms of our offering, we are still offering experiential marketing services, but with the digital application, so we are more fluid like I said. We can be doing activation now and the client will be able to see what is happening in real-time using our applications. In terms of our operations, we have become more fluid, applying digital to how we execute. How we recruit, train, deploy, monitor, evaluate, and apply learning has become sort of digitised in many ways. About 60% of our activations now are running on digital platforms and our apps. Imagine you are having an activation like this and somebody somewhere is already creating content, editing them, and putting back in real-time on the social media platform that is one of many things that we can do now. So now we have a new structure internally that enables us to do that and a whole lot more. But on a bigger scale, we are actually going into film production. We are putting our brands in our films. We have a Netflix series coming up shortly, and we have got some of our prominent brands in the film.

In terms of our offering, we are still offering experiential marketing services, but with the digital application, so we are more fluid like I said. We can be doing activation now and the client will be able to see what is happening in real-time using our applications. In terms of our operations, we have become more fluid, applying digital to how we execute. How we recruit, train, deploy, monitor, evaluate, and apply learning has become sort of digitised in many ways. About 60% of our activations now are running on digital platforms and our apps.

So from the film, there can be content from the brand, and from the brand, we can put content in the film. And again, over and beyond, when a client sees the Brands Optimal logo behind the film that is popular on Netflix, it gives them that pride to say 'I was part of the people that built this brand, and now they are doing films.' That is the vision because it is still about communication and entertainment; we are still going to be using our experience in experiential marketing, creative designs, production, scriptwriting, and entertainment to create enjoyable movies with our brands in them.

Having rebranded a short while ago, how will you gauge the resonance with your stakeholders so far?

Like I said before, it is more internal than external. When we did the rebranding, we did not invite any client to say we have rebranded. Our clients have noticed that the logos have changed, the report style has changed too. The report mechanisms have changed, the response time to briefs has changed, the approach to which we respond to briefs has changed, even our pitch winning rates have changed; the clients will notice all of this but they will



reckon with. We are now going to take the learning and experience in brand communication and creative design into movie production, telling brand stories in movies. So we also want to establish ourselves as a name to be reckoned with in that space. It is a more competitive space but where we are coming from is also a competitive space. So within a short period of time, through hard work, passion, and God's blessing and grace, we have not done badly, we have done enough that at least if we look back, as small as it is, we can be proud of ourselves. So we are going to take that into our second pillar; we are also going to position ourselves to play in a style and leisure environment. The end goal is to be in the future, whether in space, metaverse, or whatever is in the future, that Brands Optimal will be a name that everybody can resonate with. So that whoever wants to tell the story of branding will remember a story that is being told by Brands Optimal. If you are doing movies or videos, it is content creation on a larger scale, but that is not where we envision ourselves. That we are going to play in the digital space is not at the level that would be irrelevant. We want to play such that we are able to tell relevant stories about ourselves and about the brands that we represent. So we see ourselves in the future of marketing communications in style and entertainment. Ultimately, the vision is to tell powerful marketing communications stories.

not attribute it to the rebranding. Because we have always been winning pitches, we have always been doing creative designs, so the change to them might not be significant in terms of how they perceive. They have noticed, but it is not so much about the client, it is more about the internal stakeholders. So if you ask me, how the rebranding has impacted your internal stakeholders, I will say close to 100%. The sense of ownership, the sense of direction, the influence of space, and the result are absolutely amazing. So this rebranding is largely for the internal stakeholders, the team, the core of Brands Optimal.

How capital intensive has it been?

A lot. It is not really about the cost in terms of investment. People have put energy, passion, spirit into what we are doing, and that is unquantifiable. So it is not about the Naira and kobo that has gone into it, the significance is the effort,

passion, commitment, and the willingness of the team to go all out, bend over and beyond what is required, do more for the client, see the business as their own, and see themselves as the MD of the unit they are managing. That is what I calculate, and if you put that into context, it is billions of Naira.

The rebranding has taken a look at the past and it is also projecting into the future; so what future is all of these projecting for the Organisation and how are you charting your way into that future?

The direction of Brands Optimal from the outset has always been to be an icon in brand communication, marketing, and entertainment. So right now we have achieved the first pillar which is brand communication through what we are doing in experiential marketing. We have established ourselves as a brand to

Can you highlight the challenges (if any) that the organisation faced in the first half of 2022?

I like to be honest, as you know, there is always a reward for honesty. We have been faced with all manner of challenges, but the last six months have not been as challenging as some other periods of our lives. So if we look at it from a company health perspective; we are above most of our target points, and we can only be grateful to God for His grace, and the team for the passion and dedication that they have put into it. What has been challenging in the past six months has always been challenging forever; People. You know, you work with people that you don't even know that much; you have people all over the country. The difficulty in trying to control the process execution, reporting, to ensure there are standards maintained across board, whether there are 500 or 1000, how do you maintain consistency across those boards, how do you ensure the message is not diluted, that is the challenge we have always faced and that is still the biggest challenge that we face outside other

microeconomic difficulties like access to funding and the turbulent environment in which we operate. So the core challenge is still how to get to standardize with people. You know it is sometimes hard to get quality people who share in your dreams or when you have different people scattered across the country, it is difficult to maintain consistency across such profiles, so you have to do a lot more. So that is the challenge. But with the digitisation of our recruiting process, training, and deployment, we have been able to maintain a great deal of consistency. Facing challenges such as infrastructure, poor network, and insincerity of people is still a challenge. But it is not a new challenge, it has always been there.

Professionals have identified that “collaboration is the new competition”. What is your perception of collaboration?

I absolutely agree. The Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) just finished its AGM in Asaba and I was the chairman of the planning committee. The discussions that went on before the AGM, through the AGM, and the takeout from the AGM were about collaboration. How do we as competitors create an environment where we can share competitively; be uniform and accessible to all, without discriminating, nor being disproportional to all, and still allowed to be creative and competitive? That is healthy collaboration and that is what we have discussed as a unit and as an industry. A place where we can establish such structures and mechanisms, co-share, and co-create, but not be in extreme negative competition. A sort of platform that helps you do better, execute better, cost better, but still competitive; so that is my expectation of collaboration, and we are working on it as a unit in EXMAN.

Individually, I believe collaboration is only possible when both parties have common principles because you cannot collaborate with someone that doesn't share in your principles. It is difficult to work like that. If for example my principles will allow me to work with a client that will pay me thirty days after, and your principle is to work with clients that will pay you thirty days before, how do we work together? It will be difficult. But where there are common interests and principles, yes please let's collaborate. We have a lot of work that we have done with some agencies. There is a client that I advised that since this pitch has been concluded and there are two winners, call both agencies, which we are one of,



and let's brainstorm production and say ok this is this guy's idea, how do we make it better? This idea came from Agency A, how do we make it better? This idea came from Agency B, how do we make it better? Then we now take note of that commonality, now that we have a more powerful document to go and execute; that is collaboration, but it is done in such a way that it is healthy. When you are activating for the brand, you are no longer seeing the other agency as your competitor but as your collaborator, co-sharing. That is what I see as collaboration.

The word has been thrown around a lot, but really, how do you collaborate without revealing your competitive secret? It is easy to say, but the first thing is, we all face an existential threat that is competition, because we know if we don't resist it or fight it, it will kill us. So how do you open yourself to an enemy that wants to kill you?

As a result of global inflation and economic headwinds, consumer behavior has become even more erratic, how is Brands Optimal mitigating these challenges, and diversifying its strategies to retain consumers?

The first thing you should know as I said before is this, consumer behavior didn't start to change today, it has always changed, it is still changing, and will always be changing. Your lifestyle isn't the same as your parents'. Your parents' aren't the same as their parents'. So lifestyle has never been static, it has always been evolving; it is cultural, and it will always evolve. There has never been a time when consumer behavior was static and everybody could completely understand it; so what we always do is to find the insight and that moment that will help you to create engagement platforms that are relevant to

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that moment. So through insight, you are able to engage meaningfully. If I don't understand what your passions are at any given time, I will not be able to speak to you or engage you. So what we do is what we have always done, but this time around, we use different tools. Like I said, we have digitised our recruitment process. Now we work with agencies that help us to develop apps or templates that if we are having any brainstorming we can query the template and receive fresh insights from whatever demographics we are dealing with. That weren't there before. So it is not that consumer behavior has suddenly started becoming more volatile, it has always been volatile. And it changes based on what is happening; there is war now, and consumer behavior has changed. When there was a lockdown, there were changes in consumer behaviors. As far as we are human beings it is always going to change. What will happen is; you find what is relevant at every given time and have new ways of tapping into those insights, and new ways of using them.

So we have new ways of understanding consumer insights in the moment, and new ways of engaging them, being with them wherever they are; in meaningful, relevant, and authentic ways. And that is not new. I think at times we see these things as if they are just happening for the first time. It is not the first time lockdown has happened in the world, it is not the first time anything is happening. When there was a lockdown I said to myself 'once this lockdown is lifted, we are going to be back to our old ways.' There will be slight adjustments; some things will change, but largely, we are going to be back to our old ways. I was having a debate with a client and I told the client 'trust me, we are still a very traditional market, if you take all of your advertising spend to digital marketing, you will lose. Because 80% of those

we are trying to target have mobile phones, but hardly do they have enough money to buy data; so they switch on and off their data. They are not always 100% online for you. That is the truth. Yes, there is a percentage that is always online, but that percentage will not make you break even. So we still need to create avenues where we can traditionally reach these persons in the market and stores.

So the truth is, we are still a very traditional market, but that doesn't mean we are not embracing technology; we gave people buying spaces in the Metaverse, we understand how it works, and have we even fully utilised the internet in this economy? No, we haven't. Do we have 100% internet penetration in our economy? We don't even have up to 60% internet penetration. So, those things are there, they are good to be spoken about, but we cannot completely extricate those from our traditional way of living.

Yes, I understand the consumer will continue to evolve. I am a student of consumerism. Consumer behavior, from the day God created this world, has continued to change and will continue to change. There will be new trends; look at it now, trends of the 1970s is what our young boys are indulging. You are saying millennials, GenZs, the baggy shirts, and oversized T-shirts that are in vogue for them now were worn by 2pac when they started in the early 90s and late 80s, it's coming back. So, oversized T-shirts is not a new trend, it was there in the old days. If they play any 2pac song they might not know it, but if they see his picture, they can say 'oh this is my guy, I like that shirt' because that is what they are wearing. We just need to understand what works in the right moment. Even if you are old school, and you are in marketing, you should know what happens in every segment. You should understand the consumer behavior



in each segment. I always tell my kids: 'the fact that you are in your 40s, 50s, or 30s doesn't mean you cannot understand how the teenagers, millennials, or GenZs behave. You can ask and research to understand how they behave and see how you can put yourself in their space to be able to engage them.' That is marketing, that is my job. I can put myself in the space of a teenager, I may not look like them, I may not act like them, but I should be able to understand how they behave. If I'm not able to understand how they behave, then I should be selling gravel or cement.

Against the backdrop of creativity as a means to effectiveness, why do you think clients still trust in experiential marketing for brand building?

First, experiential marketing, just like every other marketing practice, is a creatively founded enterprise. If you are not creative, you cannot find new ways of engaging the consumers. As we rightly said, the attention span has become shortened and the behaviour is volatile, so we need to ensure that we find new ways to catch them quickly and keep them volatile. You need to be creative to find the right insights; first, the right idea that fits that insight, the right platform upon which that idea will be carried for them to be able to have meaningful engagement. So, creativity is the bedrock of any successful marketing enterprise. You must be able to psycho-analyse your target audience, micro-target him, and psycho-analyse him to know what his pain points are, the things that bring him joy, discover his vulnerability, and open him up for engagement.

If you cannot get your consumers to be vulnerable, you cannot engage them. So once you are able to find that, engagement becomes easier, and if you keep it consistent, then you have done your job. So, creativity will make that possible. Now, let me tell you why brands have found it more profitable to continue to use experiential marketing than any of the other tools in the marketing communications mix; experiential marketing may not be able to reach one million people at once like radio, TV, and outdoor will do, but the impact experiential marketing will be able to create is what leads to conversion, purchase, repeat purchase, and loyalty. And that is what the client is looking for. It is only experiential marketing that can empirically demonstrate that because of this message or engagement I sold this number, instantly, in real-time. That is why in experiential marketing we say, that



experiential marketing is a sword or a bullet that strikes an inch wide, but a mile deep. It is not able to reach many hundreds of people at the same time, but if it reaches 100 or 50 people, it has captured the heart of an even larger number. That's why you can go into a store, after being engaged, you buy something and you ask yourself 'why did I buy this thing?' It has happened to all of us, that is the power of experiential marketing. Advertising might now be able to do that for you. So, yes, each of those instruments in the communication mix has the respective roles that they play. Some are designed to create that broad, generalized awareness, and some are created to reinforce certain messages, but experiential marketing is created to drive conversion and sales, and that is what the brand wants ultimately.

What are the changes you expect to see in the second of half 2022?

A lot. The industry is growing. Regardless of the economic difficulties, many of the brands I have worked with, at least those that we have seen their figures and data, show that they are growing across many of the categories. So if the client's business is growing, our business is growing. If agencies are complaining, that means clients have cut budgets. And if clients cut budgets; that means they are not meeting their volume target or sales target, or whatever target that they have set. So we are a direct barometer to measure the performance of the brands. And right now we see a positive trajectory, and that means there's growth. There has been some slow down in the second quarter and we can attribute that to the rainfall and heightened level of insecurity, and all the political activities that happened in the last quarter. But we are also seeing signs that things are picking up, we are seeing new briefs, we are seeing an expansion of

the scope of existing projects, and these are signs that the second half of the year will build up as it has always traditionally done. This time it slows down, but there is a lot of excitement and build-up, and towards the last two months of the year the industries are gored with activities and a lot of excitement. That is the possibility that I see; there's going to be native growth climbing out of this slow down into a more positive closure for the year.

I think EXMAN has to be given some kudos for some of the industry-changing initiatives that have been carried out. We are now seeing a reduction in payment terms; some from 140 days to 40, 45 days. Do you know what that means to your revenue, to your profit margins? If you are paying interest of 3% monthly, you multiply it times 3, that is about 9%; if you are having 9% savings or 9% deposited to your bottom line; if that was a billion, for instance, that is 100million to your bottom line straight. So you see there has been a sudden expansion in our profitability. It's not yet there, there has also been inflation that is impacting that, but what EXMAN is doing is impacting our practice positively. There is also the plan to set up co-sharing platforms, but most important is the reduction in payment terms and willingness of companies to pay agency registration fees and all those things that financially positively impact the practice. And if the industry is growing financially, then that means the economy is growing, because, at the end of the day, it is financial growth that is one of the key measures.

How do you see experiential agencies, Brands Optimal, in particular, taking advantage of the political electioneering dispensation?

I don't know to what extent experiential marketing is playing a role in this particular electioneering season beyond what has always happened. Doing one-on-one contact marketing, knocking on doors, organising campaigns, and doing rallies. I see experiential marketing playing some sort of role in that space. To be honest, because of the lack of awareness on the part of the managers of such campaigns, this whole fragile structure of the industry, and the ease at which anybody can enter and play, anybody that is having a role to manage a campaign has a brother that can do the activation. So there's that level of fragmentation, there is also personal interest. So anybody can do anything; indigen can become a road show planner, I am not saying it is bad, all I'm saying is the fragmented nature of the structure makes

it quite difficult to measure the exact role that we play other than the traditional role. But we also see some beautiful campaigns coming out, whether they are driven by experiential marketing or creative agencies, I don't know; but we see a lot of powerful campaigns that are actually not just only shifting recruitment, but they are also now changing opinions. Like this OBIent sort of campaign, really sweet, simple, and youthful, catching a lot of fire, building a lot of momentum, and potential, that could be what marketing would do, or PR. So I can't really say that I know to a large extent what role experiential marketing is playing in this current political dispensation. I don't have data, but what I see is that any campaign manager has a brother that is able to do road shows.

Then in terms of what Brands Optimal is doing, my principles will not allow me to tell lies. The brands that I work for tell stories that have been tested, there is an agency that tests every story you are about to tell. If you have any claims, those claims are tested. So if I go to the field to tell any claim, they are true and tested claims. But I will not go and sell anybody's image that I don't personally believe in or have any empirical data to suggest that whatever stories I'm telling are true.

You received another award recently, how do you feel about it?

The truth is, this world has become so small that you put something online and you think it's just you and your immediate environment that it is exposed to, but you find out it is exposed to the entire universe. When we won the award in Ghana for African Experiential Agency of the Year, I was thankful to God. I am not one for Awards because for me, once my client is happy with my job, that is an award for me. But if somebody says 'I want to thank you for doing what you are doing and encourage you to do more, here is a personal prize', I will humbly accept that and not make so much noise about it, put it in our locker, and whenever we see it, it will inspire us to do more. So that many more persons will be impacted by what we do, and if it comes with acknowledgment, so be it. The plan is not to gain any validation from anyone, it is to give self-validation and fulfillment of a purpose, and if that comes with someone saying 'welcome guys', why not, we are not obsessed with that, that is not why we do what we do.

What drives you?

There is just this continuous feeling that



'you are not doing anything so special more than anyone else'. It is the hunger to do more. For me it is just to do more, there is just that fire to keep doing more. And there is a dedication, of course, if I quantify it, I think it's just God. I believe in God, and I believe God has sent me on an errand, that is where the fuel is coming from. Honestly, I think the fuel has to be divine because I can't really pinpoint what it is I am trying to catch. I just feel that there is a purpose for my life, and that purpose is the burning fire; until I achieve it, maybe I am not going to rest. And now I am beginning to see I am here to do good. I have been sent to this world to do good, so it is that good that I try to do that is my passion.

What is your message to the young ones?

First, my message will be 'dedication pays'. Whatsoever you do, you have to be dedicated. Secondly, it is easier said than done, but you have to find a purpose for your life. There is a message that has been given to you to deliver; find what that message is. And when you find the purpose, put a lot of commitment every minute. Full commitment will lead to the birth of a passion building in you

or a habit. You can either become so passionate about something or it becomes a habit. Then, patience is important; to be honest, nothing happens without it. Today, Brands Optimal started fully about seven years ago; in seven years, we have built up in billions, and we didn't start building in billions, there was a time we were struggling to even get one million to do a job. But before then, there was a lot of patience, doing the right thing, waiting for the right time. So patience is important. You cannot short-circuit the process. Lastly, find the right attitude. Most of our young people have very bad attitudes; there is a saying that your aptitude can take you to the beginning, but to go farther or higher into your altitude, you need the right attitude. So attitude is very important, it is not taught in school, it is you choosing to be of best behavior. I am encouraging the younger ones to develop the right behavioural patterns; patience, kindness, empathy, love, forgiveness, and sympathy. These things won't take anything from you; they will only impact you more positively. They are to imbue in you the right way to look after people and remove every element of greed, impatience, and intolerance from you.

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ARCON LAW: Has Daniel finally come to judgement?

Recently promulgated bill signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari to regulate the practice of advertising and advertising practice in all aspects and ramifications may have finally come at the least expected time by most stakeholders in the Nigerian marketing and advertising eco-system.

Reason? Since it was signed into law and made known to the general public especially those involved in the business of advertising and the advertising business, especially the client companies the law has been creating unimaginable ripples amongst all key stakeholders.

To be specific, President Buhari has just signed into a law, a bill seeking to allow the advertising regulatory agency to operate as the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, ARCON in line with its mandate of regulating the advertising industry in Nigeria. The assented bill, according to government has repealed The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (Registration etc) Act, Cap 47, Laws of the federation of Nigeria, 2004 and enacts the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) Cap, 2022, recognising ARCON as the



apex authority for the Nigerian advertising industry.

By this law, it has become the statutory responsibility of ARCON to make provision for the regulation and control of advertising in all its ramifications while creating the advertising offences tribunal amongst other powers.

Earlier before this giant leap by the Federal government on the new ARCON law, the industry has remained largely ungoverned or to put it mildly improperly governed with major challenges posed by the marketing and advertising environment. The industry which consists business operators in media advertising, creative



advertising agency, Experiential, Out of home advertising, the client companies as well as the new entrant, the digital agencies had hitherto functioned with impunity. The former regulator, APCON was seen long before now as a toothless bull-dog, which only barked but could not bite. While the brand owners who pay the bills to other sectoral groups in advertising also call the shots. In this case, agencies and media owners became lap-dogs and as such treated as slaves. Clients and agency relationship were by then a reflection of master servant.

It is the client companies that sells his products, he will fix the prices of his products, he will be turn the person to determine what to pay and when to pay. The vendors and partners involved in the project carried out had no say on when, he would be paid after executing the job, yet he cannot but wait until the advertiser was willing and ready to pay. But the same advertiser would not for any reason sell his products on credit to his customers out there in the market.

Speaking at the official unveiling of the new law at a well attended media event, the Director General, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo aid the new Act is important because it will determine, administer, monitor and enforce compliance by persons and organisations on matters relating to advertisements, advertising and marketing communications in Nigeria, whether of a general or specific

nature. He further stated that the new law was enacted with the sole purpose of establishing a council for advertisements and marketing communications as the apex regulatory authority for the Nigerian advertising industry, adding that the law makes provision for the regulation and control of advertising, ensure the protection of general public and consumers, as well as promote local content and entrench the best international practices and others.

Since the law was unveiled, there has been ripples, rumblings and grumblings amongst some critical sectors. While some have hailed the new law as timely and long over-due. Others in the client companies have been largely unhappy and dissatisfied over what they termed "too far reaching and unduly draconian".

A cross section of members of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) who would not want their names mentioned have expressed great misgivings about the new law as they alleged that the law will cripple most of their businesses, while eroding foreign investors interest in the country. They however disclosed that ADVAN, their umbrella body will engage ARCON on how to make it more humane so that it can be implementable.

The ADVAN members further disclosed that their sectoral group may not hesitate to challenge the new law in courts if their engagement fails to yield expected results.

For the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, (AAAN) the new law is long overdue as members believe it will bring some level of sanity and level playing field to the beleaguered sector. Similar views were held by members of Media Independents Association of Nigeria. The umbrella group for practitioners in the media buying and planning

sector is of the view that the new ARCON law will definitely help to enforce the long envisaged reform of the industry.

Hailing the new law enacted, President of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) Mr. Emma Ajufo said the enactment is a very bold move by the federal government as he believes the law will help grow the industry while creating more employment as well as the sustainability and growth of local agencies. He however stated that his group has forwarded the new law to its legal advisors with a view to getting a better appreciation and interpretation of the law.

Similarly, the Association of Voice-Over Artistes, AVOA Nigeria has expressed delight in the new ARCON law. Stating that it is the beginning of a new dawn of growth and development for the local talents. The association in a statement by their President, Mr. Segun Arinze, "the new regulation which bans the use of foreign models and voice-over artists in all marketing communications will encourage the growth of the creative industry in the country as well as enable local talents to thrive.

His words:

"We say it is a welcome development. It is an enabling regulation that favours the local industry especially at a time when Nigeria is in dire need of sufficient platforms for its teeming population. This is a clear demonstrative of responsiveness on the part of ARCON."

Judging by the growing support for the new ACRON law across various industries, it is not in doubt that ARCON is the great elixir the industry may have been waiting for. As it is popularly held, with ARCON Daniel has finally come to judgement.

OUR CORE VALUE IS INNOVATION AND INTEGRITY

NIMBUS BOSS



In this interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, Wale Adegoke, the Chief Executive Officer of Nimbus Media Limited, a leading Digital Out-of-Home agency, discusses germane industry issues such as standardisation, regulation, collaboration, consumer preferences, behaviours and challenges. More importantly, he speaks on his agency's ten years brand trajectory, philosophy, repositioning, service offerings, expansion plans, expectations for the second half of 2022 and anniversary.

How has the company been coping with the current economic headwinds and inflation?

The company began in 2011, but we got our first client in 2013. We received the first cheque in 2013, while I was still employed elsewhere. That was the start of the business for me. We witnessed growth from one location to several locations until the headwinds of COVID-19 pandemic broke out around December, 2019.

So, 2019 was good until the headwinds of Covid-19 kicked in and things became challenging. We had to contact some of our partners to address the situation because several customers informed us that they were withdrawing ads because people were not going out anymore. As you will recall, people were not even allowed to leave their homes for a while because of the lockdown.

Fortunately, we were able to speak with several of our partners since we are a revenue-generating company working with other companies who own real estate and places of public interest. Our partners clearly understood that they make money when we also do. So, that helped us to manage our costs. In addition, we operate a team environment with open conversations and communication about what the company is going through. As time passed, we were able to weather the storm of COVID-19.

After COVID-19, we began to look inward to see how we could provide greater value and how we can be more responsive to our clients while improving service delivery and making it more cost-effective.

There have also been challenges such as the current global energy crisis, and as you are aware, most of our platforms are digital and rely on power. These platforms are also in well-lit areas, so, by extension, a lot of diesel is being expended. We are all aware that diesel prices have quadrupled since the beginning of the year, and while this is part of our input, we cannot just tell a client, "The price of diesel has doubled; thus our pricing has increased."

We operate with a rate card regimen and price standardisation, especially because many of our clients are big businesses with several processes; some of their processes include third parties that support them in managing things. So, it's not simple for us to pass on the cost, but it's been a collective effort to keep things running well. We are working to move forward with all the plans we have set in place, and we have made some progress with them. We will continue to do so.

On a larger scale, how do you think the advertising industry is mitigating these challenges?

There have been budget cuts. I believe we live in a time when many different methods exist to reach people. I noted in an interview a few weeks ago that when I started this business, the television screen was the primary screen for everyone. But right now, the main screen for everyone is the phone screen, the primary screen that can enter our pockets and follow us everywhere. So, people's attention, which is what we're battling for, is now a significant percentage of this, and even phones are now equipped with a lot of techs to help you measure how much time you're spending on the phone.

I spend roughly four hours on my phone daily, and this is just me. I also have a two-hour commute going and coming, and I believe I sleep for nine hours, so the day is about over. So, how are we going to get people's attention?

As a result, a lot of money is flowing into online advertising, and the Nigerian marketing communications industry is likewise becoming more sophisticated with internet advertising. Now I'm seeing that brands that advertise on the internet realise that, while advertising on the internet is nice, they get more credibility from advertising on traditional media. This is because, with internet advertising, your audience is wondering, "I see the advert, but I don't know if anyone else is seeing it. I might be the only one seeing the advert."

But when you advertise in traditional media, you know that everyone is watching. So, if this brand is coming out and everybody can hear them saying this, they must be credible. Or if they can be on a billboard and everyone sees them, they must be credible.

So, coming back to your question about how the industry is, I will say not only in Nigeria but in Africa, the industry has started getting more sophisticated in leveraging traditional and digital. It's all about being creative and experimenting to see how it works. And how can they work together? So, it's not necessarily a situation where you have to rob Peter to pay Paul, but a situation where there can be a level of synergy.

All of this is to the client's benefit in the long run. The share of mind you gain with that kind of correct synergistic

omnichannel strategy lasts longer and yields greater results for the customer in terms of the lifetime value of that audience and how the industry deals with it.

Budget cuts mean you have to be more efficient about how you use what is available to you, and in terms of digital, you can't ignore it.

How will you describe your response to these changes in consumer preferences and behaviours informed by the economic challenges?

At the end of the day, the money clients spend on us is paid for by the consumer. I also consume a variety of goods. I've also seen a significant spike in the cost of various products. I understand that the inflation situation is not limited to Nigeria. It is a result of a global crisis resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, whereby big economies provided massive stimulus packages. Then some small countries closed their markets, and there was always going to be a ripple effect even if the global economy is still expected to recover.

Unfortunately, this year, a massive war in Europe has come with global consequences. So, every single customer is feeling this all around the world. Customer preferences are now looking at 'how can I save money', 'how can I avoid spending on some things', and 'how do I spend on the more important things'? But the truth is that people will still be people. People will still eat, and people will still go out. They will still buy essential things. Research has even shown that people spend more on entertainment during a recession because there seems to be some mental depression they need to escape.

So, looking at the kind of clients that have been spending money now, it is still the regular suspects, and new companies that are trying to help people to save their money, spend their money better, invest their money, and I think that is where fintech companies come in.

A lot of funding came into the African tech space. Nigeria has up to half of the funding for tech. Many of these companies don't have enough exposure, but they have brilliant products. They are digital-first; they are just trying to do Instagram ads, Twitter ads, and maybe Google SEO. If I am doing my SEO, Google is a great place, but one of the best ways to get more people to search for you on Google is if you are on a billboard or the radio.

So, I think customer preferences always seek more information, and people are buying more data on their phones. I told you about our primary screens being phones; people are spending their time on phones. But, if you can, customer preferences will make them search for you on Google. Suppose you are able to be in the airspace, on the airwaves, in the line of sight where they can see your brand and

search on Google for you. In that case, that is a plus for you, a plus for your brand, and the residual effect of that on your brand and the preferences of people haven't changed much; even though they have less money to spend, they are still going to spend. So, it comes down to which brands bring the right messages to them in the right places.

Tell us about the past ten years; how has it been?

The last ten years have been a roller coaster. Running a business in Nigeria has been like a school of learning about the advertising business and business in its entirety. I started out not as an advertising person but as a project manager and engineer. I came in from that background, so my mentality of how things should be done was tailored towards that.

But I quickly learned that things are quite different in this space, and I have been on that learning journey. We started out by wanting to do things differently; we knew there were huge billboards in Lagos, but we wanted to do more.

The huge digital billboard you see by Invent Media when you are getting off the Third Mainland Bridge, the one that looks like a sail, was the first billboard that inspired me in Nigeria. Of course, there are other digital billboards elsewhere, but those didn't leave any imprint on my mind. And it is the reason I am saying this, being the first to do something doesn't necessarily mean that you are the one that will be remembered; you have to do it in a way that people will remember you, not just being the first.

So, we started indoors and said ok, we want to put digital screens indoors. I'll say we are not the first to do that, but I believe that we are the first to do it right in a way that we came up with ideas to make it aesthetically pleasing. We wanted the owner of the venue to see the value. That informed how we went about doing procurement, creating the platform and everything, including how we engage with our hosts. Remember, we are not on the roadside; we are inside somebody's space. We did that and tried to do it at Tejuosho, Yaba, my co-founder and I.

We got the approval and we were good to go; this was in 2011, but God had other plans. The project went into receivership; the owner/funder of the project took over, meaning that the person that gave us that approval didn't have the authority to do so, and we were out in the cold. Much later, we got to Ikeja City Mall, and were able to execute there.

We executed the project in 2012 (remember I mentioned that I collected my first cheque in 2013), which tells you a little about resilience. Within the timeframe, there was a lot of upkeep and a lot of marketing leg work to do, there is no way I can speak about it without speaking about some key partners like Media Perspective.

At that time, we were able to work with P&G through a partnership with Media Perspectives. They gave us the opportunity to showcase P&G brands at the mall; we did that to the best of our abilities, and that was one of the first jobs that we got that helped us. We were able to move from one venue to two venues, then three venues. Now we are at 13 venues (shopping malls alone), and we have more than 10 venues we are unveiling in the next few months.

The team keeps changing as people come and go; it's been a rollercoaster. But we are not where we were, and I am bold to say, 'this is just the beginning.'

What are some of the notable challenges you faced during this period?

First, I'll discuss financial challenges. As I mentioned earlier, I am not an advertising person; I needed to go through a period of learning. I did APCON exams a few times, got stuck on one level, and abandoned it for a few years till I returned in 2015 to do it.

Getting myself acquainted with the people in the industry, pitching for jobs, showcasing what you have, and meeting the right people haven't been a walk in the park. Still, I am a little bit blessed with being able to connect with people, and people seem to connect with me, too, so people that I didn't know have now become good friends of mine. I have made new friends along the way and have built a little reputation for keeping our word.

Clients might be finicky sometimes; they want things done a certain way, which isn't always simple. Imagine you have operations in 13 locations, and a particular customer needs a campaign up and running in 13 locations right now. They want evidence of execution immediately and tell you they are paying you, so you have to get it done. So far, our team has consistently delivered without disappointing anyone. And it is a personal sacrifice, as well as one of our core values as a company. Our core values are integrity and keeping our word.

I must also mention that the issue of delayed payment comes up a lot because of the complexities of the industry; there is a fragmentation in our industry that has caused that to happen, but it is not a problem that I will dwell on, because it is general. On the other hand, personal discipline and goodwill have helped us in many ways to still be here.

What brand positioning have you established in the minds of your clients and consumers so far?

The brand positioning is pretty straightforward, 'it is not roadside'. But once it's outside of the roadside, then you can start talking about Nimbus. We don't work on the roadside. I will put it like this; we have fulfilled roadside briefs for our

clients by engaging third-party inventory. Because of our trusted status with those clients, we fulfilled those things for them, but that is not our core. So, our positioning is Out-of-Home and not roadside. Our positioning is to be innovative, creative, and to leverage technology in all that we do.

You launched an initiative to commemorate your 10th anniversary. What is it all about?

The initiative is not a new one, even though it seems like we are just launching it. It used to be called "Nominate a Charity", and we started it in 2017. It was inspired by a study. As I was studying advertising, I was also studying companies in more developed and sophisticated climates like Europe and the U.S., where companies do things differently. I saw a creative competition that similar companies with similar product offerings as us were doing.

I was inspired to think of how we can do something similar to enable people to leverage our platform, but we also wanted to pick the best people who bring the best value proposition. We decided to reward nonprofit organisations that are doing something altruistic to support society, and that was why we named it "Nominate a Charity".

The whole point was for our social media followers to pick their charity of choice and nominate to us, and then we would curate the ones that are most popular and then create a place where they will choose, and people will vote. You enter your email address and vote. We have had over ten thousand votes for the last editions from 2017, 2018 and 2019; but COVID-19 happened, so we couldn't do it in 2020.

And in 2021, we found an organisation that we felt what they were doing was simply amazing, so we gave it to them; it was Morainbow Down Syndrome Organisation. They did a brilliant photoshoot on children with Down syndrome wearing different traditional attires. It was just amazing, so we connected with the people pushing that and supported them with those pictures around the mall. That was how we did that in 2021.

Now that it is our anniversary, we have been able to overcome whatever challenges we experienced during COVID-19. But there are so many individuals doing things outside of charity.

In my opinion, what Nigerian society needs right now is productivity. I don't believe there are enough productive individuals in Nigeria; we are not meant to have this much deprivation when there is so much abundance around us. But we have this problem because people are not productive. It's not their fault that many folks sleep through the day and do nothing constructive.

So, we looked at that and saw the need to support those doing something productive, even if it's for profit. We have changed the format, so it is not just about charity. We want to give this to support whoever it is, whatever they are doing. So far, everyone sees it and says it is fantastic, it is adding to society, and that is what gave birth to the "Nimbus Aid Project".

So this year, we are going to be doing a specific focus on women-led small businesses and pre-seed tech companies. We are working with partners well-versed in this field to choose 20 finalists, but we will reward only 10 finalists. So those 20 finalists will be showcased on our site, and there will be opportunities for people to vote. The public will vote for the ten organizations and each will receive N2 Million in airtime on the Nimbus network to promote their product and business. We will also provide extensive coverage before, during, and after the competition. In essence, the value is considerably more than the N2 million we are providing because of the exposure and impact on their businesses. I, for one, am excited to see what it will be like. We are quite thrilled about it.

You recently rebranded. Could you give us some highlights of this rebranding and expansion efforts?

Yes, we rebranded, but we did not change our name; our logo was modified. In fact, we continue to use the same colours for our logo. So, what made us alter our logo? We've been using that logo since the beginning when our designer offered us so many possibilities, and my cofounder and I loved it. We've been using it for ten years.

When we initially chose the logo, the first screen was television, but today it's a smartphone. Smartphones have a digital interface in which application logos appear in a basic, uncomplicated manner that can easily be shown on a phone, a browser tab, and other digital expressions such as a Google ad.

We already have over 180 million mobile customers in Nigeria, which is growing as more people get smartphones. The future is obviously digital, especially with the introduction of things like the Google subsea cable in Nigeria. So, to properly harness our digital future and blend in, we decided to update our logo to something more contemporary.

We are also developing several offerings that are digital-first and completely technologically enabled. For example, we are building a marketplace like we previously aided some of our customers in procuring roadside audiences. Though it is not our positioning, we are able to provide this for clients by collaborating with partners and their facilities.

We have built this marketplace for some of these inquiries to be better served,



The brand positioning is pretty straightforward, 'it is not roadside'. But once it's outside of the roadside, then you can start talking about Nimbus. We don't work on the roadside. I will put it like this; we have fulfilled roadside briefs for our clients by engaging third-party inventory. Because of our trusted status with those clients, we fulfilled those things for them, but that is not our core. So, our positioning is Out-of-Home and not roadside. Our positioning is to be innovative, creative, and to leverage technology in all that we do.

bringing standardisation and transparency into that. We would have a tab where people could see a marketplace. People

would have opportunities to come in and load their sites on our marketplace. This is an opportunity for us to be able to do more for our clients. We are also equally excited about another product called "Nimbus Interactive".

I spoke about the phone earlier. Everyone that enters the mall has a smartphone, and normally if you put a QR code on the screen, you should be able to scan it. If you also see a URL on the screen, you should be able to put it into your browser. Then we have created a platform whereby if you scan a QR code or put a URL into your browser, you will be able to see your avatar or username on the OOH screen and participate in quiz games.

What are your expansion plans?

We already have a strong presence in Nigeria. We already have four venues in Lagos, two in Ibadan, two in Abuja, and venues in Owerri, Enugu, Onitsha, and Kano. So, with the new collaboration on board, we will have 10 additional venues; six in Lagos and four outside Lagos. We are currently working on expanding our presence. Still, we are involved in so many collaboration negotiations that when they come to fruition, we will have the ability to expand our footprint. We are very excited to expand our footprint.

What are your expectations for the second half of 2022?

It must be better than the first half. It is already showing improvement, and we have huge expectations since we want to launch many things, including our Nimbus Aid Project, Nimbus Interactive, our anniversary event, Nimbus Talks, and a new relationship that will gain us 10 more sites. The team will be really busy, and we are very thrilled about the possibilities of what people will accomplish with what we are launching.

Also, we have been planning some big campaigns with one or two of our clients, and some of them are about to start, which we are excited about. There is nothing like the rush of execution when you have been planning something, and it's time to execute, the resources are on the ground for the execution, and you want to impress your clients.

Those are some of the current plans for the year's second half. And I'm sure a lot of stuff will come up that we didn't even think of because that's how it usually goes. The biggest project we handled last year happened around September. And we had no clue what was going to happen during the year. I'm still anticipating a slew of activities before the end of the year.

The industry is tilting towards collaboration as the new competition, how is Nimbus Media riding on this new idea?

We are a very collaboration-centric

company. For me, even before all these things happened, one of my mentors, the present chairman of the company, Mr. Fagade, always says that the world has moved past competition into collaboration. Over time, I've come to realise that if you want to please your customer, you must have that as your North Star; and if satisfying your customer is your North Star, you don't need to focus on your competition all of the time, but you do need to focus on your customer a lot of the time.

So, that is what we try to do. We try to focus on our customer, and then in the line of focusing on our customer, things will come up from this conversation that will show that we don't have everything to meet your needs, then the next thing will be, 'but we know who can', and we bring them on board.

Having a collaborative mindset is at the core of what we do; in fact, the business is built on partnerships. I cannot overstate the importance of collaboration and how open we are to collaboration as a company.

Can you tell us some of the philosophies that guide you?

A very simple philosophy from one of my mentors is, "You have to accelerate receipt and delay disbursement". It's quite simple, but it works wonders. Another one is, "Communication is so important in working with people". Communication is essential; it is not always easy, but it is ideal. Clear communication helps with management, so if you can have clear communication, it helps with sales (of course, it helps if your business is sustainable, that is, you have a product that people want and need).

For us, we need to make sure that we are working on the product, it is visible, and of course, all the product documentations are quite clear so that when people see it, they understand that this is what it is and all.

The last one I'll say is that anything you chase too much will be running away from you. Money is also like that. If you are coming into a business, just try and give value, don't be chasing money up and down; you can chase money all your life till you drop dead.

One thing I would also like to point out, especially between government regulators and the industry, is that there needs to be more collaboration, which will help us upgrade our industry standard. It will also help the clients get more value and increase our service delivery because, at the end of the day, whatever we are getting paid and the regulators are taking is all coming from the clients. We cannot be taking all that from the clients without giving a very high standard of service. So, I believe we need to see more robust collaboration between regulatory agencies, governments, and the industry players sooner rather than later.

DAAR
COMMUNICATIONS PLC
2022

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Chief Dokpesi Jr. -The Chairman (Centre) Mr. Nonah Awoh -Independent Director (Left), Barr. Donatus Anopus- Company Secretary (2nd Left) and High Chief Tony Akiotu- Group Managing Director (Right)



The Chairman, DAAR Communications Plc, Chief Raymond Dokpesi Jnr.



The Chairman welcoming the representative of the Shareholders, Mr. Patrick Ajudua



The Chairman welcoming team lead of First Registrar



The Chairman welcoming the Board Members, Mr. Nonah Awoh and Mr. Cornelius Oboh



The GMD, High Chief Tony Akiotu welcoming Representatives of the Shareholders and a Member of the Audit



The Chairman welcoming some of the Institutional Regulators



Group photograph of the Board and the Shareholders Representatives



Group photograph of the Chairman with some members of the Executive Management



Group photograph of the Chairman, some Executives Management with some of the Regulators



The Chairman, Group Managing Director with the Heads of Business Units (SBLUs) of the organisation, DAAR Academy, AIT, News and Radio Services



Group photograph of the Board and some Executive Management staff



The Chairman, Chief Raymond Dokpesi Jr. and the Group Managing Director, High Chief Tony Akiotu, FNGE

FirstMonie reinforces leadership in Financial Inclusion, transacts over N1billion



First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier and leading financial services provider has announced that its agent banking network – Firstmonie Agents – spread across the nooks and crannies of the country has collectively processed transaction volume in excess of 1 billion dollars, amounting to over 22 trillion naira. The Bank currently has over 180,000 Firstmonie Agents, spread across 772 of the country's 774 Local Government Areas.

Firstmonie Agents have been integral to bringing financial services closer to the underbanked and unbanked segment of the society, providing convenient banking services that are easily accessible, thereby saving time and travel costs for individuals in the suburbs and remote environments with no access to financial services.

Popularly referred to as the 'Human ATM', Firstmonie Agents are empowered to reduce the reliance on over-the-counter transactions while providing convenient personalized services. Amongst the services carried out by the Agents include; Account

Opening, Cash Deposit, Airtime Purchase, Bills Payment, Withdrawals and Money Transfer.

Through various empowerment and reward schemes implemented to put its Firstmonie Agents at an advantage to economically impact their immediate communities whilst importantly having their business sustained.

The Bank's Agent Banking scheme has remained a toast to Nigerians, irrespective of where they are in the country. Amongst these schemes is the Agent Credit – launched in 2020 – which has had the Bank provide credit facilities to the tune of 238 billion naira to its teeming Firstmonie Agents.

Expressing his appreciation to the Firstmonie Agents, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, CEO, FirstBank said: "Since the relaunch of our Agent Banking scheme in 2018, our Firstmonie Agents have played a vital role in bridging the financial inclusion gap in the country, as many more people have been able to undertake various financial and business transactions in cost-effective ways, thereby saving a lot of time and money in travelling

over long distances for basic banking services."

"We are delighted by the giant strides of our Firstmonie Agents in promoting financial inclusion and commend them for their efforts in taking banking to the doorsteps of Nigerians – irrespective of where they are – in a very effective way", 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 128 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.

UBA launches innovative experience center in Abuja, Nigeria



Africa's Global Bank, the United Bank for Africa has just launched a modern and future-forward Experience Centre in Abuja, Nigeria.

The new UBA Experience Centre, which was commissioned on Sunday August 14, 2022, is situated at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel Abuja, and is a one-stop-shop which will provide guests and visitors with a first-class experience of the bank's offerings across various channels and touch points.

UBA Group Chairman, Tony O. Elumelu, commissioned the Experience centre during the annual Group Chairman's Forum which was attended by the Bank's executive management

team in Abuja.

Mr Elumelu explained that as always, the bank has been consistent in introducing numerous innovative products and services with customer satisfaction in mind. "UBA has invested significantly in cutting edge technology in a bid to boost its overall services to customers and meeting their needs at every touch point. The UBA Experience Centre is a further demonstration of the bank's unalloyed commitment to ensuring premium services as well as reaffirming its customer focused culture globally," Elumelu said.

Also speaking, the Group Managing Director, Mr. Oliver Alawuba said the new experience centre will go a long way towards complementing

the Bank's offerings to customers visiting the hotel and beyond. He assured customers that the bank will continue to be the flagship of innovations in the African banking space.

The state of the art centre at the iconic flagship hospitality brand has a Holographic Receptionist and self-service kiosk, as it also offers Instant Card Dispensing as well as cash withdrawal and cash deposit services.

In addition, the UBA Experience Centre provides lounge and coffee station for visitors, interactive screen displays for products and services and other entertainment menus and free WIFI to access UBA services.

UBA, is at the forefront of banking innovations and

recently celebrated the 4th year anniversary of its awarding winning Chat Banker, LEO. Since its inception in 2018, Leo has extended its services to various platforms from Facebook and WhatsApp where it was first launched, and now to services on Apple Business Chat' for IOS on iPhone and iPad. LEO will also serve as the holographic receptionist at the UBA Experience Centre.

UBA is a leading pan-African financial institution, offering banking services to more than thirty-seven million customers across 1,000 business offices and customer touch points in 20 African countries.

With presence in New York, London and Paris and now the UAE, UBA is connecting people and businesses across Africa through retail, commercial and corporate banking, innovative cross-border payments and remittances, trade finance and ancillary banking services.

Jaiz Bank marks 10 years of providing ethical services

By Ibidunni Banjoko



individuals, corporate and government entities since 2012. The bank is committed to its mission of "Making Life Better Through Ethical Finance".

For the past ten years, Jaiz Bank has maintained its leadership role by deepening alternative model of financing, thus providing the foundation for its expansion, and providing the needed ethical funding for infrastructural development in the country.

Jaiz Bank, Nigeria's premier non-interest bank, has marked its 10 years of providing ethical services to

In a recent report, Hassan Usman, Managing Director/Chief Executive, Jaiz Bank Plc, disclosed that the bank had financed the agricultural sector to the tune of N75 billion in the last 10 years. He also said that the bank had disbursed over N60 billion to more than 2,000 SMEs as well as created credit facilities for over 20,000 individuals.

Speaking at a media briefing to commemorate the bank's 10th year in operation, Usman also said one of the areas the non-interest financial institution had impacted significantly was the delivery of housing to Nigerians. He said the bank had delivered over 3,000 houses to Nigerians within the past decade.

He added that non-interest banking remained open to all irrespective of their persuasion, stressing that it has become a growing world phenomenon.

He said the bank had been able to grow its balance sheet size from about N12 billion in 2003 to N300 billion in 2021 as well as grew its branches from only three branches at the beginning to currently about 45 branches spread across the country.

Asked if the increasing emergence of non-interest financial institutions does not pose a threat to its existence, Usman said: "Rather than being a threat, it is an indication of the success that we have more non-interest financial institutions coming up in the country.

"And we see them not as competitors but as collaborators. We collaborate to do business. In the financial system, you need partners. And banking is about taking from a surplus institution or individuals and being an intermediary and financing deficit."

UBA launches first Pan African bank in Dubai



UBA has officially become the first Pan African bank to establish a branch in Dubai directly from Nigeria. The new branch is located at the Dubai International Financial Centre.

UBA will operate under the Category 4 licence and will be regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority, the financial regulatory agency of the special economic zone, the Dubai International Financial Centre.

According to a statement, the lender has a presence currently in 20 African countries, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France.

The bank said the UBA branch in the DIFC would service corporate and financial institutions and customers across the Middle East with a core focus on correspondent banking, relationship management and advisory services.

Through this new

expansion, it added, the UBA Group would be able to harness opportunities in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, which comprise of 72 countries with an approximate population of three billion and a nominal GDP of \$7.7tn and thereby, reinforce its strong franchise as Africa's global bank, facilitating trade and capital flows between Africa and the rest of the world.

Speaking during the launch of the new subsidiary in Dubai recently, the Chairman, UBA Group, Mr. Tony Elumelu, explained that with the Group's foray into the gulf region, UBA continues to focus on its strategic intent to lead the way when it comes to doing business in Africa.

Elumelu said, "Collaborating with our franchises in 20 African countries and the major financial centres of London, New York and Paris, UBA (DIFC Branch) will facilitate the financing of trade

transactions between the Middle East and Africa, enabling trade finance and investments."

Photo caption: L-R: UBA Dubai are Group Head, Commercial and Corporate Banking, Mr. Muyiwa Akinyemi; Executive Director, Treasury and International Banking, Mr. Ndubisi Chiugo; Chief Executive Officer, Dubai International Financial Centre(DIFC) Authority, Mr Arif Amiri; Group Chairman, United Bank for Africa (UBA), Mr. Tony O. Elumelu; Governor, Dubai International Financial Centre(DIFC), His Excellency Essa Kazim; Group Managing Director/CEO, UBA Group, Mr. Kennedy Uzoka; and Managing Director, UBA (DIFC Branch), Mr. Vikrant Bhansali during the launch of UBA Dubai recently.

Agencies tasked on tech adoption at MIPAN AGM

By Felicia Nwosu



Following the constant change in consumer behaviour and technological disruption, experts in the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) industry have emphasized the need for agencies to lead the conversation in data and technological adoption in order to stay ahead of the curve.

According to them, today's agencies need to be adaptive, evolving, trendy and value-oriented while ensuring and building a reliable and valuable client partnership for sustainable growth.

The above assertion was made during the panel session of the 2022 Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), which had the theme: "The Role of Data and Technology in Economic Development."

The annual event was held on the 10th of August, 2022 at the high profile Marriott hotel, Ikeja.

The panel session, moderated by Dozie Okafor, Vice-President of MIPAN, had discussants who agreed that contemporary agencies must go beyond competence by adopting a thorough,

comprehensive approach to leverage technology in today's marketplace.

Looking at data as a valuable source and how Nigerian industries can benefit from it, Stanislau Martins, Agency Partner Lead, Meta Facebook, noted that most industries have embraced technology, but raised the need to focus on adding value to brands by leveraging technology through available data and insights obtained from campaigns.

"We need to ensure that the full power and access to data that we have in digital channels is well utilized. Right now, we are still at the very elementary stage when it comes to actually delivering on clients from a digital point of view. The data is there but that is not okay; there is still a lot of work to be done from the agency side. From the skills upgrade point of view, you need to know how to use the full gamut of technology; you can't just stay in your space when you think it is safe.

"Anybody can run a campaign and say I reached a certain number, but did it help the brand to achieve its end result? One of the ways to

ensure that clients' minds are at peace is by leveraging digital technology with available data to drive impact for your brand. Whatever campaign that you are doing now, you can take the insights from it immediately to influence your offline communication instead of waiting for weeks or months," Martins said.

Emeka Okeke, Founder, Managing Partner and Group CEO Media Fuse Dentsu International (Nigeria), while stating the barriers to data and technology adoption, mentioned two key issues confronting Nigeria and its industries. He noted that the first barrier is industry adoption of data and technology, adding that the mode of operation has changed overtime as a result of technological disruption in terms of volume of data. He urged agencies to hire right to cover up in the skill set and also invest in high definition technology.

"We are quick to say we are data-centric and have technology to manage data. Behind all of that, we actually do nothing; that is the truth. We do nothing because we expect that outsiders whom

we service should do the investment for us. The second bigger problem we have is the skill gap. I think that communication practitioners, especially those in the IMC should look beyond the traditional benefits or skills of strategists, planners, implementers, and digital marketers. They should look in the direction of engineering as well as into the space of artificial intelligence and psychologists because we deal with humans.

"For us to close the gap as marketing practitioners, we need to understand that first and foremost, we own our businesses and so we need to make decisions on whether we want to invest in data and technology or we still want clients to pay for it. It ensures continuity for us; it gives us control of our space and relevance in the service we render to the clients," Okeke said.

Feyisayo Alayande, Head of product, Digital and Marketing, Letshego, while addressing some of the barriers in adopting technology, charged agencies to put themselves in the shoes of the clients by understanding their pain-points, walking in their journey and seeing how to give back to them.

"I work with international service firms. From what we have found out about data and technology adoption generally, there is a knowledge gap. We have not taken the time to put ourselves in the position of who we are asking to use certain technology before asking them to use such technology. If you understand where people are coming from and put yourself in their position, you will close that knowledge gap quickly.

"My advice and take-away is, do not under-estimate the word partnership. Because if you partner correctly with your client, and also put yourself in the position of customers by looking at the under-served and those trying to close the poverty gap, you will understand why data is actually important in closing that gap," Alayande said.

Oti Ukubeyinje, Senior VP, Products, Terragon, while reeling out new skills set to acquire for today and the future, corroborated the foregoing views, adding that the absence of professional skill set leads to the habit of using numbers to fit into the narratives that clients want to hear, an outcome that is not based on real data obtained.

According to him, such an act is not professional and should be discouraged in an agency where there is a 'professional' data scientist who is an expert in data gathering as it is against the ethics of their profession. He advised agencies to replicate the models adopted by telcos by building software that will be digitally powered within the organization instead of hiring researchers to create marketing strategies.

"It is the data that should tell the story, not the other way round. Within the media and marketing communications industry, one of the biggest gaps in terms of skills that should be preached very fast is data science, and not just data science, but also data engineering. I am saying this because scientists will do the soft part, but for there to be a repeated role, you need the engineers to build solutions," Ukubeyinje said.

Ilonah Idoko, CEO Lona Group Limited, charged agencies to innovate and develop new trends.

"From the outdoor perspective, what we try to do is to bring innovation. For us, a time will come when as we are doing this on this platform, people would be getting real value for the money paid. We need to convince clients, not just with statistics on paper, but with the number of the people who have gone ahead to browse about the product."

Interestingly, the panelists all agreed that just as third party cookies are phasing out, agencies need to follow suit in technological transformation, invest in capacity building to upscale skills set and adoption of professionals, and also evolve to continuously move with the ever-changing world or be left behind.

MTN introduces home broadband services

To accelerate broadband penetration in alignment with the Federal Government's plan to achieve over 70% broadband penetration by 2025, MTN Nigeria Communications PLC has announced its launch of Home Broadband services.

With the launch, MTN Home Broadband services will be available to millions of Nigerian households.

"At MTN, we believe that everyone deserves the benefits of a modern, connected life; hence our investment in industry-leading connectivity operations," noted Hassan Jaber, Chief Operating Officer, MTN Nigeria Communications PLC.

"Customers now have enhanced access to dedicated 24/7 support and online channels to place orders for MTN Home Broadband with options for home delivery. They can also enjoy truly Unlimited Data bundles, longer tenure data plans with flexibility to share data with multiple users remotely as well as enhanced data subscription channels including myMTN App," commented Onyinye Ikenna-Emeka, General Manager, Fixed Broadband, MTN Nigeria Communications

PLC.

With over 200 million people, Nigeria currently boasts of approximately 44.3 percent internet connectivity, whereas other African countries, such as South Africa, Egypt, and Kenya, are at 68, 74, and 48 percent internet penetration, respectively.

Global technology statistics closely link internet connectivity to sustainable economic growth rates. On average, the internet accounts for almost four percent of GDP across the large economies that make up 70 percent of global GDP. UNICEF also projects that nations with low broadband connectivity have the potential to realise up to 20 per cent GDP growth by connecting schools to the internet.

MTN currently connects over 70 million Nigerians (over 7% 4G population and 89.8 percent coverage nationwide). With MTN's Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) and the latest Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) Home Broadband services, millions of Nigerian households, with approximately 50 percent located in rural areas, will have access to reliable and ultra-fast broadband services to enjoy

unlimited data plans, ability to connect multiple devices and share data across remote locations for online learning, working from home, streaming, gaming, smart home solutions among others.

MTN Home Broadband services are available nationwide.

"At MTN, we believe that everyone deserves the benefits of a modern, connected life; hence our investment in industry-leading connectivity operations,"



10 tech companies that have laid off employees in 2022

By **Zion Rufus**

Blaming it on economic downturns, restructuring efforts, global inflation, and the ever-changing macro-economic environment, the new trend of sweeping layoffs and job cuts by companies in the tech industry have begun to stir major concerns.

Twitter

In July, Twitter laid off 30% of its talent acquisition team, as the company dealt with increasing business pressures and potential takeover from Tesla CEO, Elon Musk. Earlier in May, the company had announced plans to pause its hiring even as it looked to cut costs.

Snap

Citing an imperative restructuring, Snapchat parent company, Snap announced earlier this month that it's laying off 20% of its workforce and halting several projects.

Oracle

In August, global software giant, Oracle announced thousands of job cuts. Although the layoffs affected mostly workers in its customer experience division, Junior sales employees as well as a division sales director were amongst those laid off.

Netflix

Global streaming service, Netflix, announced major job cuts across multiple business functions in the company. In May, Netflix laid off 150 employees, and dozens of contractors and part-time workers. Following again with about 300 cuts in June, Netflix indicated more rounds of layoffs would be coming this

year following that first group, as it tries to adjust for its "heavily weakened stock price."

Kuda

Kuda Bank confirmed plans to lay off about 5% of its workforce to TechCrunch via email. The fintech company disclosed that it is currently making some strategic changes to serve its customers better and continue to make financial services more accessible, affordable and rewarding to every African.

Microsoft

Microsoft cut some jobs in July as it realigned business groups and roles after the close of its fiscal year. Although the company announced plans to keep hiring for other roles the layoffs which was initiated across geographies, spanned a variety of groups including consulting and customer and partner solutions.

Apple

iPhone maker, Apple laid off many of its contract-based recruiters in August, a move to rein in the its hiring and spending. According to a Bloomberg report, about 100 contract workers were laid off in a rare move for the world's most valuable company. The recruiters were responsible for hiring new employees for Apple, and the cuts underscore that a slowdown is underway at the company.

Google

In August, Google threatened its workforce with layoffs. The company told its staff in an email "If results don't live up to expectations, layoffs will be implemented." The sales team was told that if third quarter results "don't look up, [then]

there will be blood on the streets."

Coinbase

Coinbase joins the list of tech companies laying off its employees. In June, the crypto company laid off 18% of its total staff, around 1,100 workers, citing a looming recession, the crypto winter, and its own overly optimistic growth projections.

SoundCloud

Citing a significant

transformation, SoundCloud CEO Michael Weissman emailed staff alerting them of layoffs impacting up to 20% of the company. "Today's change positions SoundCloud for the long run and puts us on a path to sustained profitability," Weissman wrote in his email to staff. "We have already begun to make prudent financial decisions across the company, and that now extends to a reduction to our team."

Google tackles SEO, moves to optimize helpful content

By **Zion Rufus**



To ensure people see more original, helpful, and relevant contents in search results, search engine giant Google is tackling contents created primarily for search engine traffic to optimize contents with helpful information.

According to Google, content created primarily for search engine traffic is strongly correlated with content that searchers find unsatisfying. The helpful contents updates which will start rolling out next week, is a new site-wide signal for ranking web pages to identify contents that seem to have little value, low-added value or is otherwise not particularly helpful to those doing searches.

Google said: "We continually update Search to make sure we're helping you find high quality content. Next week, we'll launch the

"helpful content update" to tackle content that seems to have been primarily created for ranking well in search engines rather than to help or inform people. This ranking update will help make sure that unoriginal, low quality content doesn't rank highly in Search, and our testing has found it will especially improve results related to online education, as well as arts and entertainment, shopping and tech-related content."

"We've continued to refine these systems, and in the coming weeks, we'll roll out another update to make it even easier to find high-quality, original reviews. We'll continue this work to make sure you find the most useful information when you're researching a purchase on the web."

"We hope these updates will help you access more helpful information and valuable perspectives on Search. We look forward to building on this work to make it even easier to find original content by and for real people in the months ahead."

Exxon posts record-breaking \$18b Q2 profit



Exxon Mobil Corp has declared its biggest quarterly profit recently, reporting a second-quarter net income of \$17.9 billion. This is equivalent to \$4.21 per share which is an almost four-fold increase over the \$4.69 billion, or \$1.10 per share, it earned in the same period last year.

The results also beat its best quarter of 2008, when Brent crude oil prices peaked at \$147 per barrel, and its best-ever quarter reached in 2012, when the company earned \$15.9 billion, largely due to asset sales in Japan and tax-related items.

“Earnings and cash flow benefited from increased production, higher realizations, and tight cost control,” said Darren Woods, chairman, and chief executive officer.

“Strong second-quarter results reflect our focus on the fundamentals and the investments we put in motion several years ago and sustained through the depths of the pandemic.”

He stated further: “Key to our success is continued investment in our advantaged portfolio, including Guyana, the Permian, global LNG, and in our high-value performance products, along with efforts to reduce structural costs and improve efficiency. We’re also helping meet increased demand by expanding our refining capacity by about 250,000 barrels per day in the first quarter of 2023 – representing the industry’s largest single capacity addition in the U.S. since 2012. At the same time, we’re supporting

the transition to a lower-emission future, growing our portfolio of opportunities in carbon capture and storage, biofuels, and hydrogen.”

The quantum leap in profit is due to the increase in the prices of oil and natural gas attendant upon the Western sanctions against Russia, a major oil exporter, for the invasion of Ukraine.

Recall that in the first quarter, the company announced \$5.5 billion earnings in the first quarter. Commenting on the huge earnings, President Joe Biden of the United States said the company and other oil majors were capitalising on a global supply shortage to fatten profits. He said Exxon was making “more money than God” after posting its biggest quarterly profit in seven years.

The company earlier this year more than doubled its projected buyback program to \$30 billion through 2022 and 2023. Shell and Total on Thursday extended their share buybacks after their second-quarter results both beat what had been a record-breaking previous quarter.

Exxon has been using extra cash to pay down debt and raise distributions to shareholders. It maintained its 88-cent-per-share dividend for the third quarter.

Exxon kept its capital investments at \$9.5 billion in the first half of the year, in line with full-year guidance. The profit included a \$300 million booked identified item associated with the sale of the Barnett Shale upstream asset.

NNPC repositions, refreshes brand identity

By **Felicia Nwosu**

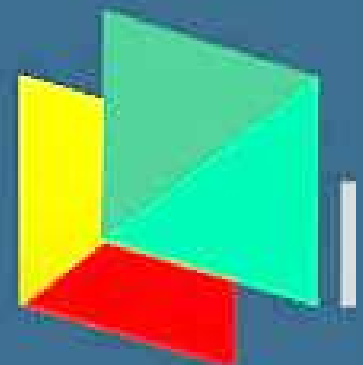
The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has refreshed its brand identity with the unveiling of its new logo. In addition, the oil & gas giant will henceforth be known as a NNPC Limited, a new Limited Liability Company and commercial entity of profitability, transparency and even more accountability to Nigerians.

The new logo, which wears vibrant green and red colours with new fonts, reflects NNPC Ltd as a new independent

company with strength, capacity and market relevance.

Commenting during the historic transformative launch, President Muhammadu Buhari, who unveiled the new corporate brand, noted that it was a landmark event for the oil & gas industry, adding that it will place the country on the path of growth while playing an important role in sustaining global energy requirements.

“We are transforming our petroleum



industry to strengthen its capacity and market relevance for the present and future of global energy priorities. By chance, I had the privilege to lead the creation of the Nigeria National Corporation on the 1st of July, 1977. 44 years later, I was again privileged to sign the Petroleum Industry

Shell MD, Okunbor, wins Prestigious Industry Lifetime Award

The Managing Director of The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) and Country Chair, Shell Companies in Nigeria (SCiN), Mr. Osagie Okunbor, has been named the sole recipient of the H. E. Dr Alirio Parra Lifetime Achievement Award in Nigeria Oil and Gas Industry for 2022.

Named in honour of the late Venezuelan Minister of Petroleum and one of the founding fathers of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the award is the most prestigious recognition for an individual or organisation who has made notable contributions to the development of Nigeria's oil and gas industry.

The award to Okunbor was the climax of the closing events for the 21st edition of the Nigeria Oil and Gas Conference and Exhibition (NOG '22) held in Abuja recently and aptly tagged "Nights of Tributes" in honour of the late Secretary-General of OPEC, Dr. Sanusi Barkindo, who passed on Tuesday night after he had delivered the keynote address earlier in the



L-R; Managing Director, Shell Nigeria Gas Limited, Mr. Ed Ubong; Managing Director, the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited and Country Chair, Shell Companies in Nigeria, Mr. Osagie Okunbor; Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, Mr. Simbi Wabote; and Managing Director, Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited, Mrs. Elohor Aiboni, after Okunbor received the H. E. Dr Alirio Parra Lifetime Achievement Award in Nigeria Oil and Gas Industry for 2022 in Abuja ...recently.

day at the opening ceremony of the conference.

An elated but surprised Okunbor expressed gratitude to the Industry and event organisers, under the principal sponsorship of the

Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited, for considering him worthy of the recognition. Winners of the award are nominated from online votes by industry participants to the Nigerian

Oil and Gas Conference and Exhibition.

Amidst applause, Okunbor said, "I am immensely grateful for the recognition and honour."

Okunbor joined energy giant, Shell, in 1986 and has since worked in Nigeria, the UK, Brunei and the Netherlands in various capacities within the Shell Group before his appointment as Managing Director, SPDC, and Country Chair, SCiN on March 1, 2015.

In winning the H. E. Dr Alirio Parra Lifetime Achievement Award in Nigeria Oil and Gas Industry for 2022, Okunbor joins a distinguished list of previous winners including The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, and past Group Managing Director of the NNPC, the late Dr. Kachalla Maikanti Baru.

Okunbor was in 2021 honoured with the Distinguished Alumnus Award by the University of Benin, and the Award for Excellence and Integrity in Corporate Leadership by the Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun. A human resource professional, Okunbor had also been honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award for contributions to the Development of HR in Nigeria by the HR People Magazine.

Act bill in 2021.

"Heralding the long awaited reform of our petroleum sector, the PIA has given NNPC a new impetus with improved physical framework, transparent governance, enhanced regulation and the creation of a commercially driven and independent national oil company. They are to operate without relying on government funding and free from institutional relationships which is the treasury single federation account," Buhari said.

On his part, the Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC, Mallam Mele Kyari said the rebirth marks a new beginning in the 44 years journey of NNPC and the energy sector, describing it as a new dawn, new hope and opportunities to upscale the nation's relevance in the global energy community as Africa's largest energy

company.

"Today, we unveiled our dynamic and commercial driven energy company with focus on value creation for all stakeholders while sustainably delivering energy to the world, endowed with the best human resources one can find anywhere in the industry. NNPC Ltd is positioned to lead Africa's gradual transition to new energy, by deepening natural gas production. We have taken a strategic initiative to achieve our mandate of ensuring energy security for our country," he said.

Minister of State Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, reaffirmed that the Petroleum Industry Act, birthed on 16 August, 2021, has helped NNPC to move to a new phase of development, adding that its new Identify encapsulates its vision for growth.

"The PIA bill was a landmark

achievement and victory for all Nigerians after about two decades of dashed hopes. While the country was waiting for the Petroleum Industry Act, the Nigerian oil industry was about 50 billion dollars' worth of investment. In fact, between 2015 and 2019, KPMG stated that only 4% of the 70 billion dollar investment inflows into Africa's oil and gas came to Nigeria, even though the country is the continent's biggest producer with the largest reserves," he said.

The event came to a climax with the decoration of the President with the lapel that bears the new logo by Senator Margery Chuba Okadigbo, wife of late former Senate President, Dr Chuba Okadigbo, and the Chairman, Board of Directors of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited.

Dangote Cement to reward consumers with N1 billion in new *Spell DANGOTE and become a multi-millionaire Promo*



L-R: Group Sales and Marketing Director, Dangote Cement Plc, Rabiu Umar; Group Managing Director/CEO, Dangote Cement Plc, Michel Puchercos; National Sales Director, Dangote Cement Plc, Funmi Sanni; Head of Lagos Office Federal Competition, Consumer Protection Commission, Susie Onwuka, at the Dangote Cement Plc Media Launch of Bag of Goodies Season 3 Consumer Promotion, in Lagos. July 5, 2022.

Consumers of Dangote Cement Plc, a leading cement brand in Nigeria, stand the chance of winning over N1 billion cash prizes in the *Dangote Bag of Goodies Season 3 promo*, tagged ‘Spell Dangote and become a multi-millionaire.’

The promo, which was launched in Lagos recently in the presence of regulators from the National Lottery Regulatory Commission and Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, is expected to offer life-changing prizes, which will have immense economic values to the loyal consumers.

According to the company, Dangote Cement Bag of Goodies Promo Season 3, which runs from July 5 to October 31, 2022, promises to be

a blast as there are over 32.3 million mouth-watering prizes to be won, including television sets, refrigerators, rechargeable fans, 2KVA generators, and millions of airtime gifts of major networks in Nigeria.

Interestingly, every single bag of Dangote Cement to be produced daily through the promo period will contain scratch cards for various gifts to be won by consumers.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, Group Managing Director, Dangote Cement Plc, Michel Puchercos stated that the *Bag of Goodies Promo* series is designed to continuously reward loyal Consumers who have stayed faithful and remained the backbone in the cement business. He said these consumers have contributed in no

SPEAKING AT THE UNVEILING CEREMONY, GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR, DANGOTE CEMENT PLC, MICHEL PUCHERCOS STATED THAT THE *BAG OF GOODIES PROMO* SERIES IS DESIGNED TO CONTINUOUSLY REWARD LOYAL CONSUMERS WHO HAVE STAYED FAITHFUL AND REMAINED THE BACKBONE IN THE CEMENT BUSINESS.

small measure to make Dangote range of cement products the first choice for construction purposes across the country.

Puchercos explained: “We are offering life-changing prizes, which have immense economic values as they can be used to kick-start small scale businesses. These prizes are targeted to help many families recover from the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which adversely affected their sources of livelihood.”

Giving details about the promo, National Sales Director, Dangote Cement, Funmi Sanni, described



L-R: Group Sales and Marketing Director, Dangote Cement Plc, Rabiu Umar; Group Managing Director/CEO, Dangote Cement Plc, Michel Puchercos; National Sales Director, Dangote Cement Plc, Funmi Sanni; Representative of the Director General National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) /Deputy Director Licensing and Regulatory, Obi Iregbu; at the Dangote Cement Plc, Media Launch of Bag of Goodies Season 3 Consumer Promotion, in Lagos. July 5, 2022.



L-R: Group Sales and Marketing Director, Dangote Cement Plc, Rabiu Umar; Group Managing Director/CEO, Dangote Cement Plc, Michel Puchercos; National Sales Director, Dangote Cement Plc, Funmi Sanni; Head of Lagos Office Federal Competition, Consumer Protection Commission, Susie Onwuka, Representative of the Director General National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) /Deputy Director Licensing and Regulatory, Obi Iregbu; at the Dangote Cement Plc, Media Launch of Bag of Goodies Season 3 Consumer Promotion, in Lagos. July 5, 2022.

the promo as a huge investment aimed at rewarding new and existing consumers, “especially in these trying times of our nationhood with the much needed financial and material palliatives.”

She said the promo is also targeted at stimulating the economy that has been

negatively impacted by COVID-19 and global energy crisis to move towards much needed recovery especially in the construction/real estate industry sector.

She explained: “To emerge as one of the lucky winners, all you need to do is to pick out the scratch card inserted in the bag;

scratch the panel at the back of the card to reveal what you have won; go to any of the over 200 redemption centers to collect an instant prize. Collect cards, spell D-A-N-G-O-T-E and win a star prize of N1 million instantly. Additionally, if you find an eagle in one of the letters, you will automatically win N5 million.”

Sanni said N125 million worth of prizes are expected to be won monthly, among which there will be 25 multi-millionaires. “The good thing about this promo is that a consumer stands the chance of winning the N1 million repeatedly. There is no limit to the number of times you are expected to win. All you should do is to continue to buy Dangote Cement.”

Validating the promo, Head, Lagos Office, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, Mrs. Susie Onwuka commended Dangote Cement for giving back to consumers through the Bag of Goodies promo.

“Dangote has always fulfilled its promises to the consumers of its product. Our duty at the agency is to protect the right of the consumers. Dangote Cement has lived up to expectations,” she said.

Director, Inventory and operations, National Lottery Regulation Commission, Mr. Obi Iregbu said Dangote Cement Promo has always been massive and impressive. “This Season 3 promo is bigger than Season 1 and 2 past promos. I want Dangote to continue to add value to the lives of the consumers of its product. In so doing, the company is also helping to boost economic activities in Nigeria,” he said.

Nigeria's New Television Audience Measurement: A paradigm shift

By Rotimi Pedro

Due to the maturity of her fragmented media market, the best audience research for Nigeria is a single source (i.e. all media in one survey), adopting passive audience data measurement using relevant new technology, highly accurate with data collected and delivered in near real time, with a highly representative national panel with a sample size with minimal margin of error. Also but equally important, the generated data must be affordable to the stakeholders.

It is against this background that industry watchers regard the recent push of the Ministry of Information and Culture's to industry regulators APCON/NBC for global standards in audience measurement for the Nigerian Media market, as a paradigm shift. The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria - APCON (representing the demand side of the equation) and Nigeria Broadcasting Commission NBC (representing the supply side) have now jointly inaugurated a Joint Industry Council ("JIC"), after the appointment of a technical service provider through a transparent bidding system in August 2021. A former President of the Media Independent Practitioners – Mr. Tolu Ogunkoya, heads JIC, while technical partnership to the project is supplied by GARB Bulgaria through her Nigerian subsidiary First Media Entertainment & Integrated (Nig)Limited [FMEIL], headed by Dr. Vasselin Shaoulov. Both have since commenced operations with a view of project delivery in the last quarter of 2022. Apart from right-sizing the increasingly unbalanced distribution of advertising budget across media platforms, a reliable TAM system for Nigeria is projected to unleash latent and new media investments



into the creative sectors by a factor 2.5 within 5yrs of commencement of operations.

To this end, it is expected that the newly commissioned establishment survey to achieve these objectives will be delivered in September/Oct 2022. This establishment survey will be a recalibration of the incidences of media consumption at a point in time in Nigeria. It will form the basis for the continuous tracking of data collection that will follow, and in commissioning the tracking research phase, it is critical to have technology-based data collection methodology to improve the accuracy and ability to deliver data fast. This is because the advertiser wants data to make decisions today, and not to justify decisions made months ago.

In practical terms, it is projected that this will see TV/Radio AD Spend grow from the current

\$430m/yr to match South Africa's at \$1.2B within 5 yrs. Other countries that have adopted the TAM (Television Audience Measurement) system like Bulgarian (in 2000) or Brazil have seen

their TV markets quadruple within a decade of TAM adoption.

A paradigm shift has occurred, the foundation of data driven TV and Radio has now been cemented for other building blocks to mount. The future of both the media industry and creative sector is indeed very bright.

Nigeria's TAM project will indeed be of global standard. Comparative only to Nielsen measurement in South Africa. Its reporting infrastructure will be immediate and real time. Overnight, subscribers will know the audience consumption of what went down on all measured TV channels the previous night. They will see the raw data on their subscription dashboard and integrate their media responses to real-time information. This is comparative to the TV/Radio ratings in the US or the UK.

Nigeria's TAM's proposed audience measurement survey will also focus on knowing who your audience is. For the advertiser, they have specific target groups for their products based on their affordability to that group, or in other words to understand the level of affluence of the target audiences so that they can plan to reach them efficiently with their advertising messages.

Today the African media landscape is changing rapidly. Where in the past, most of the media outfits were government owned, funded and monopolized, we are all of a sudden faced with a liberalized private sector-led environment with significant increases of media outlets across the continent that now need private funding to survive. Fragmenting the audiences and creating the need for science-based methods of targeting audiences is now imperative in Africa and more particularly in Nigeria as the largest economy on the African Continent.

Lagos Traffic Radio



LAGOS TRAFFIC RADIO

JAMAICA

96.1FM

LIVE! FLIGHT SCHEDULE

REPORT WITHIN NIGERIA

LAGOS TRAFFIC RADIO



LIVE

MOTORBIKE REPORT

LIVE!

TRAIN SCHEDULE

REPORT

ON LAGOS TRAFFIC RADIO 96.1FM

10 MINUTES INTERVAL

FOR TRAFFIC UPDATES

LIVE

SHIPPING POSITION

ON LAGOS TRAFFIC RADIO 96.1FM

WATER WAYS MOVEMENT REPORT

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Geely plans to unveil Commercial Vehicle Homtruck in Small Batches in 2023

Zhejiang Geely New Energy Commercial Vehicles Group Co., Ltd. a Chinese multinational automotive company announced plans to release an intelligent luxury heavy-duty vehicle called “Homtruck” in small batches by the end of 2023.

Homtruck comes with two power chains, a methanol extended-range electric drive axle and multi-motor central electric drive, and it will achieve a breakthrough 1000 km range for new energy heavy trucks.

Homtruck is equipped with the world’s first i-MPS multi-motor flexible torque central electric drive chain developed by Geely for new energy commercial vehicles. It allows for 16 operating modes and is designed for commercial vehicles with a full range of operating conditions.

At the 2022 Geely New Energy Commercial Vehicle Innovation Ecology Conference, Geely released two new energy heavy-duty trucks: the Homtruck G2M methanol tractor and the Homtruck M7 electric mixer.

At the same conference, Fan Xianjun, the CEO of Geely New Energy Commercial Vehicle Group, said the group would focus on new energy

heavy-duty trucks. By 2026, it is to achieve the goal of 50,000 units of battery exchange (extended-range power exchange) heavy trucks and 50,000 units of methanol heavy trucks.

Geely says it will do its best to build a perfect ecology based on green and intelligent new-generation commercial vehicles, covering energy, transportation, low-carbon manufacturing, finance and other dimensions. The company will also provide customers with a whole chain of integrated solutions through the combination of industry chains and innovative exploration of business models.

Also, Geely New Energy Commercial Vehicle Group has created three major platforms – Green Huilian, Green Intelligent Power Exchange Transportation Service Platform, I Oneworld + Sunshine Mingdao, and Chunqing Technology (Alcohol Hydrogen) – in order to realize the synergistic development among three elements: vehicles and cargo, vehicles and energy, and vehicles and environment. These platforms are used to jointly improve the intelligent green energy transportation services network.

Audi to enter F1 in 2026

Audi a German automotive manufacturer of luxury vehicles has officially announced that it will enter Formula 1 in 2026 as an engine supplier.

A little more than a week after Formula 1 approved new engine regulations that will go into effect in 2026, Audi officially announced its plans to compete in the premier open-wheel motorsport series.

Audi’s entry into F1 coincides with the start of these new engine rules, with the German automaker announcing its intent to start supplying engines for the 2026 season. Audi will develop its power unit at the Audi Sport facility in Neuburg, the first time in more than a decade an F1 powertrain will be assembled in Germany.

One of the stated goals of F1’s revised engine regulations is to attract new power unit suppliers. Starting in 2026, the turbocharged 1.6-liter V-6 engines used in Formula 1 will run on 100 percent sustainable fuel, while the electric portion of the hybrid powertrain will produce three times the power as today’s setup, two factors that Audi explicitly stated were critical to its decision to join F1.

Starting in 2026, the MGU-K, which harvests kinetic energy and deploys electrical energy via the crankshaft, will see its output

nearly triple to 350 kilowatts, or about 469 horsepower. This will boost the total system output to well over 1000 ponies.

The MGU-H, which currently harvests heat energy via exhaust gases in the turbocharger and can deploy electrical energy to reduce turbo lag, will be removed from the F1 power unit in 2026. The increased reliance on electricity will see the amount of fuel used in a race drop from 100 kg to 70 kg, while the removal of the MGU-H, along with other measures, is intended to decrease costs.

The announcement came with images of a Formula 1 car mocked up with Audi livery. That said, take this image with a grain of salt as it may not be indicative of what the actual Audi-powered F1 cars will look like during the 2026 season. Audi will not field its own team, but it will provide powertrains to at least one team.

The brand said it will reveal which team they plan to partner with by the end of 2022. This team will likely be Sauber, which also announced that its technical and commercial partnership with Alfa Romeo will end after the 2023 season. Alfa Romeo-Sauber is currently in sixth in the championship, which would be the team’s best result since 2012 if it can maintain this position.



Aralepo becomes Mastercard Foundation's Global Head Finance

By **Oghale Mafuru**

The Mastercard Foundation, one of the largest foundations in the world committed to the promotion of financial inclusion in Africa has appointed an astute financial professional, Oluwatoyin Aralepo as the Global Head of Finance, Programs FP&A.

Sharing this exciting news on her LinkedIn handle, the business leader who has honed her skills for over two decades of offering financial services said: "I'm happy to share that I'm starting a new position as Global Head of Finance, Programs FP&A at Mastercard Foundation".

Prior to her appointment at Mastercard Foundation, she was the Director Corporate Excellence & Programme Management at IHS Towers where she organised and prioritised critical strategy, financial and operational information to facilitate effective and efficient decision-making by the CEO among other functions.

Oluwatoyin Aralepo is a commercially astute business leader and a Finance professional, with over two decades' experience, having carved a niche as a strategic finance expert in building solid financial structures, maximizing her over 20 years of expertise in finance management, business development consulting, financial modeling and analysis, and Investments Management.

Her career has spanned banking, telecommunication, and fintech sectors, working with clients at the higher end of the organisational spectrum, guiding them across a variety of financial services and strategies, and implementing result-based methodologies which helped them to make sound financial decisions, enabling them to drive the organisations to the desired financial and business goals.

Mastercard Foundation which seeks a world where everyone has the opportunity to learn and prosper is guided by its mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion for people living in poverty. It was created in 2006 by Mastercard International and operates independently under the governance of its own Board of Directors. The Foundation is based in Toronto, Canada,



Flour Mills appoints Kazeem as Marketing Director

Flour Mills of Nigeria (FMN) Plc, one of the biggest brands in the foods and agro-allied industry in Africa, has appointed Ilyas Kazeem as its new Marketing Director.

Prior to his appointment, Kazeem had been a Marketing Sales Director with 15+ years global and regional work experience across multinational FMCG and Food industries with core expertise in Global Business Management. He has worked across various segments of Marketing ranging from Category Design

to Product Development for Sub Saharan Africa, Category/ Brand Management for East and West Africa, Marketing Brand Communication for West Africa. He has developed and executed Sales, GTM plans, Whitespace expansion plans across multiple categories in SSA.

Kazeem also has deep expertise in Digital Marketing (PPC, Social, Direct Marketing etc.) with full CRM integration, driving ROI and CPR growth.

He is excellent in Content Management, Media Plan and Strategy Development and a renowned Capability growth leader for team and partners.

Kazeem also served as the Group Marketing Director for ENG Africa with over 15 years Marketing and Category Sales work experience across multiple geographies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

He has numerous experiences building brands across the FMCG sector, having worked with P&G and Hayat Kimya prior to joining Eat'N'Go in 2018 as Domino's Marketing Manager.

He is a graduate of the University of Oxford, where he bagged a Master-level degree in Global Business Management from the Said Business School. He is also currently a Doctorate Degree Research Student in Business Administration at the Durham University Business School. Ilyas has an MBA in Marketing and a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering.

Algorithm Media appoints Ajani Associate Director

Algorithm Media has appointed media and communications professional, Adenike Ajani as its Associate Director, Media and Investments(Wavemaker and MediaCom)

With a demonstrated history in the marketing and advertising industry, Adenike has served in different capacities at Algorithm Media including Group head, media buying and negotiations; Associate Director, investments(Algorithm Media); and Head, buying and control(Algorithm Media) where she was tasked with the development of media compliance control strategies for client to ensure full realization of media spent.

She has worked extensively on brands such as FrieslandCampinaWAMCO, Nokia, Canon, Colgate, Tempo, GAC, and companies like mediaReach OMD, Promasidor, X-Media Group, and many others.

Adenike Ajani is a strong media and communications professional with a Bachelor degree in Agriculture from the University of Ilorin, Kwara State.



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