

Global OOH advertising market to reach \$39.2bn by 2030

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Brands to watch
AND FORCES
BEHIND
THE BRANDS

NIGERIA HOLDS KEY TO AFRICA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
— HAKAN MISRI

Global beer market valued at \$737.2bn in 2022

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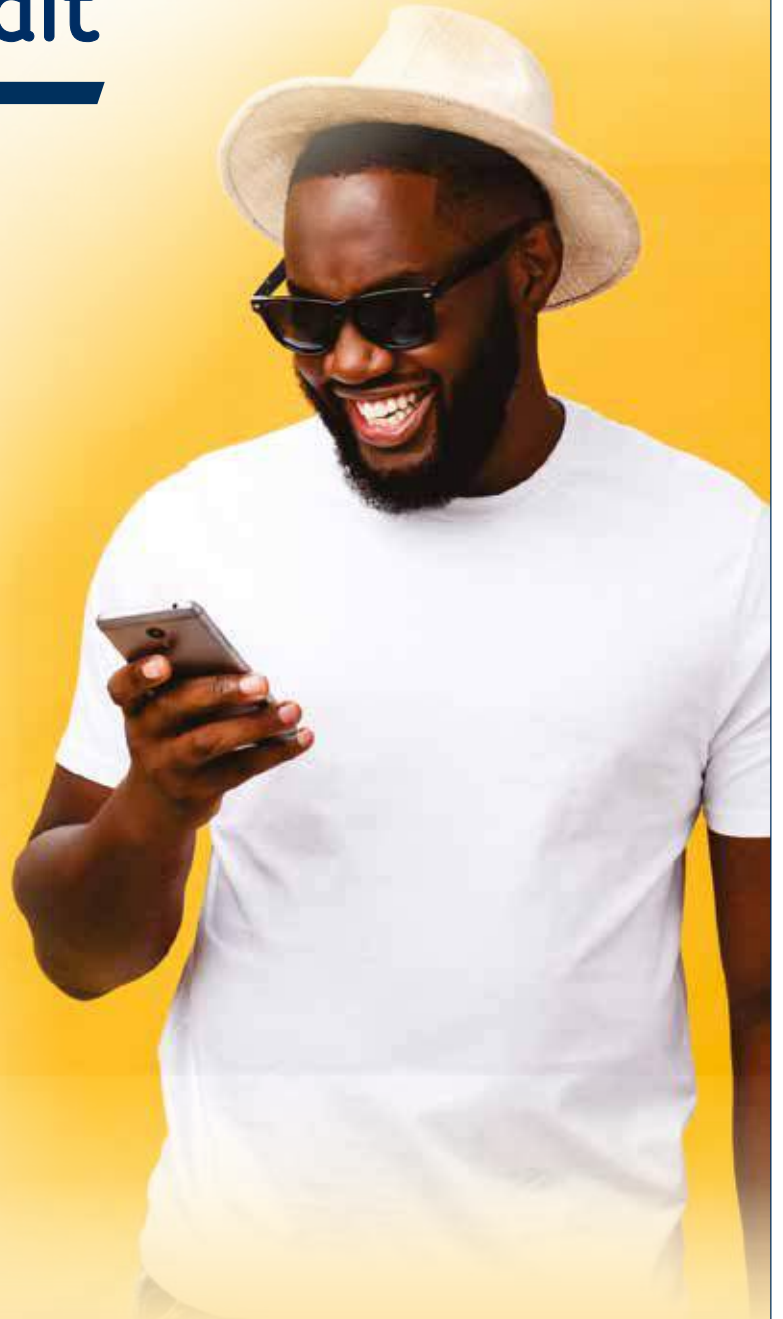
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Whether you're a veteran or an upwardly mobile professional, it's important to stand out to remain competitive and relevant in today's marketplace. Also, understanding trends and adapting your personality and corporate brand strategy accordingly will help you stay ahead in the ever-evolving marketing landscape.

In business, we have been often erroneously conditioned into keeping our personality brand positioning in check. This is especially true if we've spent a number of years in the corporate world, representing someone else's brand. Even when we set out on our own, the first thing we often do is Google people in our industry to see how we should present our professional brand story. A well-informed marketing strategy is essential for building a successful personality brand, and, consequently, a successful business.

MARKETING EDGE's Outstanding Professionals' special edition has, over the years, become an authority and industry manual for practitioners in the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) space and even out-side the IMC. As an industry authority and omnichannel publication, suffice it to say that having your professional brand story told in MARKETING EDGE will help you to attract your dream clients - the ones you'll love working with.

In this bumper issue, our readers are feted with inspiring challenges and success stories of what makes the featured professionals tick in their chosen careers. What their values are and also what drives them despite the bumpy roads they ply to success will equally motivate those who seek to break even in the Nigerian market.

The story of John Ajayi, Nigeria's legacy journalist,

entrepreneur, publisher and CEO of MARKETING EDGE Publications, who celebrated his 60th birthday on Monday, 12 June, 2023 amidst glitz and glamour also makes this edition unputdownable.

At both the local and international arena, with the rapid pace of technological advancements, some exciting trends will continue to emerge in the marketing and business world. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok will continue to grow, providing marketers and businesses with opportunities to reach new target audiences. High-quality and engaging content marketing will remain crucial for building brand awareness and driving conversions. The power of influencer marketing will help businesses expand their reach and connect with consumers in authentic ways.

On emerging technologies, a few game-changers are already here with us. Artificial intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR), and Blockchain are transforming the future of marketing. While AI will continue to enable businesses to automate and personalise their marketing messages, delivering tailored experiences to customer, AR/VR will create immersive brand experiences, allowing consumers to interact with products and services in exciting new ways. And Blockchain technology promises to provide greater transparency and security in data sharing, which is a win for both businesses and customers.

As we look ahead to the future of marketing and branding, it's clear that these areas will play an increasingly vital role on how businesses connect with their customers. However, as with any future developments, there will be opportunities and challenges for businesses in the realm of digital marketing and branding.

Brands are tilting towards data-driven storytelling. Now, marketers can quantify their impact and see what stories resonate with their audience. Data-driven storytelling allows brands to build narratives backed by evidence,

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making their messages more compelling and engaging. With real-time customer data, brands can now create personalized content that resonates with their target audience.

For example, Diageo, the global beverage giant, recently launched its revolutionary Generative AI tool aimed at streamlining and enhancing its packaging design process, and ultimately delivering products that resonate with its consumers on a deeper level. By harnessing the power of AI, the beverage giant can explore a vast array of design options with AI tools that utilize advanced algorithms and machine learning to analyze vast amounts of data, including consumers preferences, market trends and brand identity.

It has been said that AI will completely transform and drive marketing. Where there is a lot of data and a great need for personalization, AI can help shape better customer experiences and enable better predictability of outcomes. In fact, AI can do wonders with segmentation by splitting customers into various groups based on specific characteristics – gender, age, income level, interests and a zillion other criteria. It can also enable brands to connect with millions of prospects with a hundred different variations of marketing messages and help them track and measure their effectiveness almost instantly.

To further prove that AI is positioned to have an enduring impact on the marketing landscape, other global brands such as Coca-Cola have gone the AI route as it partnered with Bain and Company OpenAI to enhance the creativity of its marketing department. Coca-Cola believes that after the initial outpouring of enthusiasm and excitement from brands about Web 3, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) and the metaverse, it will just fizzle out and AI will / has already taken its place as the latest marketing trend.

Despite these advancements in technology and their attendant disruptions, sustainability remains a core brand value. In the end, what matters most is how brands make people feel. As Maya Angelou said, “People may forget what you said or did, but they’ll never forget how you made them feel.” Let’s learn from these successful brands and create experiences that truly connect with our audience and leave a lasting impression.

As we embrace the future of business, marketing and branding, let’s be prepared for the exciting opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. By staying adaptable and putting the customer first, brands and businesses can thrive in this ever-evolving digital landscape and changes in consumer behaviour.

Happy reading!

PUBLISHER/CEO
John Ajayi, frimn, NGE

MARKETING EDGE

GROUP CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Amos Oladele

MANAGING EDITOR/DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR
Ralph Tathagata

GENERAL EDITOR
Tunde Animasaun

DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR (MARKETING)
Anietie Udoh

GENERAL MANAGER (STRATEGY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT)
Mojsola Daniels-Matesun

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER (MARKETING)
Ogechi Odigbo

ASSISTANT EDITORS
Jolaoso Alabi, Zion Rufus, Seun Johnson

REPORTERS/CONTENT WRITERS
Idayat Oluwaseyi Lawal, Ibiidunni Banjoko, Abimbola Mohammed,
Felicia Nwosu, Kingsley Odii

TV PRESENTER/ANCHOR
Olubukola Omoniyi

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Olopade Emmanuel

EDITORS-AT-LARGE
Baba Awopetu, Joseph Ekeng

REPORTERS/RESEARCHERS
Phil Sholapo, Anne Olubukola Ajayi

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
SOUTH EAST/SOUTH-SOUTH REGION
Ebube Otti, 08037102077,
Living Street, Rainbow City, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

ABUJA BUREAU CHIEFS
Osho Rotimi, 08057023505, 08038024406, Dele Ogbodo, 08033055438

MARKETING CONSULTANTS
Taiwo Osho, Olawunmi Abiona, Jeremiah Joshua,
Kristian Edafe

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, SOUTH WEST/SOUTH EAST ZONE
Benedict Oluwadamilare Ajayi

ADMIN EXECUTIVES
Adejumoke Omene, Joy Ojoboh, Oladoyin Awoyele, Oluwabunmi Ibitoye

CONSULTING GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Eddie Nwayen

CONSULTANT PHOTOGRAPHERS
Dapo Adeseko, Wale Wahab

DIRECTOR/COMPANY SECRETARY
Modupe Olubunmi Ajayi

EDITORIAL ADVISERS
Dr. Ayo Teriba, Kunle Adesina, Sir Chris Ogbecchie, Dr. Ify Uraih,
Chuddy Uduenyi, Bola Agboola, Ade Ogidan, Paul Oteri

BUREAUX
NORTHERN ZONE (ABUJA)
Rotimi Osho, 08038024406, Olanrewaju McCauley, 08028644058

PORT HARCOURT
Biodun Ajibola, 08023432446

ABUJA
Gbenga Adeosun, (Associate Director), 08033020395
Charles Adebowale, Suite B10, NSTIF Plaza,
Kashim Ibrahim Way, Wuse 11, 08059576778

GHANA
C/O Business in Africa, F850/2,
Adjoate Road, 16 Osu, Accra. Tel/Fax: 233 21 775449

NIGERIA
25 Oritshe Street, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Ikeja, Lagos
08105315254, 08023243054, john@marketingedge.com.ng,
08023039359, editor@marketingedge.com.ng,
info@marketingedge.com.ng, www.marketingedge.com.ng

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Expert faults new tax policy on beer

By Felicia Nwosu



Mixed reactions have continued to trail the newly introduced tax laws on imported vehicles, alcohol, beverages and single use plastics by the Federal Government as well as its plan to further increase the number of banned items being imported into the country.

This was released as part of the fiscal policy measures for 2023 and signed by Zainab Ahmed, Ex Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning as part of its annual policy with focus on protecting home-made goods, create provision for excise on green taxes as well as to ensure that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) treaty, which Nigeria is a signatory to, is equally implemented.

The policy added that N75 per litre will be charged on “beer and stout including all alcoholic beverages and beer not made from malt – whether fermented or not” in 2023, adding that this new excise duty on beer and stout will be increased to N100 per litre in 2024.

Reacting to this new development in an interview with Channels Television, monitored by MARKETING EDGE, Taiwo Oyedele, the Fiscal Policy Partner and Africa

Tax Leader at PwC Nigeria, described it as the President’s parting gift to Nigerians. He, however, suggested that the newly introduced 2023 Fiscal Policy Measures and Tariff Adjustments came at wrong time considering how unstable the economy has been in recent times.

Oyedele revealed that some of these increases were as high as 90-95%, noting that, government’s decision to top up the increase was uncalled for, he noted that, food beverages and tobacco, are the largest sub-sector within the manufacturing, accounting to 40% and over the past seven years, the average growth rate has been about 2%. He added that, last year, the sector recorded a negative growth while decrying the ripple effect that such will have on about nine million people who directly or indirectly depend on it for livelihood.

“The naira scarcity has dented the growth of the sector with significant decline to some of the record declines in double digits that has not been seen in decades. When you find sectors struggling with issues like that, we have countries like UAE, and South Africa, who have suspended exercise on Tobacco, alcohol and wines. They cancelled it because,

based on their data, it was not helping their economy in terms of tourism and entertainment.

The Tax Leader urged the government to prioritise on the well-being and growth of the economy and the citizenry.

“If you can’t suspend exercise, why do you further increase at a point where the economy is struggling? While we understand that the government assigns

commitment around Co2 and wants to get to net zero by 2060, it is important that we put the national interest first by consulting widely with all the parties that will be affected. Use data for the decisions so that you will know the likely impact not only on the industries but also on the entire value chain,” he said.

Consumer Value Awards convener speaks on empowering consumers ahead of 2nd edition

By Seun Johnson



Strategist at Absolute PR Limited, reflected on the success of the inaugural edition of the Consumer Value Awards and discussed the upcoming second edition. He emphasized the impact of consumers’ voting patterns on brand owners, highlighting the importance of recognizing exceptional performance.

Sharing some of his personal experiences as a consumer, Ekine recounted how they motivated him to establish the awards.

He stressed the significance of providing a platform for the public to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various services through online voting.

“I was deprived by an

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airline from boarding when I was supposed to have boarded right on the tarmac, and I tried to complain, but nobody was listening to me. I bought a car, and within two weeks, it developed problems, but nobody supported or responded to my complaint. I had this external prepaid meter, and I was paying bills of over a hundred thousand naira every month. When I went to the National Electricity Regulator to complain, I was driven out," Ekine shared.

These experiences, according to the CVA Convener, led him to recognize

the need for conversations about consumer issues and inspired the concept of voting for exceptional brands, noting that recognizing and rewarding outstanding brands can motivate others to improve their offerings.

Regarding the voting procedures, Ekine explained the creation of a dedicated website where individuals listed their preferred brands. Based on nominations, a selection of three hundred brands was made available for online voting.

As the second round of voting begins, driven by the

organizers' commitment to consumer rights and knowledge, the Consumer Value Awards have firmly established themselves and are achieving their purpose. Ekine revealed growing consumer interest and support from government agencies.

He emphasized the importance of validating product and service claims, underscoring the value of a reference platform where consumers can learn from each other's experiences. Consumer votes serve as endorsements, influencing purchasing decisions of fellow consumers.

Ekine concluded by stating, "The market is clustered, so the decision of one consumer is a pointer to another consumer on what to do."

The second edition of the Consumer Value Awards is scheduled for September, aiming to promote and recognize the remarkable contributions of Nigerian entrepreneurs to the sustainable development of the economy. It encourages local practitioners to foster innovation and creativity, driving economic growth at both local and international levels.

Uber reviews \$600m global media agency account

By Joseph Ekeng

Uber, the leading ride-hailing company, has announced that it is looking for a new global media agency to manage its \$600 million media budget. The move follows a series of changes at the company, culminating in a shift in focus towards profitability.

According to industry sources, the company submitted a Request for Information (RFI) to a number of agencies in the past month, with responses expected to be reviewed in the coming weeks. The official Request for Proposal (RFP) is set to be released later this month, with presentations scheduled for July and decisions to be made by August.

In the RFI, Uber states that it is seeking a "best-in-class strategic partner who will act as an extension of our internal media & marketing teams."



The company is looking for an agency that can provide global expertise in media planning, buying, and analytics, as well as innovative approaches to digital marketing.

The search for a new

media agency comes at a critical time for Uber, which is facing increasing competition from rival ride-hailing services such as Lyft and Didi Chuxing. The company has also faced challenges

in some markets due to regulatory issues, and has been working to improve its reputation following a series of scandals involving workplace culture and executive misconduct.

Despite these challenges, Uber remains one of the most successful and innovative companies in the world, with a presence in over 900 cities and a loyal user base of millions of people. The company's advertising campaigns have been instrumental in driving this success, and the search for a new media agency is a crucial step in maintaining and growing the brand's visibility and market share.

The bidding process for Uber's \$600 million global media account is expected to be highly competitive, with some of the world's top agencies expected to participate. The chosen agency will have the opportunity to work with one of the most dynamic and influential companies in the world, and to play a key role in shaping the future of the ride-hailing industry.

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Heineken adds \$1.2bn to net revenue

Stories by **Joseph Ekeng**

Heineken, the world-renowned brewing company, has announced plans to add \$1.2 billion to its net revenue, following a rapid expansion in Africa.

The company, which has a presence in over 190 countries, has set its sights on growing its net revenue by more than 1 billion pounds, while also increasing its operating profit in Africa by 150 million pounds.

This development comes on the back of Heineken's successful acquisition of Distil, one of South Africa's leading wine exporters, and Namibia Breweries. With these acquisitions, Heineken now has



a stronger foothold in Africa, where it has been steadily growing its business for some time.

Dolf van den Brink, Heineken's CEO and chairman, expressed his delight at the successful acquisition and the

potential it presents for the company's future growth. "We look forward to adding more than €1 billion in net revenue and €150 million operating profit to our African footprint," Van den Brink said in a press release.

This announcement is expected to be a game-changer for Heineken, which has been working hard to expand its business in Africa. With a rapidly growing population and a burgeoning middle class, the continent is seen as a key growth market for the beer industry, and Heineken is well positioned to take advantage of this.

With its sights firmly set on growth, Heineken is expected to continue to make strategic acquisitions and investments in the African market, which could lead to even greater success in the years to come.

MultiChoice's profits drop by over 200%



MultiChoice Group, Africa's largest subscription entertainment company, has experienced a significant decline in profits, plunging over 200% according to its annual financial results. The company reported a loss of R2.9 billion (\$155 million), a sharp contrast to the R2.8 billion (\$150 million) profit recorded in the previous

financial year.

Analysts attribute this profit decline to multiple factors, with one of the primary causes being the rising prominence of video streaming services in Africa. The influx of platforms like Netflix and Disney+ has posed a challenge to MultiChoice, leading to a loss of customers. As early as 2021, the company had expressed concerns about

Netflix's potential impact on its relevance.

In addition to the competition from streaming platforms, MultiChoice pointed to other contributing factors such as the weak rand and South Africa's persistent energy crisis. The country has been grappling with intermittent power cuts known as loadshedding, which has adversely affected businesses across various industries. MultiChoice stated that during stage 4 and above loadshedding, there was a noticeable increase in customer churn, even among those with disposable income. Customers became more selective in their subscriptions to avoid excessive loadshedding periods.

Loadshedding has emerged as a recurring obstacle for

South African companies, leading to dire financial performances. It has forced businesses to grapple with operational challenges, affecting their ability to generate revenue and meet customer demands.

While MultiChoice continues to face challenges amid the rise of streaming services, the company says it remains committed to exploring new avenues and adapting its business model to remain relevant in the ever-changing media industry. With ongoing investments and strategic partnerships, MultiChoice aims to strengthen its position in the market and regain its profitability in the future.

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Global OOH advertising market to hit \$39.2bn by 2030

Stories by Joseph Ekeng



The global market for outdoor advertising is projected to experience substantial growth in the coming years, with estimates suggesting it will reach a value of \$39.2 billion by 2030. In 2022, the market was valued at \$28.2 billion, indicating a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.2% over the analysis period from 2022 to

2030.

The report highlights the traditional segment as one of the key areas of analysis. This segment is expected to record a CAGR of 4% and reach a value of \$28.3 billion by the end of the analysis period. Additionally, considering the ongoing post-pandemic recovery, the digital segment is projected to experience a

revised CAGR of 4.7% over the next eight years.

The United States market is estimated to be valued at \$6.6 billion in 2022. Meanwhile, China, the world's second-largest economy, is forecasted to reach a market size of \$7.2 billion by 2030, exhibiting a CAGR of 5.7% from 2022 to 2030.

Apart from the U.S. and China, other notable geographic markets include Japan and Canada. Japan is anticipated to grow at a rate of 2.5% during the 2022-2030 period, while Canada is expected to experience a growth rate of 3.9%. In Europe, Germany is forecasted to achieve a CAGR of approximately 3.4%.

Looking ahead to 2023, several challenges loom on the horizon. Higher retail inflation is likely to impact consumer confidence and spending, leading to slower economic growth. Governments may

respond to inflation by raising interest rates, which could hinder new job creation and further constrain economic activity. Consequently, companies may reduce their capital expenditure due to inflation concerns and weaker demand.

These factors suggest that developed markets are poised to enter a potential recession, marked by volatile financial markets, escalating trade tensions, stricter regulatory environments, and the need to incorporate climate change into economic decision-making.

As a result, the year 2023 is expected to be challenging for various markets, investors, and consumers. However, despite the difficulties, businesses and their leaders can still find opportunities by demonstrating resilience and adaptability in charting a path forward.

AB InBev set to triple media spend



Brewery giant AB InBev has said that it will triple its media spend this summer as the company battles declining sales from one of its major brands - Bud Light.

Far-right activists in the U.S. have led an organised boycott of the brand to

protest what they perceive as Bud Light support for the gay community in the North American country.

The problem started when popular American influencer Dylan Mulvaney, who is a transgender woman, posted a video of a can of Bud Light

with her image on it. The product was sent to her by the company as part of its 'March Madness' campaign. The video went viral and prompted outrage from some U.S. consumers of the beer.

The company has earlier announced that it will restructure its global marketing team. But apparently, the restructuring may not be enough to put out the fire, therefore, it plans to ramp up media spend also.

According to ABInBev CEO, Michel Doukeris, the aggressive media spend was necessary to reignite support

for the brand and counter the narrative out there about the company.

"We will need to continue to clarify the fact that this was one can, one influencer, one post and not a campaign, and repeat this message for some time," he said.

Speaking further, the CEO said the crisis has escalated because of social media. According to him, in an age of social media, brands, especially big consumer brands, can be easily brought into these debates. While the company can "be at the table" when issues like this are being debated, "the beer itself should not be the focus of the debate," he said.

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Tiger Beer drives 30% growth for NB Plc

By Joseph Ekeng



Tiger, the renowned international premium beer brand, has achieved remarkable success as the fastest-growing beer brand in Nigeria, experiencing a nearly twofold increase in sales volume in 2021.

The impressive performance has been sustained in 2022.

This achievement solidifies Tiger's position as one of the key players assisting Heineken,

the world's second-largest beer producer, in penetrating Africa's most populous country. With a population of approximately 200 million, the majority of whom are under 30 years old, Nigeria represents a crucial market for Heineken's expansion plans.

Roland Pirmez, the President of Africa, Middle East, and Europe at Heineken, stated, "Tiger continued its successful roll-out in Nigeria, making it the third biggest Tiger market globally and the biggest outside the Asia Pacific region." The remarkable growth in Nigeria can be attributed to the increasing adoption of Tiger, which contributed to a 30% surge in the volume

of the company's premium brands. This growth was further bolstered by the strong performance of Heineken and the successful introduction of the Desperados brand in the Nigerian market.

Pirmez emphasized the attractiveness of the Nigerian beer market, citing its high growth potential and improving macroeconomic environment. Heineken recognizes the tremendous opportunities presented by Nigeria, and their strategic focus on the country aligns with the positive trends and promising outlook.

In its quest to connect with young African consumers and capitalize on the surge

in investment and volume growth, the world's second-largest brewer has adopted an innovative approach. Heineken is leveraging sports and entertainment as avenues to engage and resonate with the younger demographic. This strategy allows the company to forge strong connections and build brand loyalty among Nigerian consumers, who have exhibited a keen interest in both sports and entertainment.

As Heineken continues to invest in the Nigerian beer market and leverage its diverse portfolio of premium brands, Tiger's rapid growth is poised to continue, further solidifying its position as a dominant player in the Nigeria.

Unilever brands sponsor Women's World Cup 2023

Unilever personal care brands, including Rexona (also known as Sure and Degree), Dove, Lifebuoy and Lux, have been unveiled by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association FIFA, the international governing body of association football, as official sponsors of the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023.

According to a statement by Unilever, "The landmark partnership will run through to 2027 and include the FIFA World Cup 2026™ and the FIFAe Finals, and marks the first time that FIFA has teamed up with personal care brands across women's, men's, and FIFA esports."

As part of the agreement, FIFA and Unilever will collaborate with FIFA's Women's Development Programme. Launched in 2020, this initiative is designed



to provide opportunities for women and girls and supports the continued growth of women's football around the globe. Unilever will provide funding, human resources, and support for tailored development programmes to tap into the upsurge in interest surrounding the women's game.

he collaboration, among other things, will build on existing projects by Unilever brands, which aim to have a positive impact on communities. Recent work has included Rexona's

Breaking Limits programme, which provides funding for community sports and helps young people overcome barriers to being active. While the Dove Self-Esteem Project has been inspiring body confidence in the next generation of girls since launching in 2004, reaching over 94 million young people to date.

"Investing at all levels from grassroots to FIFA's top tournaments, Unilever will have the opportunity to supply a total of 80,000 gift packs containing personal care products direct to fans at various FIFA events over the coming years," Unilever further stated in the release.

Fabian Garcia, Personal Care President at Unilever, comments: "Working with the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, our brands will connect with an enormous and highly engaged audience. This is a

significant opportunity for them to engage a growing audience of women's football fans, demonstrate relevance, and build brand power, while promoting gender equality in sports and supporting future generations of female athletes."

FIFA Secretary General, Fatma Samoura, added: "Unilever has some of the world's biggest and most impactful consumer brands, and we're incredibly excited for them to join us on our journey to Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. 2023 is going to be a landmark moment for women's football, and Unilever are the ideal sponsor to help us grow the game globally – this year and beyond."

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 is set to be the biggest stand alone women's sporting event in the world, reaching an estimated two billion people. FIFA is targeting 1.5 million attendees across the tournament's 64 matches, providing many opportunities to inspire more women and girls to get involved in the sport.

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TAJBank launches *Digital Banking App*



L-R: Managing Director TAJBank Mr. Hamid Joda, TAJBank Influencer Hauwa Jalilah, TAJBank Ambassador, Hajia Saratu Gidado, and TAJBank Executive Director Mr. Sherif Idi during the Launching of the Bank's "TAJWAY" Digital Banking App in Abuja, recently.

TAJBank, Nigeria's leading non-interest bank, on recently launched a new digital banking app – TAJWAY - in furtherance of its sustained drive to surpass customer expectations in real time and cost-free banking services nationwide.

The digital banking app, which is rated as one of the most secure and user-friendly platforms for transactions, has been upgraded with additional pioneering capabilities to enhance customer experience in terms of easier, faster, and more convenient services to streamline and make financial

transactions very exciting for its rapidly growing customers globally.

TAJWAY app is packaged with special features and benefits to customers, including increased transaction limits, card management, budget planning, saving on spending, multiple transfers and real time receipt generation for all transactions.

These new benefits complement the app's other value-laden benefits of seamless funds transfer, account opening, account balance enquiry, airtime and data purchase, bills payment and account funding.

Commenting on the launch of the new digital app, the bank's Managing Director, Mr. Hamid Joda, said: "This is an important milestone in our journey to becoming a digital bank. This will see us build the capabilities needed to develop and deploy an array of digitized products that are simple and easy to use".

"By leveraging emerging technologies and data analytics, we will increase engagement with our existing and prospective customers to exponentially scale up customer acquisition and transactions at a lower cost to serve", the banker added.

In his remarks on the innovative product launch, the Executive Director, Mr. Sherif Idi, enthused: "TAJWAY is a new self-service, stress-free and secured app built to offer exceptional user experience with a vast bouquet of functionalities for all classes of customers. It is currently available for download on Google Play store and iOS App Store."

Industry analysts believe that TAJBank's launch of the new digital banking app is a desirable step towards further consolidating its position as a frontline bank in the noninterest subsector of

Nigeria's financial market.

According to the experts, based on its functional values, TAJWAY will create more opportunities and value for existing and potential customers by deepening support for the growth of their personal and business aspirations, while fast-tracking current efforts of the monetary authorities to deepen financial inclusion in the country.

The non-interest lender's management advised customers that to download the app, all that is required is to visit the respective stores (Google play store or Apple app store), and search for the App, using the keyword "TAJWAY" and that this should be followed by a tap on the TAJWAY app icon, click install/get to download, then open/launch the app when download is complete, adding that customers are required to register with the Bank to fully commence the use of the app.

Quote

"By leveraging emerging technologies and data analytics, we will increase engagement with our existing and prospective customers to exponentially scale up customer acquisition and transactions at a lower cost

Spectranet introduces "Jara Scheme", rewards partners



(L – R) Babatunde Agunbiade, Regional Sales Manager Spectranet; Mrs Lawal Halimat, Harlequine; MR Friday Okolie, Tested OK; Mrs Elizabeth Oladipo, Mr Maneesh Kulshrestha, CEO Spectranet; Tord Tech; Barrister Richard Komolafe, Arktronics; Mr. Anekwe Obum, Fibrepath; and Mr. Nasiru Jibril, Regional Sales Manager Spectranet at the Spectranet Jara launch event held at the Spectranet HQ.

In a bid to foster customer loyalty and give back to subscribers, Spectranet the leading Internet Service provider in Nigeria has

launched "Spectranet Jara".

With the launch of Spectranet Jara, all data recharges done across all Spectranet's renewal channels such as their Self Care Portal, Mobile Apps, Exclusive shops and Authorized Dealer outlets, will now be eligible to receive loyalty points of up to 10% of the total value of the recharge.

During the launch of the scheme at Spectranet's Headquarters in Ikeja, Spectranet Jara was described as a special offer to say thank you to all her customers for sticking with the brand throughout the years.

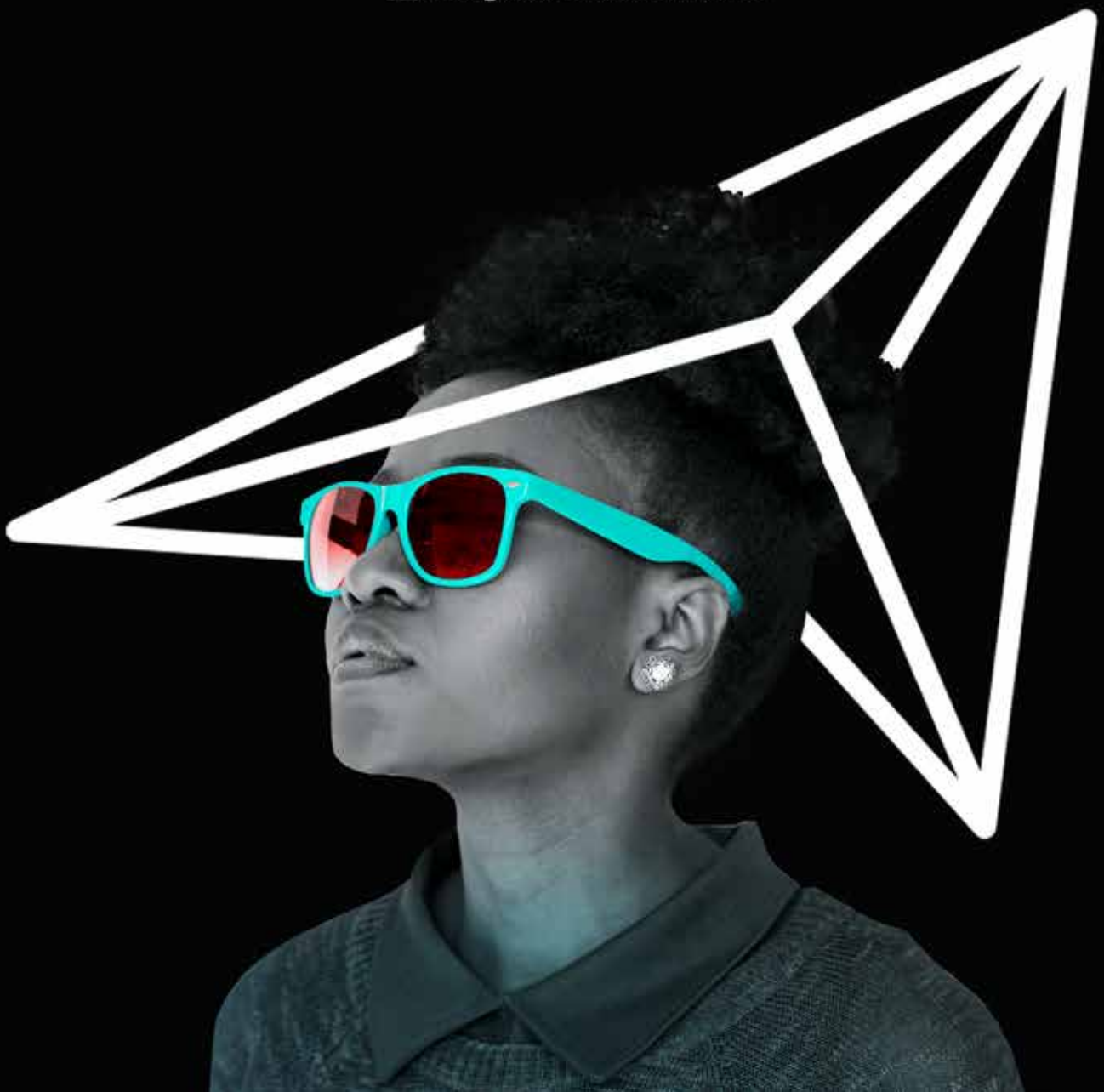
Explaining its modus operandi, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Maneesh Kulshrestha, disclosed that the

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JARA initiative will enable customers acquire loyalty points of up to 10% percentage of every data recharge done, irrespective of the plan selected.

“Jara” means “Extra” and as the word implies, Spectranet ‘Jara’ (Recharge and Earn) has been designed to reward Spectranet subscribers with Loyalty Points on every Data Recharge. He said.

Mr. Maneesh further described this new offering as one that showcases Spectranet as a market leader that will continue to introduce customer friendly initiatives that truly makes a good difference to improve the life and businesses of Nigerians.

Also, at the launch of the scheme, Spectranet rewarded five top dealers who met their targets and performed excellently in the second quarter of this year. The dealers were celebrated with awards and new incentive packages to encourage them and congratulate them for a job well done.

The CEO added that the move is a calculated attempt by Spectranet to give back to not only its customers and dealers, but also the larger society, stating that internet service is a major key to surviving and thriving in the face of the current economic challenges confronting Nigerians.

In his words, “With the launch of Jara, Spectranet customers can now enjoy more value for their money and enjoy uninterrupted internet access, to keep up with their everyday hustle. Spectranet Jara will be distinguished in the market as an initiative created to reward existing and New Spectranet customers. This is a first of its kind initiative in the industry”

Spectranet was said to have recently reached its 10th year as the foremost 4GLTE Service Provider in Nigeria. Spectranet continues to establish itself as a trusted name in the industry, offering cutting edge services and exceptional customer experiences.

Why there is low turnout of Nigerian agencies at Cannes Lions - Babaeko

By Felicia Nwosu



Following the low turnout of Nigerian creative agencies at the recently concluded Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity in France, Steve Babaeko, Chief Executive Officer of X3M Ideas and president, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), has attributed the trend to the incessant fluctuation in foreign exchange as well as the global economic headwinds.

In an interview with *MARKETING EDGE* on TV, the seasoned adman averred that the noticeable absence of Nigerian agencies at this year’s Cannes was more of economics than any other reason.

“I think it is purely economics, and I will give you an example. If there is a small agency in Estonia, a small European country that is like the size of X3M Ideas, but make their money in euro, right? If their entry for Cannes Lions, I don’t know how much it is for one entry, is 500 or 750 euro as the case may be; they have earned money in euro and are doing one for one.

“Now, let it get to the turn of a Nigerian agency. They have earned money in Naira; if they have to do 850 or 900 to one euro, they’re already disenfranchised. Not to talk of what the airline industry is even doing to us right now. We are paying more for tickets for the same journey, the same distance compared to our neighbours in West Africa. That already has put us in a back foot when it comes to being able to afford the kind of resources that would help us be majorly present in some of those festivals,” he stated.

Comparing Nigeria with its contemporaries across the globe, Babaeko confidently stated that Nigeria is at par with other global professionals in leveraging technology to create compelling

and enduring campaigns. He attested that the record-breaking campaign that has placed his agency on the global map stands as a validation to Nigeria’s technological prowess.

According to him, the combination of harnessing creativity with technology has redefined the entire advertising and marketing ecosystem. He mentioned how such technological shift has helped to place Nigerian professionals at the forefront in driving positive change.

“This is the first time the entire West Africa will have the opportunity to win. South Africa has won, East Africa has won, North Africa has won, leaving West Africa out in the cold for the past 70 years. The fact that we are able to win shows you the power and the fire that the Nigerian advertising industry is bringing to the global front today.

“I think it is just a bit of more confidence. I think sometimes we get a little not too self-assured. The economy hasn’t helped either. So, sometimes for every business you get, you’re holding on so tight to it. And sometimes when you’re left in that survival mode, you take some of the things you shouldn’t take. In our colleagues outside this country, what I see more is that self-confidence. They know they can quickly say no,” he said.

The Nigeria leading agency boss commended some of the remarkable achievements recorded by the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) headed by Dr. Lekan Fadolapo.

“If we had left everything the way it was before the DG of ARCON came in and started sanitizing, in a couple of more years, there would be no advertising industry. The government wants to strengthen all of the different ecosystems so that we can get better and be able to hire more people. Now, with all of the things that were going on before, where people could owe you for an endless number of days, advertising agencies were beginning to shut down. I am the president, so I know this.

“How are we going to improve the capacity of advertising agencies to be able to hire more people? And if you look at it, just check it by numbers. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria is the highest in Africa today; I stand to be corrected, close to over \$400 billion per annum, right? When compared to the GDP of countries like South Africa, which is far smaller, the South African advertising industry is six times bigger than the advertising industry in Nigeria. why? Because their laws and regulations are intact,” Babaeko explained.



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DIGITAL MARKETERS FAULT DOLLAR SPENDING RESTRICTIONS

By Zion Rufus

Digital marketing practitioners in Nigeria are expressing concerns over the ongoing impact of restrictions on dollar spending on the country's digital marketing ecosystem.

As more Nigerians call on the government to lift the ban on Naira cards for international dollar transactions, industry professionals are again raising their voices to draw attention to the harsh realities of the negative impact of the restrictions, and the challenges faced by businesses and marketers.

The issue dates back to 2022 when several Nigerian banks, including GTB, Zenith, Access Bank Plc, UBA, First Bank of Nigeria, and Ecobank, announced the suspension of international transactions with domestic naira cards. This move limited the ability of Nigerians to shop online from international stores and hampered digital marketing professionals' ability to pay for ads and other services using their naira cards.

The restrictions on dollar spending have had a significant impact on the budgets of businesses engaged in digital marketing. Many advertising platforms charge in foreign currencies, such as dollars, making it difficult for Nigerian businesses to allocate sufficient funds for their digital marketing campaigns. This has resulted in reduced advertising efforts and the need to explore alternative, more cost-effective strategies to reach target audiences.

Access to international platforms that require payments in foreign currencies, particularly dollars, has also been limited. Nigerian businesses are finding it challenging to leverage these global platforms, hindering their ability to expand their reach beyond the country's borders and tap into global



markets. While focusing on local digital marketing channels like social media, local influencers, search engines, and local websites can offer a more targeted approach, it may limit opportunities for global growth.

Tunny Ogunnowo, a lead strategist at Absolute Hearts Media, highlighted the challenges faced by digital marketing professionals in accessing paid tools and platforms required to drive marketing activities.

Since many of these tools are priced in foreign currencies, the restrictions force marketers to seek alternative payment methods that often come with additional

costs or complications.

"Consequently, these issues have the potential to increase marketing expenses and disrupt the productivity of digital marketers," Ogunnowo said.

While some new brands and products have emerged to address the payment problem, he argued that, on the whole, the restrictions on naira cards have caused more harm than good to digital marketers in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, justifying the restrictions, Nigerian banks had cited "current market realities on foreign exchange" while gradually reducing the monthly international spending limit on naira cards



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from \$100/\$120 to \$50/\$20. However, industry analysts and experts believe that the scarcity of foreign exchange may have contributed to these developments.

Some even predicted that the restrictions could lead to the adoption of more Fintech solutions that could provide the same access.

Fridel Makun, a marketing consultant, expressed concerns about the implications of the restrictions on budgets, access to international platforms, and the emphasis on the local audience.

The marcomms professional asserted that allocating budgets for digital marketing campaigns has become challenging for businesses due to the limitations on dollar spending.

“Advertising platforms typically charge in foreign currencies, such as dollars, making it difficult for Nigerian businesses to plan and execute effective marketing strategies. As a result, businesses may resort to reduced advertising efforts or seek alternative, more cost-effective methods to reach their target audiences. Although some solutions exist, there is still room for improvement,” Makun said, he further noted that the restrictions considerably hinders access to international platforms that require payments in foreign currencies, particularly dollars.

“This limitation prevents Nigerian businesses from fully leveraging global platforms and expanding their reach beyond the domestic market. While local digital marketing channels like social media, local influencers, search engines, and local websites offer targeted approaches, they may restrict opportunities for tapping into global markets,” he added.

Expressing concerns about the strict forex laws in Nigeria, which make it challenging to access dollars for digital advertising on platforms like social media and search engines, Miriam David, a seasoned digital marketing expert, reemphasized the significance of digital marketing for businesses in establishing and maintaining their brand presence.

“Startups face considerable amounts of obstacles due to the high cost of obtaining dollars, which impacts their limited budgets and hinders their ability to compete with larger competitors. Even larger firms face budget constraints as the rising dollar rate increases the cost of running ads,” Miriam stressed.

She suggested supporting local talent to develop advertising platforms within Nigeria as a solution to lower the cost of digital marketing while prioritizing the strengthening of the national currency.

Ebuka Chidube, who leads online marketing for PiggyVest, discussed the negative consequences of the restrictions on dollar spending in Nigeria on the digital marketing sector.

Chidube outlined a range of adverse effects, including limitations on investments, decreased foreign investment, hindered innovation and competitiveness, and the overall impact on digital marketing agencies and professionals.

The restrictions on dollar spending have significantly hampered investments in the digital marketing industry. Local businesses, as well as foreign investors, are deterred from allocating funds to Nigerian digital marketing ventures due to the uncertainties and complexities surrounding currency exchange and international transactions. This lack of investment stifles the growth and development of the sector, impeding its potential for generating revenue and creating employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the restrictions hinder innovation and competitiveness within the digital marketing landscape. With limited access to international platforms and tools, Nigerian marketers face challenges in keeping up with global trends and implementing cutting-edge strategies.

This creates a disadvantage for businesses aiming to stay ahead in a rapidly evolving digital environment. The inability to access foreign digital marketing solutions may result in a stagnant industry that struggles to adapt to emerging technologies and consumer preferences.

According to Chidube, the impact of the restrictions also extends beyond individual businesses and professionals to the digital marketing agencies that support them.

“These agencies rely on a thriving and dynamic industry to sustain their operations and provide valuable services to their clients. However, the limitations on naira cards for international transactions pose significant challenges for agencies, making it difficult for them to effectively manage client campaigns and optimize their results. The increased costs and complications associated with alternative payment methods further strain their ability to deliver high-quality services,” he

said.

The restrictions also have broader implications for the digital marketing professionals themselves. The limitations on dollar spending restrict their access to educational resources, training programs, and industry events that are often conducted on international platforms. This impedes their professional growth and limits their exposure to new techniques and strategies employed by global experts.

Additionally, the restrictions may create a brain drain as skilled professionals seek opportunities in countries with more favourable conditions for their careers.

Chidube continued “Moreover, the limitations on naira cards for international transactions disrupt collaborations between Nigerian businesses and international partners. Joint marketing ventures, influencer collaborations, and cross-border campaigns become more challenging to execute, hindering the potential for mutually beneficial partnerships.” He noted that this further isolates Nigerian businesses from global networks and markets, limiting their ability to expand their customer base and increase their brand visibility on an international scale.

Another concern raised by industry professionals is the potential impact on the digital divide and inclusivity. Digital marketing provides a platform for businesses of all sizes to compete on a level playing field. However, the restrictions on dollar spending exacerbate existing inequalities, as smaller businesses with limited resources face greater difficulties in accessing global advertising platforms and reaching wider audiences. This can lead to a concentration of advertising power among larger corporations, impeding the growth of emerging entrepreneurs and stifling economic diversity.

In light of these challenges, there is a growing call for comprehensive solutions and improvements to address the negative consequences of the restrictions on dollar spending in the digital marketing ecosystem. Stakeholders, including digital marketing professionals, are urging the government to consider alternatives that strike a balance between economic considerations and the need to foster a vibrant and inclusive digital marketing landscape in Nigeria.



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Showmax relives Nigeria's Storytelling heritage

By Joseph Ekeng

Showmax, Africa's leading streaming service, is making a major move in Nigeria's rapidly growing streaming industry with its first Nigerian Masterbrand campaign. The campaign, with the tagline "No one tells a story like we do," pays homage to Nigeria's rich storytelling heritage.

The campaign officially launched with a television commercial featuring popular Nigerian actress, Sharon Ooja, known for her role in the AMVCA-nominated Showmax Original series, *Flawsome*. Showcasing Nigeria's vibrant storytelling tradition, the campaign emphasizes Showmax's commitment to presenting authentic Nigerian stories. In the past year alone, Showmax has released eight original Nigerian productions.

Prior to the launch, Showmax generated excitement by displaying billboards across major Nigerian cities featuring popular Nigerian slangs. These billboards sparked conversations on social media, with users sharing their interpretations and perspectives on the campaign.

Showmax has a history of generating social media buzz. In 2022, its Nigerian version of the *Real Housewives* franchise, *The Real Housewives of Lagos (RHOLagos)*, dominated Twitter conversations during its 13-week run. *RHOLagos* went on to win an AMVCA award for "Best Costume Designer," joining other acclaimed Showmax originals like *Crime and Justice Lagos*, which won awards for "Best TV Series" and "Best Picture Editor."

Opeoluwa Filani, General Manager at Showmax Nigeria,



expressed enthusiasm for the campaign, celebrating Nigeria's rich storytelling traditions and Showmax's commitment to portraying them authentically. Filani highlighted Nigeria's diversity, with over 300 tribes and countless untold stories.

Showmax's investment in Nigeria has already yielded positive results. The platform received 22 nominations at Africa's top TV and film awards. Their offerings include the record-breaking children's show *Jay Jay: The Chosen One*, inspired by Nigerian football legend Jay Jay Okocha's childhood, and critically acclaimed originals like *Diiche*, *Flawsome*, *Crime and Justice Lagos*, *The Real Housewives of Lagos* and *Abuja*, and *Wura*.

Showmax also features a wide collection of TV shows and films from Africa Magic, including popular titles like *Itura*, *Covenant*, *My Beautiful Life*, and *Ricordi*. Additionally, Showmax offers beloved HBO shows, allowing fans to binge-watch *Game of Thrones*, *House of the Dragon*,

and Emmy-winning favorites like *Succession*, *Barry*, *The Last of Us*, *Love and Death*, *Industry*, and *Euphoria*.

For sports enthusiasts, Showmax Pro combines the entertainment package with live sports streaming from SuperSport, offering subscribers the latest seasons of major leagues and events.

With its Nigerian Masterbrand campaign, Showmax aims to solidify its presence in the Nigerian market by showcasing the country's storytelling heritage and commitment to producing authentic Nigerian content. The streaming service's investment in Nigeria has already resulted in significant achievements and a growing subscriber base, establishing Showmax as a major player in the Nigerian streaming industry.



MTN SA partners Meta over daily free Facebook access

Stories by Joseph Ekeng

MTN South Africa has teamed up with Meta, owners of Facebook to bring an exciting offer to its subscribers. The telecommunications giant has recently announced that it will be providing its customers with a daily allowance of 15MB of Facebook usage, including text and photos, without any data charges.

The firm stated that this collaboration aims to enhance the digital experience for MTN subscribers and make it more accessible to a wider audience.

The partnership between MTN and Meta began back in 2017 when they introduced Facebook AutoFlex. This innovative feature allowed customers to enjoy a text-only version of Facebook without incurring data charges. But now, with the new text and photo mode, users can immerse themselves in a richer and more captivating Facebook experience. They can view photos, update their status, and send messages, all without worrying

about using up their data allowance.

MTN SA highlighted the benefits of their collaboration with Meta, emphasizing the creation of an ecosystem of services on Facebook. This ecosystem includes features such as bundle purchase, data advance (XtraTime), customer registration, recharge using a card, airtime, and MoMo. By integrating these services, MTN ensures that customers can seamlessly access and enjoy various offerings on Facebook without any disruptions to their browsing experience or service delivery.

Expressing enthusiasm about the partnership, Seun Soladoye, MTN's general manager for consumer prepaid, said, "We are very excited about our partnership with Meta. Not only are we opening up the digital world to more South Africans, but we are also doing so at reduced data costs, something which is much needed in SA right now."

Soladoye stressed that the collaboration between MTN and Meta signifies a

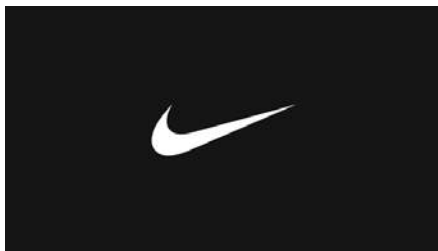


significant step forward in bridging the digital divide in South Africa. He noted that by offering daily free access to Facebook, MTN is enabling its users to connect, communicate, and stay informed without worrying about data charges.

The company stated that this initiative is particularly important in a country like South Africa, where affordable access to digital services remains a pressing need.

By empowering more South Africans with free Facebook access, MTN is playing a crucial role in driving digital inclusion and enriching the lives of its customers.

Nike to achieve 40% digital business by 2025



Sportswear giant Nike is making significant strides in its digital business, with a current share of 26% this year, up from 10% in 2019. The company remains on track to achieve its target of becoming a 40% digital business by 2025, according to Nike CEO John Donahoe during a call with investors while announcing the full-year 2023 results on May 29.

Donahoe attributed the growth of Nike's digital business to its loyalty program, emphasizing the company's focus on understanding its consumers

better and using data-driven insights to serve them effectively. He stated that the past year witnessed an expansion of Nike's membership base, but more importantly, the company has successfully deepened its relationships with consumers.

"Our members now engage with us more frequently, buy more, and are more loyal to our brands. Once members join our ecosystem, they are increasing their lifelong sport journeys with us," said Donahoe.

In addition to the digital push, Nike also revealed its intention to move away from a highly promotional environment this year. Donahoe emphasized the company's aim to recover a higher level of full-price growth and achieve profitable growth in fiscal year 2024. He acknowledged the challenges posed by a culture of promotions, expressing appreciation for the efforts of Nike's strategic partners in balancing investments in consumer connections, enhancing

the retail environment, and managing inventory.

"While we feel great about where we are, we recognize that next year, the environment is going to continue to be promotional, putting pressure on our wholesale partners in terms of how they navigate the first half of the year," explained Donahoe.

These strategic shifts are expected to contribute to improved margins for Nike, as the company focuses on profitability recovery moving forward.

Despite some challenges, Nike reported lackluster profit growth of 4% for the full year ending on May 31, with a total of \$22.3 billion (£17.6 billion), up from \$21.5 billion (£16.9 billion) the previous year. However, the company's revenues showed a more positive trend, increasing by 10% for the year to reach \$51.2 billion (£40.4 billion), compared to \$46.7 billion (£36.8 billion) in the previous year.

Nike's commitment to expanding its digital business and prioritizing profitability signals its determination to adapt to an evolving market. With a strong emphasis on data-driven insights and enhancing consumer relationships, the company is positioning itself for continued success in the ever-changing retail landscape.



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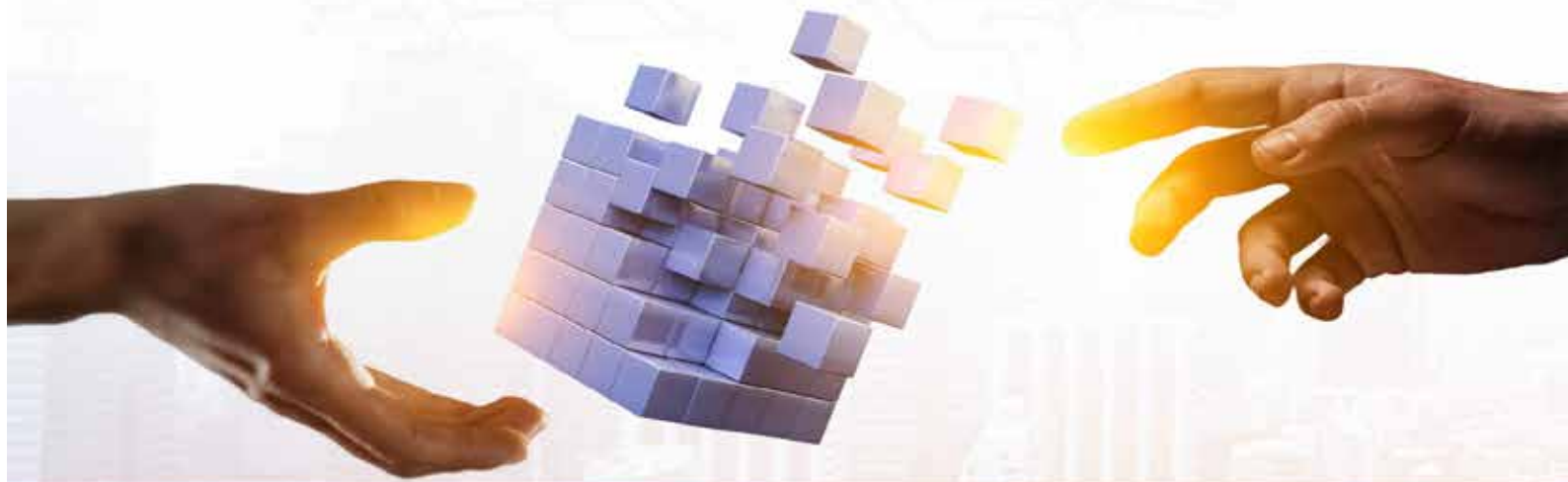
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How Coca-Cola uses AI dispensers to identify consumer preferences

By **Joseh Ekeng**

Coca-Cola markets and sells its brands in over 200 countries, but despite being one of the most recognised brand names in the world, it continues to closely monitor market trends to stay ahead of competition.

In recent times, one of the brand's innovative responses to changing market landscape and consumer preferences has been the reinvention of the fountain beverage machine. The machine, which was originally created in 2009 as a functional drinks dispenser, has now become a vital part of the company's marketing strategy.

Coca-Cola has recently unveiled the newest version of the machine, *Coca-Cola Freestyle 9100*. It is fitted with optical and motion sensors, Bluetooth technology, real-time cloud connectivity and most importantly, artificial intelligence.

Speaking about the development, Coca-Cola Global director, Greg Chambers said, "Artificial intelligence is the foundation for everything we do. We create intelligent experiences. Artificial

intelligence is the kernel that powers that experience."

Using the data collected from the machine, the soft drink giant has been able to improve its products and user experience."

According to Chambers, each individual machine conducts real-time analysis of consumer data, responding in various helpful ways to improve customer experiences. With the AI algorithm, Coca Cola can use their machine to promote unique, bespoke beverages and trending flavors in relation to their consumers.

AI also allows these machines to adjust to the "mood" of their environment. In gyms for example, the display screen will focus on performance-based sodas, the promotion of water and healthier beverages. Machines in shopping malls will display lively, colorful, trending sodas, and hospital machines will appear more functional.

Globally, Coca-Cola has installed over 50,000 machines, serving over 14 million, 8-ounce servings of

drink per day, creating a gargantuan amount of actionable data. Using data collected from the machine, Coca Cola has developed new products and flavors to satisfy consumer preferences.

In 2017, consumer data from the Freestyle machines displayed considerable consumption levels of Sprite and Cherry flavours.

As a result, Coca-Cola released Sprite Cherry and Sprite Cherry Zero products in stores. It was the first permanent product to come out of the Freestyle machine data.

Coca-Cola believes the element of choice and customization is here to stay, contrary to the one-time fad belief. In February 2019, they released a new mélange of classics in the form of Orange Vanilla Coke and Orange Vanilla Coke Zero. This was the first new Coca-Cola product to be innovated in almost a decade and is also suspected to be a creation of AI.

In light of growing awareness on health and wellness, and increasing sales of diet beverages, the Freestyle 9100 was also adapted to include 117

low calorie/ no-calorie options and 130 nocaffeine options.

Before the Freestyle machines were used, Coca-Cola offered a caffeine-free diet coke in less than 1% of dispensers in the US. After being installed data showed caffeine-free diet coke was in fact in their top five dispensed drinks during the afternoon.

What's more, the new dispenser also invites customers to download a 'pre-order app' allowing them to create drink mixes prior to collecting orders.

The strategy appeals to Gen Z and Millennials in response to the rising use of smartphones and tech-savvy consumers. The app is suspected to produce more accurate decision-making data since customers have more time to make their choices.



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CNN TV digital ad revenue hits 39% YOY

By Felicia Nwosu



MediaRadar, an award-winning advertising intelligence platform, has published a report that revealed advertising spending in CNN's national TV broadcasts and digital properties jumped up by 39 percent in this year's first four months, to \$312.6 million, from \$515 million during the same period in 2022.

The advertising intelligence for media buyers through its insights presented an impressive performance of the brand's advertising outing during the tenure of Chris Licht, who stepped down as its CEO recently after 13 months in the saddle.

Licht became the brand's CEO in February 2022, and officially started in May. It was recorded that ad revenue dropped to \$232.5 million in 2023's first quarter, down 35% versus Q1 2022 per the analysis, based on a data sample spanning Jan. 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023.

With that, the report said, the average monthly ad spend across CNN through April 2023 was \$78 million, down from \$128 million during the same period last year.

"CNN's 2022 ad revenue was on the upswing until May, which saw an 18% month-over-month decline, to \$126

million. Subsequent months generally saw MoM declines. The exceptions were August and November, which saw increases of 22% and 23%, MoM,

respectively. The number of companies advertising in CNN's media properties in 2023's four months declined 23%, to 2,100, from 2,700 in 2022's first four months.

Just 29% of last year's advertisers in the period have returned this year, with 1,900 making no investment in the brand's media properties so far this year.

It explained that advertisers declined 27% YoY in January, 23% in March and 19% in April. While in 2022's first four months, 68 companies invested \$2 million or more in CNN outlets, for a combined total of nearly \$236 million. During the same period in 2023, only 17 companies down 75% versus the year-ago period invested at that level, for a total of \$95 million, down 60% YoY. Major corporations such as Thumbtack, Apple, Cisco Systems and Walt Disney have all reduced their ad spend with CNN by more than 90% YoY.

MediaRadar's data analysis noticed a significant downward trend in CNN's ad revenue during Chris Licht's tenure, reflecting substantial declines both in total spend and in the number of advertisers.

Google launches AI-powered features for advertisers

By Abimbola Mohammed

In a bid to help brands achieve more, Alphabet, the mother company of Google, is launching two new artificial intelligence-powered features for advertisers. The new features are designed to automatically find the best ad placement for brands across the tech company's services.

Google had earlier launched chatbots that can respond to users in open-ended conversations. AI is increasingly deployed to serve advertisers, who contribute to the companies' revenue in recent times.

While Google has previously



introduced AI tools for advertisers, it is now using the technology to help brands achieve more specific goals for their ads.

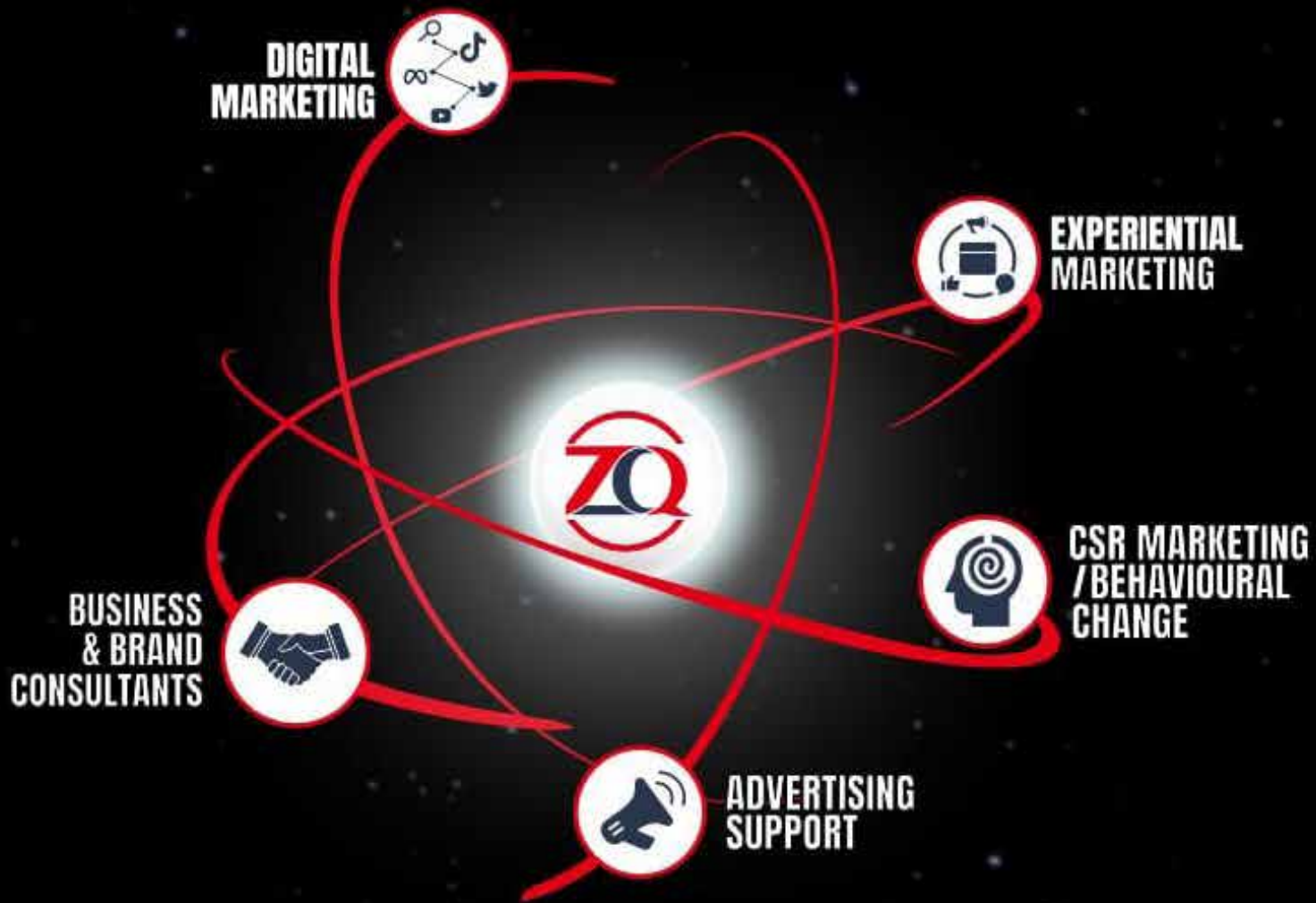
One of the new features called Demand Gen will use AI to place an advertiser's

photo and video ads across several products such as Gmail, the YouTube feed and Shorts, which is YouTube's competitor to popular short-form video app TikTok.

Vidhya Srinivasan, Google vice president and general manager of advertising, said: "AI will remove the need for advertisers to think about where they should place their ads, and the technology will focus on finding placements that are shiny, visual and immersive."

The second new feature will use AI to find the best ad placements with the goal of maximizing views of a brand's video ads," Google said.

Srinivasan added that early testing shows that brands received on average 40% more video views with the new tool. "By using AI to remove some of the "grunt work" for advertisers, brands will be able to focus more on their marketing strategy and storytelling," she added.



BLAZING IDEAS

STRATEGIC NAVIGATION

FLAWLESS EXECUTION

What Gov. Sanwo-Olu should consider in appointing new LASAA boss

In African modern comparative politics, when it comes to political appointment, the first thing that would come to mind would be party politicians and their cronies. However, transformations in several developed countries' governmental arena indicate that partisan presence in key strategic offices, and, more broadly, the general model of party government, is in a decline. Such a decline owes much to the increased government involvement of technocratic personnel – i.e., professionals with little or no political affiliation.

While the foregoing premise does not strongly suggest that African nations' and states' governments should establish themselves as the promised lands of technocracy, or form a fully technocratic cabinet, it is imperative to note that ceding key technical and professional positions to seasoned technocrats would not only serve as a viable way of enhancing the political appeal of African public office holders, but also a practical way of putting a square peg in square hole.

Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA) was established by the Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Law, 2006 (as amended), and saddled with functions, which include: control of outdoor structures to be used for signage and advertisements; issuance of licenses and permits for the construction and placement of outdoor structures in any part of the state; protection of the environment from potential adverse impact from visual blights; and control of the number, size and location of outdoor structures, among other functions. In addition, Lagos as a megacity brand is home to multinationals and corporate giants that spend much dollars on marketing and advertising.

With this status, Lagos remains one of the fastest-growing cities in the world, where Babajide Sanwo-Olu recently resumed his second four-year tenure in office as the Governor of the state.

So far, it is obvious that in the last eight years, LASAA's vision has been stunted due to the choice of its chief executive officers who have been more of political appointees



than a technocrat. Because the leadership did not possess the professional acumen and wherewithal to take the LASAA vision to the next level, their tenure in office has always been allegedly marred with gross misconduct, crass unprofessionalism and prebendalism.

With the recent exit of the former occupier of the position, Prince Adedamola Docemo, Governor Sanwo-Olu is said to have been window-shopping for a new replacement while the state government said it wants to restructure the agency for better performance while ensuring that it delivers optimal returns for all stakeholders. It is thus important to set an agenda for the state government on how best to achieve its desired objective, if sincerely the agency would be allowed to be professionally managed.

Now, the burning question on the lips of many marketing communication experts is: "Who will be appointed the next helmsman of LASAA, a strategic subsector that is critical to Lagos as a destination brand and Nigeria's commercial hub with over 25 million people?"

To get it right this time, the first strategy for Governor Sanwo-Olu is to conduct an interview for interested candidates probably by himself before any appointment to the executive office of LASAA. Such interview will provide a rigorous opportunity for interested

candidates to share their strategic vision and plans directly with the Governor so that he will be able to know that the applicant's world view is in tandem with his own. This is said to be far better than allowing such a highly technical office to be left to the whims and caprices of a handpicked political jobber. The office of LASAA helmsman is not supposed to be meant for just any individual to patronise their pecuniary interest and primordial sentiments.

To reflect and reverse some of the processes that almost crippled LASAA revenue in the last eight years, Mr. Sanwo-Olu must cancel some of the concession processes forthwith. The proposed concessioning of some high-brow road corridors in the metropolis are like time-bomb waiting to explode as it will create the most complex and image saggling legal battles.

Already, there are internal contradictions and loud rumbles and ripples over the management of the agency as well as boards allocations over the years. The industry is also not unaware of the illegal processes some of the agency's past activities have been subjected.

Even if the concession programme must continue, it should be done in such a transparent manner that the managing director of LASAA will not be the sole beneficiary. In fact, the reason why many industry watchers want the process canceled is because they know it will cripple LASAA's revenue as the CEO will always have interest in some of the successful companies in the concession.

It is, therefore, pertinent to state that a technocrat will never want to run LASAA like a personal enterprise because it will negatively impact the industry business afterwards even if he benefitted from such a policy.

Moreso, to balance the responsibility strategy in contemporary governance and enhance the quality of democracy, alongside economic and institutional drivers, Governor Sanwo-Olu will do great by appointing a seasoned technocrat as the head of LASAA.



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CANNES LIONS AWARD WIN:

I AM PROUD OF MY
TEAM, SAYS STEVE
BABAEKO, CEO/CCO,
X3M IDEAS

The recently held Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity and Ideas held in Paris has heralded a new dawn in the Nigerian marketing and advertising eco-system.

During the one week event, X3M Ideas, a top of the market creative power-house shattered the 77year old myth by becoming the first Nigerian agency, nay the first black agency in Africa to win an award at the hotly competitive yearly creative contest.

In a no hold barred interview with MARKETING EDGE team, Mr. Steve Babaeko, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of X3M Ideas said the award was a great win for Nigerians and the black people all over the continent.

Besides, he added that the glory for such an outstanding performance goes to God first and foremost and to the entire team of X3M Ideas which he said he is proud of. He also spoke on issues and challenges confronting the creative advertising business in Nigeria, Africa and the globe. Excerpts:





Congratulations to you and your agency, X3M Ideas, for achieving a ground-breaking milestone, the first-ever Nigerian agency to win a prestigious Cannes Lions award. It's an amazing feat for the company. How do you feel?

Thank you for having me. I would like to express my gratitude to MARKETING EDGE for putting this together. I am absolutely thrilled beyond what words can describe. To me, this represents the realization of a long-cherished dream from my early days as a copywriter, which started in 1994 at MC&A Saatchi & Saatchi.

Right from the beginning, I was aware of the prestigious Cannes Lions and the fact that Nigeria had never achieved this honour. However, I firmly believed that a Nigerian agency had the potential to win it. Consequently, I have been tirelessly pursuing this goal, and I am immensely proud to share that, thanks to the unwavering dedication of my team at X3M Ideas, we have turned this dream into a reality. Cannes Lions is no longer an unattainable aspiration for Nigeria, and our victory stands as a testament to the exceptional creative talent that thrives in our nation and across Africa. This accomplishment fills me with a deep sense of pride and gratitude for all those who have supported us on this incredible journey.

What is your assessment of the creative landscape, which is where you now operate?

The growth of the creative landscape in Nigeria is truly remarkable. It is evident, beyond doubts, that Nigerian agencies have been achieving international recognition and accolades. X3M Ideas is just one example among many AAAN agencies that are proudly representing the nation and excelling on the global stage. This is a great achievement and a testament to the incredible talent within

But as far as I am concerned, and as far as AAAN is concerned, we are happy with all of the reforms that ARCON has made. Let us not forget, what we are dealing with now is not just about law and order. We are dealing with livelihoods and the lives of people. We are dealing with lives of hundreds, about thousands of people who are employees within the advertising ecosystem.

While advertising holds a prominent position in the creative landscape, it is essential to acknowledge the success of other sectors as well. Our musicians, including Burna Boy, Davido, Asake, Wiz, Tiwa Savage, Yemi Alade, and many more, have gained global recognition for their remarkable contributions to the music industry. Additionally, our movies have seen significant success, with local films outselling some foreign blockbusters in Nigeria. Even in the realms of fashion and culinary trends, Nigeria has been making remarkable strides.

Considering the entirety of the creative industry, it is evident that Nigeria is on a trajectory to become a major global superpower. This success is a result of the passion, creativity and dedication of countless individuals who are shaping the creative landscape and showcasing the rich and diverse cultural heritage of our nation to the world.

With what was witnessed at the Cannes Lions Creativity Festival, how would you rate Nigeria's advertising ecosystem?

The results are clear, and we have emerged victorious. It is important to emphasize

that this is not merely a win but a historic milestone, as it marks the first time in 70 years that the entire West Africa region has had the opportunity to achieve such recognition. While South Africa, East Africa, and North Africa have had their moments of triumph, West Africa has long been overlooked. Our recent victory showcases the formidable strength and passion that the Nigerian advertising industry now brings to the global stage.

I cannot help but feel an immense sense of pride for our colleagues and all the dedicated practitioners in Nigeria who have contributed to these remarkable achievements. Their hard work and commitment to excellence have undoubtedly propelled us to new heights. As we continue to record these feats, I am confident that the future holds even more exceptional accomplishments for the Nigerian advertising industry.

What would you say has been responsible for the low turnout of Nigerian professionals at the Cannes Lions in terms of participation?

The underlying factor behind this situation is undoubtedly rooted in economics. It is crucial to bear in mind, as I have consistently emphasized, that the low turnout of both Nigerian participants at the Cannes Lions and the number of entries from Nigeria can be attributed to economic considerations. Allow me to explain this with an example. Consider a small agency in Estonia, a compact European country similar in size to X3M Ideas. Their revenue is in euros, and when they submit an entry for Cannes Lions, which might cost 500 or 750 euros, they are operating on a one-to-one exchange rate.

Now, let's compare this to a Nigerian agency. Their earnings are in Naira, and when they submit an entry, they have to deal with an exchange rate of 850 or 900 to one euro. This already puts them at a significant disadvantage. Furthermore, the challenges faced by the airline industry in Nigeria exacerbate the situation. We are forced to pay higher ticket prices for the same journey and distance compared to our neighboring West African countries. Consequently, this places us in



a disadvantaged position, hindering our ability to allocate the necessary resources that would enable us to have a substantial presence at events like Cannes Lions.

Would you say Nigeria is at par with other global professionals, in leveraging technology to create compelling and enduring campaigns?

Absolutely, the campaign we won with was a remarkable fusion of creativity and technology, which, in my view, gave it a distinct advantage. Our collaboration with Little Steps Initiatives in Port Harcourt addressed the pressing issue of soot pollution, a dire consequence of the numerous illegal refineries in one of Nigeria’s major oil-producing cities. The situation had become a catastrophic disaster, rendering the air quality so hazardous that residents couldn’t even open their windows without being exposed to soot particles. Even indoor spaces were not immune, as waking up in the morning would reveal soot residue on various surfaces.

When Little Steps Initiatives sought our expertise, we knew that a multifaceted approach was required. We reached out to the German Environmental Protection Agency, which graciously provided us with comprehensive soot data for approximately 41 countries. Leveraging

this invaluable information, we designed an innovative website that integrated and overlaid the data for these nations. With the help of a meticulously crafted algorithm, we could accurately calculate individuals’ life expectancies based on their time spent living in Port Harcourt. It is important to note that the average life expectancy in Nigeria is around 52 years.

By inputting essential details, such as one’s name and duration of residence in Port Harcourt, the algorithm could predict the remaining years of life. This compelling insight was combined with artificial intelligence (AI) to automatically generate and dispatch personalized letters to House of Representatives members and senators. The letters urgently brought to their attention the gravity of the soot problem faced by the Port Harcourt residents.

Thus, it is evident that our success in this campaign emanated not solely from creativity but from the ingenious fusion of creativity with cutting-edge technology. Nigeria is undeniably making substantial strides in combining these elements, further propelling us forward on the technological frontier.

What would you say are your learnings from the global event that you think Nigeria’s advertising can infuse into theirs?

I believe that instilling a greater sense of confidence is crucial. At times, we may find ourselves lacking the necessary self-assurance, and external factors like the state of the economy may further compound this issue. As a result, we tend to cling to every business opportunity that comes our way, even if it might not align perfectly with our values or goals. In such a survival mode, we may end up accepting projects or clients that aren’t the best fit for us.

What I’ve noticed among our colleagues outside the country is their remarkable self-confidence. They possess the ability to assertively decline opportunities that don’t align with their vision. I believe it’s essential for us to learn to say “no” more frequently, ensuring that we only take on projects for clients with whom we share a genuine sense of mutual satisfaction and collaboration. This perspective is crucial in transforming the agency-client relationship from a master-servant dynamic to that of business partners and associates, where we work together towards a common goal.

By embracing this mindset, we acknowledge that we are all on the same team, working towards shared objectives. It is essential to foster an atmosphere of self-assurance and confidence among our professionals. As we root for the same team, we must nurture an environment where our talents shine, and our



capabilities are recognized. Encouraging self-assurance will undoubtedly lead to more satisfying and successful outcomes in our work.

You mentioned AI earlier, what is the future of AI, and seeing the brilliant works shown at the Cannes Lions award, how are practitioners in your sector leveraging this tool to optimize their client's bottom line?

I am not surprised that AI is a topic of interest today. It seems like everyone is discussing AI, and opinions on it vary widely. Some people are genuinely afraid that AI will become anti-people, taking away countless jobs. However, I've always held the belief that AI and technology, in general, have the potential to propel our creativity to new heights. Instead of fearing AI, I think it's essential for us to embrace it and focus on the positive aspects it brings.

AI opens up numerous possibilities, and I see many of my colleagues already leveraging its potential. In recent Cannes Lions Festival and other global advertising award shows I've attended, AI-related work has been abundant. So, I believe it's time for us to step back and take a broader view. While AI is the new tech today, it will eventually become the old tech of tomorrow. Therefore, we must approach it with an open mind, recognizing the

positive contributions it can make to our industry.

By embracing AI's capabilities, we enable our creativity to flourish and discover billion new opportunities that were previously inaccessible. Rather than being hesitant, let's be proactive in exploring the potential of AI, and finding innovative ways to incorporate it into our work. Ultimately, AI can complement and enhance our creative endeavours, leading to more remarkable achievements in the future. So, let's welcome the positive aspects of AI and harness its power to drive us forward.

On audience measurement system, which was introduced over a year ago, can you say that it has actually achieved its industry purpose in terms of implementation, has it helped practitioners too and how well has its challenge been solved?

Addressing the substantial challenges facing the industry is not a task with a simple solution or a one-size-fits-all answer. I would like to extend my appreciation to the former Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohamed, for establishing the presidential task force on audience measurement. In this regard, I also want to pay my respects to the late Mr. Tolu Ogunkoya, the former chairman of

the audience measurement task force, who unfortunately passed away a few months ago. Despite the efforts invested, the work on this matter remains inconclusive, and we were unable to reach a definitive resolution.

As a member of that task force, I take this opportunity to appeal to our new President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to consider revisiting this crucial issue. Once the new ministers are in place, the new Minister for Information may take it up and proceed with the necessary actions. It is of utmost importance that we complete the audience measurement initiative. The members of the previous committee are ready to support and continue their work if required, to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion. The value of achieving a comprehensive audience measurement system for the industry is beyond measure, and it would greatly benefit all stakeholders involved.

What is your position on some of the recent regulatory reforms introduced by ARCON?

I must extend my profound appreciation to the Director-General of ARCON, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, for his remarkable efforts in reforming and revitalizing the advertising industry. The positive impact of these reforms has been far-reaching, from my perspective. While there may be ongoing differences between certain members of the ecosystem association and ARCON, I firmly believe that they can work together to resolve these issues amicably.

As the AAAN, we are committed to providing our support and voice where it is needed and necessary. We are genuinely pleased with the reforms implemented by ARCON. It is crucial to recognize that we are not only dealing with matters of law and order but also with the livelihoods of countless individuals within the advertising ecosystem. Our industry employs hundreds and thousands of people, and any mismanagement or negligence would have severe consequences on their livelihoods.

Before the intervention of the ARCON Director-General, the advertising industry was facing significant challenges, with unpaid debts leading to agencies shutting down. The reforms initiated by ARCON

It feels good, I am very proud of my team; you know the fact that my team was able to shatter the 70 year record and win one major one for West Africa. I think it is not just a win for X3M Ideas, it is a win for our industry, it is a win for our sub-continent, it is a win for black people in general. I feel very proud and shout out to Cannes Lion team for making the process very fair and transparent for anyone with good idea to be able to win. I feel very happy.

have been instrumental in improving the industry's capacity to hire and retain talents, fostering growth, and contributing to the nation's economic development. Encouraging registered agencies, reducing endless debt cycles, and promoting professionalism are vital steps necessary to allow the advertising industry to flourish.

Regarding technology and skill sets, the future of creative agencies is already here. The need to embrace engineering and technology is paramount. In the past year, I have emphasized the significance of engineering in driving marketing into the future. Engineering, in this context, encompasses technology and innovation. As proof of this belief, my agency, X3M Ideas, is presently seeking to hire a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) to lead our technological endeavours.

For creative agencies, it is no longer solely about creating compelling communication. Emphasis is now placed on building proprietary platforms that generate revenue independently,

irrespective of specific client briefs. Thus, we are actively seeking developers and tech-savvy individuals to join our industry and collaborate in amplifying creative ideas. This symbiotic relationship between creativity and technology will undoubtedly shape the future model for most creative agencies, fostering continuous growth and innovative solutions. The time to embrace this transformation is now; we must evolve and adapt to remain at the forefront of the advertising landscape.

A lot of people say there has been an eroding of capacity building for upcoming practitioners. What is your take on this? And how are members benefiting from the AAAN Academy?

I am glad that the Academy has finally taken off. Because for 20 years, we were all just mouthing the promises of saying, no, we're going to set up an Academy. So now it is up and running. I think there is still a lot of work to be done. We are doing this in partnership with Henley Business School, which is one of the finest business schools in the world.

And we are proud of our partnership with them so far, we just need to go the depth of that partnership so that we can achieve more. But yes, you are right. I think there should be more opportunities for young practitioners to be able to hone their skills and develop their confidence on the job.

And there is only one way you can do this, which is by training and retraining. I think we need to do that, but what is good is that there are lots of training grounds now, apart from the Academy, which is the AAAN initiative.

There is O2 Academy, there's Orange Academy, and there are a couple of academies like that coming up and that have also been around. So we are happy with all of the support services they are giving in regard to training young practitioners.

How would you say that the creative industry is dealing with the JAPA syndrome?

The JAPA syndrome is not an issue limited

to the creative industry alone; it has had a severe impact on various sectors, including banking and technology. Unfortunately, the creative industry has also been significantly affected by this phenomenon.

However, it's essential to highlight that the most profound blow inflicted by the JAPA syndrome is not solely related to the flight of the labour force. While it does affect those who choose to leave their jobs abruptly, the more significant concern lies with entrepreneurs who decide to shut down their businesses and leave the country. When a business owner closes his/her shop, it results in the loss of jobs for multiple individuals, not just one person. Hence, the flight of entrepreneurial talent is the aspect that poses the most far-reaching implications for the nation.

I strongly believe that the government needs to declare a state of emergency regarding the flight of talents in the country and take measures to discourage it. This ongoing talent drain has serious consequences for our nation, and addressing it should be a priority.

As for my expectations and projections for the sector following the elections, I maintain a positive outlook. Despite the current challenges, I remain optimistic that the new government will take the necessary steps to improve the macro economy. By aligning fiscal policies with monetary policies and addressing issues such as oil production, oil theft, and foreign reserves, we can achieve a more stable economic environment. If we can work towards reducing the disproportionate exchange rate between the naira and the dollar, it will positively impact the macro economy, leading to potential growth in the advertising industry.

I acknowledge that there might be some uncertainties, but overall, I have confidence that this government will rise to the occasion and implement measures that will benefit both the economy as a whole and the advertising sector in particular. As an optimist, I firmly believe that with concerted efforts and sound policies, we can create a favourable environment for growth and prosperity.

What would you say is most preferable between the traditional media and the digital

channels for today's audience?

In my opinion, the dynamics at play here are a combination of both factors. Nigeria is an immense country, with a population of approximately 200 million people. However, it's essential to recognize that, sometimes, urban dwellers tend to overlook the vastness and diversity of the nation. Many urban residents, especially those active on social media platforms like Twitter, might unintentionally assume that their experiences and perspectives represent the entire country.

It's worth noting that while social media platforms, including Twitter, have gained popularity in Nigeria, the number of active users might not accurately reflect the entire population. In particular, rural areas might have fewer social media users, but they play a significant role in national elections and other aspects of public life. The people who truly influence electoral outcomes and other crucial decisions are often in these rural regions. Social media popularity doesn't always translate to electoral success, because those who post and engage online might not turn out to vote on election day.

Traditional media, on the other hand, continues to hold considerable sway in rural areas and the hinterlands. It reaches a broader audience, making it an essential channel for communication and information dissemination in these regions. For the urban populace, especially the younger generations like GenZs and millennials, digital media remains highly relevant and influential.

Therefore, to effectively engage with the diverse population of Nigeria, a careful balance between traditional and digital media is crucial. While traditional media continues to reach rural communities effectively, digital media caters to the urban population, especially the tech-savvy youth. Striking this balance ensures that messages and campaigns can reach a wide range of audiences and have a more significant impact overall.

Talking about advertising billing, what would you say is the total annual advertising billing for the creative industry?

I think, we are still, give or take, with even all of the elections spend and everything, I will still bring it to about maybe 500 million



dollars in a year and that is like a spit in the ocean, compared to where we should be if we take that to be a percentage of total GDP, we are still less than 2%.

Meanwhile, South Africa maybe is about 1.6 billion dollars, so you can see that we have more catch-up to do and maybe they are approaching three billion dollars by this year. There is still so much for us to do, which is why the government needs to empower ARCON to even do more work, because if we are able to sanitize this industry and keep all of the rules of engagement very crystal clear for everybody to follow, and adhere to, it will grow the industry.

As I said, the industry will hire more people, pay more taxes, and there will be a general boom for everybody.

How would you describe the relationship between clients and agencies, and are you an advocate of in-house agencies?

The concept of an in-house agency doesn't resonate with me, and I'll admit my perspective might be biased since this is my profession. I strongly believe in the principle of division of labour. If I were to have any vested interest or investment in a client's business, I would wholeheartedly encourage them to focus on their primary responsibility of creating outstanding products and brands. Brand building is a specialized task best left to professionals whose expertise lies solely in that domain. When businesses attempt to manage an in-house agency, it often leads to distractions and compromised creativity. Over time, the in-house team can become stagnant, unable to deliver the same level of creative

brilliance as external agencies.

The relationship between clients and agencies can sometimes resemble that of a husband and wife. Both parties are united in a common purpose, but disagreements can arise when making crucial decisions. However, such disagreements should be embraced and respected, as they signify an open and honest exchange of ideas. When you look at globally recognized and award-winning brands, you'll notice that many of them have strong and co-operative relationships with their agencies. Winning accolades is often a result of the collaborative effort between the client and the agency. I wholeheartedly encourage clients and agencies to co-create and work as a unified team. There is no room for rivalry; instead, we should strive for harmony and embrace constructive disagreement when needed. Ultimately, we all share the same goal: to create exceptional work and build better brands together.

Talking about winning, now coming to your milestone recognition, what was it like coming home with such a prestigious award?

After our win, I playfully mentioned to my wife that maybe it was time for me to retire, and she responded with a smile, reminding me of our responsibilities, especially the children's school fees. So, retirement was put on hold, and I'm back to work with a sense of fulfillment and joy. I can't express enough how proud I am of my team. Their hard work and dedication allowed us to break the 70-year record and secure a major win for West Africa. This achievement

goes beyond just X3M Ideas; it's a triumph for our entire industry, our sub-continent, and even a victory for black individuals worldwide. I'm grateful to the Cannes Lion team for creating a fair and transparent process that enables anyone with great ideas to succeed. This win has filled me with immense happiness and pride.

What is the creative philosophy of X3M Ideas?

Our creative philosophy is rooted in thinking outside the box, approaching challenges from unexpected angles, and ultimately helping our clients thrive in the highly competitive Nigerian marketplace. Here at X3M Ideas, our guiding principle is "Finding X."

Right from our inception, I made it clear to the team that we are not a new, small, or start-up agency. We are THE agency, and that spirit has been our driving force. Our aim has always been to be the best, not settle for second place to anyone. We are bold, confident, and we fight every day to achieve our vision of being number one. Each client we work with receives our unwavering commitment to creating fresh and innovative work.

Our growth has been phenomenal, and today we stand as the only multinational agency originating from Nigeria, with a presence in six other countries—Johannesburg, Lusaka, Zambia, Congo Brazzaville, Nairobi, Kenya, and Dubai. It's important to note that this expansion has been achieved independently, without any foreign affiliations or partners. We owe our success to sheer determination and the indomitable Nigerian spirit. Our gratitude goes to our clients, partners, and, above all, to God Almighty for granting us the ability to reach such heights.

How would you say X3M Ideas has managed its creative leadership in the light of dynamics in the Nigerian marketing and advertising ecosystem?

Being a creative at heart, I have a personal investment in the magic that happens within X3M Ideas. Prior to co-founding this agency, I spent seven years as a creative director in another company, and that passion for creativity still burns

This victory has sparked a fire within our creative community, and I am excited to witness more wins and recognition for our remarkable talents in the years to come. The future holds immense potential for our industry, and I am certain that Nigerian agencies will continue to shine brightly on the global stage.

within me. Though I now contribute from a more strategic level, our team at X3M Ideas boasts a talented group of creative directors, including Macmillan, our executive director, along with other directors, deputy creative directors, and senior management.

Together, we have a unified vision for the company's future. We believe in the success of X3M Ideas and aspire to maintain a reputation for excellence. Every single day, we challenge ourselves to live up to the name we've built, as X3M Ideas. With such a bold and expressive name, we cannot afford to settle for anything less than extraordinary ideas. We take pride in our work and strive to produce fantastic ideas that embody the spirit of creativity. It's a constant drive to uphold the legacy of our name and deliver excellence to our clients and partners.

Would you say that it is that vision to be the best has given you the edge to excel at the Cannes Lion?

Absolutely! The breakthrough at Cannes Lions has undoubtedly opened new doors for Nigerian agencies, and I am genuinely thrilled about the future prospects. This achievement serves as an inspiring challenge to our fellow agencies, igniting a competitive spirit within the creative industry. As Nigerians, we have a remarkable tendency to rise to the occasion when faced with challenges.

The fact that one of our own has accomplished this feat at Cannes Lions

has set a powerful precedent. I have full faith in our colleagues' capabilities and dedication to delivering exceptional work. With this newfound knowledge that it is indeed possible, I am confident that more Nigerian agencies will rise to the occasion and secure their place in the international spotlight.

This victory has sparked a fire within our creative community, and I am excited to witness more wins and recognition for our remarkable talents in the years to come. The future holds immense potential for our industry, and I am certain that Nigerian agencies will continue to shine brightly on the global stage.

How has the Cannes Lions award repositioned your agency?

What I envision and truly hope for is a shift in the perception of our industry's value, leading to increased compensation for the exceptional services we provide. In the context of the World Cup, we are undoubtedly the Argentina of this creative industry – champions who have triumphed and brought glory to Nigeria. Thus, it is only fair that clients recognise the tremendous value we bring to the table and are willing to invest more in our expertise.

As an agency that has secured remarkable achievements, we aspire to witness a change in the way clients perceive our worth. Our recent victory at Cannes Lions has garnered widespread recognition and brought an influx of congratulatory messages. However, I believe it should go beyond just congratulations and translate into a willingness to acknowledge and reward the excellence we consistently deliver.

When clients recognise the significance of our contributions and are willing to pay commensurate rates for our services, it enables us to continue raising the bar and delivering even more impactful results. This reciprocal relationship fosters a stronger creative ecosystem where agencies thrive, and clients benefit from top-tier solutions.

Ultimately, I envision a future where the value of our expertise is rightfully acknowledged, leading to more equitable compensation and a sustainable, prosperous creative industry in Nigeria.

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This notion lucidly articulates the position of First Bank of Nigeria in the comity of commercial Banks across Africa and clearly encapsulates the robust impacts it has made on its teeming customers. It is a bank of honour where performance makes a headline.

Whenever a conversation is struck about the brand, what easily comes to mind is its visible strides and palpable accomplishments that have consistently defined its existential effect in the banking sector.

Since its 129 years of existence, First Bank has maintained a brand that solidifies its status as a bank of choice with an impeccable delivery and impressive services that have continued to resonate in the society and draw the attentions and administrations of not only its customers but also corporate institutions across the world.

This clearly explains the numerous plaques of honour in its kitty and serial recognitions that have constantly greeted its performance and commitment to delivery of outstanding services to Nigeria and across the African continent.

Recently, the Bank was awarded the Financial Institution of the Year at the African Export-Import Bank and Pan

African Business and Development Awards.

The award which was organized in association with Business Council for Africa in Accra, Ghana aimed at promoting Pan African Trade. As a bank that has over the years maintained an unwavering commitment to excellent performance, emerging the Financial Institution of the Year did not come as a bit of fluke.

It was a recognition of its Pan-African spirit through its leading role in promoting trade and investment across the continent which have been instrumental to strengthening the economic and multi-lateral business relationship across the nations.

In the same vein, First Bank was crowned as the Best Private Bank for Sustainable Investing in Africa Award 2023 by Global Finance. The award was given in acknowledgment of its exceptional attention to the unique requirements of high net-worth individuals as they seek to increase, protect and pass on their wealth.

Not only that, First Bank also received an award for Best Corporate Bank Western Africa 2023. This was in recognition of its impressive achievements in providing exceptional corporate banking services across Western Africa.

For its efforts in promoting financial inclusion in the country, the bank earned a name for itself as the Best Financial Inclusion service provider in Nigeria 2023 by Digital Banker Africa.

It was a deserving honour for a bank

that deployed its network of Firstmonie agents to promote Financial Inclusion in the country with a robust presence in all the 774 local government areas in the country.

This however could not have been achieved without the instrumentality of dependable and advanced technology that is cost-effective for its agent and customers. Its innovative mindset has also attracted the award of being the first bank to introduce FastTrack ATM.

Other accolades that were earned by the bank in the course of this year include the African Bank of the Year by African Leadership Magazine, which was presented with the Award as a confirmation of its exceptional performance.

It was also named the Best CSR Bank Western Africa 2023 from Global Banking and Finance Awards, for the impactful implementation of its SPARK initiative in fostering and advancing conscious acts of kindness across West Africa.

Not too long ago, the Bank launched a Humanoid robots in its head office at Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos. The robots are professional service robots to mimic human motion and interaction. They provide value by automating tasks in a way that leads to cost-savings and productivity.

This move has further cemented the status of the bank as a leading commercial bank with giant strides.

While reacting after the recognition of the bank as the Best CSR Bank Western Africa 2023, the Chief Executive Officer of First Bank, Dr. Adesola Adedutan described the multitude of awards earned by the bank as testament to its unwavering dedication to excellence in banking.

He said, "The multitude of awards earned by First Bank of Nigeria is a testament to its unwavering dedication to excellence in banking. With a commitment to promoting economic growth, providing exceptional services, and driving innovation, the bank has solidified its position as a leader in the industry.

"These accolades are a recognition of the hard work and diligence of the bank's employees, as well as the loyalty and patronage of its valued customers. First Bank remains committed to delivering outstanding banking solutions and contributing to the continued growth and development of the nation and beyond."

The bouquet of honour and buffet of recognitions resulting from excellence performance have been the characteristics trademarks that distinguished First Bank as a leading Financial Institution with giant strides.

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API SN

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An eclectic review of MARKETING EDGE Q2 Virtual Summit

By Tunde Animasaun

The second edition of the popular MARKETING EDGE Quarterly Virtual Summit was held recently and like the previous ones, its echo is still reverberating in the Nigerian integrated marketing ecosystem and beyond.

Consistent with the aim of thought leadership, knowledge expansion and thought engagement on contemporary issues in the industry, this edition of the Quarterly Virtual Summit featured three well-tailored themes which are: ***Changes in Consumer Behaviour: Delivering Better Customer Experience Amid Pressure to Deliver Return On Investment (ROI); Increased Digitization: Keeping Up with the Shifts and Rising Demands; and Cross-Cultural Branding & Communication: Why Marketers Should Establish Cultural Bonds With Target Audiences.***

In his opening remarks, John Ajayi, CEO and Publisher of MARKETING EDGE magazine and convener of the summit, expressed deep appreciation to the panelists for sharing their precious time and knowledge. "Choosing you to lead the conversation is an indication of our regard for your erudition and professionalism," he said.

Laying the foundation for the intellectual engagement, Ajayi averred, "In furtherance of our commitment

to the promotion of the brand idea, we organized this virtual summit with a view to expanding the frontiers of marketing and advertising knowledge while also promoting the business of brand management and management of brands.

"The themes of the Summit are significant because we are living in a fast changing world. This season is particularly different because of the changes that have occurred in the global and national economies. We are not unmindful of the changes in the integrated marketing communications and the competitiveness among stakeholders in the ecosystem. While advertisers are battling with issues arising from poor capacity utilization due to the vagaries of the operating environment, consumers are also becoming more resistant, restricted and apathetic towards product patronage."

Tolu Medebem, President, Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) and COO/ Lead Consultant, Aster Integrated Marketing Limited, in her paper on "Changes in Consumer Behaviour: Delivering Better Customer Experience Amid Pressure to Deliver ROI", emphasized the need to understand what consumers are consuming in these uncertain times and how it impacts businesses' ability to defend their ROI.

According to her, it is very important to understand marketing evolution and how this affects consumer behaviour. "We live

in an economy where suddenly prices have tripled and in some cases, quadrupled. This will definitely affect the consuming pattern of the consumer."

She also advocated a balance between brands' quest for return on investments and consumer experience. "Most companies really care about and defend these three verticals the most: revenue growth, profit growth and price growth. Any activity that does not contribute to these core goals immediately is going to be on the chopping block soon, especially given the current economic and social uncertainties."

"The significance of adapting to the changing consumer behaviour and finding ways to deliver unique experiences while remaining accountable in terms of ROI cannot be underestimated," Mrs. Medebem added.

Noting that the imperative of consumer experience in driving revenue is a matter of absolute importance, she cautioned however that: "Consumer experience is invaluable; it is crucial to communicate its value to stakeholders and demonstrate how it contributes to sales and profitability. Any activity that doesn't align with these goals should be reconsidered in the current business landscape."

She concluded by stressing that businesses cannot afford to operate as usual, especially as consumer behaviour continues to evolve. She maintained that



Kemi Fabusoro, the Executive Director, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), believes that, for brands and business owners to evolve, they have to follow trends, optimize their marketing strategy to suit today's consumer as they are more informed, cautious and careful to choose value over loyalty. According to the marketing communication expert, consumers are now interested in brands with corporate responsibility and sustainability plans to drive ROI.

understanding the consumer journey and leveraging data and insights are critical for businesses to deliver better experiences and achieve their desired ROI.

Similarly, Kemi Fabusoro, the Executive Director, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), believes that, for brands and business owners to evolve, they have to follow trends, optimize their marketing strategy to suit today's consumer as they are more informed, cautious and careful to choose value over loyalty. According to the marketing communication expert, consumers are now interested in brands with corporate responsibility and sustainability plans to drive ROI.

Speaking on the same theme, Fabusoro said that gone were the days when consumers were the ones trying to catch up with brands, adding that brands must follow consumers across their various touchpoints and identify with their passions to get a share of their wallet.

Her words, "Business has evolved over time and so consumers' habits and attitude are expected to also evolve. Consumer behaviour mirrors trends and happenings within the society and economy. For instance, if we put Nigeria in perspective, inflation will definitely affect the purchasing power of consumers and then it will affect the type of goods or services that people chose to have.

"Also in post-Covid era, you will see that the behaviour of consumers has evolved. People are moving from just the brick and mortar store to do convenient shopping and online shopping. People are more interested in what the brands have to say beyond marketing campaigns. There is a lot of dynamism in marketing strategy, so things cannot remain stagnant. Every brand and organization must evolve or die."

"There is a lot of social commerce going on Facebook, Instagram, etc., as people hardly go to stores these days as much as they should. Rather, they buy

things on e-commerce websites like Jumia, Konga and the likes. This means that lots of brands need to plug into this and not just make social media platforms a place to communicate, but where people can make purchases,” Fabusoro noted.

She added that after talking about all the differences in consumer behaviours, it is important to discuss how to deliver consumer experience (CX) amidst Return on Investment (ROI).

“The truth of the matter is that most people are not about price anymore, they care more about experience with the brand and the value they get for their money, because price loss or gain doesn’t give consumer loyalty. Lots of the time when you position your brands in terms of cheapest you are not going to get large loyalty once people can afford to buy something that offers much better value. If you have a competitor that offers the same product at very good quality, the only thing that will differentiate you from the competitor will be the experience consumers have using your product.

“This is why 45% of businesses are saying in the next 5 years, the focus is going to be on consumer experience. So, it is clear that if you can deliver on business value, ROI and consumer experience then your business will be successful,” she explained.

The need to reimagine and align traditional marketing processes with digitization was the focus of Damilola Owolabi, CEO of The Dami Owolabi Company’s presentation. According to the highly cerebral marketing expert, marketing professionals need to tap into the vast technological opportunities available to drive the much-needed transformation.

In his presentation on one of the themes of the summit, “Increased Digitization: Keeping up with Shifts and Rising Demands”, he urged brands to latch on the extraordinary benefits of measuring the efficiency of their marketing campaigns and how they translate to growth.

“We are totally in a different era right now; we are in a fast-paced environment where the power that used to be in the hands of brands has moved to the hands of consumers. So, they are now hyper-connected and can dictate how things should be.

“The world of digitization makes us the driving force for business success and a lot of businesses need to latch on to that

to be able to better serve their customers, drive return on investment and, most importantly, to stop winking in the dark. A lot of businesses still wink in the dark. To stay competitive, these demands of customers need to be met and businesses must leverage data and digital space to be able to achieve this,” he said.

Shedding more light on the power of technology in transforming and shaping the future of marketing, he listed measures to be adopted and these include; re-imagining traditional business processes, developing a strong online community, embracing data-driven marketing, staying agile and adaptive as well as investing in talents and training to enable them to offer better consumer services and increased growth.

“Digitization has become a transformative force in the marketing landscape. Businesses must adapt to shifting consumer behaviour, leverage emerging technologies, harness the power of data and analytics to deliver exceptional customer experience and increase efficiency to stay competitive. Digitization is not just a trend; it is the future of marketing. Embrace it, stay agile and leverage its power to drive success in your marketing efforts,” Owolabi concluded.

For Munachi Nwoke-Ekpo, the Chief Operating Officer, Anakle Nigeria Ltd., more than 60 percent of consumers are now on social media hence its importance as a marketing channel. However, he cautioned that marketers should know that marketing on the different social media platforms requires strategy. It is, therefore, important to know the best strategy for a particular social media platform rather than working on assumptions or generalization.

Given the quality of papers delivered and the level of participation by industry stakeholders, the initiative has met its agenda-setting mission. No wonder the Publisher, Mr. Ajayi enthused in his opening remarks, “As an agenda-setting publication, stakeholders expect much from us especially at this critical time. This is our little way of stimulating meaningful and result-oriented conversations in the IMC as it recovers from its myriad of challenges. It is also a way of accomplishing our self-appointed task of promoting the brand idea.”

“The truth of the matter is that most people are not about price anymore, they care more about experience with the brand and the value they get for their money, because price loss or gain doesn’t give consumer loyalty. Lots of the time when you position your brands in terms of cheapest you are not going to get large loyalty once people can afford to buy something that offers much better value. If you have a competitor that offers the same product at very good quality, the only thing that will differentiate you from the competitor will be the experience consumers have using your product.

Golden Penny Foods launches *premium quality Chocolate Spread with Cocoa*

Through its commitment to *Feeding the Nation Everyday*, Flour Mills Nigeria's (FMN) iconic brand, Golden Penny has launched **Golden Penny Chocoh**, a chocolate spread made from natural cocoa which contains the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) adequate to meet the nutritional needs of a healthy person.

The Golden Penny Foods brand has continued to produce superior quality products ranging from pasta to noodles, ball foods, flour, breakfast cereal, edible oil & fats, etc. to the satisfying pleasure of its consumers.

The Golden Penny Chocoh Spread is made with natural cocoa sourced from local farmers, which is very rich in Polyphenols – compounds that have potent antioxidants and anti-inflammatory effects. The Chocoh Spread also contains Omega 3 & 6, essential fats that actively help to reduce inflammation.

The product was launched as a proactive response to consumers' need for a tasty, nutritious, and superior-quality spread that affords them the required dietary nutrients.

Speaking on the brand's commitment to consistently affording consumers products of superior quality, the Managing Director, Foods Division, Mr. Devlin Hainsworth said "The Golden Penny Brand is synonymous with nutritional goodness, bringing joy to people and offering great quality and value, with that in mind we identify categories and new launches that we can add to the Golden Penny basket. The Chocoh spread is an exciting demonstration of this commitment. By locally sourcing the cocoa used in the production of our chocolate spread, we are also driving local content and innovation across our value chain and various touchpoints. And as always, we are committed to sustainably feeding the Nation, everyday".

Also commenting on the expected consumers' outlook on the product, FMN Marketing Director, Foods Division, Mr. Ilyas O. Kazeem said "We are excited to introduce our new Golden Penny Chocoh



Spread to our customers. It is a direct response to our consumers' need for nutritious quality products so you they can Indulge themselves with its deliciously sweet taste. It is made from pure soya oil and natural cocoa sourced from local farmers. It contains Omega 3 & 6 is a good source of energy. It is smooth with a rich sweet taste. Easy to spread on bread, pastries, biscuits, and a delicious dip for fruits. It is available in three different sizes, 15g sachets, 325g and 585g jars. With Golden Penny Chocoh Spread, our

consumers are assured of a tasty and indulgent experience".

The Golden Penny Chocoh Spread is now available in stores across Nigeria. With this new product, Golden Penny continues to deliver high-quality foods that meet the needs of its consumers while supporting local production and sourcing. For more information, visit @goldenpennyspread on Instagram and Facebook

Quickteller: The Swiss Army Knife of Fintech Apps

In the vast world of tools and gadgets, few are as iconic and versatile as the Swiss Army knife. This compact marvel packs an astonishing array of functions into a single, handy device, ready to tackle any challenge that comes its way. Now, imagine a fintech platform that embodies the same spirit of versatility and efficiency.

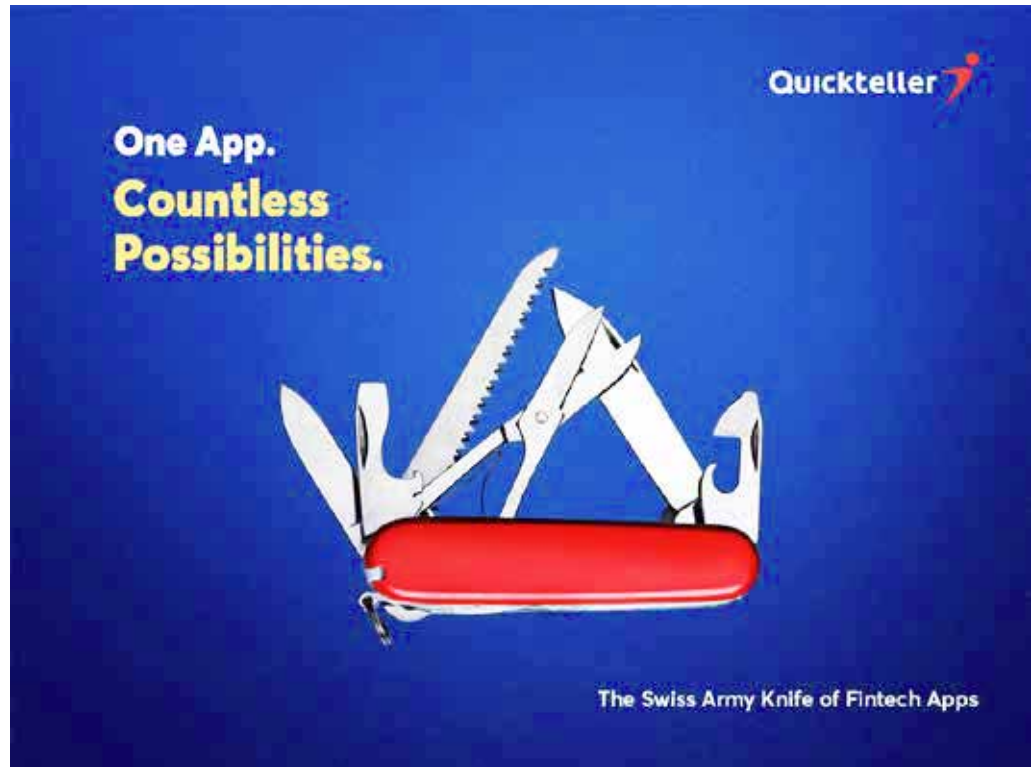
Enter Quickteller, the digital Swiss Army knife of financial transactions and lifestyle services. With Quickteller, you can unlock a treasure trove of services that will leave you wondering how you ever managed without it.

Just like a Swiss Army knife, Quickteller is a delightful blend of practicality and ingenuity.

While the Swiss knife might have a corkscrew, can opener, and even a toothpick (because, well, you never know when you'll need one), Quickteller goes beyond the realm of physical tools. This fintech marvel empowers you to pay bills, transfer funds, airtime top-ups, house-hunting, tax remits, interstate travel tickets and much more, all from the comfort of your fingertips.

It's like having an entire toolbox of payments and lifestyle services neatly packed into one sleek and quick app – www.quickteller.com.

Versatility is the name of the game for both the Swiss Army knife and Quickteller.



Just like a Swiss knife's blade that effortlessly finds utility across various physical tasks, Quickteller seamlessly adapts to meet diverse payment needs. The Swiss Army knife is renowned for its durability and reliability, and Quickteller follows in its footsteps. It's very much a companion you can trust, ensuring secure transactions and protecting your sensitive information.

Whether you're paying a recurring bill, sending money, or exploring the myriad of lifestyle services Quickteller offers, be rest assured knowing that your financial affairs are in safe hands.

Beyond the vast array of

tools it encompasses, the true allure of a Swiss Army knife lies in the convenience it brings to your life.

Similarly, Quickteller eliminates the need for juggling multiple apps or enduring cumbersome visits to various service providers. Instead, it offers a comprehensive, all-in-one solution for your payment needs, making convenience a steadfast companion. Like a Swiss Army knife nestled in your pocket, Quickteller becomes an indispensable tool on your device, ensuring you're always prepared to make everyday transactions seamlessly. In a world that demands efficiency and

adaptability, Quickteller stands tall as the Swiss Army knife of fintech apps. With its extensive range of services, secure transactions, and unmatched convenience, Quickteller simplifies everyday payments like never before. So, whether you're facing a daunting bill payment or need to top up your phone's airtime, reach for the digital equivalent of a Swiss knife – reach for Quickteller.

And a point to note, Quickteller is much more versatile than a Swiss army knife – but it's the best thing we could compare it to. (winks).



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X3M Ideas: The lion in the house

'Short of selling their grand mothers, there's probably nothing a creative wouldn't do to win a Cannes Lion. Come to think of it, even grannies might well be sent packing with a Lion at stake', Campaign.



Above quoted allegory by Campaign magazine, a U.K based global business magazine covering advertising, media, marketing and commercial creativity very well encapsulated the die-hard spirit and "desperation" if you like behind the contest for the Cannes Lions award. If the deep anecdote as popularised by **Campaign** is well comprehended and deconstructed, it goes without any equivocation that the X3M Ideas journey into the global creative stardom was not in the least a happenstance.

For the purpose of those who may not have been well apprised, the recently held Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity will forever remain evergreen in the annals of creative advertising business in Nigeria, and indeed, West Africa. Reason? It was the first time in the 70 year epochal history of Cannes Lions Festival that a Nigerian Creative agency would emerge winner in the global contest with its **"The Soot Life Expectancy" Campaign**. Needless to say, this feat is



phenomenal as Nigerian agencies had for seven decades aspired to gain honour and recognition on the prestigious global stage but to no avail. However X3M Ideas, under the headship of Mr. Steve Babaeko did what past Napoleons of the Nigerian creative industry could not do by warehousing the Cannes Lions award with its **truly extreme Ideas**. Or who could ever have imagined that "the Soot" which had for many years remained a daily nightmare

for the Nigerian citizens in the Niger Delta region would one day turn into a wining wand? Now, we all know better, and its no thanks to Steve Babaeko and its team at X3M who have through their revolutionary creative zeal and passion made this a reality and not a fallacy. It needs restating that "the Soot Life Expectancy campaign which gave X3M Ideas the lift to global creative stardom addressed the critical issue of the detrimental effects of soot on

the lifespan of Nigerians especially those who live and eke-out a living in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This unpalatable experience has been occasioned by the unfortunate rampant incidence of illegal refinery and activities of illegal miners.

The Soot Life Expectancy Campaign show-cased the agency's exceptional ability to create impactful messages that resonate with audiences, while also driving tangible change as well as addressing societal challenges especially the human condition in a society where the end justifies the means: This Campaign revolved around creating awareness about the adverse effects of soot in the lifespan of Nigerians. To re-ignite national attention on this critical issue, X3M Ideas developed an innovative formula that recalculated life expectancy based on the duration of time spent in Rivers State. By combining data on soot obtained from the German Environmental Protection Agency across 41 countries with the average air quality data of Rivers State and Nigeria's official life expectancy, X3M Ideas created a formula. This formula was unveiled through a dedicated website, SOOTCITY.COM, where individuals could check their new life expectations. Additionally, strategically placed LED billboards across the country displayed the results, ensuring widespread visibility and engagement.

The conventional measurement of life expectancy fails to account for the unique challenges faced by communities in Rivers State, Nigeria's second-largest oil-producing region. Since 2016, the region has been plagued by rampant oil bunkering, gas flaring, pipeline explosions, and the proliferation of illegal artisanal refineries, resulting in the largest recorded emission of soot in the country. On certain days, the soot particles in Rivers State reach levels 40 times worse than the World Health Organization's 24-hour exposure guideline.

However, the conversation surrounding the soot crisis had gradually diminished over time as national attention shifted to other pressing issues, leaving residents in the dark. To reignite the national discourse and work towards a viable policy solution, The Extra Step Initiative partnered with X3M Ideas to launch the impactful campaign, "The Soot City Life Expectancy," in February 2023.

The campaign harnessed data from 40 countries, acquired from the German Environmental Protection Agency and EIONET, and combined it with the average

air quality of Rivers State and Nigeria's official life expectancy. This innovative formula provided a more realistic life expectancy for individuals based on their exposure to soot. The campaign's website, SOOTCITY.COM, played a vital role in generating awareness and engagement. It automatically generated a letter on behalf of each visitor, urging Nigerian senators to address the pressing soot problem. This multifaceted campaign utilized various media platforms, including print, digital, and out-of-home, to foster widespread awareness and drive tangible policy action.

"The Soot City Life Expectancy" campaign was met with great acclaim when it was officially launched in Nigeria. Its compelling message and innovative execution resonated deeply with audiences, attracting attention not only from the local community but also from the prestigious Cannes Lions jury.

X3M Ideas' historic win at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity heralds a new era for Nigerian agencies and shines a spotlight on the immense talent and untapped potential within the Nigerian marketing and advertising industry. This groundbreaking achievement serves as an inspiration for other Nigerian agencies, encouraging them to push boundaries, showcase their creativity, and create impactful campaigns that resonate globally.

The victory of X3M Ideas and their impactful campaign, "The Soot City Life Expectancy," not only marks a significant milestone for the agency but also for the entire West Africa region. It symbolizes the breaking of chains and the realization of long-awaited recognition for West African practitioners in the advertising profession.

Besides, the great lesson to be drawn from the X3M Ideas Lion win is that nothing is impossible if vision and focus are involved. The victory song is sweet, but preceding it is hardwork, persistence, doggedness and focus. These unique attributes have been put on display by Steve Babaeko and his wonderful team at X3M Ideas. With this global acclaim, it is assured that there will be jealousy and envy. This is not uncommon amongst humans. Feelers emanating from the industry have revealed that the X3M feat has attracted for it both friends and foes. But should the agency lose sleep over this? The answer is nope. While those who celebrate the feat with them will surely do, those who will downplay or undermine them cannot but do. That is the way of

humans.

But from the **Gists Jests & Jabs** corner, we felicitate with team X3M Ideas and their head-honcho, Steve Babaeko for this outstanding global outing and wish them greater heights in the years ahead.



Briefs On Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity

The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity (formerly the International Advertising Festival) is a global event for those working in creative communications, advertising, and related fields. It is considered the largest gathering of the advertising and creative communications industry.

The five-day festival, incorporating the awarding of the Lions awards, is held yearly at the Palais des Festivals et des Congrès in Cannes, France. During the last week of June, around 15,000 registered delegates from 90 countries visit the Festival to celebrate the best of creativity in brand communication, discuss industry issues, and network with one another. The week's activities include, multiple award ceremonies as well as an opening and closing gala.

History

Inspired by the Cannes Film Festival, staged in Cannes since the late 1940s, a group of cinema screen advertising contractors belonging to the Screen Advertising World Association (Sawa) felt the makers of advertising films should be similarly recognised. They established the International Advertising Film Festival, the first of which took place in Venice, Italy, in September 1954, with 187 film entries from 14 countries. The lion of the Piazza San Marco in Venice was the inspiration for the Lion trophy.

The second festival was held in Monte Carlo, and the third in Cannes. After that, the event alternated between Venice and Cannes before settling in the latter in 1984. New categories have been added to the awards in recent years: the Press & Outdoor Lions competition in 1992; the

Cyber Lions in 1998 (retired after 2017); Media Lions in 1999; Direct Lions in 2002; Radio, and Titanium Lions in 2005; Promo & Activation Lions in 2006 (retired after 2017); Design Lions in 2008; Others are the PR Lions in 2009; Film Craft in 2010; Creative Effectiveness in 2011; Branded Content & Entertainment and Mobile Lions in 2012; Innovation in 2013 and Creative eCommerce and Social & Influencer in 2018. However, in recent years, there have been calls from within the industry for the festival to simplify the entry categories to better reflect the current state of the modern communications world. The festival responded by introducing changes in 2018, including new categories, revising costs and reducing the event from seven days to five.

In the 1990s, the Festival also added a programme of learning in the form of seminars and workshops. Over the years, this aspect of the Festival has grown considerably, and in 2013 it featured around 130 sessions over seven days.

These included talks from Christopher Bailey, Jack Black, Jenson Button, Nick Cannon, Shepard Fairey, Arianna Huffington, David Karp, and Annie Leibovitz.

In 2004, British publisher and conference organiser EMAP plc (now called Ascential) purchased the festival from French businessman Roger Hatchuel – who had started managing it in 1987 – for a reported £52 million. In June 2014, the *Wall Street Journal* as well as *Campaign Magazine* reported on Nimrod Kamer's protestations at Cannes Lions.

Philip Thomas is the Chairman and Simon Cook the Managing Director. Thomas is also the President and Chief Executive Officer of Ascential Futures, under which Cannes Lions operates.

The Awards

Cannes Lions juries are drawn from experts in each field from around the world. Each jury is headed by a jury president. They judge submissions in Film, Film Craft, Industry Craft, Digital Craft, Media, Print & Publishing, Outdoor, Direct, Pharma, Health & Wellness, Design, Radio & Audio, Mobile, Branded Content & Entertainment, Brand Experience & Activation, Creative eCommerce, Entertainment,



Entertainment Lions for Music, PR, Creative Effectiveness, Social & Influencer, Creative Data, Innovation and Titanium, as well as Glass: The Lion for Change and Sustainable Development Goals. In 2013, the Festival launched a new category called the Innovation Lions, which are supposed to “honour the technology and innovation which facilitates creativity”, including recognition of the ‘Top 10 Startups to Watch’. Additionally, global start-ups can apply for the Start-up Academy to receive festival passes and access mentorship sessions.

Other awards include, Holding Company of the Year, Network of the Year, Media Agency of the Year, Agency of the Year, Independent Agency of the Year, Media Person of the Year, New Directors’ Showcase, Advertiser of the Year, and the Palme d’Or to the best production company.

Advertisements are generally entered by the agencies that created them, although technically anyone can enter any advertising creation, providing it ran within a specified time frame. The jurors are instructed to reward advertising that is deemed most creative both in idea and execution.

In an article in *The Guardian* in 2009, WPP boss, Sir Martin Sorrell, said the Cannes Lions awards were too costly to enter. However, a year later, he also admitted that he had made sure that WPP was “very, very focused on Cannes” and wanted to be “the leader in terms of awards at Cannes”. In 2011, WPP won the first Holding Company of the Year prize at the Festival. Commenting on this industry recognition, WPP Worldwide Creative Director, John O’Keeffe, said:

“Cannes is the only global, cross discipline show, covering advertising,

design, digital, media, promo, effectiveness, and everything else besides. It doesn’t aggregate the scores of other shows, so you can’t inflate your ranking on the back of just one or two pieces of work. If you are number one at Cannes, you’ve done it the hard way, the proper way, the only way”.

In 2013, the “Dumb Ways to Die” a campaign by McCann Australia for Australian company Metro Trains made history by winning a total of five Grands Prix awards, the most ever awarded to a single piece of work.

The Lion of St. Mark is an honour given each year at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity to “someone who has made outstanding contributions to the creative community”.

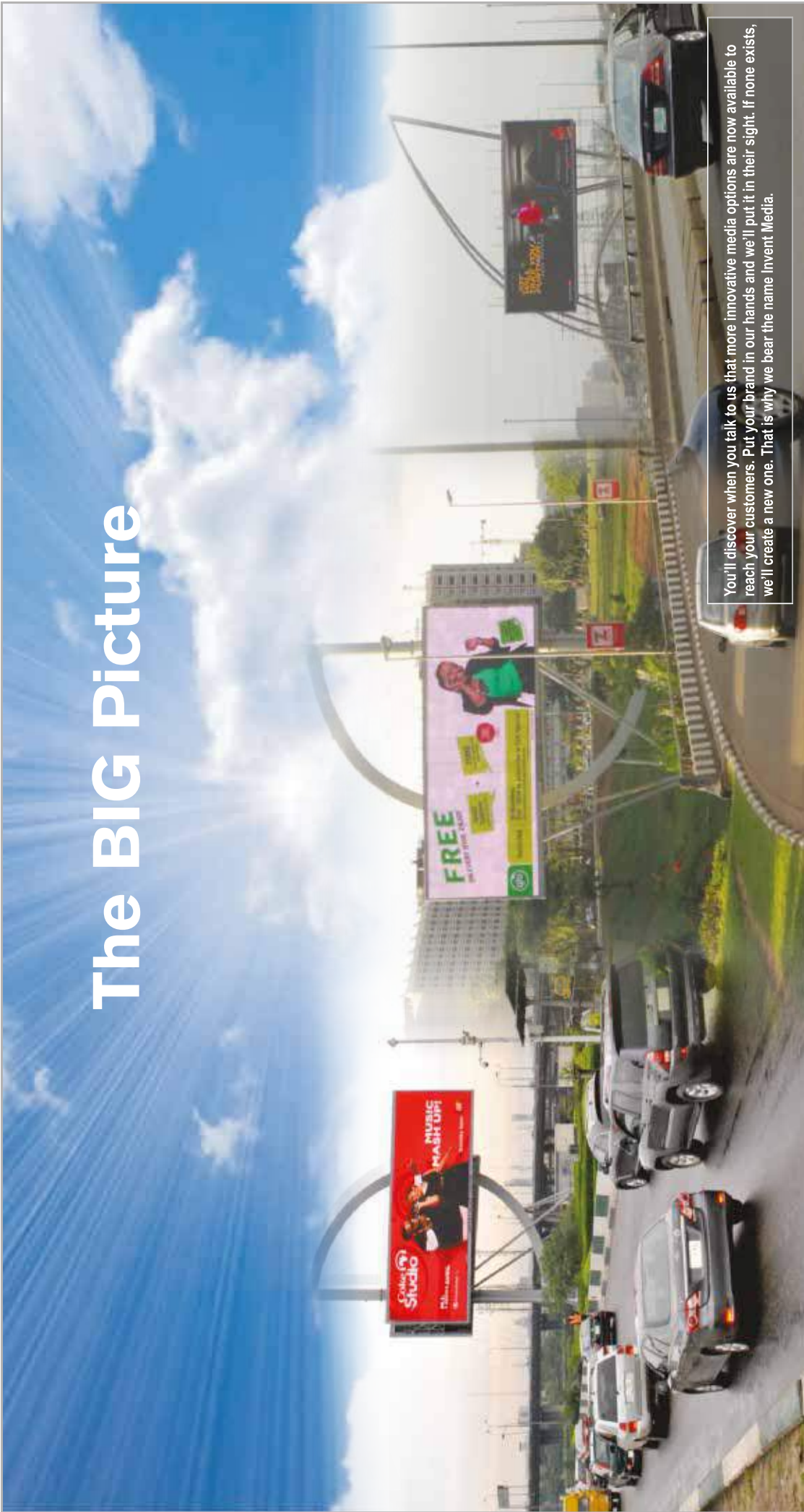
Young Lions Competitions

The Young Lions Competitions (previously known as the Young Creatives competition, which started in 1995) is open to advertising professionals up to 30 years old working in teams of two. The competition takes place during the festival week in Cannes in seven divisions: print, digital, film, design, young marketers, media, and PR. Regional competitions are held in most countries to select teams in the lead-up to the Festival, with winners of these going into the final round of the competitions at Cannes Lions. A design competition was launched in 2012.

Lions Health

In June 2012, Cannes Lions announced that it plans to launch a new two-day event for creative communications in healthcare, wellness, and sustainability. Taking place in the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France, just before Cannes Lions kicked off on 15 June 2014, the event will offer two days of content that will explore and debate the essential and unique issues relating to the world of healthcare communications. The move was welcomed by some sections of the industry, with Jeremy Perrott, global creative director of McCann Health, commenting: “Lions Health gives the industry the highest stage to showcase its brilliance”. In 2017, Lions Health was moved to take place at the same time as the main festival, but remains a standalone event in another part of the Palais.

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Standing out in a crowded marketplace

By Ralph Tathagata

“If you do not develop a personal differentiator by the age of 35 you become uninteresting for the market.” - **Robert Greene**

The above affirmation by Green, a renowned American author, may smack of a sweeping generalization, particularly when it comes to age. In the context of modern corporate and business environment, however, the quote is to be considered important in order to invoke market differentiation and excellence.

To present a consistent and compelling narrative of those who have distinguished themselves in the corporate and entrepreneurial space, which is the strategic goal of this edition of *MARKETING EDGE*, it is, therefore, pertinent to take into consideration the logic of value, productivity and personality brand equity, which is rather factual and tend to reign over contemporary market.

How outstanding are you in your profession or trade? What skills do you have that make you an important asset for your business or the organization in which you work? How much would you be missed if you happened to not carry out your job or close down your business? **When clients picked your agency, product or service over your competitors, which personality did they see behind the corporate or entrepreneurial entity? Except in a system where endemic cronyism prevails, your outstanding professionalism makes it easy for your clients to see why they should pick you over your competitors. These competitors might have the same skills and experience as you, but they're not you. You are what makes your business unique.**

While the foregoing argument and questions may sound too Machiavellian and generalized, their compelling logic points out yet another argument for professionals and business owners, not only for them to be unique in their respective endeavours, but also to ensure that there's a steady growth in a near future in their personality brand equity.

The personalities featured in this Outstanding Professionals of *MARKETING EDGE* are drawn from within and outside the marketing communication ecosystem.

As an industry agenda-setting magazine, *MARKETING EDGE* is suggesting, with a well informed article, for Governor Sanwo-Olu to conduct an interview for interested candidates of the Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA) helmsman. Such interview, our publication believes, will provide a rigorous opportunity for interested candidates to share their strategic vision and plans directly with Mr. Governor so that he will be able to know that the applicant's world view is in tandem with his own. This is said to be far better than allowing such a highly technical office to be left to the whims and caprices of a handpicked political jobber.

In this edition, our readers will also know that Artificial intelligence has become the cornerstone of the next business reinvention era, and embracing AI is no longer optional for CMOs. It is, therefore, essential for brands to adopt it to stay ahead in a competitive market.

However, even as professionals across the globe are all in pursuit of this machine assisted tool in the quest to enhance creativity in their chosen fields, the fear is the possibility of infringement of copyright as the AI does not acknowledge the source of materials, some of which may be copyrighted.

The global deodorants market growth size has been forecast to soar from USD27.4 billion in 2022, to USD35.9 billion by 2028. A report by IMARC Group also revealed that the market will exhibit a growth rate (CAGR) of 4.6% from 2023-2028. The report stated that the high and increasing demand for personal grooming products, along with the rise in female workforce participation were triggered by the demand for novel and innovative fragrances by the working class group.

What's more, Nestlé, a leading global food and beverage company, recently unveiled a groundbreaking technology that addresses the pressing issue of sugar reduction in various product categories. By employing an enzymatic process, Nestlé can effectively decrease intrinsic sugar in ingredients like malt, milk, and fruit juices by up to 30%, all while preserving the delightful flavours consumers love.

The global laundry detergent market, which has continued to witness tremendous innovation, is projected to reach USA 98.6 billion by 2030, while growing at a CAGR of 4.8% from 2023 to 2030 respectively. According to Verified Market Research, a marketing research firm, the laundry detergent market size was valued at USD 64.7 billion in 2021, and its profound growth is propelled by various market dynamics and other scenarios which have been responsible for its growth opportunities.

Jameson, the renowned Irish whiskey brand under Pernod Ricard, has named Ogilvy its new global creative partner. Ogilvy emerged winner following a competitive pitch which included longtime incumbent TBWA and Publicis New York.

Our readers are also presented with how practitioners, while celebrating the World PR Day (WPRD), 2023, reimagined the practice in all its ramifications in the communications industry. This year's virtual event was organised by GLG Communication in collaboration with The Guardian Nigeria and WPRD with the theme: “Harnessing the Power Of Public Relations”.

As *MARKETING EDGE* continues in its avant-garde quest to promote the brand idea and set an agenda for the industry, it's convinced that industry professionals, the brands and businesses they lead will continue to grow in equity while standing out in their various categories, segments and subsectors.

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Onitsha Anambra State.
Tel: 070 68559 216.

Port Harcourt Office:
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Ikwerre LGA, Rivers State.
Tel:+234 80377 37173

At DigiBreed, data is the central to our success

– Arijesuyo

Though an Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) graduate of Microbiology, Mr. Ezekiel Arijesuyo, Digital Transformation Lead at DigiBreed Limited, seems to have left the world of microbes and has comfortably pitched his professional tent in the digital marketing space.

A thoroughbred Digital and Traditional marketing icon, Arijesuyo has traversed the diverse digital marketing sector like an idol of sorts. With professional and career qualifications and experience that spans over a decade, Arijesuyo talks, breathes and lives in the world of digital marketing.

In this interview with **MARKETING EDGE**, Arijesuyo who says, “I consider myself a life-long learner, with an ability to learn fast and also comfortable with different technology platforms”, speaks on DigiBreed as an innovative and proactive firm, the challenges of the digital revolution, and other industry related issues. Excerpt:



Technological advancements are creating huge gaps in all sectors of the economy. What is DigiBreed’s strategy to close the gap in Nigeria’s marketing communication industry?

We understand the challenges and opportunities that technological advancements create in all sectors of the economy, especially in the marketing communication industry in Nigeria. That is why we are committed to staying updated on the latest trends and best practices in digital marketing like SEO, social media, content marketing, email marketing, etc.

We use data and analytics to measure the impact, ROI of our campaigns and optimise them accordingly.

This allows us to identify what is working and what is not, so that we can make adjustments as needed, just as we provide customised and innovative solutions for our clients that suit their goals, budget, and target audience.

We understand that every business is unique, so we take the time to understand our clients’ needs and objectives then develop customised solutions that are

tailored to their specific needs.

Accordingly, we leverage the power of new technology tools (such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, 5G enabled real time audience data capture and analysis etc) to reach and engage potential customers across different channels and devices.

Partnering with other reputable and reliable digital marketing agencies in Nigeria and abroad to expand our network and capabilities is also our unique style. We believe that collaboration is key to success in the digital marketing industry and so, we are actively seeking partnerships with agencies that share our values and can help us achieve our goals.

We believe that these strategies and actions will help us bridge the gap between our clients and their customers, as well as help strengthen the industry through our collaborations and partnerships home and abroad.

How future-fit is your agency given the fact that technology changes trends at the speed of light?

As a digitally driven marketing agency, we are always innovating and experimenting to help our clients achieve their goals and grow their businesses. We stay up-to-date on the latest developments and best practices in the industry, thanks to our digital transformation mindset, which allows us to be agile and flexible in the face of uncertainty and disruption.

What stands you out from competitors?

We are passionate about helping our clients achieve their goals and grow their businesses. We value long-term relationships with our clients and provide them with ongoing support and guidance throughout the project lifecycle and beyond, constantly striving to deliver a SHARE OF THE FUTURE to our client through partnerships, processes and ideas that are anchored on integrity.

Moreover, DigiBreed stands out as one of Nigeria's foremost agencies leading the industry in creative support services such as: Talent management, Sound design, VFX and SFX, Animations, and General Audio and Visual Production.

How would you describe your digital strategy in terms of integration and execution?

Our digital marketing strategy is built on these key pillars: alignment, consistency, collaboration, and communication.

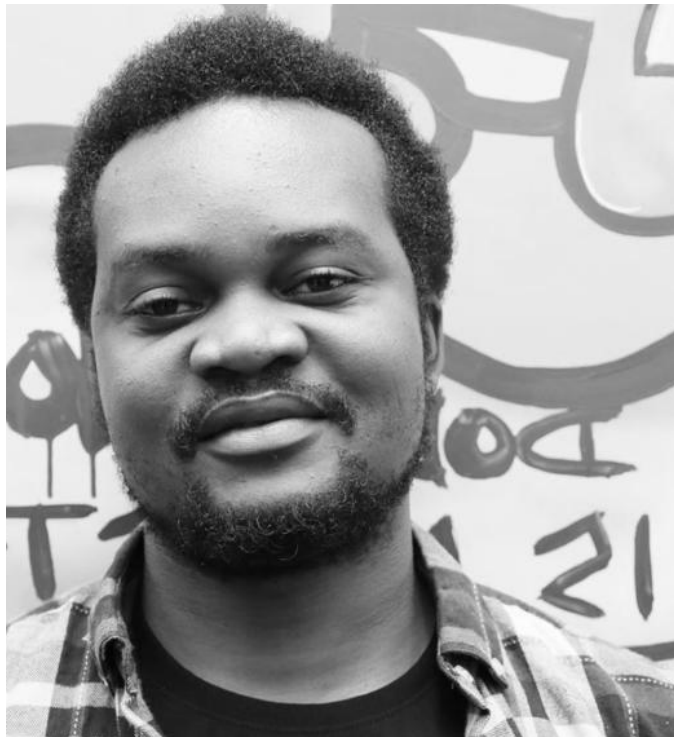
We integrate our efforts with our clients' overall business objectives and marketing plans while working closely with their teams to ensure that our communication and brand representation are aligned with their culture and values.

Similarly, we execute our digital strategies with excellence and efficiency, using the best tools and techniques available, whilst monitoring and measuring performance and outcomes to make further improvements.

How data-driven is DigiBreed?

At DigiBreed, data is the backbone of our work. We employ data to: Understand our clients' business objectives, challenges, and opportunities, Research and analyze their target market, competitors, and industry trends, Plan and design effective and innovative digital marketing strategies and campaigns., Implement and execute our digital marketing actions using the best tools and techniques available..

We monitor, measure, and provide actionable insights and recommendations on the performance of our digital marketing



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efforts.

We also leverage various sources and methods to collect, process, and interpret data, such as: Online surveys, interviews, and feedback forms to gather data from our clients and their customers.

We deploy Web analytics, social media analytics, email marketing analytics, and online platforms to track and measure data from our digital marketing campaigns, we also use data visualization, reporting, and dashboard tools to present and communicate data in a clear and engaging way, other are data analysis, testing, and optimization tools to improve and refine our digital marketing actions based on data.

We believe that being data-driven helps us to deliver high-quality results for our clients, both now and in the future.

As a key player in the marketing communication industry in Nigeria, how would you describe the digital revolution here, compared to developed

countries?

As a digital marketing agency, we are aware of the opportunities and challenges that the digital revolution presents in Nigeria and other emerging markets. We strongly believe that Nigeria has made significant progress in adopting and leveraging digital technologies for a variety of purposes, like:

Financial inclusion and innovation: Through mobile money, digital banking, and fintech solutions, millions of unbanked and under-banked Nigerians have gained access to financial services.

Education and learning: With the use of online platforms, e-learning tools, and digital content that enable remote and flexible learning opportunities for students and teachers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic have made tremendous impacts.

Health and wellness: By increasing access to quality health care services and information for Nigerians, especially in rural and underserved areas, using telemedicine, e-health, and m-health solutions.

The digital revolution has also impacted on agriculture and food security. This is through the use of digital platforms, e-commerce, and agri-tech solutions that connect farmers to markets, inputs, information, and financing, while enhancing productivity and resilience.

On Governance and civic engagement, the digital innovation has positively impacted the sector via utilizing digital platforms, e-government, and social media solutions that enhance transparency, accountability, and participation in decision-making and public affairs.

However, we recognize that Nigeria still faces some gaps and barriers in fully harnessing the potential of the digital revolution. Some of which include:

Infrastructure and connectivity: Low internet penetration, high data costs, unreliable power supply, and poor network quality limits the availability and affordability of digital services for many Nigerians.

Skills and literacy: Low digital literacy, awareness, and adoption among some segments of the population, especially women, youth, the elderly, and rural dwellers, limits their ability to benefit from digital opportunities.

Policy and regulation: Inadequate or outdated policies, laws, and regulations governing the digital space creates uncertainty, inconsistency, and inefficiency for digital service providers and users.

Security and privacy: Increasing risks of cyber attacks, frauds, scams, identity thefts, data breaches, and misinformation affects the safety and trustworthiness of digital platforms and services.

Despite these gaps and barriers, Nigeria has a number of potential advantages that can help it succeed in this era. These include: A large and youthful population that is tech-savvy, entrepreneurial, creative, and innovative. This provides a huge market opportunity and talent pool for digital solutions that can address various social and economic needs.

A vibrant and dynamic digital ecosystem that comprises various stakeholders. This creates a conducive environment for collaboration, learning and exchange.

A strong culture of resilience and adaptability. This fosters a spirit of experimentation and exploration in using digital technologies for solving problems and creating value.

We believe that by leveraging these strengths and building on these accomplishments, Nigeria can accelerate its digital

transformation and catch up with developed countries in this regard.

Do you think Nigeria's internet penetration is good enough for digital marketing to thrive?

Despite the challenges and limitations, we remain optimistic about the prospects and potential of digital marketing in Nigeria. Nigeria's internet penetration is gradually improving and expanding, creating a greater opportunity for digital marketing to thrive.

In your estimation, can the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) regulate the social media space for digital agencies to operate professionally?

Yes, it is ARCON's role to promote and protect the interests of the Nigerian advertising industry, as well as the public interest, in this fast changing digital age. However, there is a need to establish clear and consistent guidelines and codes of conduct for online and social media advertising, in line with global best practices and the platform owners (e.g Meta, Twitter, Snap, Tiktok, etc) and local realities.

Moreover, there is a need for a strong and transparent collaboration and co-operation with other relevant stakeholders, such as social media platforms, government agencies, advertisers, advertising agencies, private sector players, civil society organizations, development partners, etc. to create a conducive and supportive environment for online and social media advertising.

The days of cookies are almost over. What is your data strategy for customer insights and analytics?

As a digital marketing agency, we are aware of the challenges presented by the looming demise of third-party cookies. We believe that first-party data is the future of digital marketing, and we have developed a data strategy that focuses on building, growing, and activating our first-party data. We also capture, store, and analyze data using a variety of methods and advanced technologies to create high-quality customer insights and analytics for our digital marketing campaigns.

Where does creativity meet technology?

Creativity and technology are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary and synergistic. And we believe that technology can enhance and enable creativity in various ways, such as: providing new platforms and tools for creative expression and communication, such as websites, apps, social media, blogs, podcasts, videos, etc. Expanding and diversifying creative possibilities and outcomes like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), etc.

Technology also offers new sources and methods for creative inspiration and research such as online databases, search engines, forums, communities, etc., it supports, facilitates creative collaboration and feedback like online chats, video calls, cloud computing, project management software, and automating and streamlining creative processes and tasks, such as data collection, analysis, visualization, optimization, etc.

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OUTSTANDING GAME CHANGER AMAZONS





My Journey so far in the service of Apapa Local Government - Senbanjo

Honourable Idowu Adejumoke Senbanjo is the Executive Chairman of Apapa Local Government in Lagos State. A corporate Amazon, she came into office with a wealth of experience in both the private and public sectors. She worked for Harris Corporation, Nigeria and the defunct Metropolitan Bank for many years, before serving as Special Assistant to the Lagos State Governor on Housing (2004-2007) and Senior Special Assistant to the Lagos State Governor on Women Affairs & Poverty Eradication W.A.P.E. (2012-2015).

Since taking office, she has given herself and her team the mandate to turn Apapa into a modern port city. This would naturally help to eradicate the struggles and challenges facing Apapa and its environment. The mandate is based on four strategic pillars: Security, Health, Education, and the Environment (SHEE). To this end, an Apapa Modern City Strategic Plan has been put in place to guide the journey towards this well-defined destination. There have already been landmark achievements, making Hon. Senbanjo's footprints indelible on the sand of time. In an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE's AMOS OLADELE** and **TAIWO OSHO**, the grassroots political powerhouse reflects on her professional and political journey. Excerpts:

As we all know, Nigeria is on the brink of bankruptcy, and his courage in stopping the fuel subsidy is a very brave one; it is one decision that a lot of countries and a lot of people who are looking up to him will applaud. It is a decision that is going to change a lot of things henceforth. If we all will be sincere with ourselves, we would ask ourselves, where has the subsidy led us? Therefore, this is a time when we need to encourage and inform the public, especially people at the grassroots, what this subsidy is all about and what benefits its withdrawal would deliver to all of us.

Perhaps we should start with the fact that Nigeria just transitioned to a new administration, the seventh consecutive transition in the current democratic dispensation; how do you feel as a person and as a political leader at the grassroots about the transition and this period that we are in, in Nigeria?

First of all, I need to thank you for your persistence in getting me to grant this interview. I also thank you for being patient since you got to this office today.

Now, talking about the latest transition in our political evolution as a country, I'd like to allude to Mr. President's campaign slogan, "Renewed Hope". Quite clearly, it's a time for hope; it's a time for us to hope and work for a better Nigeria. There's no doubt about that.

Personally, I believe that Asiwaju (President Tinubu) is the Moses that will lead us out of our current challenges. Those who will come after him must be prepared to continue from where he would eventually stop. There is so much to do, to be able to get to where we want to go; but starting from where we are, we need a leader who is focused, understands this country, and is ready to make well-thought-out decisions that will get us to where we are going.

As we all know, Nigeria is on the brink of bankruptcy, and his courage in stopping the fuel subsidy is a very brave one; it is one decision that a lot of countries and a lot of people who are looking up to him will applaud. It is a decision that is going to change a lot of things henceforth.

If we all will be sincere with ourselves, we would ask ourselves, where has the subsidy led us? Therefore,

this is a time when we need to encourage and inform the public, especially people at the grassroots, what this subsidy is all about and what benefits its withdrawal would deliver to all of us. For now, a lot of people don't see the subsidy withdrawal as bringing hope. Rather, they see it from a negative perspective as just another policy that brings hardship, especially with the hike in the price of petrol.

Interestingly, I was listening to an Imam who was preaching this past Friday; and I liked his analogy about fuel subsidy. He said that when Nigeria started the GSM revolution with MTN and Airtel (then Econet), he reminded his congregation that the price of a SIM card was almost N50,000; but today, we are buying it at next to nothing. He assured us that it would be the same with oil subsidy withdrawal; that prices of a lot of things will initially skyrocket, but eventually, everything would come down, once we have stabilized and found our footing. Prices will continue to drop, and the free-market economy will fully come into play.

I am positive that this government is serious about subsidy removal; and that the economy can only grow bigger and better for it. This government will do so much more because it will surely generate more revenue. Recall that the Buhari's administration in 2021 recorded the highest revenue growth of about 3.4% or thereabout. Today, Mr. President wants to double that to about 7%. Once this happens, God helping him and his team, the government will have more revenue to do more for the nation. Asiwaju is one person we can trust to do just that. He would manage our resources properly, encourage and attract industrialists and investors, both local and foreign to do more, and make life better for all of us. I hope he will encourage more local content to develop than foreign. If this is done, there will be employment for the

youths; prices of food and other items will drop. We will have more food because the administration will invest very much in agriculture; there is hope for a surge in exports; such national assets like the Ajaokuta steel complex will roar to life and enhance our export capacities; the compressed liquefied gas resource will be enhanced. Imagine if we had been at a competitive advantage on compressed liquefied gas since the Russia-Ukraine war started.

Nigeria has an abundance of compressed liquefied gas, and if we were in the position to exploit it efficiently, we would experience an increase in foreign exchange earnings which would be beneficial to the country.

One of our slogans during our campaign was "Catch the fire". It was a call for business unusual. Those who catch the fire on time will understand and appreciate the birth of a new Nigeria. This is what I see happening to Nigeria under this new administration. And I sincerely wish Mr President and his cabinet the best. Though the task is Herculean, I am confident that Mr President is up to it.

As a grassroots political leader and chairman for this local government, how do you see the new dispensation impacting local government administration given Asiwaju's records in that regard when he was governor of Lagos state?

Well, from that time to now, a lot of things have changed, and his position on a lot of issues may have shifted to align with what is going on worldwide. As a grassroots leader, I will sincerely hope that more funding will come to the local government so that the local authorities will be able to do more.

As of today, most of our potential revenue avenues, at the local government level, are

domiciled in the states. I believe this was done due to how the revenue was poorly managed in the past. The good thing is, we still have some wiggle room as the state government now mainly disburses the funds directly to the local governments.

Local Governments (LGs) have the potential to can generate greater revenue. However, our progress has been hindered by different issues. For instance, the rampant and unsanctioned collection of tolls and levies by non-governmental entities. Remarkably, in numerous instances, these actors have been found to amass substantial amounts far exceeding the revenues that our local authorities have been receiving. Consequently, we find ourselves striving for a more controlled and regulated environment, which has begun to infuse a much-needed sense of order and rationality into the system.

Presently, we are committed to instigating a transformation within the current landscape. The present cohort of local government chairmen is composed of individuals endowed with keen economic acumen and an exceptional understanding of our local context. With such capable leaders at the helm, I believe that we shall ultimately achieve optimal outcomes for the well-being of our people at the grassroots level.

How about internally generated revenue?

We now have the charge to look inwards to cultivate and nurture other revenue streams. While this is challenging, given the way the economy is today, we will continue to apply creative financial re-engineering methods to deliver for our people.

Generally speaking, how do you see governance at the grassroots level in Nigeria, not just in Lagos?

I agree with local government autonomy.

For all that we know, Lagos State is the most advanced when it comes to governance and the impact of the local government at the grassroots. However, for good governance to reach more of our people across the nation, I think Mr President and all our governors should encourage local government authorities more. Our people should also strive to ensure that only the right people govern at the grassroots. The truth is, in some mature democracies, the local authorities are better empowered as they are closest to the people. This I experienced first-hand during a visit to South Korea some time ago.

The local government are more directly



involved with the people. So, we can do more for them. We feel the pulse of these people and it is through the local government that the state and the federal government can do more for them as well.

Therefore, it is imperative that the cadre of individuals who assume leadership roles at the local government level possess certain qualities and attributes. We should consistently scout for and promote highly intelligent people, people of impeccable integrity, who know what has to be done and are committed to moving the country forward by moving their local governments forward.

In Lagos State, we are lucky that the calibre of L.G. are of high quality particularly under the chairmanship of our chair of chair Mr. Kolawole Alabi.

One of our objectives for the edition on Nigeria's corporate Amazons is to hear from our Amazons across various sectors of society; what is your personal take on the agitation for more equitable representation in government for our women folk?

As a woman, I stand firm in my determination to champion the cause of greater female participation in politics and leadership roles. While I do accept that each woman is unique, our shared identity as mothers underscores our inborn commitment to nurturing and caring for others. It is important that we encourage more women to take up the challenge.

Personally, I firmly believe that an increased presence of women in government will bring about substantial improvements across various sectors. While Lagos State demonstrates comparatively better female representation than other states, there is still ample room for progress. We must continue to encourage and empower women to rise to positions

of influence. We are in the era where women empowerment has become necessary.

Historically, collective action among women has proven to yield remarkable outcomes. While the current level of female representation is not entirely lacking, there remains a tangible potential for improvement. I hold the optimistic view that the efforts of Mr President and our esteemed First Lady, with her unwavering support for the cause, will yield significant advancements in this regard. And I believe that we must continue advocating for the crucial 35% affirmation for female representation, as it will foster a more inclusive and equitable political landscape.

In essence, I am steadfast in my commitment to push for the rights of women in politics and leadership, and I stand united with like-minded individuals in our endeavour to effect positive change. The truth is, together, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and prosperous nation.

Let's look at you as a person; how will you trace your journey into politics and political office?

I did not come into governance by error or by accident. My journey began when Asiwaju was the executive governor of Lagos State. I was working in a bank at the time, but I needed a change. I felt the urge to do something different. I felt I needed to deepen my leadership skills and grow my governance knowledge. While pursuing employment options at the Canadian High Commission amongst others, I went to see Baba Abraham Adesanya. He offered to introduce me to the then-governor Tinubu.

Baba Adesanya wanted me to meet him so he could point me to possible employment opportunities within his

sphere of influence. Rather than do that, Asiwaju chose to interview me for a job in his government. Though it took several months before I finally received my offer of employment, it was worth the wait.

I worked in the Ministry of Housing during Asiwaju's administration, and I also worked in the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation during Governor Fashola's administration.

Becoming the local government chairman was a divinely ordained event. Initially contesting was not on my radar, but I was encouraged to run for the council chairmanship in Apapa. One day, while walking in a neglected area of Apapa during the rain, the dire state of the place deeply affected me. While I tried avoiding the route on my next walk, I experienced a powerful epiphany urging me to serve my people. I sought divine guidance, I prayed fervently until I received a clear answer.

When the forms were available, I promptly bought, filled and submitted

obstacle. Undeniably, it hasn't been an easy road; it has been incredibly challenging. Nonetheless, when compared to other local governments, I must acknowledge that my local government has treated me fairly. My management team and council leadership have been exceptional in their support.

The beauty of it all lies in the fact that I am serving my people, and I can confidently say that most of them are content with my leadership. Naturally, some may not share the same level of satisfaction, largely because my approach to governance differs from what they are accustomed to. It is worth noting that my background is in the private sector, which has influenced my perspective on various matters. Drawing from my corporate experience, I have adapted some valuable insights into how we operate within this context.

Let me draw a parallel to the current president's approach. I firmly believe

set out to turn Apapa into a modern port city community. We created a four-pillar strategy covering Security, Health, Education, and the Environment (SHEE). These pillars are the moulds for our Apapa Modern Port City Strategic Plan that is helping us focus and energize our efforts. A quick look at the plan would show that it addresses all the challenges that have plagued the local government and its environment.

Our first order of business was to address the problem of trailers in Apapa. With the help of Mr Governor and the Nigerian Ports Authority, we were able to implement some key changes. One of the most important changes was eliminating toll collection. It was a difficult decision, as many people were profiting from the tolls. However, we believed it was the right thing to do. Tolls were encouraging trailers to block the roads, which caused traffic congestion and made it difficult for businesses to operate.

I understand that some people were upset by the elimination of tolls. However, I believe it was a necessary step in order to improve the flow of traffic in Apapa. Without the tolls, we have reduced the indiscriminate parking of trailers on the roads.. If we didn't, we will never be able to achieve our full potential.

Eliminating tolls was one of the most difficult choices I had to make, but it has helped us to where we are today. Traffic in Apapa has improved significantly, and it is now much easier to drive in and out of the area. Unfortunately, the bridge is currently under repair, which has caused some traffic congestion. However, once the bridge is repaired, traffic in Apapa should be even better than it is now.

Prior to our intervention, it would take commuters at least three to four hours to travel the short distance from their homes to Apapa. This caused significant disruption to their lives, as children were unable to arrive home from school until late at night and adults were unable to complete their work. In addition, the traffic congestion created an environment conducive to crime, as thieves and armed robbers preyed on unsuspecting motorists.

I was determined to address this problem, as I live in Apapa and have experienced the traffic congestion first-hand. With the help of the Presidential Standing Task Force now known as Port Standing Task Team, we were able to clear the roads of trailers and other obstructions, which has significantly improved traffic flow. I am grateful for the support of the Task Force and I am confident that we can continue to work together to make Apapa a more liveable and productive city.

We are hungry to do more. We will surely do more. And I'm excited about the possibilities ahead now that we have a powerful alignment of progressive forces from the local, state and federal levels. The rebirth of Apapa will take centre stage across all tiers and our alignment will surely deliver prosperity for the people of Apapa, Lagos and Nigeria. With the help of the Apapa Residential Development Committee & N.P.A., we have been able to resuscitate the Apapa Mini Water Works.

them. Amidst intense intra-party campaigning and politicking, I, along with others, faced twists in the tale. However, in the end, I received confirmation from our leader, Mr. Tunde Balogun, of my success as the party's flag bearer.

I can't forget the instant support I got, especially from some leaders in the party. Also worthy of special mention for their phenomenal support are our party leaders and the local and state levels. As it turned out, the election was successful and not only did I win, but I also recorded the highest number of votes ever in the history of Apapa Local Government to date.

Assuming duty after our swearing-in was quite a journey. There were battles we fought, but I am immensely grateful to God that I have overcome most of the

that he is not content with maintaining the status quo. Rather, he is determined to effect meaningful change and leave a lasting legacy. His resolute actions, such as decisively removing oil subsidies, demonstrate his commitment to improving Nigeria for the better, regardless of the challenges it may entail. He knows that genuine progress requires tough decisions and clear communication with the public. He urges everyone to adapt and embrace necessary changes, even though they may be difficult.

Since you got in the saddle, how have you begun to do what you envisioned yourself to do – in some specific ways?

When I took office, my team and I



In addition to our work on traffic and security, we have also made significant progress in other areas. For example, we have retooled and repositioned the environmental and sanitation unit for optimal delivery. We procured sanitary tools and uniforms for sweepers, as well as Man Diesel trucks to evacuate silt and refuse. This has helped to improve the flow of our drainage systems. It has helped reduce some of our flooding challenges and has also greatly improved the sanitation and public health of our communities. Regular evacuation of refuse from different areas by our trucks has also helped to keep Apapa clean and healthy and has made it a more pleasant place to live and work. Still, there is a lot of work to be done.

Education remains one of our key passion areas. So, our commitment is to continue to invest in the system to drive positive outcomes for our children. Some of our interventions and projects in this regard include the construction of Ijora Primary School. This was one of such projects aimed at improving the user experience of our pupils by making the learning environment conducive and inspiring. Our teachers are also finding the improved work environment empowering as well. Our goal, therefore, is to build more of such going forward. We have also rebuilt the toilet facility in our primary school and put in place bore holes for water to keep the environment clean.

In addition to building schools, we have also invested in programs to ensure that no child is left behind due to their parent's inability to provide them with basic school supplies. To this end, we have distributed welcome back-to-school kits to public school pupils, providing them with the supplies they need to succeed. These kits include items such as notebooks,

pens, pencils, and rulers. We have also distributed notebooks to public school pupils, helping them to take notes and stay organised. School bags, shoes and school uniforms were included as well to ensure the kids were fully kitted up.

While basic education is important, we believe that our children in the local government can be helped to have a firm footing on the ladder of success by ensuring they have secondary school certification. We continue to pursue this through the procurement and distribution of GCE forms for hundreds of our students and organising preparatory classes for them before their exams.

All these programs are designed to help children from all backgrounds succeed in school, regardless of their family's financial situation. We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to receive a quality education, and we are committed to making that happen.

The road network within our communities continues to receive our attention. We have rehabilitated some roads within Apapa. This has improved the quality of infrastructure a notch and has made it easier for our people to get around. There are more in the offing.

Another area of impact for us has been in the area of welfare and healthcare for our vulnerable constituents. We have an ongoing programme that focuses on the aged and widows. We are helping them to live in dignity, good health and security through our welfare packages and free health insurance coverage.

We have also sponsored community programs and projects. This has supported the development of Apapa and its residents.

We are hungry to do more. We will surely do more. And I'm excited about the possibilities ahead now that we have a

powerful alignment of progressive forces from the local, state and federal levels. The rebirth of Apapa will take centre stage across all tiers and our alignment will surely deliver prosperity for the people of Apapa, Lagos and Nigeria. With the help of the Apapa Residential Development Committee & N.P.A., we have been able to resuscitate the Apapa Mini Water Works. We are yet to start phase 2 of the project.

Still on our Amazon dimension, in what ways are you inspiring other women and ladies to take more interest in politics and governance; and become more active?

Well, I will continue to play my part to make a difference. Whenever I have the opportunity to speak, I will encourage other women to get involved in their communities. My advice is for our women to start at the grassroots level. They should get to know their ward and the people who live there. Participate in local government activities and make their contributions. They should be active and vocal. They should let people see them making a difference so that when the time for decision-making comes, they will be part of the conversation.

I was fortunate to start my political career at the state level. However, even while I was at the state level, I attended ward meetings. I am the type of person who prefers to operate behind the scenes, rather than take centre stage. I do my part by encouraging and supporting people in my ward and community. I would encourage any woman, especially those in my community, to pursue their goals. I would do the best I can to promote and support them.

Are there any hurdles such women are likely to scale, or glasses they need to break, some of such that you may have broken?

There are indeed many hurdles to scale; and yes, there are still some glass ceilings to break. Many of these hurdles are constructs of prejudices, stereotypes and biases. The good thing is, many amazons came before us. Their struggles and triumphs paved the way for many of us to dream, aspire and achieve today. By never giving up or giving in, and by believing in our ability to lead and make an impact in our communities, we are paving the way for those who will follow in our footsteps. For me, I cannot say I did it by myself, I give all glory to God.

TITILOLA adedeji

AN ENIGMATIC ACHIEVER OF ALL TIMES

With over 10 years' experience as a top notch business negotiator and outstanding entrepreneur, Titilola Adedeji, founder and CEO, Tielle Global Enterprise Limited, Curlla Enterprise Limited, Tielle intimates Ltd and General Manager, Amber Energy Drinks Limited, also has cognitive experience in building successful business models, manufacturing, International Procurement, providing exceptional customer experiences and managing HNIs.

Lola has fittingly been able to navigate the corporate

world as an icon after acquiring various degrees and certificates from universities across the globe.

Her journey into the world of intellectualism and knowledge spans from UK to Ghana, where she got various degrees in events management, cosmetology and business management, all of those after Queens College, Yaba, Lagos which she attended for her secondary education.

For her professional education, she studied Leadership Essentials, strategies for leadership and business growth strategies from IMD, Switzerland, and Disruptive Strategy from Harvard Business School.



TOLULOPE medebem

AN UNSTOPPABLE EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING CZAR

Mrs. Tolulope Apinke Medebem, is the Founder and Head, Aster Integrated Marketing Limited (AIML) – a leading agency in the experiential marketing sub-sector of the marketing communications industry in Nigeria offering services across brand management and strategy, activations and events management all poised to deliver excellent experiences to the target consumer.

She has the rare honour

of being one of the pioneer females in this sector, having perfected her skills and competence since the inception of this marketing communication genre especially in the booming Nigeria space. With almost two decades of vast and varied experience spanning Experiential Marketing, Event Management, Brand Management and Marketing, Tolulope, as she is popularly called, has been central to the success of many campaigns on behalf of top-notch clients.

As Lead at AIML, this professional cum entrepreneurial Amazon is responsible for ensuring the development and deployment of outstanding experiential marketing solutions for a wide spectrum of private and public sector clients. Her results by virtue of the great strides in the marketing space speaks volumes about her competence and capacity both as a leader and as a marketing business owner. The firm's Client base boasts of both local and international

product and corporate brands in several sectors covering Telecommunications, FMCG, Finance among others. The firm also partners occasionally with other creative agencies to provide the experiential touch that oftentimes, makes the difference.

This prodigious Amazon's career experience runs through several top-notch Experiential/ Through the Line Agencies such as Brand Footprint Communications, FKG2 (Troyka Group) and Miss Commonwealth Organization.



Tolulope has also worked on the clients' side. She served as Consumer Development and Marketing Manager, Dansa Foods Limited, a subsidiary of Dangote Group.

Worthy of mention is the fact that in Tolulope's career trajectory, she worked on various accounts, including MTN, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Multichoice, M-Net & SuperSports, Miss Commonwealth (Nigeria & International), V-Mobile and Zain (now Airtel), Procter & Gamble (P&G), British American Tobacco (BAT), First Inland Bank, Intercontinental Bank, Dansa Foods, among other brands.

Similarly in her early career days, she had a stint in broadcasting, working with AIT, M-Net New Directions and UNFPA, Klink Studios, etc.

All of these have set her apart as an authority in the world of integrated marketing communications as she is able to draw from various experiences and executions to provide insights and solutions in the field both from client and agency side, media appropriateness and buying and other related fields.

Tolulope is well read. She obtained her first degree

in Dramatic Arts from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Consultants, an Associate of the Advertisers Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), a full-fledged member of the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIMN), as well as other sectorial/industry associations.

It is still to Tolulope's credit that she remains a leading member of the Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) where she was recently in a historical landmark event, elected as the first female president of the body after having served as the body's first female vice-president for two consecutive tenures. By means of this office, she has also been able to sufficiently contribute to the body of experiential marketing in Nigeria and consistently paving the way for increased diversity and inclusion in the world of marketing. She is also a life member of WIMBIZ (Women In Management, Business and Public Service), a non-profit organization focused on increasing and supporting the success of fellow women in the business

and management sectors in Nigeria.

For a woman whose passion for more knowledge is limitless, it is not strange that Tolulope has also attended many development programmes in diverse areas.

A 2014 Cohort graduate of China European International Business School (CEIBS)/WELA Programme, Tolulope currently serves as a Council member of the CEIBS Nigeria Alumni Body as well as Chairperson CEIBS Alumni, Nigeria Chapter's Editorial Board.

She was again one of 500 women selected to pioneer the EDC/Cherie Blair Foundation Road to Women's Business Growth programme in 2016, being an alumnus of the same Road to Growth programme.

In 2018, Tolulope became a facilitator for LSETF after undergoing training with Lagos Business School (LBS). She's also a UNIDO/HP certified trainer, currently volunteering with Lagos State as a facilitator for the RSW (ReadySetWork) programme.

As should be expected of a woman of her status, stature and records, Tolulope is not new to being accorded due recognition, accolades and awards for her great strides and outstanding performances in various spheres of human endeavor but even more importantly in the integrated marketing communications industry.

She was WIMCA's Female Experiential Marketing Professional of the Year 2018. In 2020, she was named as one of Top 50 Women in Marketing and Communications. She was honored as one of Africa Woman's Leaders in 2020 by World Women Leadership Congress as well as MARKETING EDGE's Outstanding Experiential Personality of the Year 2020. In 2021, she was honored as WIMCA's Female Experiential Marketing Professional of the Year.

In the same vein, in 2022, Tolulope was celebrated as one of WIMCA 2021's

Top 50 Most Influential Women in Marketing and Communications in Nigeria. Her agency, AsterIML also recently won two bronze medals at the 2023 Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria Awards gala.

She also currently serves as an inaugural faculty member of the ExperientialNG Marketing Academy (the first duly accredited certification programme in Events and Experiential Marketing for Nigeria and West Africa).

An unrepentant and restless entrepreneur with so many irons in the fire, including an internet radio – BoomRadio.ng – and a couple of other business enterprises, T.A.M (as she's fondly called by friends and close associates) also volunteers with the ACT Foundation with her marketing communications expertise as well as The Slum2School project where she serves with the Stakeholders and Partnership Unit.

Her other Social/Volunteer Initiatives include: Creator and Presenter of BantzwitTee, a social initiative on Mental Wellbeing. BantzwitTee is a mental wellness podcast where everything relating to mental well-being is discussed at www.bantzwittee.com; also available on all podcast distribution channels and as blog articles.

She is also Founder/Mentor of Nurture to Nature - a Youth Enablement Movement. She is particularly passionate about the youths and always seeks to understand them and relate to the present generation with the past while mentoring them for the future ahead of them. Her love for developing young talent is a testament to her passion and tenacity.

Despite her heavy work schedule, T.A.M is a fitness enthusiast whose workout sessions are an inspiration for healthy living.

Tolulope who is an avid traveler, enjoys reading good books and listening to fine music. She is happily married with three lovely daughters..

SANDRA amachree:

AN ICON GIFTED WITH MULTIPLE COMPETENCES

Sandra Amachree is currently the Head of Marketing Communications at Nigerian Breweries Plc. In this role, she has the responsibility to drive ambitious and innovative brand communication initiatives across the full portfolio of 21+ NB brands. She also provides oversight Media Excellence management for two West African Countries within the HEINEKEN International Group.

She has been most instrumental in re-shaping the media capabilities of the Africa, Middle East and Eastern Europe (AMEE) region in raising the floor and the ceiling with the successful launch and roll-out of the AMEE media hub, providing media excellence practices for other West African OpCo's in HEINEKEN. She drove the implementation of the first marketing mix modelling study in the AMEE region with key objective to fully optimise media investments as a critical driver of business success, while delivering positive ROI on media investment in line with HEINEKEN's media principles and agenda to transform brand building.

Under her, she oversaw the merging of Media, Brand PR and Sponsorships under one umbrella of Marketing Communications. Next to this, she transformed the role of Brand PR in the marketing mix with key focus on impactful brand storytelling, increasing brand awareness and ensuring year on year Share of Voice growth, as one of the growth engines for brand power. This has been delivered through her passion for working and winning with teams.

Dedicated to the development of Marketing in Nigeria, its intersection with business growth and positive impact on society, Amachree serves as the first female Chairperson of the Lagos Mainland Chapter of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria(NIMN).

Sandra has also had a successful cross-functional career working in other capacities like Sales and Human Resources, which has equipped her with the wealth of knowledge and expertise required to lead business transformation agendas,



drive business success through innovation, collaboration, and a focus on delivering impactful results.

Among her achievements while in Human Resources, Sandra supported HEINEKEN South Africa to become a full-fledged OpCo with the successful implementation of Project SWORDFISH in 2016. During this time, Amachree managed the successful people separation from the HEINEKEN-Diageo joint venture

(BRANDHOUSE) and setup of the new organization, recruiting key positions and establishing end-to-end HR capabilities in building the foundation of a future-fit organization.

She earned her Masters of Business Administration from the Pan Atlantic University and enjoys spending her free time playing lawn tennis and golf.

LAURA oloyede

A PROFESSIONAL OF IMMENSE ABILITY DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH

Known for operational excellence and business profitability,

Laura Oloyede (popularly known as LO) has built a track record for herself, having functioned in the capacity of GM/COO of top leading PR agencies in Nigeria.

Currently, she is the General Manager/Chief Operating Officer of Mediacraft Associates Limited, one of Nigeria's leading Public Relations consultancy firms, and the exclusive Nigeria affiliate of the FleishmanHillard global PR network.

In a career spanning about 25 years, Laura has extensive integrated marketing communications experience and has held various job roles on both client and agency sides.

Her strengths include brand management, corporate communications, brand positioning, reputation management, stakeholder management, brand and marketing PR, and crisis communications management.

Laura was once the Vice President, Marketing and Communications at Lekki Concession Company (LCC), a Spokesperson for Ford Motors across Sub-Saharan Africa and a former Communications Director for a Presidential Candidate during the 2019 Presidential campaigns.

In her earlier years, Oloyede worked for and managed some of the leading multinational companies across different economic sectors, including Financial Services, FMCG, Oil &



Gas, Automobile, Aviation, Telecoms, and Entertainment. She has led the strategic communications drive for Coca-Cola, Ford Motors, Old Mutual, Nigerian Breweries, Multichoice, Peugeot, and StarTimes, among others.

At Mediacraft Associates, Laura has oversight on high-profile clients, including Stanbic IBTC Group, USSEC

(US Soybean Export Council), RTP, Interswitch Group, Olam Group, Sahara and others.

Laura holds a first degree in Estate Management from the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, and a post-graduate Diploma in Marketing from the University of Liverpool, UK.

She is an Associate Member of the Nigerian

Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), and Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON).

She also has extensive communications, marketing and leadership experience in the marketing communications industry, and has demonstrated in words and deeds her ability to drive business growth.

EUNICE braimah

AN EPITOME OF VERSATILITY



A Marketing Professional extraordinaire aptly fits the description of Eunice Braimah. She is also a powerhouse in Business Integrated Marketing Communications and Mentorship

An innovative and strategic thinker with a passion for excellence and top notch delivery, Braimah is an astute professional. She is career driven, hardworking, smart thinker, goal getter and an all-round business woman with diverse interests.

She carved a niche for herself in the marketing industry where others dread to go, multi versatile in approach; strong believer in 'you can have the best of your worlds if so desired.' Despite the challenges,

discouragements, and barriers faced, she rose through the ranks amidst different setbacks to the peak of her career and refused to be deterred from the pursuit of her dreams to be a formidable and unstoppable force to be reckoned with in the Marketing sector. The setbacks were actually a trajectory for her in the right direction.

A staunch believer in mentoring and growing younger professionals to ensure the sustainability of quality talents in the industry, with the determination to impact the marketing industry and society at large, 'Malle' as she is fondly called by many in the industry, paved opportunities and mentors other marketing professionals.

Young professionals look

up to her and believe that if she can do it, they will someday do it as well. Known for her innovative and creative approach to achieve better work life balances, she has a deep passion for mentoring and coaching women, and this is evident in the lives she has impacted positively. Her guidance, inspiration, and advice have helped numerous women achieve their dreams.

Having worked with foremost marketing agencies in Africa and Fortune 500 brands, she has also led teams on Business Development & Management, Integrated Marketing Communications, Brand Strategy Management, Digital Marketing, Stakeholder's Management, Social Marketing, Project Management and Trade Marketing among others.

A successful business professional with a wealth of experience spanning over two decades in the Integrated Marketing sector, a track record of growing businesses across climes with a strong knack for driving business processes, she has developed business modules for brands, providing both the overarching and implementation strategies for their route to market. She has successfully launched and managed various businesses, including hers, as well as tackling the challenges in the business terrain...

She is presently building a conglomerate which she believes will transcend her in the Integrated Marketing Communications Industry. As the CEO of a fast growing Integrated Marketing Agency in Nigeria, 'Ideazqution Consulting' called **IQ** for short, Braimah has spearheaded numerous successful marketing campaigns not just in Nigeria but beyond the country's borders. Her profound understanding of the African market has earned her a reputation in the industry and many accolades. She is sought

after in several industries.

Diversity and inclusion in the workplace is a norm with Braimah, and she has implemented policies in her company to promote equality and respect. She sets a positive example for others to follow.

Eunice Braimah is a member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), and a thought leader in the marketing industry. Her multi-industry expertise and leadership skills are remarkable as she has vast experiences in the Multi-Sector and Multi-Industry spanning FMCG, Tobacco, Telco, Automobile, Oil & Gas, Fintech, Finance & Banking, Pharmaceuticals, and NGO.

She has consulted for many brands, managing Digital Marketing, Experiential Marketing, ATL, Social Marketing/ Behavioural Change, PR, Brand audits and Insight driven initiatives across global and local brands.

The marketing mogul is deeply passionate about mentoring and coaching, impacting values, professional etiquette, and global best practices across the board.

Known for her tenacity, doggedness, hard work with her high energy, and positive attitude; she is gifted with the uncanny ability to get things done. She remains a process driver to the core.

With a first Degree in Mass Communications and second Degree in Marketing from the prestigious Federal Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State and University of Lagos respectively, this IMC expert believes that if she could grow and still growing the businesses of other brands across climes, then why not her string of businesses; hence she is set to expand her business frontiers beyond the shores of Nigeria.

She presently has a growing community on Meta and Twitter where she shares business tips and marketing hacks for SME's CEO's and Small Business owners and she is set to launch a CareerPreneur series for young women.

🌟 In her words, the decision to stop can only come from me. I will continue to break through the business biases that come with you being a woman in a man's world

CHERRY eromosele

A REVOLUTIONARY ON THE GLOBAL MARKETING LANDSCAPE



Cherry Eromosele (Dr.) is currently the Executive Vice President, Marketing and Communications for Africa at Interswitch Group. In this capacity, her remit includes providing leadership and oversight for all key marketing and communications disciplines across Africa, where Interswitch possesses extensive footprints.

An award-winning marketing professional with cross-sectoral experience, her revolutionary approach to marketing has transformed its practice in the Nigerian fintech space, earning her the recognition as one of the Global Top 100 B2B Marketing Leaders in Technology for two consecutive years – 2021 and 2022,

In leading Interswitch Group's Marketing & Communications function,

Eromosele is a member of the senior leadership team of the Interswitch Group, bringing to bear a creative vision, understanding of company values, and business leadership skills to ensure brand differentiation/equity, market leadership and return on marketing investment.

She is a dynamic and performance-driven professional with 25+ years of versatile, multi-industry functional and leadership experience. She has also distinguished herself professionally with a proven track record of success in product and marketing innovation, with deep experience spanning FMCG (alcoholic beverages), telecommunications, fast-moving consumer healthcare and most recently fintech/e-payments across key African markets.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree in

Biological Sciences Education from the University of Benin and has attended executive functional, leadership and management programmes from Cranfield School of Management, Columbia Business School, Wharton Business School, Kellogg Business School (Northwestern University) as well as the Oxford Fintech Programme at Said Business School.

She has equally demonstrated a consistent ability to deliver exceptional results when crossing into new terrains and is reputed as having contributed significantly to the changing face of marketing in Nigeria. She was recognized in 2015 as Marketing Personality of the Year in Nigeria by MARKETING EDGE and more recently, as one of the top 50 Marketing Professionals in West Africa at the 7th edition of the annual Marketing World Awards in Accra, Ghana (2019). In 2020, she was also awarded the Most Outstanding Marketing Professional of the Year award (Financial Technology Category) at Women in Marketing & Communications Conference/Awards (WIMCA). For two consecutive years, 2021 and 2022, Eromosele was named among the Global Top 100 Marketing Leaders in Technology by Hot Topics.

She is deeply passionate about individual social responsibility as a means of making impact on one's immediate and expanded communities, being extensively involved in mentoring and finding ways to give back through charitable causes. She is also particularly enthused about female empowerment and girl child development and advocacy.

In May 2023, she was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Business Administration by Prowess University, Delaware, USA.

She was also recently recognized as one of the #100 Most Inspiring Women in Nigeria by 'Leading Ladies Africa', a compendium honouring phenomenal Nigerian women (both home and abroad) making a difference and bringing value to their respective spheres of influence and to the wider world.

TOSIN adefeko

GAME CHANGER AT AT3 RESOURCES

Tosin Adefeko is a corporate executive and entrepreneur with over 25 years multi-sectoral experience in Nigeria. She has led and delivered outstanding business results in financial services, print/broadcast media and marketing communications industries.

She is Founder/CEO, AT3 Resources Limited, an award-winning specialized consultancy focused on enhancing the productivity of key clientele which include global corporates like META (Facebook), local conglomerates like NIBSS and influential private clients using strategic communications. The multi-disciplinary consultants at AT3 Resources are the go to specialists for public relations, media

interventions and special events. Tosin's unique background straddles multinational and growing local commercial business contexts. Apart from her business development and relationship management expertise derived from frontline roles in major industries, she has built very strong networks in the public and private sector, engaging at board level whilst serving in key operational capacities.

She increasingly derives personal fulfillment working on impactful social investment projects with a number of not-for-profit organizations.

She is very passionate about gender inclusion/equality and female empowerment; as a LIFE member of Women in Management & Business, (WIMBIZ) - the foremost NGO for women in sub-Saharan Africa, she actively serves on a number of committees and has chaired the communications committee of the annual conference for three consecutive years, including the recent milestone 20th anniversary. Concurrently, she has also served for three years as Chair, Communications of the Central Organizing Committee for the Nigerian Economic Summit Group's (NESG) annual summit and Co-Chair, Joint Planning Committee with the Federal Ministry of Finance and Budget.

Over the last decade, Tosin has dedicated her work life to helping brands thrive in this 'Always On' world. Her work on META, Coca-Cola, Procter and Gamble, Guinness, Microsoft, Etisalat, British Airways, Ford, Radisson Blu and many others too numerous to mention haven't gone unnoticed.

Under her leadership, AT3 Resources

is already a gold fish in its corporate calling as a strategic communications and events consultancy which has chalked up incredible records of achievements in its service areas of Public Relations (PR) Consultancy (Corporate Communications;



Crisis Communications; Stakeholder Engagement; Digital & Social Media PR); Events Consultancy (Strategy, Planning, Execution); and Media Consultancy (Online & Offline Media relations, Advocacy & Engagement, Media Training, Listening & Monitoring).

Some of the very notable works done by the agency are: Ideation & Strategy Development for Brand Impact & Reputation Management in Anglophone West Africa for Facebook; Flex Naija; Creator's Day Nigeria; XR Exhibition; Launch of Amber Alert Program; Made By Africa, Loved By The World; Ramadan #MonthOfGood; Meta #NoFalseNewsZone Ghana Campaign; Meta #StaySafeOnInstagram Campaign; and Meta #Facebook Creators Campaign, just to mention a few.

In commemoration of its fifth anniversary, and in tune with its belief that SMEs are the lifeblood of Nigeria's economy; coupled with its desire is to lend support within its core expertise, AT3 Resources recently organized what it termed The AT3 Digital Marketing Bootcamp. The Bootcamp was designed to empower SMEs to seize the growth opportunities presented

by the digital media era.

At the end of the one-week programme, AT3 Resources armed selected participants with knowledge, which if deployed judiciously, would leave them well positioned in the minds of their target audience. With theme: 'Leveraging Possibilities for SMEs in the Digital Age,' the programme focused on realtime guidance around the best digital marketing tactics & strategies from leading industry experts who support SMEs in their quest to actualize their full potential in general but specifically shape how they connect with their target audiences.

As an icing on the cake, there also were accomplished entrepreneurs and business leaders who played cameo roles to share their personal 'Key to success' nuggets with the participants.

Little wonder that the agency has bagged several awards for its great strides, exemplary performance and outstanding results. These include, but are not limited to SABRE Certificate of Excellence – Public Education – META with AT3 Resources; Outstanding Young PR Agency of the Year, 2021 by Brand Communicator; and Outstanding Young PR Agency of the Year, 2022 by MARKETING EDGE.

And, on her part, Tosin was recently listed as one of the 'Top 50 women in Marketing communications by Brand Communicator magazine; Leading Ladies Africa 100 Most Inspiring Women 2022; and Top 50 Most Influential Women in Marketing & Communications – (WIMCA), among many others. She is a member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Chartered Institute of Public Relations UK (CIPR); and an Associate Member Institute of Directors (AmIoD).

A woman of many parts, she is also Life Member, Women in Management & Business (WIMBIZ); President, Ausso Leadership Academy Alumni Association; Board Member, Fortress Microfinance Bank; Lead, Media & Publicity Committee WIMBIZ Annual Conference 2019, 2020 & 2021; Member, Media & Publicity NESG 25th Annual Conference 2019; Co-Chair, Communications Joint Planning Committee NESG 26th, 27th & 28th Annual Conference 2020, 2021 & 2022; Chair Communications Central Organizing Committee NESG 26th, 27th & 28th Annual Conference 2020, 2021 & 2022; Mentor, WIMBIZ Big Sister Program – Youth Development; and Mentor, ACT Foundation program. She is an ardent follower of Media/Urban trends/Current Affairs; Health & Wellness, Travel. This professional and entrepreneurial Amazon describes herself as dogged, focused and resolute in pursuance of her goals. She is married to Ade and they have three lovely kids. Her Social Media Handles are Instagram - @at3tosh; Twitter – @Toshat3;

**OUTSTANDING
PROFESSIONALS**

+

BRANDS TO
WATCH

SERIES TWO

Olalekan Fadolapo: An accomplished technocraft



Without any equivocation, Dr Olalekan Olumuyiwa Fadolapo's curriculum vitae tells a verifiable story of a man who has made remarkable impacts both in the academia and professional circles.

An erudite scholar and thoroughbred professional, Dr. Fadolapo has also journeyed through the academic and corporate world with the sure-footedness of a giant.

Undoubtedly, he knew early enough that knowledge is power and sought that time-tested virtue with a fanatical zeal.

No wonder, he holds degrees in diverse fields and capped his academic feat with a doctorate certificate.

Take a second studied glance at Dr. Fadolapo's academic accomplishments and you can rightly describe him as an intellectual prodigy: Fadolapo attended Ogun State University for his first degree in Economics. He also holds three Master's degrees: Master of Science in Marketing, (MSc.); Master in Business Administration (MBA) and Master in Legal Studies (MILS) from the Babcock University, Illisan, Ogun State, the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State and the Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos respectively.

He also holds a PhD in Marketing with specialization in Marketing Communications from the Babcock University, Illisan Remo, Ogun State.

Though armed with a sea of academic

laurels, yet Dr. Fadolapo never rested on his oars as he ventured into the core professional space, acquiring to his kitty highly coveted certificates and awards.

For instance, he is a Registered Advertising Practitioner, a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and also a Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN).

With his academic and professional accomplishments, Fadolapo was soon discovered in his professional circles as a rare gem and an asset of inestimable value.

He became a member of the Governing Council of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) for several years and was a Member of the Executive Committee of Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups (HASG). He also served as Secretary to some advertising industry organizations and bodies which include: AAAN Executive Board and later its Board of Trustees.

He was also the Secretary to LAIF Management Board; Board of Directors, Advertising Academy; Inter-media Study Group of HASG; others are Secretary of Advertising Industry Reform Committee of APCON; International Advertising Association (IAA) Nigeria Chapter.

Dr. Fadolapo was also a member of the APCON Special Committee On Media Debt Issues (ASCOMDI), a committee set up by APCON to resolve the industry's debt issue.

He also served as a member of the Advertising Practitioners Investigative Panel (APIP), was Vice Chairman of APCON Finance & Administrative Committee, and Chairman of APCON Corporate Licensing Administrative Enforcement Committee (CLAEC).

He was also the Chief Examiner for APCON Professional Examination, and an ICAN Examiner for several years.

With over 25 years in the advertising industry, Fadolapo has served the sector in different and various capacities before he was appointed the fourth substantive Registrar/Chief Executive of APCON. And, following the repeal of the APCON law and the enactment of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), Dr. Fadolapo became the pioneer Director General of ARCON.

He is a recipient of many awards, and has facilitated several seminars, conferences and symposia. Dr. Fadolapo is married with children.



Israel Obatunde: An iconic professional on familiar turf

Judging from his robust credentials and professional accomplishments, Israel Oluyomi Obatunde, Founder and CEO of Ideas Origin Media, is an iconic personality and outstanding leader in the creative industry.

Undoubtedly, Obatunde's brain child, Ideas Origin Media, is a fast-expanding creative agency that has not only etched its name in gold but has earned enviable reputation for delivering exceptional advertising services to renowned clientele.

With more than a decade of experience, Obatunde has consistently paved the way for the success of numerous brands. His all-encompassing knowledge of the advertising business spreads across various domains, including creative development,

brand management, and strategic planning. Admirably, he has a profound passion for scriptwriting and strategy development while also demonstrating unequalled expertise in art direction.

Notable global and local brands, including Jack Daniel's, Jameson, Facebook, DSTv, Pepsi/SBC, Access Bank, Etisalat/9mobile, Globacom, BetKING, Suntrust, Kimberly-Clark, Coca Cola, and Mondelez, have all benefited from Obatunde's creative genius, art direction, scriptwriting, and strategic expertise.

Israel who attributes the rapid growth of Ideas Origin Media to the wealth of experience he gained while working for top notch advertising agencies. According to him, the valuable background shaped his

desire to enhance his strategic capabilities as a creative professional, leading him to pursue further education in strategy and planning at the esteemed Miami Ad School.

It is on record that Obatunde graduated as one of the top performers in his class and his achievements were recognized.

For instance, in 2021, he was selected to deliver a compelling talk at a strategy boot camp for aspiring students from various fields who were interested in joining the Miami Ad School.

More commendably, during his career at Insight Redefini, he left an indelible mark via his creative involvement in the highly acclaimed Pepsi Max Am campaign visuals. That ground-breaking campaign showcased the talents of top Nigerian artists such as Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage, Wizkid, Davido, among others.

Driven by his ceaseless passion for creativity, Obatunde set up a virtual ad agency, thereby pioneering an out-of-the-norm innovation within Nigeria. This innovative endeavour consolidates his commitment to expanding frontiers and continually shaping the advertising landscape.

And as a way of giving back to an industry that shaped his career, he remains dedicated to nurturing the next generation of advertising professionals.

His commitment to this lofty cause is evident in his offering of scholarship to a student at O2 Academy, Ogudu, Lagos; and employing an outstanding graduate of the O2 Academy who exhibits immense promise for the future.

As Ideas Origin Media's vision expanded, the agency commemorated its official launch in August 2022 with the establishment of a work station in Ikeja, Lagos. The work station serves as the creative home where Obatunde and his team create original and impactful brand-consumer connections, making a significant difference in the industry.

He also derives immense fulfillment from his role in the advertising industry. And like a prophet who is not without honours, this debonair adman's outstanding achievements have earned him widespread accolades and recognition on both local and international scenes. His works have been celebrated by prestigious platforms such as Lürzer's Archive, the New York Festival, Loeries, the African Cristal, and the LAIF Awards. These recognitions attest to his unwavering commitment to originality and his holistic approach to resolving communication challenges. These well-deserved recognitions serve as enduring testimonials to Obatunde's passion and unwavering dedication to creativity and excellence in the advertising industry.

Rajat Kapur: A thoroughbred leader as Henkel's helmsman

Rajat Kapur, an Indian, is the Chairman and Managing Director of Henkel Nigeria, a German multinational with industrial and consumer businesses that operate globally with a well-balanced and diversified portfolio.

It is beyond contention that Kapur who has a double Masters in Business Administration and Economics and whose professional career spans over 24 years, is eminently suited for the very challenging job of leading such an international company in Nigeria.

Kapur joined Henkel in 2009 and progressed to become Chairman and Managing Director of Henkel Nigeria in 2017. Over the years, he had held various management positions.

He was instrumental to the 2016 acquisition of Expand Global Industries Limited – a local Nigerian subsidiary of Henkel.

Under his capable leadership, Henkel Nigeria has grown tremendously in product development, distribution and customer service. The company's brands include WAW and Nittol, both of which are market leaders in their categories.

Henkel is reputed for providing thousands of jobs across the country with over 5,000 direct and indirect jobs through an extensive local distributor's network. The firm also generates direct employment for more than 1,000 people in its Ibadan plant.

No doubt, the company is living out its mission, "To be a strong contributor to the Nigerian economy, with the ultimate goal to produce for Nigerians by Nigerians".

Kapur, the firm's helmsman, religiously believes in creating a workplace culture that is anchored on diversity, equity, and inclusion, which he equates to the team's ability to produce exceptional results.

He is also a team leader when it comes to skills development both within the organisation and with future talents. He supports Henkel's 12-month internship programme with an intake of two batches of graduates annually.

Kapur, along with his leadership team, identify specific business needs and work closely with pre-identified tertiary institutions to select only top talents



who meet Henkel's various role criteria. Potential candidates go through a rigorous recruitment process, which includes interviews with local Henkel ExCom members. Once successful, interns are provided with a structured programme including regular progress reviews and performance assessments.

The internship provides a platform for these graduates to receive critical business experience, as well as an opportunity to work for Henkel once their 12-month programme is completed.

Beyond the company's business disposition, Kapur in consonance with the firm's ambition, places high premium on creating long-term sustainable commitment to social involvement and empowering local talents. He was a main

supporter of the implementation of the Street Smart Entrepreneur programme, which is designed to take unemployed youths and provide them with the necessary skills to become self-sustaining entrepreneurs of Henkel's products – while developing the economy and communities at the same time.

The initiative came about as a means to contribute to human capital development through entrepreneurial skills training, and also job creation by empowering youths with the tools for business. The training includes classroom and field lessons in branding, book keeping, trading, and other skills necessary to make them self-reliant and successful in life.

Under Kapur's able leadership, Henkel also launched the first Researchers' World

in Africa.

This is an international educational initiative designed by Henkel to introduce children into the fascinating world of science.

Since its inauguration at Henkel's Düsseldorf headquarters in April 2011, around 95,000 children around the world have taken part in Henkel's Forscherwelt programmes.

Commendably, Henkel aims to enhance its positive social impact on communities by mobilizing its employees who have been trained as sustainability ambassadors.

In Nigeria, Kapur promotes such initiatives through brand activations and partnerships. One such way is through the brand Nittol, where they have partnered with Miss Earth to promote the proper care of the environment. Through this partnership, the company is involved in initiatives such as tree planting and much needed community clean-ups.

The leadership team in Nigeria also works closely with the German Embassy in Nigeria to identify areas where together, they can work with other German companies to promote economic growth and sustainable activities for the better of the entire country.

Henkel's sustainability efforts can also be seen in the various awards which the company has received from both industries as well as consumers alike. Such awards include Africa's Best World Cass Quality anti-Bacterial Detergent of The Year 2023 certified by the World Quality Alliance; the Brand Innovator and Customer Value Award. Othes are the West Africa Brands Excellence Awards 2023; the Peace Legend Award – as one of 100 Brands Transforming Africa; Most Preferred Powder Detergent Brand of the Year 2023, organized by the Nigeria Quality Summit (NQS); and the Brandcom Awards – Detergent of the Year, 2020.

Jude Odia: An exceptional strategist

Jude Odia is the Managing Director of Starcom Media Perspectives. He is an astute IMC strategist with 260-degree work experience across client and agency divides. His vast experience has exposed him to best-in-class brand management, strategy and media operational models from leading global media networks.

Prior to Starcom Media Perspectives, he has held several leadership roles across brands which include, sitting as the Group Head, Brand Management, at FinBank PLC, where he handled the Re-branding of First Inland to FinBank in 2008, developed FinBank Brand Communication Strategy for 2009 and managed the Implementation of the Brand Communication Strategy across Corporate & Retail Products in 2009 and other several functions.

Odia was also Head, Strategy & Planning, MediaCapital. There, he led as agency Lead Media Strategist & Account Manager, while handling the MTN Media Budget Planning & Buying Strategies/Implementation 2007 – 2008.

His impressive beginning in 2001 saw the start of his illustrious career as a TV Presenter & Team Co-ordinator at Minaj Broadcast International where blazed as a Content & Research Executive, together with other several roles.

Odia's career covers a wide spectrum of industries having worked on multinational clients like P&G, Coca-Cola, MTN, VISA, Samsung, Mondelez, etc., working with regional account management teams across West Africa. The marketing expert has successfully carried out numerous high-profile campaigns in several industries, such as championing and coordinating winning integrated media campaigns across these leading brands circle.

He led the Starcom team that locally operationalized



SMG connection planning framework HX, the first successful attempt in West Africa. This effort and many others helped in positioning Starcom Nigeria as the go-to operational hub for the network across the region.

With great passion for industry upliftment, the MD of Starcom Media Perspectives has facilitated at various professional fora, locally and globally. He was one of Nigeria's top IMC professionals invited to the 2018 EMEA Emerging Executive summit organized by Google at its global HQ in California, USA. Odia believes that brain-power and knowledge sharing are critical in achieving a better world. His endearing personae has won him several friends in the IMC and beyond.

He is one of Nigeria's marketing communications finest thought leaders. As an advertising veteran with decades of work, he has been

able to develop winning media strategies for multinational/local brands in Nigeria and across the West African markets. With an enviable pool of inspiring talent and exposure to the best of tech and trends, he has coordinated the WA account management teams that implemented many successful media advertising campaigns for leading multinational clients. Odia is a great team player and a passionate manager of people and resources.

With a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the University of Bradford, United Kingdom. Odia also attended Senior Management Program, Business Strategy, HRC, Leadership, Management, Globalization courses from the Lagos Business School. As a registered practitioner, he is an Associate member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, ARCON.

John Ehiguese: A PR guru with robust experience

John E. Ehiguese (popularly known as JE) is the Founder/CEO of Mediacraft Associates, one of Nigeria's leading Public Relations (PR) consultancy firms, and the exclusive Nigeria affiliate of the FleishmanHillard global PR network.

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

In a career spanning over 30 years, Ehiguese has garnered extensive cross-functional experience in Marketing, Broadcasting, Advertising and Public Relations.

Under his leadership, Mediacraft Associates has worked with several high-profile clients, including: Stanbic IBTC Group, USSEC (US Soybean Export Council), Interswitch Group, Olam Group, Truecaller, Mastercard, Western Union, Sanofi (a global French pharmaceutical giant), ExxonMobil, Nigerian Breweries Plc (a Heineken company) and AVON HMO.

Ehiguese holds an MBA from the Lagos Business School of the Pan Atlantic University, Lagos (2004). In 2013, he obtained a Certificate in Leadership And Governance in Media & Communications (LGMC) from the School of Media & Communications (SMC) of the Pan Atlantic University (PAU). He is also an alumnus of the IESE Business School, University of Navarra, Barcelona, Spain and the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.

He is a Member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), The Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), the PRCA (UK), a Fellow of the African PR Association (APRA) and a Board Member of The International Communications Consultancy Organization (ICCO).

Ehiguese is also the immediate



past President of the Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN), the umbrella body of practicing PR consultancy firms in Nigeria.

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

2021, and was inducted into The MARKETING EDGE Hall of Fame (PR) in 2022. He also received the 2022 Industry STAR Award, formerly The Industry Lifetime Award, in the Public Relations category.

Ehiguese was recently appointed the Chairman of the Training & Education Committee of the Lagos State Chapter of NIPR.

Andrew Hanlon: The turnaround strategist at TVC

Andrew Hanlon is the Managing Director/CEO of TVC Communications (formerly Continental Broadcasting Services), one of the largest privately owned and operated national terrestrial TV and radio broadcast companies in Nigeria.

The iconic broadcast media company operates terrestrial FM radio and TV stations throughout Nigeria and beyond, on cable and satellite with a daily audience of 10 million people throughout the Federal Republic.

Since he got in the saddle at TVC Communications in 2017, he has led his team to turn around the fortunes for the company in terms of personnel, infrastructure, technology, programming, branding and even marketing.

Under his visionary leadership, TVC Communications hit the 10million listeners and viewers mark across its platforms earlier, this year.

The company has deservedly risen in corporate stature and



brand equity; and has won numerous awards and recognitions within the period. Among such awards is the Television Station of the Year by the Nigerian Media Merit Award, NMMA and **MARKETING EDGE's** Innovative Young Radio Station of the Year for its MAX 102.3FM and Outstanding Television Station of the Year for TVC News.

Uwem Afanide: An experienced process, people's manager



Uwem Afanide was recently announced as the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of All Seasons Zenith, one of the top advertising media agencies in Nigeria and part of Publicis Media global network of agencies.

Notably, Afanide has been in the advertising media industry for about 2 decades and has over the years demonstrated his operational and leadership qualities across the agencies he has worked. He started his career as a media research and strategy executive at MediaReach OMD where he rose to become a manager. He later on had a stint as a Group Head, Media Strategy at Centrespread FCB before returning to OMD where he was posted to Ghana as the first ever country manager, OMD Ghana. He joined the then All Seasons Mediacom in 2018 as Assistant GM, Strategy and Planning and rose to become GM/COO and now sits as the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the company, now known as All Seasons Zenith Limited.

Uwem is a seasoned marketing and advertising expert with an unwavering dedication to excellence. With his rich experience in leadership roles, he has also, along the line, built exceptional operational skills in marketing strategy, digital marketing, media buying, marketing communications, and client relationship management.

His extensive experience in media and advertising, spanning over two decades, has equipped him with a deep understanding of the technological tools and insights necessary for businesses to thrive and fulfill their brand promises.

He is an alumnus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), where he laid the foundation for his successful career in the marketing and advertising industry. His educational background, combined with his extensive professional experience, has shaped him into a well-rounded and accomplished industry professional. All Seasons Zenith is an audience focused advertising media company supported by over 600 brilliant experts – working across 95 markets globally.

Uduak Bassey: Bestriding the OOH landscape with dignity



Uduak Bassey is the founder of Plural Media, one of Nigeria's leading outdoor agencies. The outdoor professional is a visionary and experienced entrepreneur who has built thriving/successful businesses from the ground up particularly in marketing, media and entertainment. He is driven by the passion to contribute innovative, sustainable, long-term, value-adding ideas; adept at trying new things with cheerful optimism, learning new things and an unflinching quest for discovery of how to make life better for his generation.

Before now, he was the Chief Operating Officer of Virtual Technologies Ltd (WorldSpace Direct Media), where he managed a franchise business of Satellite Radio/Targeted Data Subscription and Advertising across W. Africa.

He previously served in the sales and marketing department at Multichoice Nigeria Limited. He was one of the pioneer personnel that implemented MNET's successful introductory communication campaigns ATL/BTL. He ensured the changing of the paradigm from 'free TV viewing' to pay-TV subscription with several compelling communications and marketing strategy implementations as well as the successful launch and positioning of DSTV in the Nigerian market.

The outdoor expert has continuously expressed his

commitment, and he is proud to be changing the learning paradigm in Nigeria working with Veative Labs. Bassey is passionate about the sound education of the Nigerian child and believes it is time to leverage immersive technologies such as VR/AR to stimulate high order thinking and deeper understanding of concepts by students.

To avert the consequence caused by the unprecedented lock down of the COVID pandemic, the managing director in his wisdom to ensure child education is sustained during the pandemic, saw a spike in blended learning and created opportunities for students to combine online, in-person, and tech-enabled offline learning programmes that leverage virtual reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Mixed Reality as a way to embrace the new normal.

Bassey has extended his versatility to becoming a keen author with a yet to be launched book, titled: "Lola and the Broken Ladder: An Immigrant's Journey and Resolve."

The ace marketer also launched a new consumer engagement, "Nexcel iSignage", a software and platform that facilitates audience-engaging and dynamic media displays on TV screens, mobile devices and large format billboards. It is powered by Nexcel Technologies Ltd, a communication technologies solution provider with development partners in Europe and the United States.

The brand builder contends that consistent growth or value creation occurs when the right combination of strategy, cultural values, entrepreneurial mindset, experimental processes, values-based leadership, and people-centric human resource policies combine to enable high employee engagement that results in consistent simultaneous strategic exploitation and exploration.

Plural Media, which Bassey founded was established in July 2006. The iconic OOH agency came into Nigeria's advertising landscape with a clear perceptiveness of challenging the status-quo in the delivery of OOH media communications.

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

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

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

Dozie Mbanefo: An ingenious OOH superman

Prince Dozie Mbanefo is a renowned Out-Of-Home practitioner and Chief Executive Officer of New Crystal Communications Limited, a leading, digitally wired and pace-setting OOH advertising agency; and DLK Oil & Gas Limited.

A trained engineer with impeccable track records of out-standing performances in his chosen field, Mbanefo who has put behind him over two decades of admirable years with exemplary dynamism in the industry is also a proud holder of a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA).

As should be expected of a man of his records and stature, he is a registered member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, (ARCON); he has also been involved in development of data and tools for accessing efficiency of OOH Advertising.

He has garnered a lot of experience working on multinational companies across several sectors and services; as well as government accounts. He has also been involved in development of data and tools for assessing the efficiency of out-of-home Advertising.

New Crystal Communications, the agency which he founded and leads, is a major outdoor advertising company with offices in major cities of Nigeria and advertising coverage reaching all the corners of the country and most West African countries.

Initially established as a printing and public relations company in 1994, the company has risen to become one of the most prominent and influential outdoor advertising companies in the country. In fact, the agency has grown into an Octopus with foot-prints on all paths.

Since its inception as an outdoor advertising company in 1998, New Crystal has quickly risen to lead the market with its innovative approach, introducing a number of world class products and services to the Nigerian market and earning itself a prestigious position within the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN).

With his digital-driven OOH Products dotting the skylines of many Nigerian cities, towns and metropolis, Prince Mbanefo is fast assuming the status of the "KING OF THE AFRICAN OOH".

Gentle, Suave and humane, Mbanefo, an avant-garde professional is one bold and audacious entrepreneur that his generation



has bequeathed to the Nigerian advertising industry and enterprise.

Mbanefo's passion for professionalism and excellence in any task he is committed has almost become an "obsession". For him, enterprise is not only about making money or posting huge financial returns. Rather it is all about value. It is all about impact. And it is all about changing the paradigm, setting new standards and bench-marks while creating value for all stake-holders within the value chain. He is a humanist to the core as he has no space within him for bile or hate. His businesses are populated by exciting, ever-happy employees whose commitment to enterprise is remarkably inspiring and admirable. Mbanefo has uniquely and robustly demonstrated this in his over two decades practice as an OOH advertising professional par excellence! With innovation and creativity at the heart of his drive and endeavours, Mbanefo

continues to set the pace.

He continues to navigate the fortress where even the devils fear to thread. He is bold and audacious. He has guts, grit and intellectual acumen that keep propelling him to higher and enviable heights. As at today, he remains a quintessential OOH practitioner whom all advertisers in the country would like to trust with their brands exposure on the OOH. Yet, he remains loving, humble and affable but extraordinarily outstanding on value creation and addition.

As a distinguished marketing communications professional in Nigeria, his exceptional role in the industry has earned him notable recognitions which include the conferment with the prestigious National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award by President Muhammadu Buhari, and other notable industry awards.

Olawale Adegoke: An advertising prodigy as Nimbus Media's boss



Candidly, it will only take a man in the class of Mr. Olawale Adegoke – urbane, resourceful, proactive, game changer and consummate advertising professional – to sit as the Managing Director/ CEO of a highly innovative company, Nimbus Media Limited, a leading outdoor advertising agency with headquarters in Lagos.

No doubts, Adegoke has with his unique leadership and team spirit been able to deepen the Nimbus Media's mission: "to boost brand discovery and visibility through strategic outdoor advertising in high-traffic locations, captivating audiences and leaving lasting impressions."

It needs be echoed that Adegoke's respected position did not come by mere happenstance or stroke of luck, rather it is a well-earned and much deserved slot for a man who can conveniently be described as an OOH advertising icon.

Also, one does not need to go into the realm of conjecture to discover who Adegoke truly is in the media advertising circle as he represents one of the best in the industry having traversed the entire advertising gambit with remarkable accomplishments.

Adegoke, who has fittingly been described as a modern-day renaissance man, has over a decade of expertise in diverse fields, ranging from media, advertising, technology, construction, real estate, to sports.

As the CEO of Nimbus Media Limited, a pioneering destination out-of-home advertising company in Nigeria, this relentless goal getter is at the forefront of shaping the country's advertising landscape.

Nimbus Media uses its core specialization techniques and strategies to achieve set goals.

Says the agency, "As specialists in destination advertising, we curate advertising media platforms in prime locations such as Ikeja City Mall, Novare Mall Lekki, Festival Mall Festac, Jabi Lake Mall

Abuja, Novare Gateway Abuja, Heritage Mall Ibadan, and Ado-Bayero Mall Kano, among others. Our extensive network ensures your brand reaches the right audience at the right time".

Simultaneously, he co-founded and leads as CEO at LVM Ltd, a technology and sports gaming company based in Lagos, Nigeria.

In today's dynamic world of technological disruption, Adegoke remains an active member of Nigeria's startup and innovation ecosystem. He is also a valued member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and the Institute of Directors of Nigeria (IOD).

No wonder, with his wealth of experience and professionalism, Adegoke has been able to reposition Nimbus Media as a firm of repute.

The company affirms: "At Nimbus, innovation is in our DNA. We continuously invest in cutting-edge technology to deliver seamless experiences to our clients. Our latest offering, Nimbus Interactive, combines the power of Digital Out-of-Home screens with interactive quizzes and polls, engaging audiences like never before".

Continuing, Nimbus Media claims, "Our dedication to growth extends to our clients. We leverage our expertise and partner network to implement campaigns on both third-party OOH platforms and our inventory. With our forthcoming marketplace web app, clients can access multiple platforms, including ours, with ease and convenience".

All of the above makes the agency to state, matter-of-factly that, "Nimbus Media Limited is on a journey to create the most extensive digital out-of-home advertising network in Africa. Our focus remains steadfast—to empower brands and communities through innovative and impactful advertising".

As should be expected of a company of its status and stature, Nimbus Media has, over the years, pioneered remarkable advertising installations and campaigns, collaborating with numerous brands and venues. The company's landmark achievements include:

- . Launch of Nigeria's First Shopping Mall Digital Screen Network at Ikeja City Mall in Lagos (2013)
- . Full Advertising Concession Agreement with UPDC PLC for Festival Mall in Lagos (2015)
- . Hennessy 100th Anniversary Time Barrel Execution at The Palms, Lagos (2015)
- . Full Samsung Mall Branding at Jabi Lake Mall, Abuja (2017)
- . Nationwide Shopping Mall Domination Campaign for YouTube Shorts (2021)
- . Techno Pillar Branding at Ikeja City Mall, Lagos (2022)
- . Nimbus Aid Project—Empowering 10 Women-led Small Businesses with Advertising Grant (2022)

Deeply committed to the growth of Nigerian small businesses, Adegoke spearheads the Nimbus Aid Project—an impactful corporate initiative by Nimbus Media Ltd, supporting SMEs, startups, and NGOs to expand their reach and impact. The Nimbus Aid Project, formerly known as "Nominate A Charity," reflects our commitment to giving back to the community. Yearly Nimbus Media invites community-focused organizations creating impact within their respective industries and communities, to submit applications for a chance of winning millions in advertising support.

Adegoke's driving force also lies in "cultivating shared knowledge that enriches his community's quality of life. Whether through personal or professional pursuits, he embraces a passion for reading, writing, and engaging in philosophical discussions about purpose and the essence of life.

Moreover, this resourceful workaholic still finds solace and inspiration in the power of music and sports, recognizing them as potent forms of self-expression and facilitators of overall wellness.

Serge Noujaim: Giving AIM Group global visibility



No doubts, Serge Noujaim is a top notch professional and leader of extraordinary qualities. And his outstanding qualities as a goal

getter and achiever of note is evidently seen in his resume and career history.

Still, Noujaim is not another run of the mill professional who sits in top positions and only enjoys the perks of such exalted

office.

No! For Noujaim, power comes with enormous responsibilities and challenges, yet he is not a man who shies away from hurdles associated with leadership.

Truth is: Noujaim sees challenges and obstacles as motivators and ladders to attain stellar levels in human endeavours and accomplishments.

He has achieved many feats in the several positions he held in the AIM Group and other organisations, thereby giving such firms quantum leaps in terms of global reckoning and market acceptance.

Noujaim joined AIM Group in 2015 as Head of Strategy and Broadcasting Operations, having formerly worked as Head of Marketing for Dajcom Ltd, a leading Home Appliance and Electronics trading company based in Apapa, Lagos.

He quickly rose and in 2016 was appointed CEO of Cool FM, Wazobia FM, Nigeria Info FM and Arewa Radio; four radio brands and 13 radio stations under the stable of AIM Group.

His appointment became a boom and soon ushered a new era for an already well-established organization.

However, the firm needed the injection of new ideas and a paradigm shift to cope with yet another recession that hit Nigeria's leading media conglomerate.

Noujaim had to rejig the system and restructured the company to its core, re-enforcing its operational processes.

He also put on his thinking cap "by reviving the firm's creative hub, reconnecting the brands with its customer base, establishing its presence in the digital sphere and successfully selling his vision to a workforce of over 600 employees along the way."

Widely regarded for his highly motivational and result-oriented management style, Noujaim knows what he wants at all times and he wants and expects no less. This goal setting and result-oriented philosophy he imbibes in all who work with him, so much so that his entire staff constantly regurgitate his popular mantra to "GET IT DONE!" The result has been a breath of fresh air and renewed drive among his team members.

Aside his core competence as a true professional and leader, Noujaim is a member of the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO), as well as Broadcasting Organizations of Nigeria (BON). He's also a certified member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON)

Funmilade Alalade: A consummate game changer



Funmilade Alalade is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Elev8media Advertising Ltd. He parades a demonstrated history of working in the marketing and advertising industry. A strong business development professional, he is highly skilled in Negotiation, Business Planning, OOH Advertising, Integrated Marketing, and Entrepreneurship.

Funmi, as he is simply called, holds an MBA from Swansea Metropolitan University.

His company, Elev8media Advertising Limited is a leading Out of Home advertising agency in Nigeria. It is an innovative outdoor advertising company that provides effective marketing and advertising solutions.

The agency has been in operation

in the OOH market in Nigeria since 2007 but in February 2016, it rebranded as Elev8media Advertising Ltd with the aim of providing audience and technology driven effective solutions in the advertising sector. With a mission to connect its clients with their audiences in the most direct and engaging way possible through various effective means of advertising at all times, Elev8media Advertising Limited offers strategic OOH mediums that target its clients' audience at all times. This is best expressed in the agency's pay-off line: We Sell Audience Reach, Not Billboards.

Its services include LED OOH billboards; Mobile Billboard Trucks and Transit Tv, among others.

Bamise Oyegbami: A revered marketer at ABInBev

Bamise Oyegbami, a marketer of repute, holds the exalted position of Marketing Director at AB InBev in Nigeria, where he deploys his extensive experience to spearhead strategic marketing and communications initiatives in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.

Prior to his role as Marketing Director at AB InBev, Bamise excelled as the Marketing Manager for Trophy Lager and Trophy Extra Special Stout.

Through innovative processes, compelling brand positioning, and award-winning strategies, he transformed Trophy into one of Nigeria's most popular brands, resonating with consumers across the country, particularly in the South-West region.

Before joining AB InBev, Bamise served as the Brand Manager for Devon King's at PZ Cussons. His exceptional performance in this role led to his promotion from Regional Brand Manager (Africa) for Olympic

Brand, demonstrating his ability to drive brand success on a global scale.

Educationally, Bamise holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow.

To deepen his knowledge in marketing, he pursued a postgraduate course at The Wharton School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In his current role at AB InBev, Bamise is instrumental to the success of International Breweries Plc (IB PLC), a subsidiary of AB InBev. As part of the world's largest brewer, AB InBev boasts an impressive portfolio of approximately 630 beer brands, distributed in 150 countries worldwide.

In Nigeria, IB PLC produces renowned beer brands such as Trophy Lager, Trophy Stout, Hero Lager, Budweiser, Flying Fish and Beta Malt.



EMEKA OKEKE: An advertising icon of global repute



Emeka Chris Okeke is an accomplished and visionary leader, widely recognised for his role as the Founder, Managing Partner, and Group Chief Executive Officer of MediaFuse-Dentsu. With an illustrious career spanning over three decades, Emeka Chris Okeke is responsible for the development of Dentsu's global and local service brands in Nigeria.

The outstanding advertising guru, with experience spanning across the print media, full-service creative and media agencies, has made significant contributions to the media and advertising industry in Nigeria, Ghana and beyond.

Notably, Emeka launched Ghana's first Media Independent Agency Network – Premier MediaCompany Ghana in 1999 (now iProViz) Ghana, a division of Dentsu Ghana) to pioneer the development of professional media planning services and communications practice in that part of Africa.

As the GCEO of MediaFuse-Dentsu, Emeka Chris Okeke has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and a deep understanding of the ever-evolving media landscape. Under his guidance, MediaFuse-Dentsu has emerged as a prominent player in the industry, offering cutting-edge solutions in media planning, buying, and advertising. With a focus on innovation and

strategic thinking, he led the company to achieve remarkable success, serving a diverse range of clients and helping them reach their target audiences effectively.

Emeka Okeke's leadership and contributions have been recognised with numerous accolades and awards throughout his career. His innovative thinking, strategic vision, and commitment to excellence have set him apart as a trailblazer in the media and advertising industry. With this, he has successfully led MediaFuse-Dentsu in Nigeria to winning numerous awards and recognitions since its inception, cutting across different service categories, and has at the same time earned notable recognitions and professional awards for himself from different organisations in and outside Nigeria. Some of the awards include, Media Entrepreneur of the Year (2014), Outstanding Leadership in Advertising (2017), Outstanding Media Advertising Leadership Awards (2018), Advertising Professional of the year (2018), Life-Time Award Winner (2021), CEO of the Year (Media Independent), Life Time Award by The Industry (2021), Best Agency in Gender Inclusion (WIMCA 2021 and 2022), Outstanding Media Personality (Three Decennaries) by MIPAN, and recently, an inductee, Media Pacesetter

Hall of Fame (2022) by MARKETING EDGE, and Most Media Friendly Personality of The Year (2023).

Under his leadership, MediaFuse-Dentsu also won outstanding awards for quality service delivery. Among those awards are Innovative Marketing Communications Network of the year (2021, 2022), Most Reliable and valuable Media Advertising Agency (2022), Most Outstanding Quality Advertising Agency of the Year (2023), Most Valuable Media Advertising Agency Brand of the Year (2023).

This is in addition to the outstanding performance of agencies under Emeka Chris Okeke-led MediaFuse-Dentsu. Between 2022 and 2023, the agencies have won over 60 professional and recognition awards and medals, including Grand Prix, gold, silver, and bronze medals at the Pitchers Award. Under Emeka Chris Okeke's leadership, a client to one of MediaFuse-Dentsu agencies, AB-Inbev, had its product, Trophy, become the first Nigerian brand shortlisted for the Cannes Lions Award, popularly called the 'World Cup of Creativity'.

Okeke's expertise extends beyond his role at MediaFuse-Dentsu. He is highly regarded as a thought leader and influencer in the media and advertising industry. Emeka has consistently advocated for the adoption of digital technologies and data-driven strategies to enhance marketing effectiveness. His insights and perspectives have shaped industry trends, driving innovation and pushing boundaries in the field of advertising.

Apart from being a Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, a Fellow of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (formerly APCON), a member of the International Advertising Association, and other industry professional bodies, Emeka

Chris Okeke plays leadership roles in Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria, where he is an ex-officio member of the body's executive committee. He is also recently inducted into the Pacesetter Hall of Fame.

Emeka Chris Okeke's professional work life has taken him to many global communication networks, conferences and allowed him to be in a position to support clients from different product and service categories spanning across conventional media communications, digital marketing, creative, content as well as integrated communications strategy in today's dynamic marketing communications landscape and evolving global digital and attention economy.

His passion for excellence and his commitment to raising industry standards have also earned him respect and admiration from his peers. He is known for his unwavering dedication to delivering exceptional results and providing clients with customised, tailor-made solutions that meet their unique needs. Emeka's strategic approach to media planning and his ability to navigate complex market dynamics have been instrumental in the success of numerous advertising campaigns.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Emeka Chris Okeke is a philanthropist who is deeply committed to giving back to society. He actively supports various charitable causes and community development aimed at empowering and uplifting human conditions. He believes in the transformative power of education and has been involved in educational projects that aim to provide opportunities for underprivileged youths to access quality education.

Notably, Emeka is an alumnus of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Lagos Business School, and University of Navarra's, IESE Business School, Barcelona, Spain, to mention a few tertiary institutions that contributed to shaping his career in marketing communications.

Wale Adenuga: A tireless creative generalissimo

Wale Adenuga, an ex-cartoonist and series producer of award winning Ikebe Super, Binta and Friends and Super Story, was born on September 24, 1950.

Adenuga who is the son of a tobacco merchant, was raised in Ibadan, Oyo State.

He attended the Ibadan City Academy where he obtained his O-Level certificate, before proceeding to King's College, Lagos for his higher school certificate.

At Lagos, he formed a pop band which was later disbanded.

Adenuga studied Business Administration at the University of Lagos in 1971, and worked for the cartoon section of the Campus' Magazine where he was soon made Chief Cartoonist.

In 1975, after graduation and youth service in the then Bendel State, Adenuga's comic Ikebe Super was launched, introducing several iconic characters including womaniser Papa Ajasco, illiterate Pa Jimoh, and playboy Boy Alinco. A leading female character, promiscuous gold-digger Miss Pepeiye, was later introduced.

His other magazines were Super Story, which focused on satirical issues and Binta, a children's publication.

In the late 80s, Nigerian publications were affected by the economic depression, leaving Adenuga with the decision to move from print to electronic media.

Before the growth of the film industry, Adenuga had released the celluloid movie Papa Ajasco, which was based on the main character in Ikebe Super, in 1983. Papa Ajasco made history as the first English comedy in an industry which had been dominated by Yoruba productions.

A film version of Binta, re-entitled Binta My Daughter was released in 1995. A year later the television series Papa Ajasco (formerly The Ajasco Family) was aired on Nigerian television to rave reviews.

On September 24, 1994, Adenuga and his wife Ehiwenma founded Binta International School in Lagos, a foundation dedicated to better education in Nigeria.

In 2004, he opened the Pencil Film and Television Institute (PEFTI). Its courses include Producing, Directing, and Cinematography. The school was recently featured in De Film Industries van Nigeria, a Danish documentary on the Nigerian



film industry.

Adenuga is the recipient of five awards at the Nigeria Film Festival, 2002: Best Producer, Best Script Writer, Best Director, Best Television Drama and Best Socially Relevant Television Production.

He was conferred with the national honour of Member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR), in 2009.

Ronan Redmond: Renowned globally in media and entertainment



Ronan is an International leader in the Media and Entertainment sector. He has worked in commercial media leadership roles for some of the biggest Global names in media and entertainment including: Ogilvy & Mather, Mindshare, Sky, and TV3 (now Virgin Media). His career has taken him across Europe and Africa: from Dublin, London, Prague, and lately to Lagos.

Prior to joining TVC Communications, Ronan had his own successful commercial media consultancy advising media and entertainment clients on how best to develop new and incremental revenue lines. The business had a select corporate client base with a combined turnover of €200M. Before establishing his own consultancy, Ronan set up Sky Media Ireland where he was Managing Director for seven years and grew revenues to over €100M.

Before switching to the media owner side of the business, Ronan worked for advertising and media agencies Ogilvy

& Mather and Mindshare in London, planning and buying pan-European advertising campaigns for clients such as Ford Motor Company and Guinness.

In his six years in Lagos working in Media and Entertainment, Ronan has helped transform the commercial fortunes of TVC Communications. He has made the business far more accessible to advertisers and agencies alike by introducing flexible trading and pricing policies reflective of the economic environment and he continues to try and expand multi-channel advertising solutions for all clients.

Ronan is passionate about trying to grow the advertising sector in Nigeria and he is a regular contributor to the debate on the best ways forward for the Media and Entertainment sector here and across Africa.

Ronan has an MBA from Dublin City University and holds BA Honors degree in Economics from the National University of Ireland.

Dozie Okafor: A relentless game changer at PHD Nigeria



Dozie Okafor, Managing Director, PHD Nigeria, is an iconic personality of many parts.

He is a trained electrical engineer from the University of Nigeria and an alumnus of the

Lagos Business School.

With a strong background in marketing management and product marketing, Dozie Okafor provides deep subject matter expertise on driving growth for brands across diverse markets. He has perfected his professional

skills and robustly extended his tentacles across marketing, management, strategy, and media.

Since re-joining PHD in 2017 as Managing Director, Dozie has brought exceptional leadership and experience that have played a pivotal role in driving PHD's operations and propelling the business to one of the Top 3 media agencies in Nigeria. Dozie's visionary mindset and perspectives continues to be instrumental in driving growth for PHD and its commitment to clients both locally and across Africa.

Under Dozie's leadership, PHD Nigeria has gone on to win several high value clients and expanding PHD's footprint into West and Central Africa with brands like Unilever, LG and Pernod Ricard. Today, PHD boasts of a 90% client retention rate across many industries and categories.

Dozie continues to inspire the team at PHD Nigeria to make the leap in innovation as PHD has over the years delivered big, bold executions for clients on both traditional and digital media; gaining commendations from

clients on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Testament to the quality of work at PHD Nigeria is the several awards that have been won over the years both locally and regionally. PHD Nigeria emerged the Most Outstanding Media Independent Agency for two consecutive years and have recently secured an impressive tally of ten awards at the 2023 Pitcher Festival of Creativity.

Dozie has served on the jury panel of many prestigious media festivals – from the Leories in South Africa in 2018 and most recently, as an Awarding media juror at the 70th Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity in France.

PHD is a growth obsessed company and continues to push boundaries in innovation and thought leadership within the marketing ecosystem. Dozie has facilitated media training programmes for several multinational brands and continues to speak on topical issues that affect the growth of the industry.

There is no doubt that Dozie is indeed an outstanding personality worthy of celebration and emulation.

Raymond Dokpesi: Redefining broadcasting in the global space



Chief Raymond Paul Dokpesi Jr. is Chairman at DAAR Communication PLC. Dokpesi was before his appointment, one of the executive directors of the foremost broadcast group.

He is a graduate of Business Management of the Kings College London and also obtained a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Lagos; and a Masters Degree from the University of Westminster.

DAAR Communication PLC which he chairs, provides printing, publishing, broadcasting, telecommunications, and allied multimedia services across the world.

The Company has broadband Internet services with capacity for voice, Internet access, video conferencing, data, telephony, and other multi-media capabilities.

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♦ MOBILE BILLBOARDS ♦ SPECTACULARS ♦ DIGITAL BILLBOARDS NETWORK ♦ GANTRIES ♦ LAMPOSTS

Plus Acuity: Making difference on the media advertising space



Plus Acuity came into the Nigerian media advertising space in 2016, and, right from its inception, looked every inch set to bstride the sector like a corporate colossus.

This positive posturing of the (then) young firm was amply evident when viewed against the backdrop of its mission, vision, values, philosophy and modus operandi.

It instantly expressed its uniqueness as not just another media agency, but one with a huge difference in terms of deploying cutting edge technology and other measurable indices in its service delivery pursuit; affirming that “we are an independent media planning and buying agency offering data based strategic insights and the most competitive media value to our clients.”

Significantly, Plus Acuity, from inception, has made excellent service delivery to its clientele an article of faith; while this virtue of extraordinary service is anchored on the agency’s core values of Accountability, Devotion and Innovation.

Plus Acuity is also driven by an all inclusive philosophy that is summed up in Client First; Transparency, Data-led collaborative work; and Client-centric agenda in its day-to-day operations.

It equally gives collaboration and partnership a prime place in its operation, believing that leveraging on such synergies produce better and mutual outcomes.

Thus, in its blueprint and roadmap towards achieving its projected service delivery priorities, the firm echoes: “we leverage our unique business relationship with the biggest media agency networks to ensure the most competitive media buys.

This relationship helps us drive first-to-market opportunities with all our media partners.”

Plus Acuity distinguishes itself in its buying process which, in its words, “is packaged on an innovative process that focuses on value rather than cost; measurement and performance rather than just Reach”; adding that, “Our longterm bulk buying for large Fast Moving

Consumer Goods (FMCG) clients helps us to deliver on set annual objectives and hedge against inflation.”

From its impressive records, it is beyond contention that Plus Acuity’s

services entail thinking beyond the ordinary and outside the box to achieve set goals and desired ends. This is always guaranteed by the fact that its services are data-driven and technology enabled. It

always engages in scientific media planning that is guided by syndicated & proprietary tools; ensuring that it plans on the right medium, right stations, right day; and in optimal quantity with percentage reach objective in view.

Little wonder that in just seven years of existence, the agency has successfully and impressively partnered many blue chip companies, especially in the FMCG category, using the print, electronic, OOH and digital media channels to market their products and help improve return on media investment. These include, but are not limited to, Indomie, Minimie, Power Oil, Munch IT, Colgate, Hypo, Fearless, Bigi, Sosa, LuckyBet, Kellogg’s, Yanga Lotto, 9Mobile, Pocari Sweat, among others.

In recognition of its remarkable achievements, MARKETING EDGE magazine named Plus Acuity Outstanding Young Media Agency of the Year 2019.

Interswitch: Facilitating electronic money circulation in Africa



Interswitch is an Africa-focused integrated digital payments and commerce company that facilitates the electronic circulation of money as well as the exchange of value between individuals and organizations on a timely and consistent basis

Interswitch was founded in 2002 by Mitchell Elegbe. It started operations as a transaction switching and electronic

payment processing company that builds and manages payment infrastructure as well as deliver innovative payment products and transactional services throughout the African continent.

Interswitch uses a ‘switching’ infrastructure to connect the different banks in Nigeria and provides technology for ATM cards. The company has over 11,000 ATMs on its network.

Interswitch is the owner of Verve, Nigeria’s most used payment card, accounting for 18 million of the 25 million cards in circulation in the country. Verve has also been launched in Kenya.

Interswitch also owns Quickteller, an

online payments platform; Retailpay, a mobile business management platform; and Smartgov, an identity management and e-payment infrastructure for state governments.

Interswitch has also very recently acquired VANSO, a mobile-focused technology provider to banks. This new acquisition will result in VANSO’s mobile banking, SMS and security business lines being fully integrated into Interswitch’s digital commerce and technology operations in Nigeria, and across the Africa To bolster its equity and strength, Interswitch sold two-third of the company’s equity to a consortium led by

Helios investment partners in 2010. A year later, Interswitch took a 60 per cent stake in Bankom in Uganda.

In an epoch making move, Interswitch entered into an agreement for payment processing with Discover Financial Services in 2013.

Interswitch made a bold statement in East Africa when it acquired a majority

shareholding in Paynet Group, an East-African payments provider in 2014.

In the area of corporate social responsibility(CSR), Interswitch has made a huge investment in supporting science education in Nigeria. In February 2018, Interswitch unveiled its SPAK National Science Competition to promote and reward excellence in Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics in Nigeria.

Earlier in 2015, Interswitch launched a \$10m investment fund for African startups in the payments sector. Interswitch has been at the forefront of providing innovative solutions using cutting edge technology to drive financial inclusion in the continent.

IDEAZQUTION CONSULTING

We Take Care Of All Your Integrated Marketing Needs

Taking Integrated Marketing Communications to enviable pedestals

The message on its website about its name, corporate calling, and service offerings is simple, short, sharp, and straight to the point. But one thing cannot be lost on any visitor to the site:

IDEAZQUTION CONSULTING, simply called **ZQ** is a 21st-century, future-focused, tech-driven and result-oriented Nigerian marketing communications firm that prides itself in taking care of all integrated marketing needs of its clients – every one of them!

As envisioned by its proprietors, the agency is a one-stop-shop agency – offering services across various sectors of the marketing communications industry.

In the words of one of the proprietors, the idea of birthing a one-stop-shop arose from having worked in and studied marketing and advertising terrain for so long, and reaching a conclusion that providing solutions from one platform produces better results as long as you have the required expertise to provide these solutions.

She said, “A one-stop-shop provides a holistic view of the entire strategy from start to finish while helping you leverage on the different and very interesting marketing platforms to achieve maximum results. The

concept of ZQ offering a one-stop shop marketing service was informed to handle all Client’s needs and provide lower cost.

Interestingly, the name IdeaZQution is explained to be a perfect fusion between **Ideas** and **Execution** as most times, well-thought-through ideas in the boardroom fall to pieces at the point of execution.

Taking into account the operational approach of ZQ, it is evident that this industry frontrunner strives to enhance excellence and professionalism in the ever-evolving sector.

Boasting her power, potential, and proficiency to the public, ZQ’s solutions is stated as **“We offer strategic consultation services in Business, Marketing and Communications. We help you develop result oriented route(s) to market. And we help you implement these strategies to achieve the desired look of success.**

The company possesses immense expertise in Digital Marketing, Experiential Marketing, and is highly interested in Talent Development and Capacity Building.

ZQ is also a renowned player in Project Management and Stakeholders Management.


ZQ emphasizes her unique selling proposition; as strategic, creative, and adept at managing relationships while

focusing on even the smallest details (a hallmark of professionalism), which is what she is known for.

ZQ delivers world-class standards with very competitive rates”; and concluding, “ZQ takes ownership of your budget to deliver optimal results”.

As a leading marketing communications outfit, ZQ is peopled by top-notch and seasoned practitioners whose combined experiences span over six decades. It is a team that fully understands the strategies to be deployed across different platforms; leaving no grey areas, but a seamless fusion of strategy and execution tactics to deliver holistic results.

Little wonder that ZQ enjoys superlative performance and rating in the entire Nigerian integrated marketing communications sector. It is thus not surprising that the upbeat firm has continued to remain a much sought-after outfit by leading brands across Nigeria and beyond and has also continued to explore new frontiers in the IMC space.

 *remains the home of BLAZING IDEAS, STRATEGIC NAVIGATION AND FLAWLESS EXECUTION(s).*

UBA PLC: Africa's financial powerhouse to the world



United Bank for Africa Plc is a multinational pan African financial services group offering banking services to more than 35 million customers across 1,000 branches in 20 African countries. With presence in New York, London, Paris, Republique du Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Congo Brazzaville, Congo DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Tchad, Uganda Zambia and Dubai, UBA is connecting people and businesses across Africa through retail and corporate banking, innovative cross border payments, trade finance and investment banking.

With a history of over 74 years, UBA is one of the most recognized banks to originate from sub-Saharan Africa and have been providing superior financial services to small businesses, corporations, governments, institutions and individuals globally. The bank which also operates in the United Kingdom and France officially opened for business in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates last year.

UBA provides corporate, commercial, SME, consumer and personal (retail) banking services to more than 27 million customers, served through diverse channels: over 1,000 business offices and customer touch points with

2,669 ATMs, 87,223 PoS, and robust online banking services. Additionally, UBA offers pension custody and related services.

The bank has proven expertise and capacity in key sectors of economies across Africa, especially in Oil and Gas, Infrastructure Finance, Agric, and Commodity/Export, and this positions us as a preferred partner for structured solutions to key governments and corporations operating in/into Africa.

Recently, the bank signed a \$6 billion financing agreement with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Accra Ghana, to eliminate trade barriers and promote intra-African trade. The agreement aims to boost intra-African trade and encourage small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

In a bid to provide uninterrupted service, increase productivity and customer loyalty, the pan African financial services group, UBA has entered into a long-term power-supply contract with Renewvia Energy and its local partner, Incremental Energy Solutions Limited, to supply their branches with clean energy generated from Renewvia's cutting-edge microgrids.

The Bank's solid financial performance, excellent service delivery to customers and its continuous role of facilitating rapid economic growth across

the African continent were some of the reasons that led to the bank being named Best Bank in 12 of its African subsidiaries and in Nigeria.

Significantly, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility efforts, the Bank established the UBA Foundation, in January 2004. And as the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of the UBA Group, UBA Foundation is committed to the socio-economic betterment of the communities in which the bank operates, focusing on development in the areas of Education, Environment, Economic Empowerment and Special Projects. Being one of Africa's largest financial services institutions, UBA has always believed in the need for a social contract with local communities and residents. To that end, UBA became the first bank in Nigeria to establish a foundation saddled with the responsibility of giving back to the societies it operates.

With the widest financial service reach in Africa, the Foundation leverages and facilitates philanthropic ventures unlike any other institution. Its partnership with the Tony Elumelu Foundation has successfully supported thousands of small and medium scale enterprises across Africa, and continues to empower local communities and provide scholarships to young promising Africans through our Special Education Initiatives.

UBA Foundation sponsors several skills acquisition workshops and social, tech and agriculture entrepreneurship forums that promote innovation and advancement on the continent.

It is a Part-sponsor of the 7th Annual Celebrations

and Entrepreneurial Awards of Fate Foundation, a private sector-led non-profit initiative with a vision to foster the establishment of 5,000 businesses and the creation of employment for at least 50,000 Nigerians by 2015. The Foundation is in partnership with the Initiative for Peace Empowerment and Tolerance (IPET) to hold economic empowerment workshops and other projects, involving training and equipping traders with skills aimed at raising their standard of living.

As one of its key areas, the Education pillar is the umbrella arm of UBA Foundation that guarantees this commitment.

The Read Africa program and National Essay Competition are geared at stimulating the quest for sound knowledge and arming educational institutions/organizations with support and/or resources to meet various learning needs.

The 'Read Africa' initiative aims to rekindle the dwindling reading culture amongst African youths. Conceived and introduced in 2011 by the foundation, the project involves the provision of recommended English literature for junior and senior secondary schools' students across Africa.

The first edition of 'Read Africa' was well received in Nigeria and across the 19 countries where UBA has operations, having been successfully implemented in selected schools across the continent. The project was anchored by senior executives of the bank and UBAF staff, who visited these schools to mentor the students and distribute select literature to the students, at no cost to them. Another initiative under

the education pillar by the UBA Foundation is the UBA National Essay Competition (NEC) which provides a competitive platform to develop the intellectual and writing abilities of senior secondary school students in Africa. Winners get educational grants to study in any African University of their choice.

The competition has been held annually since 2011 with students challenged to write on different engaging topics to test their writing and cognitive skills.

In line with its commitment towards sustainability, the UBA Foundation joined a group of elite financial institutions in May 2008 who signed on to the United Nations Environment Program Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) Statement. Through this, the foundation is focused on improving the environment and promoting sustainable

development by forging best practice throughout the industry.

The Foundation maintains three gardens across Nigeria.

Apart from the aesthetic value associated with projects in this focus area, UBA Foundation also creates employment opportunities for thirty-six youths every year and this has been done over a five-year period where most of the staff sponsor their own education through the income they earn and the flexibility of their work schedule. On the special project, the Foundation completed the construction of a pedestrian bridge valued at about N13m for students of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto State (UDUS), thus bringing comfort to students of the institution.

For over four decades, the students of UDUS, especially those living off-campus faced difficulties in connecting to

the campus especially during the rainy season, due to the poor state of the road. They couldn't get in and out of their dormitories and had to use an uncomfortably long route to get to lectures and the mosque. In 2020, it donated \$14 million to help African governments fight the COVID-19 pandemic across the continent.

The donation provided significant and much-needed support to Nigeria and 19 other African countries, by supplying relief materials, critical care facilities, and financial support to Governments.

UBA Foundation draws its inspiration from the Group's intrinsic values of humility, empathy, resilience, integrity and its mission statement; "to be a role model for African businesses, abiding by the utmost professional and ethical standards, and creating an enduring institution". According to the Foundation,

"These values have, and will always be the factors that inspire us to 'Do Well and Do Good.'"

Not unexpectedly, UBA has over the years been a recipient of several awards and recognition for pioneering innovation in the African banking sector such as the Winner, Africa Bank of the Year 2021 by The Banker Magazine, a Financial Times publication, Banking Group Brand of the Year Ghana 2021 by Global Banking and Finance Award, Best CSR Bank Ghana 2021, Best Remittance Bank Ghana 2021 by Global Banking and Finance Award

With multiple awards over the years, UBA continues to distinguish itself in the financial service industry across Africa. It continues to be at the forefront of innovation on the continent as we aim to deliver excellent services to our customers.

JAMESON: On a journey of endearing loyalty among Nigerians



Jameson is a blended Irish whiskey, with every drop of the exceptionally smooth whiskey coming from its state-of-the-art distillery in the rural village of Middleton, Cork. Born in the heart of Dublin city in 1780, its founder John Jameson could never have envisioned his whiskey's explosive success on the global platform, including its journey to Nigeria! Jameson's brand embodies the down-to-earth character of The Irish; a trait that it shares with Nigerians which has endeared loyal consumers.

This unique brand understands that both the content and the container are powerful in enhancing the consumers' drinking experience. Its attractive, beautiful green colour evokes

special feelings of friendship and togetherness. Jameson Whiskey is the world's #1 Irish whiskey; and Nigeria's favourite premium whiskey.

Jameson in Nigeria has two variants; Jameson Irish Whiskey and Jameson Black Barrel. These two premium whiskeys are distilled three times for unmatched smoothness. They are matured across Seasoned Oak Casks and Sherry Butts, giving each whiskey a complex flavour profile. Jameson Black Barrel is matured for additional years in a series of double-charred barrels, leading to the campaign Touched By Fire.

You can enjoy a Jameson Irish Whiskey as you see fit. Neat? On the rocks? In a cocktail? All excellent options. Jameson's signature serve is the JSL; Jameson, Sprite and Lime.

The sweetness, carbonation and citrus flavour of Sprite combined with a lime wedge produces a smooth & delicious mix for any occasion.

Its journey in Nigeria began over 10 years ago, met with the open and warm reception of Nigerians. To demonstrate its own Nigerian spirit, Jameson Irish Whiskey recently launched a campaign to encourage fans to embrace other kindred spirits and 'Widen the Circle.'

Jameson's 'Widen the Circle' campaign celebrates the spirit of openness, challenging people to look beyond superficial barriers for the shared values that unite them. By encouraging individuals and communities to make new connections, Jameson is looking to make the world feel like a smaller, friendlier place.

Martell

Martell embodies the epitome of luxury and opulence, steeped in an unparalleled heritage that dates back to its inception by the visionary Jean Martell in 1715. As the oldest and most esteemed cognac house, Maison Martell is globally renowned for its exquisite craftsmanship and refined cognacs, crafted with a savoir-faire passed down through nine generations. Exuding a deep-rooted passion for its artistry and an unwavering connection to the terroir, Maison Martell fearlessly defies conventions, continually pushing the boundaries of cognac innovation. A testament to this audacity is the iconic Martell Cordon Bleu, an extraordinary expression introduced in 1912. Symbolizing the unfettered spirit of the House is its emblem, the swift.

Within Nigeria, Martell reigns supreme with its four distinguished variants: VS, Blue Swift, XO, and XO. However, the undisputed crown jewel is Martell Blue Swift, a testament to the brand's audacious nature. Through groundbreaking advancements in the Cognac Industry, including the pioneering creation of Blue Swift, Martell has captured the hearts of Nigerians, emerging as their preferred choice. In 1783, Martell revolutionized the industry by becoming the first Maison to export

cognac to the United States, introducing the world to Martell Blue Swift, an unprecedented blend meticulously crafted from VSOP cognac and aged in bourbon casks.

Martell's signature distillation process infuses the eaux-de-vie with the sublime essence of the bourbon casks, resulting in its hallmark style distinguished by delicate hints of candied fruit and plum. Complemented by the subtle sweetness of vanilla and the toasted oak nuances from the casks, Martell Blue Swift boasts an unrivaled smoothness, boasting a rounded taste that exudes unparalleled character.

To embody the audacious essence of Martell, the brand has enlisted the incomparable Davido, one of the most daring afrobeat musicians, as its illustrious brand ambassador. In 2021, Martell embarked on a groundbreaking campaign, "Be The Standout Swift," featuring Davido across all media platforms, including television, out-of-home advertising, digital channels, and radio. Davido epitomizes the qualities of a Standout Swift, showcasing that standing out is not merely an exception but a rule to be embraced.

Martell continues to lead from the front, captivating audiences with audacious campaigns and activations, such as Martell House, Martell Box, Martell x



AMVCA Afterparty, and the exclusive Davido Blend, among many others.

As you embark on the indulgence of Martell Blue Swift, rest assured that it can be enjoyed in its pure form, on the rocks, or as a sophisticated addition to cocktails. The quintessential Martell Blue Swift cocktail, the Nigerian Swift Sour, is an embodiment of excellence: 50ml Martell Blue Swift, 50ml Soya Milk, 15ml citrus-infused lemon juice, and 20ml of exquisite sugar syrup, garnished with two vibrant green pepper slices resembling the Nigerian Flag.

Martell's remarkable journey began over a decade

ago when it ventured into Nigeria, receiving an overwhelmingly warm and embracing reception from the Nigerian community, who swiftly discovered the unrivaled taste of Martell. As our journey in Nigeria continues, we strive to inspire Nigerians to embrace audacity and stand out as Standout Swifts, knowing that it is the only path to greatness.

CBN to sanction banks backing illegal foreign firms

By Abimbola Mohammed



The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in its guideline for regulation of the representative office of foreign banks in Nigeria, has said it will sanction banks assisting the operations of unlicensed foreign firms in Nigeria.

The guideline, signed by Muhammad Musa, Director, Financial Policy and Regulation Department, stated: "Any CBN regulated entity found to be assisting, supporting, harbouring or facilitating the presence and/or operations of an unlicensed international financial institution in Nigeria shall be liable to severe sanctions including suspension or revocation of their banking licence."

According to him, the policy aligns with CBN's mandate to promote financial system stability. He added that the guidelines are backed by Sections 6(1) and 8 (1) of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020 (BOFIA) respectively which states that "no foreign bank shall operate in Nigeria without prior approval of the CBN".

The CBN said a bank licensed under any foreign law, whose registered head office is outside Nigeria, or any financial institution licensed under foreign law, whose primary business includes the receipt of deposits, granting of loans and/or provision of current and

savings accounts, are covered by the guidelines.

It also includes any foreign-owned operating bank/ financial holding company that is foreign-based, that owns controlling interest in one or more banks or institutions whose primary business includes the receipt of deposits, granting of loans and provision of current and savings accounts.

The CBN also authorised the banks to market the products and services of its foreign parent or an affiliate of the foreign parent licensed and domiciled outside Nigeria.

They can also carry out research activities in Nigeria on behalf of the foreign parent and also serve as a liaison between the foreign parent and local banks, private institutions within Nigeria and other customers of the foreign parent based in Nigeria.

The banks can also connect banks and other financial institutions to their parent firm, and assist exporters in Nigeria with information related to the laws and markets of target countries in which the foreign parent or any of the Group's affiliates has a subsidiary.

Part of the responsibilities includes collating and distributing economic and financial information or country reports to its foreign parents for use by their customers and assisting their customers who desire to invest in Nigeria

or do business with Nigerian companies subject to the extant Data Protection Regulations.

"Representative offices are permitted to record revenue, in so far as such revenue does not relate to non-permissible activities as set out in section 3.2 below and emanates from intra-group services rendered to the parent company with such revenue taxed in accordance with transfer-pricing regulations. Revenue in this provision is limited to line items such as staff costs and business premises leasing fees."

However, the banks are not

allowed to provide services designated in Nigeria as banking business and provide any commercial or trading activity that may lead to the issuance of invoices for services rendered.

In establishing a representative office in Nigeria, the CBN said a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CBN and the applicant's home regulatory supervisor is essential. "Where such an MOU is non-existent, the CBN will work with the home regulatory agency to establish/execute an MOU as soon as possible," it said.

"Not later than three months after obtaining the Approval-In-Principle, the promoters of a proposed office shall submit an application for the grant of a final license to the CBN," the apex bank noted.

'50% of Nigerians have no bank accounts'

By Joseph Ekeng

The CEO of Opay, Olu Akanmu, has highlighted that Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, lags behind in financial inclusion. He added that about 50% of Nigerians are financially excluded.

Olu Akanmu made the disclosure at the CIO Club Award Summit 2023, held recently in Lagos.

The summit, which was themed "Digital Economy and the Nexus between E-identity, Connectivity, and Financial Inclusion", attracted top players in the FinTech sector.

Akanmu emphasized that the challenge provides an opportunity for telcos and fintech companies to rise to the challenge. He explained that financial inclusion is a business

of scale, and that those lowearning customers, mostly residing in rural areas, are frequently ignored by banks.

However, these customers carry out millions of transactions daily that generate revenue for businesses.

The issue of financial exclusion has been a longstanding challenge in Nigeria, and this latest revelation has spurred calls for urgent action to address the problem.

It is hoped that the insights shared at the summit will prompt stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that will increase financial inclusion and enable more Nigerians to participate in the country's growing digital economy.

FirstBank named Financial Institution of the Year



- The award was bestowed on FirstBank in recognition of the Bank's role in promoting trade and investment endeavours across the continent.
- With its subsidiaries across the FirstBank Group, FirstBank has continued to play a leading role in boosting cross-border businesses, including trade and investment opportunities, essential to enhancing trade relations amongst countries.
- In 2021, the Bank launched its First Global Transfer (FGT) initiative, specifically designed to ensure safe, timely and improved efficiency in the transfer of funds across the network of FirstBank subsidiaries in Africa.

First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier banking institution and leading financial inclusion services provider, has won the Financial Institution of the Year Award at the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) Pan African Business and Development Awards. The ceremony marked the 30th anniversary of Afreximbank as it hosted the inaugural Pan-African Business and Development Awards in

association with the Business Council for Africa (BCA), in Accra, Ghana.

The award bestowed on FirstBank is in recognition of the bank as an epitome of the Pan-African spirit through its leading role in promoting trade and investment across the continent which have been instrumental to strengthening the economic and multilateral business relationship across nations.

Among its role in facilitating

transactions across borders, in 2021, First Bank launched its First Global Transfer (FGT) initiative, specifically designed to ensure safe, timely and improved efficiency in the transfer of funds across the network of FirstBank subsidiaries in Africa. The FGT is not restricted to FirstBank Group's Customers alone but it is also open to every individual resident in the country the funds transfer is originating from.

Speaking on the awards, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, CEO, FirstBank said: "We thank the organisers of the event (Afreximbank, BCA) for the recognition as it reinforces our commitment to promoting trade, finance and investment opportunities across borders which have been instrumental to the continued growth and development of the continent and the world. On behalf of the Board and Management, this award is dedicated to all employees at the FirstBank Group for their diligence and hardwork as well as to our esteemed customers for their loyalty and patronage in over 129 years of existence" he concluded.

Also commenting on the awards, Prof. Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board, who has been at the Bank for over 29 years said: "Tonight we are recognising outstanding leaders and institutions. Having joined the Bank in 1994, I have been fortunate to have worked with many of them... At Afreximbank, contributing to Africa's development is a lifetime vocation, as I know it is for all those that we have recognised tonight."

In recognising these leaders and institutions, Arnold Ekpe, chair of the BCA and former Group CEO of Ecobank, said: "Too often our business leaders do not get the praise they deserve. Succeeding in business on the continent is not always easy, but it is rewarding and more importantly it is possible to build strong, profitable businesses that are globally competitive. Our winners tonight have demonstrated this."

FirstBank has consistently been recognised by reputable global organisations for its steady outstanding performance and among the streak of recent wins is the award for Best Financial Inclusion Service Provider Nigeria 2023 by Digital Banker Africa as well as Best Private Bank for Sustainable Investing in Africa by Global Finance.

Nigeria's smartphone market: Winners and losers

By Joseph Ekeng

The Nigerian smartphone market is a highly competitive one, with several major brands vying for market share. A report on Statista put the number of current smartphone users in the country to between 25 and 40 million.

Yet it projects that by 2025, the number will rise rapidly to roughly 140 million. It also estimated that revenue in the segment will hit \$9.39 billion in 2023. This makes Nigeria a tantalizing prospect for smartphone brands.

Over the last few years, the growth potential in Nigeria has triggered an influx of smartphone brands into the country. But while some of them have met success in Nigeria, others have not been so fortunate.

This new features will highlight the winners and losers in the highly competitive smartphone market.

Winners

According to a recently released report by Orange Business Intelligence Technology (ORBIT), Tecno is the most used smartphone brand in Nigeria. The brand is said to account for more than 50% of the smartphone market in Nigeria.

Little known in its home country China, Tecno, which made an entry into the Nigerian market in 2007, has expanded into 35 other countries. It has dominated major markets such as Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Cameroon, and Ghana.

Experts believe that the reason why Techno has enjoyed success in Nigeria is because it understands the uniqueness of the African mobile market and developed smartphones best suited to the African people and cultures.

"Tecno stayed true to the maxim "Think globally, act locally," thereby achieving great success in translating advanced technology into superior localized products," Geeta Singh, a market analyst, said.

Tecno's success highlights how a small company was able to win the African market by leveraging its accurate brand positioning; the sophisticated, innovative features of its products; and localized manufacturing capacity.

Despite its phenomenal success in Africa, TECNO has several challenges ahead. These include protecting the

brand from counterfeit products, fierce competition, and a slowing African economy

Infinix

The ORBIT report also stated that Infinix is the second largest smartphone brand in Nigeria in terms of usage. Interestingly,



both phones are made by the same Chinese company.

And like Tecno, Infinix owners understand the local market and design its product to meet the unique needs and preferences of the consumers. This includes offering dual-SIM capabilities and optimizing the phones for use with popular apps and services in Nigeria.

iPhones

Still in the ORBIT report, iPhones were surprisingly rated as the third most used phones. This underlines the fact that consumers continue to love iPhones despite their high cost.

According to experts, the reason why iPhone ranks high is because Apple has built a strong brand reputation over the years, and Nigerian consumers perceive iPhones as a status symbol. So, owning an iPhone is seen as a statement of affluence and sophistication.

iPhones are also reputed for high

quality and durability. This is a crucial factor for the Nigerian consumers who are willing to pay a premium for products that will last long.

Samsung knocked off the perch

Until a few years ago, Samsung was the leading smartphone brand in Nigeria. That position now belongs to Tecno. Samsung has lost significant market share to the influx of China phone brands into Nigeria.

These brands have eaten into Samsung's market share, particularly in the mid-range and budget smartphone segment. The economic downturn has also played its part in Samsung's misfortune, as many Nigerian phone users have been opting for more affordable smartphones,

which has impacted Samsung's sales.

Yet, amid the downturn, Samsung is still a huge brand name in Nigeria largely as a result of its high quality, durability and other exceptional qualities.

Nokia: Nokia was once the dominant player in the Nigerian mobile phone market, but its popularity has declined significantly in recent years. This is due in part to the rise of smartphones and Nokia's inability to keep up with the latest technology.

For instance, smartphones with large touchscreens, high-resolution cameras, and advanced operating systems have become more popular among Nigerian consumers.

But crucially, Nokia's brand perception may have changed over the years, with some consumers perceiving it as not as trendy as other brands. This may have affected its appeal to Nigerian consumers who value style and fashion.

Global video ad spend to hit US\$230 bn by 2027

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**



Statista, a research agency in Germany reports that the Video Advertising market worldwide is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2023-2027) of 6.80 percent, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$229.80bn by 2027. Meanwhile, for the current year, the Ad spending in the Video Advertising market is projected to reach US\$176.60bn in 2023 while most revenue will be generated in the United States.

In the Video Advertising market, US\$180.00bn of total ad spending will be generated through mobile in 2027.

Connected TV ad spending in the Video Advertising market is projected to reach US\$29.79bn in 2023.

Connected TV is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2023-2027) of 12.41%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$47.56bn by 2027.

The market share of Facebook amounts to an estimated 7% of the Video Advertising market and the selected region in 2022.

Whether it is a six-second bumper ad or a multi-minute compilation, video marketing has become one of the most popular and effective ways of capturing the attention of audiences across the globe. As the number of digital video

viewers keeps rising every year, marketers embrace video as a promotional tool more vividly than ever.

In 2022, online video ad spending amounted to almost 75 billion U.S. dollars, thereby accounting for almost 30 percent of total display ad spend worldwide.

Unsurprisingly, the United States remains the country with the highest spending on digital video ads, followed by China and the United Kingdom.

Connected TV (CTV) and social video are among the most popular content marketing tactics worldwide, and the post-pandemic era has only consolidated companies' dependency on these tools.

In the first half of 2022, the global viewability rate of desktop video ads stood at 77 percent, which means that 77 percent of display ads on desktop devices were in view in the measured period. The same was true for 80.1 percent of mobile web video ads and 83.7 percent of in-app video ads.

During the fourth quarter of 2022, online videos recorded an audience reach of almost 92 percent among internet users worldwide. In recent years, video has become one of the most popular online formats, spanning from educational content to product reviews.

Music videos recorded the highest category reach, with almost 49 percent of responding internet users reporting watching music videos online each week.

The weekly time spent with online video worldwide 2018-2023, according to a survey conducted among consumers worldwide, respondents watched an average of 19 hours of online video content per

week in 2022. This represented an increase from 2021 when consumers watched 19 hours of online video content weekly.

In the company's latest report, the ad spending in the video advertising segment of the digital advertising market in the United States was forecast to continuously increase between 2023 and 2027 by a total of 28.9 billion U.S. dollars (+37.55 percent).

According to this forecast in 2027, ad spending will have increased for the fourth consecutive year to 105.9 billion U.S. dollars. Notably, the ad spending of the video advertising segment of the digital advertising market was continuously increasing over the past years.

Threads App: Twitter threatens to sue Meta

By **Zion Rufus**

In a letter addressed to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, X Corp., the successor to Twitter, has threatened to sue Meta Platforms, accusing the company of "systematic, willful, and unlawful misappropriation" of Twitter's trade secrets and other intellectual property.

The letter alleges that Meta hired dozens of former Twitter employees who had access to confidential information, utilizing it to develop their competing app, Threads.

The launch of Threads, Meta's text-focused app, comes at a pivotal time when users are seeking alternative platforms that provide a more positive and creative



space for self-expression.

The appeal of Threads lies in its promise to create a positive space for expressing ideas, attracting users who are seeking an alternative to the recent turmoil and controversies surrounding major social media platforms.

DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC



Shell's global media account up for grabs

By Joseph Ekeng



Shell, the energy giant, has initiated a comprehensive review of its global media account, currently under the management of WPP's EssenceMediacom. WPP has been responsible for handling media planning and buying duties for Shell since 2005. According to industry insiders, multiple agencies have been invited to participate in the pitch for the coveted account.

As a significant advertiser, Shell has garnered attention

for its substantial marketing expenditure, reportedly around £142 million annually. With this review, the company aims to ensure that its contracts align with its evolving business strategy and current requirements, according to a spokesperson from Shell.

News of the global account review has been circulating in recent days, drawing attention from various quarters. Activists from the environmental campaigning group *Extinction*

Rebellion seized the opportunity to stage protests outside EssenceMediacom's offices on Theobalds Road in Central London. The protesters urged the agency not to repitch for the Shell account and presented a series of suggestions to garner support for their cause. These suggestions included appealing to agency and network heads to boycott the pitch, internally sharing informational leaflets, and utilizing Extinction Rebellion's TruthTeller site for whistleblowing on the pitch process.

EssenceMediacom, while declining to comment specifically on the account review, acknowledged the presence of the protest and described it as "very peaceful."

Shell, on the other hand, refrained from providing any comments regarding the protests.

Shell's decision to review its global media account comes in the wake of the company's announcement of its new strategic initiative, "Powering Progress," in 2021. The initiative aims to accelerate the transition of Shell's business operations towards achieving net-zero emissions.

As the review progresses, industry watchers eagerly await the outcome, which will not only have implications for Shell's media landscape but also shed light on the role of activism in shaping corporate partnerships and alliances in today's socially conscious environment.

Chevron set to invest \$10b in new energy

By Kingsley Odii



Chevron, one of the world's largest oil companies, has announced plans to invest \$10 billion in new energy technology over the next decade. This move demonstrates the company's recognition of the growing importance of renewable energy and the need to diversify its portfolio beyond fossil fuels.

The money will be used to fund research and development into areas such as solar, wind, energy storage, and advanced fuel cells. The investments will focus on renewable energy and low-carbon technologies, the development of new fuels and

energy efficiency solutions, as well as carbon capture and storage.

President, Chevron New Energies at Chevron, Jeff Gustavson, while speaking on the future of energy and Chevron's action to accelerate lower carbon solution at the Yahoo Finance studio said: "From oxygen and renewable fuels to CCUS and carbon offsets, we need all solutions in order to meet the growing demand for reliable, affordable and ever cleaner energy."

He added that, there are three key elements to the energy system. First is that, energy needs to be reliable to support energy security. Second, energy needs to be affordable to support economic prosperity and third, energy needs to be ever cleaner.

"We are focused on all of these aspects in both our traditional business and now, these new businesses."

The company also stated that it plans to reduce its emissions by 25 percent by 2035 and by 50 percent by

2050. The announcement came as part of a larger effort by the oil giant to transition to a more sustainable energy future.

Through this, Chevron aims to achieve a significant reduction in its carbon footprint by investing in clean energy solutions. Chevron's commitment to investing in new energy aligns with global efforts to combat climate.

Commenting on the development, Ritesh Parakkal, managing director at Harvard Business School, Iker II said that "this is a great initiative by Chevron to accelerate lower carbon solutions and bring about energy security, economic prosperity and better environment.

Also speaking on the new introduction by Chevron, Jeff Krimmel, Chief Strategist Officer at Pinnacle said: the initiative by Chevron is a welcome development and it will bear more fruits on hard to abate emission industries, and on economies that are difficult or impossible to electrify.

This investment is an

important step for Chevron as it acknowledges the increasing demand for cleaner energy alternatives. It also positions the company to stay competitive in a rapidly changing energy landscape, which is shifting towards renewable sources and away from traditional fossil fuels.

With this \$10 billion investment, Chevron is signaling a strategic shift in its business model towards sustainability and renewable energy. It highlights the company's recognition of the urgent need to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Chevron's decision to invest in new energy is a positive development for the energy industry and the planet as a whole. It demonstrates the potential for even the biggest oil companies to adapt and contribute to a more sustainable energy future.



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How Guinness, NB plc incurred N119.6bn losses in H1 2023

By Ralph Tathagata

Following the protracted and multidimensional currency depreciation in Nigeria, occasioned by the foreign exchange (forex) crisis, Guinness Nigeria Plc and the Nigerian Breweries Plc, two of the country's brewing giants have suffered humongous losses amounting to billions of naira.

The spiraling currency depreciation, the liquidity crisis in the forex market – which manifests in the acute shortage of forex in the official window, and the volatility of the exchange rate that creates considerable uncertainty and unpredictability for investors have in no small measure contributed to the erosion of their profit margins – because not all the additional cost could be passed on to consumers.

While Guinness Nigeria Plc recorded a N49 billion in exchange rate losses according to the information contained in its full-year results for the period ending June 2023, Nigerian Breweries Plc reported an exchange rate loss of N70.6 billion for the second quarter of the year that ended June 30th, 2023.

For Guinness Nigeria, the loss per share declared was N8.29 kobo versus N7.15 earnings per share a year earlier. For Nigerian Breweries, the loss per share was N4.6 and the losses were a result of the unification of the exchange rate which has led to forex losses



upon the revaluation of its dollar-denominated loans.

Also for Guinness Nigeria, the revenue for the year was N229.2 billion +10.9% YoY; gross profit was N78.1 billion +7.5% YoY; operating profit was N23.3 billion -2.3%; net finance cost N45.4 billion +20040.1%; loss after tax was N18.1 billion -216.1%; loans and advances were N63.7 billion vs N31.3 billion YoY; cash generated from operations was N57.3 billion vs N38.9 billion YoY, while cash in bank was N92.1 billion vs N69.1 billion; the dividend declared is N15.6 billion compared to N1 billion YoY, and the DPS is N7.14 per share +1452%YoY.

The forex depreciation led Guinness Nigeria to a loss of N18.1 billion, its first full-year loss since 2020 when Covid-19 ravaged company financials.

The key highlights of

Nigerian Breweries' 2023 Q2 results include: net revenue of N154 billion +13% YoY; gross profit of N68.4 billion +21.5% YoY; operating profit of N26.6 billion +119.7% YoY; net finance cost of N77 billion +970.8%; pre-tax loss of N50.2 billion; gross margins of 44.4% versus 41.3% YoY; operating profit margins of 17.3% versus 8.9% YoY and a working capital of N318.6 billion. It's important to add that the losses did not impact cash as the company still has a healthy cash balance of N34.9 billion. However, its negative working capital suggests it has to find money to repay its loans when they fall due within a year.

The current losses are likely to impact full-year profits considering that NB also reported a profit after tax of N13.1 billion last year (2022). So far, NB has reported

back-to-back losses in the first two quarters of 2023 after reporting a loss before tax of N17.4 billion.

While each of these dimensions of losses has a diverse impact on the economy, the protracted currency depreciation and forex crisis have far-reaching implications for major economic players such as Guinness Nigeria and the Nigerian Breweries which includes high cost of production because of the high import dependence of Nigeria's manufacturing sector for imported raw materials, high operating costs across businesses in practically all sectors of the economy, and low sales and turnover because of the increase in price and effect on demand.

JOHN AJAYI: AN EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL @60

By **Ralph Tathagata**

Ever heard the phrase “60 is the new 40”? While that may sound biologically and literally impossible, it’s meant to highlight the very real phenomenon of being productive, a continuing and innovative presence in the workforce even at 60.

The above poser and its ensuing explanation encapsulate the life of John Ajayi, a.k.a Omo Ajayi, a legacy journalist who has spent over three decades of his sojourn on earth, practising a career that gives joy to his heart and soul.

Born on June 12, 1963, in Ijan-Ekiti, in Gbonyin Local Government of Ekiti State in Southwest Nigeria, Ajayi, known for his visionary and highly focused journalism, marketing and public relations acumen, graduated from the University of Lagos with a Bachelor’s Degree in English Language. In his quest for more knowledge and to prepare for future endeavours, he obtained a PostGraduate Diploma in Journalism at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, (NIJ) Ogba. Lagos and later a Master’s Degree in Political Science, from the same University of Lagos.

A consummate professional,

Ajayi worked with prominent media firms in Nigeria, particularly in the print media, distinguishing himself as a well-sought-after journalist, covering the wide spectrum of business beats, features and later the political desk where he was once posted to the Governor’s office as a State House Correspondent by THISDAY Newspapers. He cut his journalism teeth at TheNEWS magazine, where he was first employed as a Proof Reader on the Sub- Desk. He later moved to THIS DAY Newspapers upon the completion of his Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism as a Staff Writer where he also introduced the Media page column of the Newspaper.

Meritoriously celebrated as an investigative journalist, and a very hard-working news hunter, Ajayi is known for delivering breaking news and exclusives that have positively lifted the profession.

In his drive to move beyond the established mark and



do something extraordinary, Ajayi took a very bold, surprising and decisive decision in 2003 that stunned industry watchers and even his family by floating his own media outfit, MARKETING EDGE Publications Ltd. His bold decision to call it quit with a paid employment even at a much younger age was seen as a risk too grievous and ambitious.

The focused publication's objective as envisioned and moulded by Ajayi is aimed at promoting the brands, while expanding the frontiers of marketing and advertising knowledge for all the players and practitioners in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) sector. This initiative offers the IMC group the first and novel opportunity to embrace and identify with a news platform that solely deals with the industry happenings, developments and growth. This media group has today metamorphosed into a multi-channel media news outfit that cuts across print, online, broadcast and OOH; and with a subsidiary, Media Edge, that is into 360-degree marketing communications and brand management consultancy services.

In further pursuit of the vision, Ajayi, in 2013, signposted the 10th anniversary of the company with the flag-off of an annual two-in-one event: the National Marketing Stakeholders Summit and the Brand and Advertising Excellence Awards, an event which, on the one hand, galvanizes the industry to brainstorm on a contemporary and topical issue in an effort to extend the frontiers of knowledge in the business of brand management and the management of the brand business as well as provide the environment for stakeholders engagement to chart the way forward for the industry.

The awards event, on the other hand, is a platform that honours outstanding product, corporate, institutional, and personality brands across marketing communication and other sectors. The two-in-one event has since grown to become another pace-setting and torch-bearing initiative which, over the last ten editions, has enjoyed a consistent rise in profile and equity, both locally and internationally.

In 20 years of establishing MARKETING EDGE, John Ajayi, a Fellow of the National



Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, FNIMN, has truly developed the publication as a likable brand reputed as the authoritative source of news, events, and happenings in the IMC sector. As far as Ajayi is concerned, the vision remains very green, as ever-green as the water plant by the river bank.

It is no secret that the magazine and, indeed, the print media industry have had to cope with some significant changes in recent years. From declining print sales to advancement and incursion of the social media and digital technology, it is fair to say that the print industry is verging on extinction and looks very different

now to what it did 20, or even 10 years ago. What remains of print journalism is shifting, morphing into a loose web of digital outfits populated by a corps of young freelancers, citizen journalists and keyboard hustlers, Twitter fiends and social media soothsayers. Gone are the packed days of the newsrooms. And gone, in many cases, is the journalism of the olden days as technology and innovations have disrupted the trade and the profession.

Despite the shrinking of the sprawling lattice of the newsroom and the extinction of several publications in the Nigerian media landscape too



numerous to mention, Ajayi as a publisher, has continued to strategically and creatively navigate the media ecosystem with exceptional courage, innovation and creativity. His audacity and can-do spirit inspired him into replicating the MARKETING EDGE in print with MARKETING EDGE On TV, broadcast version of the print in partnership with TVC and WAP TV,

In 2017, John Ajayi was inducted into the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), an umbrella body for Nigerian top editors and media elites. In 2022, Brand Journalists Association of Nigeria (BJAN) recognised and honoured him for his immeasurable contributions to the growth and development of journalism profession. The association conferred

him with the Industry Torchbearer award (Brand Journalism) in recognition of his pioneering, pace-setting, and continued torch-bearing credentials in birthing and nurturing the genre of journalism which is now recognized, respected, and celebrated as brand journalism.

The NUJ national body added more feathers to his cap with a milestone award recognition as one of the Media Icons in Nigeria. John Ajayi was bestowed with this award and honour alongside media gurus and icons.

It must be recalled that the earlier days of this veteran journalist and workaholic's venture into media entrepreneurship weren't a bed of roses but tough and tedious, as initial efforts to get sponsors and investors failed woefully. Most

regrettably, the few who were keen showed reluctance to part with their money on the media enterprise when the die was cast for them to represent their stakes with funds back-up. Indeed, they pulled out within some months! In Ajayi's own words: "At the point when we thought we had investors ready for our business, no sooner did we kick off after business registration than they pulled out."

For Ajayi, those were the most glooming and harrowing days in the life of the business. Most significant, he would recall that one of the "reluctant investors" said, John Ajayi, if MARKETING EDGE fails, you have failed, if it succeeds, you have succeeded". That singular development, despite how unpalatable, has continued to goad and inspire the publisher in relentless pursuit of higher ideals and goals for the magazine.

Simply put, MARKETING EDGE is a story of an individual's audacity in the face of adversity and a man who braved all the odds to prove the nay-sayers who thought that the enterprise would collapse within one year wrong.

We are grateful to God today, for giving us a man in Ajayi's mould and personae who has been impacting positively on the Nigerian media landscape with innovative and brilliant ideas ever imagined in this part of the world. Interestingly, MARKETING EDGE will be celebrating 20 years of its operations in September this year, having redefined brand journalism, a new genre of journalism which "John Omo Ajayi" as fondly known in some circles pioneered in the annals of journalism practice in Nigeria.

For those who work closely with John Ajayi, the fountain of his innovation and ideation never runs dry. There is no sign that it is going to do so any time soon either. As we celebrate this indefatigable journalist and exemplary entrepreneur with an insatiable appetite for excellence, may 60 years of age mark the starting point of the best he has to offer his family, his community, his state, his country and the world at large. We wish you growth and prosperity in all aspects of life.

Images of **JA@60** Celebration





My Advertising career has been most fulfilling - Omisore

Honourable (Chief) Ipoola Omisore who turned 75 years recently is any journalist's delight. This is so because this advertising icon, politician, educationalist and community leader is an engaging and magnetic personality. When he speaks on his first love, advertising, he does so with the conviction of an oracle.

In this interview with MARKETING EDGE, Chief Omisore relives his life trajectory as a professional advertising professional cum entrepreneur, past president of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, OAAN, a two-time member of the Lagos House of Assembly; and his impactful role as a community leader. Excerpt:

How will you describe your career sojourn?

In those days, WNTV was the oldest and first television in Africa. I was there as a commercial officer, and I was the most qualified person in that department and I was the toast, but I learnt that active advertising was not there.

The officer in charge would be scheduling commercials, such as inserting tapes where they were being used. It was a combination of radio and television, but I had an unforgettable experience which I still remembered today and I laughed. It was a commercial, PZ Industries, sent a new film to us which I didn't preview, and even if I had previewed it, I would have still used it. It was Joy Soap, it had a semi-nude lady, with bikini and bra, and I slotted it and the following morning, the military governor of the western states, colony Njenibewo.... sent soldiers to pick us up, we were tortured and were asked to look at the sun for one to two hours. I asked what I had done. Their response was that I was showing porn film, and I told them that it was a commercial from PZ. They insisted that it was porn, and that we have been caught. They released us at 5.00pm, and I said enough was enough. I resigned, they were even trying to split the station into two, it became NTA Ibadan, Oyo State Broadcasting Service radio



Before it was combined, both radio and television, despite setting up these things, I still left because I just came back from

England, and to be tortured, I saw it as very unprofessional and annoying.

How will you assess your tenure as past President of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN)?

It is a great privilege to look back at my contributions in the agency as the past president of OAAN

While at the agency, the association, APN, now AAAN, at old Yaba road saw my brilliance, they co-opted me into their education committee, publicity committee among those who trained practitioners through their training committee and I was able to introduce several courses. I am happy that I contributed in large capacity, it became a novelty for advertising practitioners in core advertising to introduce outdoors. The Media Link people were in the same office together, the late Kole Ademulegun of blessed memory. I and another colleague decided to join them and formed Adspace Limited. As the managing director, we became fire brands, Media Link was leading, we were following. We inherited an association called OAACAN, Outdoor Contractor Association, but in those days, the word contractor connotes commission agent and in that light corruption, so we changed it to Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, OAAN, and I became the publicity secretary, the first and was committed to it for several years, and because of my knowledge from the advertising school, I also became the chairman of the education committee.

I was training their managers, artisans, directors, and even had seminars. It was beautiful.

All those things that I should have used for my personal gain, that is my weakness, but I believe in institutional building. I forgot myself, otherwise, today I should be more celebrated, but I thank God. I had a business problem with a broken partnership, Adspece died and I set up another one called Outdoor Communications Limited, I was the Managing Director. When I went into advertising, no proper attention was given. But what I am trying to say is that, I became the vice president, while Jascular Oyekan, he is late now and may his soul rest in peace, was the president. In 2002, I became the president, in Abuja, at the general election, and my presidency, the records are enormous. It is yet to be beaten, I am not bragging. During my presidency, I had a lot of firsts, and I capped it up with the founding of the Muzaka Outdoor Advertisers Association in Lome Togo. I have practitioners from Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast

and Benin. We met in Lome and I became the first president, while other positions were shared across country members. I was able to attract their attention and we got a letter of recognition from ECOWAS. This was because I found out Nigeria was spending so much on ECOWAS, but there was no commercial gain for Nigeria's spending. We reasoned that Nigeria was getting saturated with the outdoor, that we can spread our investment across the continent. As president of OAAN, we invested in research, and also held our posters award

When Malam El-Rufai was minister in Abuja, he trying to pull down our boards, I confronted him, and he was able to grant access to OAAN members but the greed and indiscipline in our business made some of our members to go and meet him and say no, don't give to them, do it yourself, it can pay you more.

As the president, I was able to woo top public office holders like governors to be our patrons. People like President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, we made him a patron in 2003, Chimaroke Nnamani, former governor of Enugu state, Former Kano State Governor, Ibrahim Shekerau and across the various states. They saw themselves as patrons and so there was no aggression on OAAN.

Since I left, a lot of things that I did which made the association stronger were neglected. I gave OAAN a legal bite, they were pulling down our boards in Oyo State and I took the government to court and if the court judgment had been followed, we would have been stronger than what we are today. We got a 272 page document judgment against Oyo State.

With the pronouncement, they were given N2, 000,000 damages to pay us. It stated that no state government has rights over federal roads, that no state government has power to take over local government functions but unfortunately, Kole Ademulegun, my successor (God rest his soul) did not follow that judgment, so we lost out. On a serious note, when I look back, I see myself as an institutional man, one who created institutions and power in the advertising industry. As president, I became a fellow even before I became president of OAAN and other positions just to serve.

How would you want OAAN to handle the issue of road concession with Lagos State government having experienced such with Oyo state when you were OAAN president?

OAAN's problem is self-inflicted. I will just say that OAAN gave itself out. Like the proverbial cock that has the red comb on its head, other animals were running away from it, referring it as a fire, but the cock allayed their fears, assuring them that it's not fire, don't look at it like that, it is soft and since that day, the fox has been going after all cocks today. It takes boldness to wrestle with government

The moment outdoor went into electronics, it opened the door for non professionals to invade the sector today, it is no more about professionalism but who has the money to buy sophisticated products such as digital LEDs.

Why did you quit the industry?

Today, I am an educationalist, because it is good to invest into what you have interest in. When I was a member of the House of Assembly, I instituted a lot of scholarships, I set up a n ICT center and equipped the primary school in my area with computers. These caught the attention of some observers who reported to the government and I was singled out with lots of educational awards in 2012 by the government. This inspired me to set up a school at the Ogun state border with a very premium quality for both primary and secondary. Today we are one of the best 10 in Mathematics.

I now spend my time on political services and community engagement and development. In the area where I come from, I was the chairman of CDA, I was the second vice chairman for the whole council for 2 years. Till today, I am a member of the community, I am a grass root personality. I was installed as a chief in my own town in 1991 when I was barely 40.

What advice would you give to current players in the industry?

My advice to them is that they should not price themselves out of the market. They should not be afraid of the government. They should stand up for their rights. They should resist any attempt to pull down their boards. When the government threatens you and you know the power of the law backing you, stand up for it. OAAN has been very timid, sleeping over their rights. Fear kills one faster. I want to enjoin youths that if you have anything that will be beneficial to others, do not hesitate to do so. Use your talents to impact others positively. Pursue your goals because cowards don't get to the top.

Hyundai, Kia face investigation, lawsuits in America



Connecticut has launched an investigation into the allegations of failure to equip vehicles with industry standard anti-theft technology levied against Hyundai America and Kia America. It is believed that this has made it very easy for Kia and Hyundai brands to be stolen thus propelling spike in car theft in America.

William Tong, the Connecticut Attorney General, announced the consumer protection investigation recently, saying the companies' failure to properly equip their cars has led to "an erosion of public safety" and the

need for law enforcement "to divert scarce resources to increased patrols and theft investigations."

"We've got viral videos all over the internet teaching kids how to hotwire these cars in a matter of seconds and glorifying reckless driving that has resulted in injuries and multiple deaths nationwide," Tong said in the press release announcing the investigation.

If the investigation confirms the allegation, the car companies face the risk of lawsuits from the state and perhaps class action from their American customers.

Meanwhile, New York has

sued Hyundai and Kia earlier in the month on similar grounds to Tong's investigation.

According to the State, the two auto companies have caused a "public nuisance" by failing to properly equip the cars and protect against theft.

Kia and Hyundai settled a customer lawsuit in May for \$200 million and said they would issue software upgrades to 8.3 million U.S. vehicles without anti-theft immobilizers; for cars that couldn't accommodate the upgrade, they would give \$300 for owners to buy theft deterrents, like steering wheel locks.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in February there were at least 14 crashes and eight fatalities reported related to the trend of stealing these vehicles.

Stealing Kias and Hyundais emerged as a trend on TikTok last year when videos started going viral of people cracking the steering column and hotwiring the cars using USB

cables; USA Today reported some cities this year have seen Hyundais or Kias account for 60% or more of their auto theft reports, though official data isn't yet available.

Tong's investigation isn't the first step Connecticut has taken to address the increase in thefts of Kias and Hyundais. In March, Tong and other attorneys general asked the companies to address the safety concerns, pointing out the software updates they were working on weren't compatible with all vehicles. Then, in April, 19 attorneys general nationwide asked the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for a federal recall of the cars, though that hasn't been granted. Tong's new investigation calls on Kia and Hyundai to turn over "records and information regarding susceptible vehicle(s) sold in Connecticut"—including the companies' decision making and in

H+K Strategies clinches Genesis global PR account

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

Hill+Knowlton Strategies has clinched Hyundai premium brand Genesis Global PR duties following a competitive review.

The battle was among four global PR firms that pitched for the assignment, which is valued in the high six-figure range. Incumbent firm, Zeno was one of the participants, along with H+K Strategies, MSL, and Current Global.

A Genesis spokesperson confirmed the decision but declined to provide further details. It is understood that

the remit covers global lead PR duties from Genesis' Seoul HQ, and local market support across Europe and the US.

Genesis expects to reach the 1m milestone in terms of sales this year, after reporting more than 900k units sold as of March this year.

Launched in 2015, Genesis sales have risen steadily in recent months and now account for 5.4% of Hyundai's total global sales.

Hill+Knowlton(H+K) Strategies bagged the foremost global business magazine,



Campaign PR Network in the year 2020 in the EMEA region.

According to campaign magazine, Hill & Knowlton had demonstrated agility to create some noteworthy campaigns. This included NHS #MakeItBlue, where, over

the course of just two days, it arranged for 111 sporting and entertainment venues, national landmarks, and historic buildings in the UK to turn blue through the #LightItBlue initiative.

Aralepo joins Forbes Finance Council

By Zion Rufus



Renowned finance professional, Oluwatoyin Aralepo, has been appointed as an official member of the esteemed Forbes Finance Council.

This prestigious recognition underscores her exceptional expertise and leadership in the finance industry.

Scott Gerber, the founder of Forbes Councils, expressed his delight, stating, “We are honored to welcome Toyin Aralepo into the community.”

She boasts an impressive educational background, holding a first-class Accounting degree.

She is also a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and the Institute of Information Management of Africa. Furthermore, she is an esteemed alumna of the London School of Business and Finance (LSBF).

With over 15 years of experience across banking, telecommunications, and fintech, Aralepo possesses a diverse skill set that includes finance strategy and business partnering, financial planning and analysis, audit and business assurance, and financial controls and governance.

Currently, Toyin Aralepo serves as the Director of Finance, Programs FP&A at the Mastercard Foundation. In this crucial role, she leverages her expertise to drive financial strategies and provide valuable insights to support the foundation’s programs.

Prior to joining the Mastercard Foundation, Aralepo held the position of Director Corporate Excellence & Programme Management at IHS Towers. Her responsibilities included organizing and prioritizing critical strategic, financial, and operational information, enabling effective and efficient decisionmaking by the CEO, among other key functions.

Aralepo has established herself as a commercially stute business leader and finance professional, accumulating over two decades of experience. She has earned recognition as a strategic finance expert, renowned for building robust financial structures and leveraging her expertise in finance management, business development consulting, financial modeling and analysis, and investments management.

Throughout her illustrious career, she has also made significant contributions in the banking, telecommunications, and fintech sectors. She served as the Head of Budget at United Bank for Africa, where she was responsible for overseeing budget preparation and consolidation for over 400 business offices.

Additionally, she held pivotal positions as the Commercial Controller and Financial Controller at Airtel Nigeria, managing a substantial portfolio exceeding US\$1 billion. Her contributions included supporting cost-saving initiatives that resulted in significant financial savings for the organization. Aralepo also served as the former Chief Financial Officer of Cellulant Nigeria, contributing to the company’s financial stability and growth.

Driven by her passion to support businesses, particularly SMEs, Aralepo founded the Africa Finance & Strategy Hub. This platform provides businesses with access to professional financial

management skills and tools that assist them in understanding, managing, and scaling their operations.

Through her guidance, Aralepo helps companies establish sustainable financial structures for profitable growth and become investor-ready. She has trained over 5,000 business owners through various platforms such as She Leads Africa, Keystone Bank, Leap Africa, Wema Business School, FCMB SheVentures, and more. She also serves as a passionate and unassuming entrepreneurial role model, especially for young women.

She actively mentors aspiring professionals through organizations such as WIMBIZ, Tony Elumelu Foundation, and eChquest STEM Academy. Furthermore, she is the esteemed author of the book titled ‘How to Attract Billion Dollar Investors.’

Adesua Dozie emerges Exxon Mobil’s vice chair person

By Felicia Nwosu



Adesua Dozie, the quintessential trailblazer has emerged as Exxon Mobil’s first female Vice Chairman of the Boards of Exxon Mobile Affiliate, which includes Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPN) and Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited (EEPNL) She shared the rare recognition on her LinkedIn handle, noting that her appointment as Vice Chairman of Exxon Mobil Affiliated in Nigeria, has truly been a humbling experience.

“I couldn’t be more grateful to those who have expressed their words of prayer, support and congratulations – both privately and publicly. Your support really means a lot and I appreciate all the messages and well wishes. Throughout my life I have been the beneficiary of support and mentorship from an array of incredible men & women who’ve dedicated time and energy to nurturing me; guiding me when I was unsure which path to take, praising me when I had done a good job. They saw a spark in me and took time to help me develop in my career. These are qualities I have tried to match in my own life and this accolade is also shared with all those who have played a part in this achievement. Thank you.

“I will also take this moment to thank all my colleagues and leaders at work; my beautiful and supportive family and friends; and of course God – who has been loving, guiding and consistent always. ALL Glory to God without whom nothing is possible.”

Expressing his confidence on Dozie’s result-oriented capabilities, Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State congratulated Mrs Dozie through his write-up on his Twitter handle.

“It is always an honour to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our very own. Today, I heartily congratulate Adesuwa Dozie on your well-deserved appointment as the Vice-Chairman of the Boards of ExxonMobil affiliates in Nigeria – Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited and Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited. You have been a worthy Edo ambassador as you continue to highlight the excellence that resides within our great State. I am assured that your tenure will be marked by even greater achievements and continued advancements in the nation’s energy sector.”

Prior to her present position and role, she was an Executive Director and General Counsel for MPN and EEPNL. Dozie joined MPN in November 2019 as General Counsel and was elevated to the position of Executive Director on December 30, 2019.

The newly appointed vice chairperson who assumed office this June has several years' experience which she would bring to bear on her current engagement. In her new role, Dozie will be at the helm of affairs spearheading some key initiatives towards overall growth of the company.

Uzoma Dozie has held other several high profile positions across board such as CEO of Diamond Bank. She is currently the CEO and founder of Sparkle Bank.

This prominent leading woman boardroom impresario is a senior Legal Advisor with over 20 years of experience as a trusted leader for multinational companies across Africa in a diverse range of industries.

She holds a law degree from the University of Buckingham, United Kingdom and a Master of Law from Cornell Law School, New York. She has been a senior legal advisor with over 20 years of experience for multinational companies across Africa in a diverse range of industries.

Nwabuisi named GM at Optimum Exposures

By **Zion Rufus**



Optimum Exposures Limited, a prominent subsidiary of Troyka Holdings, has appointed Anthony Nwabuisi as its General Manager and Head of Business.

Bringing over a decade and a half years of expertise and a wealth of experience in marketing, brand management, and communications to his new role, Nwabuisi's impressive track record extends further back in his career.

As a seasoned and passionate marketing and brand communications expert who has made significant contributions to various organizations throughout his career, Nwabuisi's most recent position was as the General Manager of Media Strategy & Planning at Algorithm Media Ltd., where he played a crucial role in driving business growth and implementing innovative strategies.

Prior to that, he had served as the Deputy VP of Marketing at Konga Group Nigeria Limited, overseeing marketing and communications, brand management, and more.

At Sundry Markets Limited, Nwabuisi held the position of Head of Marketing. In this role, he was responsible for coordinating and managing all marketing, advertising, and promotional activities. His strategic mindset and creative leadership contributed to the development and expansion of the customer base, resulting in a remarkable 25% growth.

As the Branch Manager for Marketing at Fidelity Bank Plc, he achieved remarkable results, including reducing operational costs by 25% through effective stock level management and increasing revenue by N20 million. His implementation of a new reporting system led to a 25% increase in risk asset efficiencies, further solidifying his reputation as an innovative thinker.

During his tenure as the Head of Brand Management and Communications at Fidelity Bank Plc, Nwabuisi played a pivotal role in developing a bank-wide communication cycle plan to

enhance visibility and brand representation. He successfully managed the production of various advertising campaigns across multiple media channels, including TV, radio, newspapers, and online platforms.

With a remarkable educational background, Nwabuisi has equipped himself with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in the field of marketing and communications. He holds a Master's degree in Marketing and Communications from VIU – Universidad Internacional de Valencia and a Master's degree from Rome Business School in Italy.

Furthermore, he completed a Mini-MBA program at Takeda Institute in Boston, USA, and a certificate course on Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies from Harvard University. He is a fellow of the Institute of Management Specialists (IMS) and an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM). He also holds membership in the prestigious Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) in the UK, showcasing his commitment to professional excellence.

Lagos NIPR lauds Adeniyi's appointment as Customs' chief

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**

The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Lagos Chapter, has congratulated Adewale Adeniyi on his recent appointment as the Acting Comptroller-General of Customs in Nigeria.



It would be recalled that President Bola Tinubu made the appointment alongside other new service chiefs.

In a congratulatory statement by the chapter, Mrs. Comfort Nwankwo, the Chairman of the Lagos NIPR, expressed her admiration for Mr. Adeniyi's accomplishments and the impact he is expected to make in his new role.

Mrs. Nwankwo, while highlighting Mr. Adeniyi's outstanding contributions to the institute and his vision for the customs sector, said: "Your appointment not only reflects your personal accomplishments but also serves as an inspiration to countless professionals in the field of public relations and beyond. Your outstanding contributions to the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, both as the Vice President and as an esteemed member, have been invaluable in shaping the future of our industry. We are confident that your vision and expertise will bring about positive transformations within the customs sector, enhancing its efficiency, transparency, and public trust."

Also in the statement, the Institute pledged to stand united in support of Mr. Adeniyi and committed to assisting him in his new role. The institute believes that Mr. Adeniyi's appointment will positively impact the customs sector and contribute to the growth and development of Nigeria as a whole.

"Mr. Adeniyi's appointment as the Acting Comptroller-General of Customs showcases the endless possibilities for growth and success within the field of public relations," the statement added.

Adeniyi vowed, during his inaugural briefing after taking over office from his predecessor Col. Hameed Ali in Abuja, to shatter all trade facilitation obstacles and put in place a new culture of consultation and compliance.

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