

Nigeria's advertising industry value hits N605.2bn - PwC

# MARKETING EDGE

Promoting the brand idea.

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# Embracing trends, changes in the marketing landscape

**M**arketing and marketing communications industry are undergoing profound transformations driven by technological advancements, shifting consumer behaviours and regulatory changes. Embracing these changes, staying abreast of global trends and adopting innovative strategies, remain the surefire means agencies and industry professionals can position themselves for success in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

From prioritizing privacy and authenticity to harnessing the power of data, video content, influencer partnerships, Artificial Intelligence-driven solutions and other tech-driven innovations, the key for brands and businesses to stay ahead lies in embracing change, adapting to new realities and delivering exceptional experiences that resonate with consumers in the second half of 2024, and beyond.

As the Q2 of 2024 draws to a close, a lot of changes are being recorded in the advertising industry. According to a new forecast from ad media giant GroupM, global advertising spend will grow 7.8 percent in 2024 to \$989.8 billion and increase a further 6.8 percent in 2025 to \$1.1 trillion. The updated estimates are up from a December 2023 projection for a 5.3 percent ad gain this year.

Following the expected momentum, the industry will surpass the trillion dollar milestone in 2025, one year earlier than previously forecast by GroupM. The report also stated that Digital ad gains will be the engine of growth in 2024 and 2025.

What's more, advertising spend is forecast to grow by 5.0% globally in 2024, according to the latest dentsu Global report, a mid-year update examining major shifts in ad spend by geography and by media channel across 56 markets. Overall, an anticipated \$754.4 billion will be spent worldwide by the end of the year. This increase year-over-year is not only more rapid than the 2023 forecast, which projected 3.3% growth year-over-year.

The report added that, in the top 12 markets, inflation-adjusted growth is projected at 2.6% in 2024 (vs. 5.2% at current prices), as media inflation shows signs of coming down but remains high, especially for TV and sought-after digital video formats such as social video.

The 2024 dentsu Global Ad Spend Forecasts report further highlighted that digital is expected to remain the fastest growing channel at 7.4% to reach \$449.3 billion and 59.6% of global ad spend. Substantial ad spend increases are forecast for retail media (+32.0% YOY, 17.7% three-year CAGR to 2026), paid social (+13.7% YOY), and programmatic (+10.9% YOY), while paid search (+7.7% YOY) and online video (+6.7% YOY) are set to maintain strong growth.

Although its share of spend was predicted to slightly contract to 22.5%, television was forecast to rise by 2.6% and attract \$170.0 billion in investments in 2024. Growth is driven by spend in connected TV (+24.2% YOY), as streaming platforms ramp up their advertising offerings, and is currently enough to counter the decline in broadcast television spend (-0.4% YOY).

While print advertising spend is forecast to continue to contract (-2.6% YOY), the other media channels are expected to increase in 2024, with out-of-home growing by 4.2%, audio by 0.4%, and cinema by 4.8%.

In Nigeria, however, the value of advertising industry rose to N605.2 billion in 2023, from N216 billion in 2018, according to the latest PricewaterhouseCoopers' (PwC) report. The report compiled on behalf of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and various advertising industry associations, outlined the advertising sector's contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), its value, and its multiplier effect.

PwC projected that the advertising value will reach N893 billion by 2028, in the report titled 'Economic Contribution of the Marketing Communications Industry to the Nigerian Economy'. The report stated that the top three contributors to advertising spend between 2018 and 2023 were cable television (25.5 percent), digital media (18.5 percent), as well as creative and content production (13.4 percent).

The report highlighted economic pressures, regulatory reforms, and competition from global players as challenges faced in the industry.

Also, the study said rising digital trends, opportunities for local and international partnerships, the ability to leverage technological innovations like artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics, Nigeria's large and culturally diverse market, and the potential for innovative, locally-tailored marketing approaches are some of the strengths of the industry.

In this edition of *MARKETING EDGE*, readers are treated to the most compelling industry stories, reports and insights. Gracing the cover of the magazine are top agency interviews and exclusives from MediaFuse-Dentsu Nigeria and SO&U Group, including other stories that will keep readers spellbound and give them value for their subscription money.

Readers will also learn how rapid technology advancements have led to an almost immeasurable increase in the number of customer touchpoints along the customer journey. The result has been a plethora of options that overwhelm most marketing teams. Grab a cup of coffee, sit back and peruse this edition of *MARKETING EDGE* with relish. Happy reading!



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# Nigeria's advertising industry value hits N605.2bn - PwC



The value of Nigeria's advertising industry rose to N605.2 billion in 2023, from N216 billion in 2018.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), which made this known in a report compiled on behalf of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and various advertising industry associations, outlined the advertising sector's contribution to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), its value, and its multiplier effects.

PwC projected that the value will reach N893 billion by 2028.

The report titled 'Economic Contribution of the Marketing Communications Industry to the Nigerian Economy' was unveiled on recently by ARCON.

Femi Adelusi, chairman of the multiplier study committee, who presented the report, said for every N1 spent on marketing communications in Nigeria, the nation's GDP increases by N16.5.

"The marketing communications sector has emerged as a formidable economic powerhouse. The study estimates that for every N1 spent on marketing communications in

Nigeria, the nation's GDP increases by a staggering N16.5 – a multiplier effect that highlights the industry's substantial value contribution," Adelusi said.

He said the projected N893 billion by 2028 will contribute "a significant 1.08 percent to Nigeria's GDP, up from 0.7 percent in 2023".

The chairman of the committee also noted that the top three contributors to advertising spend between 2018 and 2023 are cable television (25.5 percent), digital media (18.5 percent), as well as creative and content production (13.4 percent).

"The proliferation of cable TV, driven by its diverse content offerings and affordable package options, has captivated a wide consumer base," he said.

Additionally, the surge in digital media spend, fueled by increased internet and mobile penetration, as well as the rise of social media and video-on-demand platforms, has reshaped the marketing landscape," Adelusi said.

According to Adelusi, the popularity of smartphones, social media engagement, and the appeal of real-time online content is improving

the influence of creative and content production.

"The investment by video-on-demand platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime in Nigerian productions, particularly in the thriving Nollywood industry, has further bolstered this segment," he added.

The report highlighted economic pressures, regulatory reforms, and competition from global players as challenges faced in the industry.

However, the study said rising digital trends, opportunities for local and international partnerships, the ability to leverage technological innovations like artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics, Nigeria's large and culturally diverse market, and the potential for innovative, locally-tailored marketing approaches are some of the strengths of the industry.

PwC outlined key recommendations to accelerate the industry's growth and development, some of which are creating specific, measurable goals for the sector's GDP contribution, encouraging strategic alliances among industry players, and utilising analytics tools to track spending patterns and consumer behaviour meticulously.

Commenting on the report, Olalekan Fadolapo, ARCON director general (DG), stated the need to quantify the industry's size and impact as an economic enabler.

"We cannot continue to guesstimate the size of the industry. This report lays the foundation for us to assess the advertising space and its multiplier effects on the economy every year going forward," he said.

Fadolapo mentioned that the findings of the report underscore the industry's paramount role as a catalyst for consumer demand, business expansion, employment, and innovation across sectors.





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# Nigerian Creative economy to add \$100bn to GDP by 2030

By **Seun Johnson**

The Nigerian Creative economy is expected to contribute a whopping \$100 billion to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030.

This was stated on Tuesday by the Minister of Art, Culture and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa-Musawa while addressing the large gathering at the 2024 edition of Ojude-Oba festival held in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State.

The Minister revealed that the eight-point agenda she introduced in the ministry is already driving the pursuit of the projection.

According to her, one of the things they considered in terms of potential of the industry was its ability to create an economic expansion. She disclosed that her team came up with a very ambitious goal of trying to contribute at least \$100 billion to increase the GDP by 2030 or 2031, and this has the potential to accelerate economic growth.

Speaking on the rationale behind the creation of the ministry, Musa-Musawa explained that President Bola Ahmed

Tinubu created the ministry with the aim of diversifying the nation's economy.

"The president is committed to diversifying from our normal means of revenue, which is oil. In that diversification, he created this amazing ministry – art, culture, and the creative economy – the first of its kind in Nigeria.

"When I got this job, I decided to approach it from a ground zero point of view because I really felt that not much had been done in the space, to create a fortifying sort of industry-specific structure.

"The basic things that are needed to put a foundation were not there, so we approached it from a ground zero perspective," She noted.

Also touching on her eight-point agenda, the Minister stressed that the agenda centres on making Nigeria a global creativity hub, engaging in skill acquisition for members of the industry and capacity building so that they will be better positioned for job creation.

She highlighted capacity building/training of individuals across the sector; public-private partnerships (PPP) for



infrastructure renovation/construction; partnerships and collaborations; job creation; GDP contribution; cultural heritage; soft power; and stakeholder engagement as part of the agenda.

On job creation, she hinted that her ministry is hoping to create at least two million jobs by 2027.

In her words: "Part of our own mandate is to engage the younger demography in almost everything that we do. This is all part of job creation, and I have all my agencies pursuing that goal."

She however revealed the plans of this administration to establish creative hubs in the six geo-political zones of the country.

## NACCIMA appoints Odufuye as Vice Chairman of digital economy, gaming, others

By **Felicia Nwosu**



In a move that recognizes his exceptional leadership and commitment to driving innovation, Dele Odufuye has been appointed as the Vice Chairman of the Digital Economy, Gaming, and Sports Betting Trade Group by the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA)

Throughout his illustrious career, Odufuye has recorded numerous milestones, demonstrating his dedication to excellence and his ability to shape industries. As a seasoned industry veteran with decades of experience, he has held significant roles in several major companies, leveraging his expertise to

drive growth and deliver unparalleled value.

As Vice President and Country Director at Cavista Holdings, Nigeria, Odufuye has been at the forefront of shaping the technology industry, fostering innovation and growth. His leadership positions in various companies, both locally and internationally, have earned him numerous accolades and recognition as a serial entrepreneur, mentor, and investor.

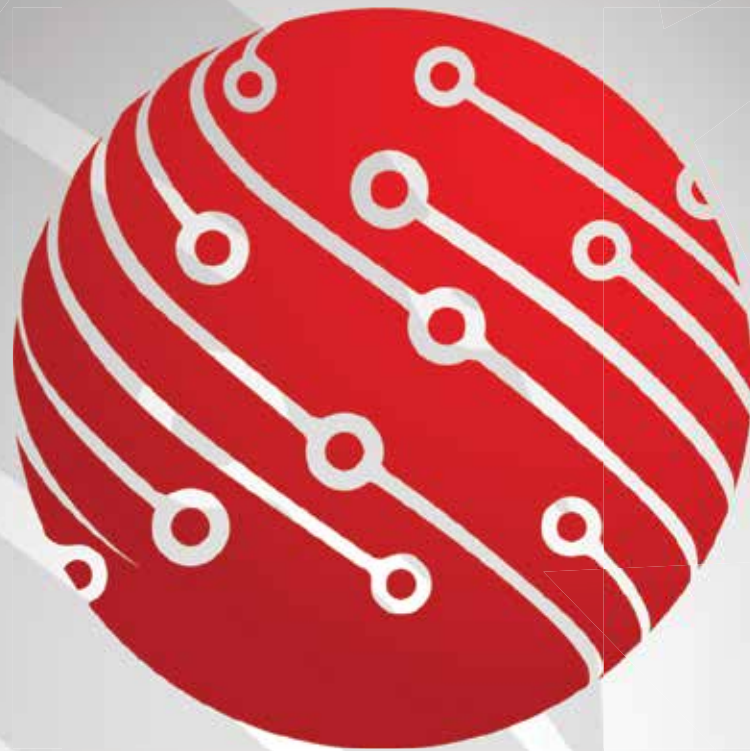
In his new role, Odufuye is poised to apply his unwavering determination and passion to drive the growth of the digital economy, gaming, and sports betting industries in Nigeria. *Cont'd on pg 14* ▶▶



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# Anietie Udoh represents MARKETING EDGE at Cannes as Nigerian agencies register

Anietie Udoh, an Executive Director with MARKETING EDGE Publications Ltd stands as a proud delegate of the leading marketing and advertising magazine at the on-going prestigious Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity holding in Cannes, Paris.

His participation as a VVIP under- scores the height and essence of MARKETING EDGE commitment to Cannes Lions as a media partner as well as the publications unwavering commitment to promoting the brand idea by expanding the frontiers of marketing and advertising knowledge.

His presence and coverage of the event along the huge turn- out of Nigerian agencies contingents and corporate players from different sectors of the Nigerian economy also sign-posts a renewed interest by the Nigerian agencies and other corporate players to benchmark their practice and skills with global standards.

Similarly, MARKETING EDGE recognition as a media partner with a VVIP status is a clear testimony of the publications' significant contributions and growing influence on global industry affairs as a market leader and thought leadership positioning.

Commenting on the development, Publisher / CEO of MARKETING EDGE Publications ,Mr John Ajayi

said " the presence of Nigerian agencies at Cannes, as revealed by the different category of dynamic leaders and young talents is a remarkable achievement for the industry and the nation, noting that Anietie's participation almost three years consecutively exemplifies the magazine's ongoing commitment to global excellence and innovation.

He stated further that "Anietie's contributions have not only amplified MARKETING EDGE's voice but also secured its place on the global stage, ensuring that Nigerian marketing and advertising expertise garners the recognition it rightfully deserves."

The marketing expert's journey with MARKETING EDGE is marked by a profound dedication and visionary leadership that has significantly elevated the magazine's profile

Throughout the years, the seasoned professional has been a driving force in building goodwill, fostering industry relationships, and positioning the magazine as a key player on the international stage.

His relentless efforts have ensured that MARKETING EDGE remains at the forefront of promoting the brand idea, a concept deeply embedded in its mission and pay-off line.

MARKETING EDGE has consistently championed the brand idea, shaping the integrated marketing communications and



advertising landscape in Nigeria. The magazine's commitment to delivering insightful analysis and comprehensive coverage of brand news extends beyond national borders, offering readers a global perspective on industry trends. This expansive vision has been significantly propelled by the marketing manager's strategic initiatives and unwavering commitment.

At Cannes, his representation of MARKETING EDGE is more than symbolic; it is a testament to the magazine's dedication to global engagement and partnership building. His

presence at this esteemed festival highlights the strides Nigerian agencies are making in the international arena.

There is no doubt that his ability to build lasting relationships, expand global networks, and drive MARKETING EDGE's mission forward is truly commendable.

As he represents the magazine at Cannes and beyond, the brand enthusiast continues to inspire, paving the way for future growth and success for MARKETING EDGE and the broader Nigerian marketing communications industry.

## Cont'd from pg 56 ►► NACCIMA appoints Odufuye as Vice Chairman of digital economy, gaming, others

His appointment is a testament to his exceptional leadership quality and dedication to hard work.

Notably, Odufuye has a proven track record of mentoring younger generations, instilling in them

the values of innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership. His commitment to shaping the future of the industry is evident in his DNA, and his new role will undoubtedly provide a platform for him to continue

inspiring and empowering the next generation of leaders.

With his extensive experience and proven track record, Odufuye is well-positioned to lead the premier association, providing insights and guidance that will be

pivotal in shaping NACCIMA's growth and expansion. His appointment is a significant milestone in his career growth trajectory.



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# ADVAN puts Nigeria on global map, wins WFAs presidential award



*From Left to Right Mr Samuel Akinrimisi Treasurer, Mrs Ediri Ose-Ediale CEO, Mr Osamede Uwubanmwen President, Dr Tola Bamigbaiye-Elatuyi Executive Member, Adeola Emmanuel Publicity Director and Roseline Abaronye Executive Member, all of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) at a recent press briefing in celebration of winning the prestigious World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) award for Industry Excellence*

The Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) has put Nigeria on the global map after clinching the Presidential Award of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA).

Excited about the win, the association also unveiled a 6-Point Roadmap its newly elected executive plans to embark on for the next two years. This was revealed during the press conference held on Tuesday 11 June 2024 at its secretariat in Lagos.

Speaking on the awards, the President of ADVAN, Osamede Uwubanmwen said the award is evidence of the associations contributions to the the global advertising and marketing communications landscape through its advocacy, innovative programmes, and initiatives.

He explained that ADVAN was given a special award for seeking to tackle one of the most persistent challenges facing marketing around the world, the poor briefing that leads directly to less effective creative output. He pointed out that agencies complain that poor briefs from brands impact the outcome of their creative and campaigns so they proffered solutions to the challenge.

“Our entry that won is on our training on brief writing. The reason for this is that some of the things we get as a response in marketing are that agencies always complain that the kind of briefs that advertisers send to them are the reasons they didnt get the required result. We see brief writing and training as something we needed to do, so we gathered young brand and marketing managers, we trained them and we also gave the outstanding ones award”.

He added “This award is for Nigeria and

we are happy that as an Exco we are able to put Nigeria on the global map and this is the first time we will receive such an award. We hope to receive another one next year. We understand that the reward of good work is more work and we are pledging to do more “.

Recall, that the association launched an annual brief writing training and competition targeted at young brand and marketing managers with the goal of infusing new creative methods in brief writing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of campaigns. The winners were showcased at the ADVAN Awards for Marketing Excellence.

Launched in 2010, the annual Presidents Awards of WFA recognises initiatives run by national industry associations that help advance the marketers agenda and contribute to positive change in the marketing industry and society.

Other 2024 winners are Union des marques, France: Oneframe, bvA, the Netherlands: The NMO Listening Survey, SverigesAnnonsörer, Sweden: Campus Marketing, ISBA, UK: Responsible Retail Media Framework” and ANA, USA: AIMM Diverse Media GrowthFronts.

Tin a statement issued by WFA, the WFA President and Chief Marketing and Communications Officer at Mastercard, Raja Rajamannar disclosed that “Each of these six local initiatives exemplifies the power of collaboration to tackle big issues facing our industry and establish best practices for marketers everywhere. A sincere congratulations to this years winners.

Reeling out the plans of the new ADVAN executives, Akinrimisi Olabode Samuel, Treasurer, ADVAN said the association is set to make more impact and build on the achievement of successive administrations with its 6-point plans. The plans include: It will provide specialized support for Marketing Professionals. It will also provide valuable marketing resources to all members, which will include information on marketing effectiveness, and Real-time answers to on-the-job issues via a website poll from members and the WFA network.

Others are providing templates for Media, Creative, and AI agencies relations, etc; Commission ADVAN committees of members and non-members to drive initiatives; Providing comprehensive education and support for SMEs; and Lead Strategic Stakeholder Engagement.

Also, Uwubanmwen added that his administration will continue to hold industry engagements with stakeholders and work with them to take the association to greater heights.

Recall, that the association elected new executives during its Annual General Meeting (AGM) held recently. The new executives are Osamede Uwubanmwen, Commercial Director, Biogenerics Nigeria Limited who returned as President for a second term; Yusuf Murtala, Marketing Director, Coca-cola was elected 1st Vice President; OTega Ogra, SSA Digital Engagement, Communications & New Media Strategy emerged 2nd Vice President; Ediri Ose-Ediale returned as CEO/Executive Director; Akinrimisi Olabode Samuel, Deputy Marketing Director, CWay Foods and Beverages was elected Treasurer; and Adeola Emmanuel Amosun, Group Media Manager, Tolaram as Public Secretary.

Also, the new Executive Council Members include; Roseline Akure Abaraonye, Head of Marketing, Hayat Nigeria Ltd; Tolu Olanipekun, Head of Marketing, Mouka foam; Omolara Banjoko, Marketing Manager, Friesland; Dr. Omotola Bamigbaiye-Elatuyi, Marketing Director, Pladis; and Maurice Igugu, CMO, Sterling Bank.

As the umbrella body for advertisers in Nigeria and a member of the WFA, ADVAN represents a diverse group of leading corporate entities that utilize advertising and marketing to promote their goods and services. Some of ADVANs members include MTN, Unilever, Nestle, BUA Group, FirstBank, Airtel, Guinness Nigeria, Coca-Cola, and many others.



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# Advertising, Public Relations, and related services market on track to hit a trillion-dollar valuation

By Zion Rufus

The advertising, public relations, and related services market is poised to reach a monumental milestone, with its valuation set to hit a trillion dollars. The market, which includes a broad spectrum of services such as advertising agencies, media buying, public relations, and direct mail advertising, has demonstrated robust growth over recent years.

Growing from \$878.26 billion in 2023 to \$922.29 billion in 2024, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.0%, projections from research company Research and Markets indicate that the market will continue to expand, reaching \$1,101.03 billion by 2028 at a CAGR of 4.5%. This sustained growth can be attributed to several pivotal factors, including the expansion of media channels, globalisation, the digital revolution, increased brand-building activities, political campaigns, and shifting social and cultural dynamics.

Key Drivers of Growth

## Digital Marketing Dominance:

The rise of digital marketing has revolutionized the advertising and PR landscape. With the integration of data analytics, companies can now deliver highly targeted and personalized advertising campaigns. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become vital tools for reaching vast audiences, leveraging users' data to enhance ad precision.

## Technological Advancements:

Advancements in technology, especially artificial intelligence (AI) and programmatic advertising, are significantly enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of advertising. AI tools help businesses analyze consumer behavior, predict trends, and optimize their marketing strategies. Google's introduction of new AI advertising tools in 2023 exemplifies how



technology is driving industry growth by offering more engaging and personalized ad experiences.

## Video Content Surge:

The demand for video content continues to rise, driven by platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. Video advertising is proving to be a powerful medium for storytelling and brand engagement, attracting a larger share of advertising budgets.

## Emphasis on Sustainability and CSR:

Consumers today are more socially and environmentally conscious, prompting companies to integrate sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) into their brand messaging. This trend is reshaping marketing strategies and fostering a deeper connection between brands and their audiences.

## Data Privacy Concerns:

With growing concerns about data privacy, companies are adopting more transparent and ethical practices in their advertising strategies. Compliance with regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is becoming crucial, influencing how businesses collect and utilize consumer data.

## Diversity and Inclusion:

There is a heightened focus on diversity and inclusion in advertising and PR campaigns. Brands are increasingly recognizing the importance of representing diverse communities and promoting inclusive values, which resonates well with modern consumers.

The proliferation of social media platforms has been a game-changer for the advertising and PR industry. With an estimated 4.62 billion social media users worldwide in 2022, the potential reach of social media campaigns far surpasses that of traditional media. The continuous increase in social media usage, with 424 million new users in 2021 alone, underscores the significance of these platforms in driving market growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to the advertising, public relations, and related services market. Global lockdowns and economic slowdowns led to a temporary dip in demand. However, the market has shown resilience, rebounding as businesses adapt to new realities and leverage digital channels more effectively. The pandemic is viewed as an aberration rather than a reflection of underlying market weaknesses.

The market is dominated by key players such as Google LLC, WPP PLC, Publicis Groupe S.A., Omnicom Group Inc., and Interpublic Group of Companies Inc. These companies are at the forefront of innovation, continuously developing new products and services to stay competitive. Asia-Pacific holds the largest share of the market, followed by Western Europe. The regions covered in market analyses include North America, South America, the Middle East, and Africa, with a focus on major countries like the USA, China, India, and the UK.

Looking ahead, the advertising, public relations, and related services market is set to embrace several key trends. Increased digital advertising spending, AI integration, sustainability in brand messaging, programmatic advertising, and the adoption of chatbots and conversational marketing are expected to shape the industry's future. As technology continues to evolve, the precision and effectiveness of advertising will reach new heights, further propelling market growth.



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**MediaFuse-Dentsu  
Nigeria empowers  
young talents  
for global  
competitiveness,  
*says Okeke***

**DENTSU AGYLE  
NIGERIA  
THRIVES ON  
DRIVING MEDIA  
INNOVATION  
- Ogaziechi**

**DENTSU OOH  
NIGERIA'S WORK  
EXCEEDS STANDARD  
SET TO BENEFIT OUR  
CLIENTS  
- Oputa**

**MEDIA FUSE  
YOUNG LIONS  
WINNERS  
SPEAK**

# MediaFuse-Dentsu Nigeria empowers young talents for global competitiveness, says Okeke

*Emeka Chris Okeke, Group Chief Executive Officer, MediaFuse-Dentsu Nigeria, is not your ordinary run-off-the-mill professional. He is a distinguished professional in the world of Integrated Marketing Communications, (IMC) having made an impressive impact in that industry. Okeke's wealth of experience and pedigree in the IMC space are evidently robust and impressive. He successfully led the network in Nigeria into winning numerous awards and recognitions, both locally and internationally, and a key promoter of the Dentsu network in Ghana where he is a Director and Shareholder.*

*In this interview, Okeke speaks extensively about MediaFuse-Dentsu Nigeria, especially its feats at the Young Lions Awards, as well as the future of the IMC industry and other sundry issues. Excerpts:*







**C**an you talk about Cannes Lions where some of your talents won awards while others will be part of the jury; and what is the implication of all of this for your agency?

The Cannes Young Lions competition, as you know, is an academy where young people and young talents are encouraged to make entries and compete with the works they believe are outstanding. It is also an offshoot of Cannes Lions, and therefore, our young talents competed in three separate categories, which are the creative, precisely on design and won. Representatives of Dentsu Creative Nigeria won the best design for the Young Lions Academy competition.

Similarly, a hybrid media team from Dentsu Performance Nigeria and Dentsu Location Services Nigeria entered the media category and competed for best strategy and innovation and won. Stephanie Ume and Joseph Uwandu

teamed up to make this happen.

It didn't stop there, Dentsu Agyle, a content and production agency of our network under the leadership of Marian Ogaziechi competed in the film category and won with an outstanding production they did as a CSR for the Rotary Club regarding Club Foot.

As for the implication, there is the cost implication which I don't like because it means that all the winners will have to go to Cannes. This is because the Young Lions organizers over the years had stated that every team that won would have to attend the Cannes Lions itself to compete on the global stage. Thus, we're sending these six youngsters to Cannes this year. They are all going, if visa permits, to make a strong army of eight members of staff to Cannes this year, from our group here in Nigeria alone.

Essentially, they will have access to those key events. They will have access to the Hall of Fame where the best of works are showcased, and they're going to compete on some projects during the competition at Cannes. That's the kind of stage we want to expose our young talents.

We are therefore proud to say that, this

reinforces what we have been saying that we are not only a media agency network. We don't compete only as a media agency network but as a total marketing communications solutions provider.

In Nigeria, we offer full services through our media agencies (Carat, Iprospect, Dentsu X, Redstar International) with specialized service agencies in content, (D'Agyle Systems), Digital Marketing (Dentsu Performance), and location services (Dentsu OOH) as well as Integrated creative services (Dentsu Creative).

Interestingly, Dentsu Creative in less than five years already has its work competing with established creative agencies and going as far as having a major national indigenous brand shortlisted for the Cannes Lions Award in 2023.

Dentsu Creative Nigeria is today the creative agency of the year for the just-concluded Pitchers Award with two grand prix awards and numerous gold, silver and bronze medals.

**In the past, digital agencies used to be apathetic about**

**international appearances, awards or competition; but recently, it's like there has been a kind of renewed excitement, a new interest in international competitions and global creative contests. What would you say is responsible for this?**

I don't think it's a lukewarm attitude because they know what being on the international stage means; and the prestige that comes with it. But two or three factors do work against their interest.

In the first place, it is a case of "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak". The flesh in this context is resources; and resources here means the talents to deliver a globally competitive work.

The makeup of the Cannes Lions Jury, for instance, is largely "Snow white" as some people would say. What this means is that the culture of the people judging the works at Cannes is completely different from where we are coming from. They don't understand Africa and therefore, if you have been winning Gold and Grand Prix within the local space here, and your creative bent is about local culture, it would be difficult for the jury at Cannes to understand you. Cannes is very global but far less Afrocentric than European, Asian and American.

With this in mind, creative works from Africa will need to be truly outstanding and ready to break diverse cultural prejudices to make an impact at the Cannes Lions Award.

The second thing is cost. If you have to enter for Cannes, you will pay in Euros. If you have to travel, you have to either buy the Platinum, the Gold, the Silver, or the Bronze tickets, which you also pay for in Euros - hundreds and in some instances, thousands of Euros depending on the size of your delegation. You have to pay for flight tickets. You also have to feed your team to attend the Cannes event. Above all, you have to enter for works that are really competitive; and be able to speak and break the clutter of pervasive excellence that the Award is known for. Really, it's like walking a very tightrope. You must stand out; and you must appeal not just to your base, but to the international creative community, to win even a broken Bronze.

Unfortunately for Nigeria, we haven't had any indigenous brand that has won the

Cannes Lions award given the constraints in the marketing landscape in terms of priorities of local advertisers.

If you want to create works to take to Cannes, you have to struggle between what the brand priority is in Nigeria, Nigerian audiences; or whether the brand will be able to navigate that thin line between global acceptability of the work and cultural acceptability.

This is why the combined effort of Dentsu Creative Nigeria and Dentsu sub-Saharan Africa put up a very good showing with the Trophy DNA campaign which was shortlisted for the Cannes award in 2023.

For the first time, a Nigerian brand was shortlisted out of the Dentsu Creative Nigeria and Dentsu, Sub-Saharan Africa stable. This is a remarkable feat for a young creative agency that is less than five years old.

Anecdotal to the above, is the fact that creative agencies need to get the opportunity of clients who will want to put in the money to go the whole hog and create a piece of work that can compete internationally.

So, as part of our efforts to prepare for that grand stage, we believe it is not only the creative directors and business directors that should be sponsored to Cannes and therefore we're investing in these young people to attend the Cannes Lions Festival this year, aside from their senior colleagues. The truth is that the more we expose them to international best practices that win awards, the better for us and the market at large.

**What you just said reminds me of a new development at Loeries where some Blacks are raising eyebrows about the dominance of white sentiments in their judgments. Do you see the need for the protest? How justifiable?**

Again, you would have to look at that from the lens of the global space and the cosmopolitan foundation upon which the Loeries was founded. Loeries came out of South Africa and we know the South Africa's image of a rainbow nation; and therefore it would be difficult to have pervasive indigenous Afro-cultural contests at the Loeries, even though you have the Black African population in the

majority.

For me, the Loeries is our mini-Cannes and it would be important to retain the diversity, the cosmopolitan nature and the sophistication that it shares. The moment you dilute it to one culture, it will lose that appeal of international standards, and of a competitive creative award. For me what we need is a creative protest in all aspects of contest and not only at the Loeries. It should also be taken to the Cannes Lions Festival. To stage a successful creative protest will require Africans to tell our stories in a manner that we don't lose our local essence, but also in a manner that should appeal to global creative diversity, which appears to be a complex code to hack.

Cannes and Loeries are not only for international brands. I want to see the day when a brand from Nigeria would compete in SA, Cannes, the UK and in the Middle East, etc, and win. The reason this may not happen so soon is that clients here are not too adventurous with what they want the creative community to do with their brands beyond the bottom-line objectives. It's a delicate balance to keep. But it is up to us (agencies) to keep lifting our game and telling our stories in the language, and more compelling creative manner that will help the stories resonate across creative civilisations and cultures.

**How did you really manage the 360-degree transformation of your agency which first started as a media agency because this can be very difficult for some people?**

I have been asked this question several times and I gave the same answer. But what probably I missed in earlier responses is that where MediaFuse-Dentsu International is today as a network in Nigeria and part of the global network, Dentsu; was part of the founding dream and the vision of the company.

I came from a media agency background as you well know in the industry; but I asked myself a couple of questions when I was setting out to start Media Fuse Limited. I reasoned that if the annual marketing budget of a client were to be a hundred naira, how much does a client spend on media versus how much the same client would spend on other arms of marketing communications? And it turned out that in my back of the envelope





calculation, the client will spend about 85 percent of his budget annually in multi-media communication channels.

That led to a second question. For a client, what should be more of interest between the one who spends 15 percent of his budget and another who spends 85 percent of his marketing budget? I will leave it to you to guess the answer, But I am sure that your guess could be as good as mine, in the given circumstances.

I realised also that the structure of the market has a role to play at the time we launched our services. The market was structured in such a way that every media agency came, and built on the systems that came from known creative agency networks. There were a few occasions in this market when a media agency was a stand-alone, and non-aligned to any of the established networks. However, we did some backward integration to bring full creative, full production into our full content, full tech, full performance and full media offerings.

So, what we simply did was to say to ourselves that over the five years of launching our services, we would not take profit from the business but reinvest all the money into developing the other arms of the communication practice because in reinvesting, we would need talents to drive our new service offerings, we would need office spaces, we would need training, we needed to travel to find partnerships, and glean experience from some of the best global practices.

Yes, we started with the media also knowing that having robust media accounts would give us access to robust creative, and digital opportunities which we leveraged.

It was therefore not too difficult for us to say to the client, besides the media, we have capabilities that will change how you approach the market. Give us a trial on this and see what we'll do. The clients gradually started inviting us to pitch their businesses for our new service offerings. So, we started with the closest one to

media which is digital creative and digital content.

We succeeded with Isobar on the digital creative but realised something was missing: We needed to go and play in the above-the-line traditional creative side of the business. We opted for partnerships to access talents to bridge the gap. To consolidate our gains, in October 2022, we decided to merge Dentsu Mcgarry Bowen and Isobar into a hybrid creative powerhouse, that houses both digital creative capabilities, creative content, tech creative capability, and robust consumer insights which are required in a forward-looking creative agency in this space, supported by data from our media practice.

### **Talking about the young Lions that are going to Cannes, Some of these guys belong to the Gen Zs, how are you able to manage their eccentricity?**

One thing I have said in some interviews in the past is that my generation in marketing communications is the luckiest. This is because we are what I call the Bridge generation. We were trained by the conservative professionals who cut their teeth in advertising from some of the best global advertising networks that have been around for generations. My generation ushered in the rapidly evolving digital ecosystem. We know clearly what the digital-world is looking for. We had the benefit of proper training in the traditional, above the line way of marketing communications and therefore in a position to fit into the two worlds and add value to the changing landscape. We just happened to be here when the evolution started, to become the Bridge between conventional marketing and the fast-paced world of digital ecosystems powered by data and technology.

That's why I call us the Bridge Marketing Generation. So it's easy for us to understand what the GenZs need, and how they think, better than the people who trained us. It is also easier for us to understand the devices they're using and what they want to do with the devices than the people who trained us and therefore are able to accommodate their eccentricity and adapt to the changes they want to embrace.

# Dentsu Agyle Nigeria thrives on driving media innovation

## - Ogaziechi

Marian Ogaziechi is the Managing Director of the Dentsu Agyle, an agency under the MediaFuse-Dentsu Nigeria Holding Company. In this interview with Seun Johnson, she explains how the agency drives media innovation, trading and investment management to ensure their clients are constantly ahead of their competition.

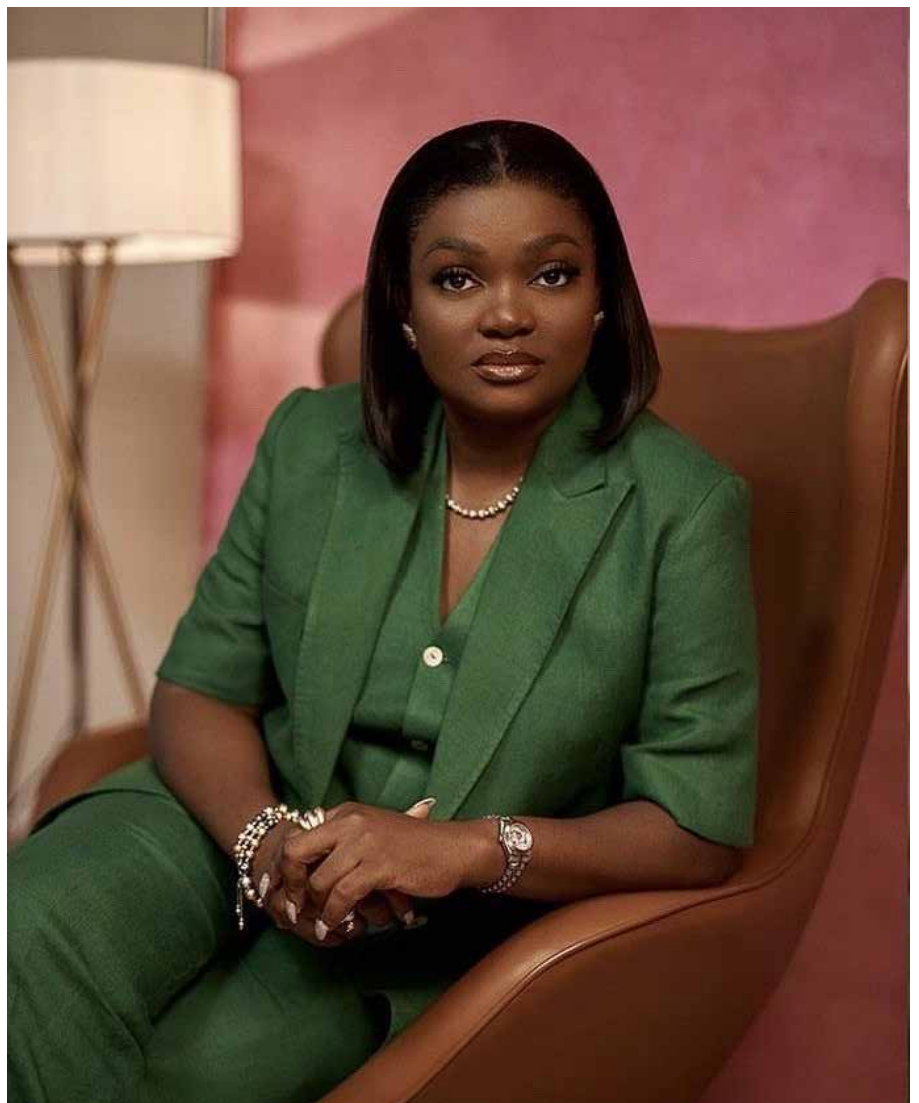
**W**hat is the inspiration behind the contest for this global competition by some members of your team?

First, these are young people, very talented people, and very restless people. Dentsu Agyle as a media innovative powerhouse allows them to explore and excel. We have been creating meaningful content, and we have a current movie that we're shooting for a brand. When the opportunity came, I asked a couple of them who are working on that account to see if they could try their creativity, their talent and a couple of things that they have learned from filmmaking. They did very well. They were very passionate about it. They wanted to do it.

I'm very happy that they won that category and we're the only ones representing Nigeria in the film category.

**How did your team approach the creative process from concept development to execution?**

Apart from the fact that they had the willing spirit to do it and to conquer, one of the things that came out clear for them was that they understood the creative process - that research is very important in





carrying it out because we had never done anything of that nature (Club Foot). They had never done anything like that so they researched and wanted to make it real. The brief was for them to come up with a video campaign on club foot.

So they took their time and did good research which helped the entire process. It was the bone of a lot of things that they did. They went to the hospital, researched, and interviewed those required. It wasn't easy but at the end of the day, the execution was seamless because they took their time to understudy the orthopaedic clinic that manages Clubfoot and I would also want to thank the orthopaedic clinic because they were very collaborative.

So, they understood the roles of research, collaboration and making good films from a creative standpoint.

### **Could you give us insights into some of the challenges they encountered and how you were able to overcome them?**

They encountered a couple of challenges in trying to get the right patients who were willing to do interviews. These were not just patients, they were people who were experiencing the issue around clubfoot, their kids and their parents. So we had a little challenge trying to get them to accept to grant the interview. They also had challenges trying to convince the hospital and also trying to get the necessary approval, because it is a Federal Government medical facility. But of course, at the end of the day, they surmounted it. Challenges help you get stronger.

### **What is the significance of this laudable feat for your agency and the creative industry at large?**

For me, it's a great deal. It's a great deal for us because this is the first time that we are being represented. Not just for the team in Nigeria, but I think for the team in Africa generally. This is the first time that people from the Dentsu Agyle team, the amplifying team will be represented at the Cannes Lions.

It's a big deal for us. It's also a big opening for us. There's something about working and not getting recognised and not getting rewarded. It doesn't encourage people. It's an encouragement to all the

work that we have been trying to do. It's a major feat for us and I would say that we're very excited about it and we hope that this will be the beginning of great things that will come out of the Agyle team.

### **In what way do you think it will impact your brand's reputation and market presence?**

In a couple of ways. Clients will now begin to see the kind of work we do because we've been pushing media innovation. We're developing a couple of properties as regards content and film. This would help us begin to do the case study around what we can do, and what we can offer our clients and also, it will begin to give us the credibility that we deserve for all the work that we have been putting in that sector for the past years that we've been operational.

This is going to open a lot of doors for us and we are very grateful for the opportunity. We are also very happy for that win. Of course, that's why we're in business. We're in business to make profit. We're in business to provide solutions. So this will be like a case study for us to also pitch to our clients as well.

### **What are some of the innovative strategies adopted in the campaign that contributed to this success?**

I think it's basically storytelling and creation. Telling stories in a way that is believable and also our competence in terms of filming and research. Our competence in terms of full production. End-to-end production in itself, research and also the tools that we use as well. Our tools help us a lot with talent management, storytelling, production and getting the right resources as well.

### **Going forward, how do you intend to build on this success for future projects?**

I attended a seminar some time ago and they said the reward for good work or successful work is more work. So, the truth is we're going to be doing more. We're going to be recruiting more people and our focus will be to solve clients' challenges. We are out there to provide media innovations in a solutions-driven manner for our clients. But we're going to do a lot more. And you are going to be hearing

about everything we're going to be doing.

What's your management philosophy in grooming young talents?

My philosophy is everyone has to be involved. No matter how young you are, everyone has to be involved. Collaboration is the key to everything that we do. So we don't sideline, we don't underestimate because the truth about it is that, the younger generation are the key to most of the successes that we record here. Because they are younger, they are open to new ideas. They are open to taking risks and they are very hungry to succeed.

I like to involve everybody. Everyone has to be involved and collaboration is always the key to success for us.

### **How capital-intensive was the Cannes venture? Do you have any plans for further amplification of what won you that award? Also, having said that you always ensure that every of your brands is kept ahead of the competition; and with the plethora of brands under your belt, how do you do that for every brand?**

I will start with the first question. Of course, with unstable forex, tickets are very expensive. It is an expensive venture, but you know, we're in a business of human service. I call it human service because it's the brain that works here. We're not buying, we're not selling. And if you're not able to invest in your people, you're not able to stay ahead of others. So for us, it's like training. And you can't equate the value of exposure in people, in building people, in building intellect, and also in growing your staff from an intellectual point of view. That's one. It's an expensive venture. But we're not complaining.

Then, on how we keep our brands ahead of their competition, we constantly do that which is why we pitch and win. I don't think that we have so many brands - because we want more. We're very ambitious people. And this way is the solution because we have the right resources. We have the right capabilities. We have the right support in Nigeria, outside of Nigeria and Africa, and in Europe as well. So we have the right people.

# At Dentsu Creative Nigeria, we bring excellence in all we do - Adekola

In this interview, **Funke Adekola**, Managing Director of Dentsu Creative Nigeria, speaks with **MARKETING EDGE's Oluwaseyi Lawal**. She shares the latest laurel won by her team and the Unique Value Proposition (UVP) that sets her agency apart from the crowd.



## What does this win mean to Dentsu Creative, and how does your team feel about the achievement and its impact on the agency?

This is our first major win since consolidating into Dentsu Creative from DMB and iSobar. It's a significant achievement for our young talents and positions us as an agency that invests in developing them. In a time of brain drain, finding and nurturing talent is crucial.

## What is your management philosophy in grooming young talents?

I emphasize that growth is a team effort, not just an individual pursuit. Like Ronaldo, who trained relentlessly to be the best, we aim for excellence in everything. This translates into how we work, live, and present ourselves.

## Going forward, how do you plan to build on this success for future projects?

We foster internal "friendly" competition to keep creativity flowing beyond our current projects.

## What were the core cultural traits that inspired the team to achieve this major feat?

Personal success and continuous learning are vital. Our weekly knowledge-sharing sessions encourage the team to share information and skills. In the communication industry, understanding various perspectives is key to connecting with different audiences.

## What role did collaboration play in achieving this feat?

Collaboration is essential. We leverage the diverse skills and perspectives within our team. Before finalizing any work, we seek feedback from colleagues to ensure it resonates with a broader audience.

## What is the significance of this laudable feat for the agency and industry at large?

This win signals a reawakening in the industry despite the brain drain. It shows that young, eager talents are stepping up and thriving, sending a positive message about the industry's future.

## What's your message to young creatives out there?

Make the pursuit of excellence part of your DNA. Strive for excellence in all aspects of life and work. It takes time and effort, but surrounding yourself with like-minded people can help you maintain high standards and support you when you falter.



# Dentsu OOH Nigeria's work exceeds standard set to benefit our clients - Oputa

**Chike Oputa**, the Managing Director of Dentsu Out-of-Home Services also known as Dentsu OOH Nigeria, in this interview with **MARKETING EDGE's Seun Johnson**, speaks about the agency's win at the 2024 Pitchers Award. He also reveals what sets his team's campaign apart from other entries in the same category at the globally acclaimed competition, including what makes the agency tick.



## What is the inspiration behind the context for this global competition by members of your team?

We have the ethos of ensuring that we do great work. However, it is not enough. You must put your work out there so that an independent and impartial body will be able to encounter and judge it, to be sure that you're doing great. So, it's imperative to ensure that the work we do meets global standards for us to enter it

in a global competition.

## How did you lead the young talents to excel in the contest?

Leading young talents is about mentorship and ongoing grooming, supervision, and training. The company provides a fertile ground for ongoing training, exposes young talents to opportunities, and gives them challenging tasks to do so that they can develop themselves. At the end of the day, it's all about ensuring that we do great work for our clients.

To answer your question directly, what we do is actually applied learning and experience-based learning whereby we provide an enabling environment where young people can come, learn new things, try out the ideas they have, and jointly help the clients succeed.

## What were the key creative strategies employed in the campaign that contributed to the success at the Pitchers Award?

There are different categories for the award. There is the creative bit and there is also the media bit. So, this is a lot in line with the media execution. There is a bit of creativity in media, but the core focus is on media. What we try to do? We ensured that we had innovative media ideas.

Media has gone beyond radio, TV, press, out-of-home, and digital. Media is how you engage with content daily. And you will agree with me that people, as consumers, do not consume media in silos.

I'm sure when you were on your way to this place, a lot of the things that you saw were communicated to you. And that is how we redefine media. We brought that level of creativity to blur the lines of traditional kind of media deliberation in a manner that cut through the clutter to ensure that we can reach the target audience for the campaign case study at every moment of their day. It's to ensure that the campaign will resonate and help the NGO - that was the beneficiary of the case study - to achieve its key objectives.

## Would you run us through how your team approached the creative process from concept development to execution?

I would have preferred the people who did it to do that. But I will try to do that

without taking credit for the amazing work that they've done.

What we did was to provide an enabling ground for them to bring their innovation to bear. However, this is what they did. When you get this kind of problem, the first thing you try to do is to understand what the key objectives are. When you understand that you have to map out a plan for achieving the key objectives. And they did that beautifully.

They identified what the NGO's objectives were and identified the most cost-effective, efficient, and creative ways to reach the target audience or key stakeholders to ensure that the objectives were met.

How were they able to do that? They had to do proper segmentation and mapping. They were able to map out audience clusters and define their demographic and psychographic needs. And we were able to target each of these clusters with specific and bespoke strategies that helped them reach each target audience.

It wasn't a one-size-fits-approach. It wasn't putting out something for everybody. It was undergoing some sort of segmentation that led to the mass personalisation of campaigns in a manner that spoke to different audiences. It was more effective and it hit at the heart of the matter.

### **Can you run us through some of the challenges you encountered during the process and how you were able to overcome them?**

Part of the challenge was that you typically need a lot of data to be able to do this. If you don't have data, you'll not be able to do the deep dive, the segmentation, or the psychographic analysis. The good thing about it is that at Dentsu, we invest a lot in data. Though it was a challenge, it presented us with a unique opportunity that the young people were able to leverage to give themselves an advantage in the process.

### **What is that unique thing that sets your campaign apart from other entries in the same category at the competition?**

What set us apart was part of the things I've discussed and what I will treat. Part of the things was that it was born out of

consumer insight, deep understanding of the consumer or the stakeholder. It was not just a mass campaign. It was a campaign that was specific and tailored to people. Hence, it was a lot more resonating. And it was backed by empirical data. That was the thing that gave them an advantage in the competition.

### **Can you highlight any innovative or unconventional strategies used in the campaign that contributed to the success at Cannes Lions?**

What we did was to ensure that we did what other people did not do. And that is to go the extra mile in terms of audience understanding. Now, audience understanding is the bedrock of any campaign that you do. But typically, a lot of people don't go into understanding the in-depth motivation for behaviors. So, it wasn't like we did something unconventional. It was that we went far and beyond what was written down to dive deep and understand the consumer a bit more. That way, the campaigns were a lot more resonating.

### **Going forward, how do you plan to build this success for future projects?**

So amazing! This helps us to know that we're on the right track in terms of the investments that we are making in people data and tech.

For us, this will accelerate the investments that we make to ensure that the work we do keeps meeting and exceeding the standard set. And it will be beneficial to our clients, the category, and the country at large. If we do great work, a lot of clients that are not in Nigeria will want to invest in Nigeria in terms of output. In the marketing space, Nigeria is not renowned for doing a lot of creative work. And it means that the investments in terms of production, in terms of creativity, goes to other places. The more we put our people on the map and do great work, the more it pays the country and this industry. And automatically, it benefits us and our clients.

### **You just said that Nigeria is not yet renowned when we talk about creativity, which is a bitter truth. What can the critical stakeholders do and how fast should they do it to put Nigeria on the global stage of creativity?**

There is no shortcut for excellence in anything that you do. Now, why our people in this part of the divide have been able to do what they are doing is that there is a drive for excellence, to do things the right way, to do things properly, and to put their best foot forward.

For us here, that hasn't always been the case for various reasons which we will not get into.

Now more than ever, we are in a global marketplace of ideas. You are not competing with somebody in Niger Republic or Kenya or Ghana. You are competing with people from everywhere in the world that look like you and me, but happen to reside in London. They are black people like you and me or white people. They are humans who have access to cutting-edge technology and can do the things that you are doing cheaper and better than you.

For a long time, we have already defined competition narrowly as agencies in the country. So you will win local awards because you're competing with yourselves. It's imperative for us to redefine who we think our competition is. Our competition is the global creative capitals of the world which include London, Dubai, New York, the Madison Avenues, etc. We need to start benchmarking the work that they do. If you don't do that, you're only going to remain local champions because your frame of reference is local.

Now, is it possible? Yes, it is possible. Tech is not a means of differentiation. Africans have unique perspectives and unique stories to tell that people all over the world are interested in. We need to tell our stories well. We can't out-tech the first-world countries. Even though we are competing with them, we need to change the rules of the game. India is doing quite a lot in terms of creativity, but they are using locally relevant things to elevate their creativity. So, it is incumbent on us to define who our competition is and use our locally relevant stories to elevate the creative narrative.



# MEDIA FUSE YOUNG LIONS WINNERS SPEAK



## STEPHANIE UME

### How does it feel participating in a global contest like Young Pitchers Cannes Award?

Taking part in the Young Pitchers Cannes Award feels incredibly exciting. It feels amazing to be part of a global competition, alongside so many talented people from all over the world. It's both humbling and empowering to have the chance to share my ideas and creativity on such a big stage.

### What was your motivation and inspiration to enter for this contest?

My motivation to participate in the Young Pitchers Cannes Award stemmed from the honour of being nominated alongside other talented individuals from my workplace. The prospect of learning from industry leaders and connecting with fellow professionals

was inspiring and encouraged my active involvement in the contest.

### Did it ever cross your mind that you will emerge one of the premium winners when you first entered this contest?

Honestly, yes. I had high hopes of emerging as one of the winners. I was confident in the strength of our ideas and the dedication my teammates and I put into our pitch.

### What mileage do you envisage from this award contest?

The connections made with industry professionals and fellow participants during the contest can serve as a valuable network for future collaborations or mentorship opportunities. Additionally, the experience gained will undoubtedly strengthen my skills in communication, creativity, and problem-solving, which are invaluable assets in my career advancement.

### Which category did you participate in and won?

I participated in and won the media category alongside my teammates.

### What is the implication of this win to you and the agency?

Personally, it serves as validation of my skills, creativity, and dedication to my profession. It boosts my confidence and reaffirms my commitment to pursuing excellence in my work. Professionally, this win elevates the agency's reputation and credibility within the industry. It showcases our ability to deliver innovative solutions and positions us as leaders in our field.

### What motivates you as a professional?

Seeing the results of my efforts and knowing that I've contributed to the success of a project, or the growth of an organization gives me a sense of fulfilment and drives me to continue striving for excellence.

### Who are you? Can we meet you?

My name is Stephanie Ume. I am a performance driven marketing professional, boasting over four years of experience in driving business growth across various industries. I have demonstrated my expertise by successfully managing brands in FMCG, Food and beverages, Technology, Banking, and Oil & Gas categories, steadily rising through the ranks along the way.

I draw inspiration from successful women who have paved the way in their respective fields. I live by the principle that continuous progress is the catalyst for extraordinary success. This philosophy shapes my approach to life, inspiring me to embrace growth.

Beyond professional accomplishments, I am a multifaceted individual with diverse interests. You might catch me binge-watching a TV series to unwind after a long day or enjoying quality time with friends over drinks. Alternatively, I can be found delving into the endless rabbit hole of social media or immersing myself in the intrigue of true crime and unsolved mysteries.

## JOSEPH UWANDU



### How does it feel participating in a global contest like Young Pitchers Cannes Award?

It's an amazing feeling. The idea of being in a position to represent your country on a global stage feels surreal indeed. It's a blend of excitement, anticipation, and a bit of nerves knowing that you are competing on an international stage alongside some of the brightest talents in the world. It's a humbling and inspiring opportunity to showcase my skills and creativity on a global platform.

### What was your motivation and inspiration to enter for this contest?

An opportunity to apply myself and bring my creativity and technical skills to the fore? Count me in! My motivation also stems from my fascination for advertising and the power of creativity to captivate audiences and drive change. Another interesting factor is that I was disqualified last year, so this was my opportunity to right the wrongs and prove a point.

### How does it feel to participate in the contest?

It feels both thrilling and challenging. It's an opportunity to test my skills against top talents around the world and push myself to new heights.

### Did it ever cross your mind that you will emerge one of the premium winners when you first entered this contest?

When I first entered for this contest last year, I didn't necessarily expect to emerge as one of the winners, however I approached the opportunity with optimism. But this time around, the scar from last year's disqualification was still fresh in my mind, it

## MEDIA FUSE YOUNG LIONS WINNERS SPEAK

served as an extra level of motivation. With the level of preparation and self-application of me and my partner, I was confident of a podium finish this year.

### How do you or would you assess Young Pitchers Award?

The young Pitchers Award is a fantastic platform for young creatives and media practitioners to showcase their talent on a national and international stage. It provides valuable exposure, networking opportunities, and recognition within the industry.

### What mileage do you envisage from this award contest?

Winning the Young Pitchers Award opens up a world of possibilities for me and my career. It is a badge of honour, a stamp of approval from industry leaders and a validation of my creative abilities. I intend to leverage this award and recognition to further my professional development, expand my network within and beyond the industry, and pursue exciting opportunities.

### Which category did you participate in and won?

I participated in the keenly contested media category of the Pitchers Young Lions Competition.

### What is the implication of this win to you and the agency?

This win holds significant implications for both me and my agency. It showcases our collective talent, creativity, and dedication to excellence. It enhances our reputation within the industry and positions us as leaders in our sector. It also opens doors to new clients, projects, and collaborations, further fuelling our growth and success.

### How do you see this award impacting on you and your career growth?

Winning this award is a major milestone in my career growth. It boosts my confidence, credibility, and visibility within the industry. It opens doors to new opportunities, challenges, and collaborations that will help me continue to grow and evolve as a creative professional.

### How will you assess your agency for granting you the privilege to be part of this great global contest?

I am incredibly grateful to my agency for granting me the privilege to represent them in this global contest. Their support, guidance, and mentorship have been instrumental to this success. I am proud to

be part of a team that values creativity and excellence and I am excited to continue contributing to our collective success.

### How do you see the agency's growth and market leadership now and in future?

I see my agency's growth and market leadership as a testament to our commitment to excellence and innovation. We have a talented team of media practitioners and professionals who are dedicated to pushing boundaries and delivering outstanding results for our clients. I believe that our agency will continue to thrive and evolve, remaining at the forefront of the industry now and in the future.

### What impact do you want to leave behind as a member of this winning group?

I want to be an inspiration to others to stay motivated, work hard, and to never stop learning. I also want to be remembered as someone who brought the most recognition to this competition by becoming a part of the first Nigerian team to secure a podium finish on the global stage. So help me God.

### Who are your role models?

My role models are individuals who have achieved success through hard work, determination, and a commitment to excellence. One of them is an industry leader and an authority in his area of expertise, and also my mentor, Chike Oputa, Managing Director, Dentsu Location Services, Nigeria. He inspires me to push myself beyond my comfort zone, take risks, and pursue my passions with unwavering dedication. I also follow, global media and entertainment personality, Trevor Noah with a lot of interest and admiration. His successes and accomplishments remind me that anything is possible with the right mindset, diligence, and a willingness to persevere in the face of challenges, all whilst being charming and agreeable.

### What motivates you as a professional?

I am driven by a passion for excellence. I thrive on challenges that push me to think outside the box, collaborate with others, and push the boundaries of what's possible. On slower days, you will likely catch me alone, behind the scenes, reinventing a wheel I am not satisfied with.

### Who are you? Can we meet you?

Aside being a Pitchers Award Young Lions winner, I am an Associate member of the

Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) in the UK and an affiliate member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON). My professional journey in marketing and media communications has been marked by innovation and recognition. Over the past six years, I have worked collaboratively to conceive groundbreaking marketing solutions, which has earned accolades at Industry awards and recognition at Media Agencies' Personalities Awards for my exceptional contributions to the industry.

My expertise extends across diverse industries, including Alcoholic and Non-Alcoholic beverages, finance, education, dairy, and betting. In each sector, I've tackled unique marketing challenges, leveraging my skills to drive impactful solutions that align with clients' business objectives. Presently a media manager, I am saddled with the responsibility of overseeing media services provided to different clients, amongst which are Nigerian Breweries and Stanbic IBTC to whom I chiefly provide services as a Location marketing specialist.

Beyond traditional marketing roles, I've embraced cross-functional responsibilities as a data analyst. By meticulously gathering and analyzing empirical and qualitative data and transforming them into actionable insights that empower informed decision-making processes for stakeholders across multiple sectors. Leveraging my proficiency and expertise in relevant tools, I consistently strive for excellence in delivering results.

Outside the boardroom, I find joy and inspiration in travel and exploration, immersing myself in new moments and creating memorable experiences. I recharge by spending time with friends who share my values and interests. We enjoy gaming, catching up on football matches, and engaging in lively discussions where we exchange progressive ideas, all while savoring refreshing beverages together.

In summary, I'm a versatile marketing professional with a proven track record of delivering results across industries. Whether I'm devising innovative strategies, analyzing data, or pursuing my personal interests, I approach each endeavor with enthusiasm, dedication, and a commitment to excellence

## ESTHER USORO

### How does it feel participating in a global contest like Young Pitches Cannes Award?

I feel honoured and privileged to be picked to participate in a contest that has placed my name on a global platform such as Young Pitches Cannes Awards from Mediafuse Dentsu Nigeria.



### What was your motivation and inspiration to enter for this contest?

I want to thank the management of Dentsu Nigeria, ably led by GCEO, Mr Emeka Okeke, and the Managing Director of Dentsu Agyle, Marian Ogaziechi for throwing his weight behind us and giving us all the support and inspiration that we needed.

### Did it ever cross your mind that you will emerge one of the premium winners when you first entered this contest?

I would not say it did not exactly cross my mind, I knew that to win, our work has to be exemplary, so we put our absolute best and won.

### How do you or would you assess Young Pitches Award?

Young Pitches Award has shown me a global standard Award organisation experience. They are fair in their judgement and their website is easy to navigate as well as frequent emails to keep all contestants updated.

### What mileage do you envisage from this award contest?

The opportunity of being a winner of a global contest is one that will be green in my career, as well as the exposure that this opportunity will provide me.

### Which category did participate in and won?

I participated and won in the film category.

### How will you assess your agency for granting you the privilege to be part of this great global contest?

First of all, I am super grateful to Mediafuse Dentsu Nigeria for this great opportunity to

be a part of Young Pitches Global platform. Dentsu Agyle and Mediafuse are people driven companies where one can grow and thrive even on global radar.

### What impact do you want to leave behind as a member of this winning group?

I will continue to put in my best on my job everyday by applying all I have learnt from Young Pitches and share the knowledge with everyone in our team.

### Who are your role models?

Mr Emeka Okeke, Marian Ogaziechi and other female inspiring leaders in Mediafuse Dentsu Nigeria.

### Who are you? Can we meet you?

I'm Esther Usoro, a result-oriented marketing and business professional, well versed in the areas of digital marketing, talent management, content production and marketing ideation & concept and client/vendor relationship.

I have a demonstrated history of multidimensional work spanning across FMCG, Brewed beverages, Health & Healthcare, Energy, Logistics, Non-profits, Electronics, and Film & Motion Picture.

I am currently the Senior Client Service Executive with over four years' experience in the Advertising and Media industry. I have directly managed the execution of over 10 brand growth campaigns with Promasidor Nigeria & Ghana, Grand Products (Grand Cereal, Grand Pure Soya Oil, Vita feed), Reckitt (Jik, Mortein, Dettol); Brian Munro Ltd (Oboron 6, Vitazade), Distell Ltd (Chamdor, 4th street, Bains, Nederburg) and Heineken Nigeria.

Currently, at Dentsu Agyle, my role involves commercial production (AV & photography), client relationship management, original content production, influencer management where I manage the end-to-end content process to achieve brand profitability.

I'm a graduate of Computer Science from ISCOM University, Benin Republic, also a member of Digital Marketing Institute and an associate member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARPA).

I am always open to working in innovative and unconventional environments while bringing desired optimal value.

## ADAORA MUOH

### How does it feel participating in a global contest like Young Pitches Cannes Award?

I feel honored and very proud of myself. Of course, I couldn't have done it by myself





but it's fulfilling to know that I had massive support, and I didn't let them down.

#### **What was your motivation and inspiration to enter for this contest?**

I want to thank the management of Dentsu Nigeria, ably led by the GCEO, Mr Emeka Okeke for constantly supporting and inspiring us to go beyond limits.

#### **Did it ever cross your mind that you will emerge one of the premium winners when u first entered this contest?**

To be honest, I didn't think so ab initio, but with the level of encouragement I received from the management, I became more optimistic.

#### **How do you or would you assess Young Pitchers Award?**

The outstanding factor for me, is the fact that there were frequent updates, so we didn't miss out on anything. Communication is key and if participants must wonder or keep asking for information, then it would question the authenticity or fairness of such platform. But in this case, it was top notch.

#### **What mileage do you envisage from this award contest?**

It's not every day you get to be on a global platform, this is a major milestone for me, and I believe that it's just the beginning.

#### **Which category did participate in and won?**

I participated and won the film category.

#### **How will you assess your agency for granting you the privilege to be part of this great global contest?**

Dentsu Nigeria is one of the best places for career growth and it's good to know that young talents like me are trained, guided,

## MEDIA FUSE YOUNG LIONS WINNERS SPEAK

and given all the support that we need to become all that we aspire to be.

#### **What impact do you want to live behind as a member of this winning group?**

I want to be known as one who gave her best and did all she could to win.

#### **Who are your role models?**

I have a couple of persons I look up to, but I'd prefer to have a mentor who has walked the talk with a track record of consistency and evident results. Professionally, Mr Emeka Okeke is an icon to look up to. Marian Ogaziechi also serves well in that capacity.

#### **What motivates you as a professional?**

I am motivated by the fact that there are others who have gone through this path and succeeded at it. If they could, then I certainly can!

#### **Who are you? Can we meet you?**

My name is Adaora and I consider myself a self-driven, innovative, and result-oriented individual. I have over 3 years of experience in media innovation across major advertising and Fortune 500 companies like Heineken brands, LVMH, Promasidor Nigeria and Hisamitsu, amongst others.

Currently, I am a Senior Media Executive at Dentsu Agyle where my role involves innovative product building, content and inventory management, client relationship, negotiations, media buying and control, amongst others.

For context, Dentsu Agyle is part of the Dentsu Holding Company responsible for media innovation and investment management. We provide client solution through insights, creativity, content production, and inventory management.

With the help of the team, my role is targeted at helping brands achieve their set marketing and business objectives, as well as receive value for their investments.

I have a degree in Philosophy from Imo State University and an Associate Member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria.

When I am not working, I am either reading, writing, cooking, or hosting/ attending brainstorming sessions with friends.

## DEBIMISOLA SOTADE



#### **How does it feel participating in a global contest like Young Pitchers Cannes Award?**

Participating in a global contest like Young Lions is a surreal and exciting feeling.

#### **What was your motivation and inspiration to enter for this contest?**

I happened to be in the right place at the right time, and I fit the criteria for the competition. On a serious note, I was motivated by the chance to do something fun and impactful. I am a firm believer in using creativity for good.

#### **How does it feel participating in the contest?**

I still have to pinch myself to confirm its not a dream, because it is a privilege to compete with other extremely talented young creatives.

#### **Did it ever cross your mind that you will emerge one of the premium winners when u first entered this contest?**

Absolutely, even before entering the competition, it has always been on my bucket list.

#### **How do you or would you assess Young Pitchers Award?**

Young Pitchers Award is a commendable initiative, I'm glad the industry provides platforms like this for young creatives, kudos once again to the organizers.

#### **What mileage do you envisage from this award contest?**

I envisage a career boost and more exciting projects.

#### **Which category did participate in and won?**

My teammate and I competed in the Young Lions Design category to create an app to help children with club foot.

**What is the implication of this win to you and the agency?**

This win is a confirmation that Dentsu Creative is an incubator for young talents to thrive, and further confirmation that we are all about putting out impactful work.

**How do you see this award impacting on you and your career growth?**

I see this win as opening more doors for me career wise, providing more connections and making for at least one or two conversations.

**How will you assess your agency for granting you the privilege to be part of this great global contest?**

It shows that Dentsu Creative is all about growing the next generation of creatives.

**How do you see the agency's growth and market leadership now and in future?**

In every category, I would say we are on an upward trajectory. I don't see Dentsu Creative slowing down anytime soon.

**What impact do you want to live behind as a member of this wining group?**

I hope our contribution inspires other creatives, and makes a difference in children with club foot.

**Who are your role models?**

My role models within the industry are Kunle Omope, Carol Ofem, Chris Ogunlowo and Sola Mosuro.

**What motivates you as a professional?**

Reaching the same level as those I have admired from afar and being able to do great work motivates me as a professional.

**Who are your role models?**

My role models are Jesus Christ, my parents and other wonderful people I have met on my journey too numerous to name here.

**Who are you? Can we meet you?**

Hi, I am Mosope Sotade, a copywriter with Dentsu Creative. I believe in the power of a good story.

**OYEJOBI SHERIFF**

**How does it feel participating in a global contest like Young Pitchers Cannes Award?**

Participating in the Young Lions Competition



was a thrilling ride from start to finish. It feels incredibly rewarding to compete on a global stage of creativity and innovation.

**What was your motivation and inspiration to enter for this contest?**

My motivation came from a deep desire to tackle real-world problems with creative solutions. When I saw the brief to create a solution for children with clubfoot, inspiration came almost instantly. The opportunity to make a tangible difference in the world while challenging myself creatively was irresistible.

**How does it feel participating in the contest?**

The whole process, from ideation to execution, was challenging and rewarding, if given the choice it's something I would do all over again.

**Did it ever cross your mind that you will emerge one of the premium winners when u first entered this contest?**

Honestly, I was so focused on creating the best possible solution that I didn't dwell on winning. But, somewhere at the back of my mind was the promise of winning that kept me going.

**How do you or would you assess Young Pitchers Award?**

The Young Lions Competition is a fantastic platform that pushes young creatives such as myself to think outside the box and be innovative. It was a rigorous test of creativity and it brought out the best in all the contestants.

**What mileage do you envisage from this award contest?**

Winning this contest is a huge deal. I see it opening more doors for me in terms of opportunities and collaborations. It also afforded me the opportunity to network and connect with other like-minded creative professionals globally.

**Which category did participate in and won?**

I participated in the Design category, where we developed user interface for an app to help children with clubfoot. Winning in this category was particularly special because it aligned perfectly with my passion for creating impactful digital solutions.

**What is the implication of this win to you and the agency?**

This win is proof of our creative capabilities and innovative spirit. For me, it's a personal milestone, and for Dentsu Creative, it's another laurel emphasizing our commitment to excellence and social impact.

**How do you see this award impacting on you and your career growth?**

This award is a significant career booster for me, because I was able to showcase my ability to create meaningful solutions and enhance my portfolio.

**How will you assess your agency for granting you the privilege to be part of this great global contest?**

I'm immensely grateful to Dentsu Creative for their support and belief in my abilities. They provide a suitable environment that allowed me to thrive and take on exciting challenges like Young Lions.

**How do you see the agency's growth and market leadership now and in future?**

Dentsu Creative is on a trajectory of growth. With a focus on innovation and creativity, I see us continuing to lead the market, setting new standards, and inspiring others in the industry.

**What impact do you want to live behind as a member of this wining group?**

I hope to leave a legacy of innovative thinking and social impact. I want to inspire others to use their creative talents to solve real-world problems and make a difference.

**Who are your role models?**

My role models include industry legends like Funke Adekola and contemporary creatives like Damola Shonubi, whose work continually inspires me to aim higher and push creative boundaries.

**What motivates you as a professional?**

The thrill of creating something new and impactful, the challenge of solving complex problems, and the joy of seeing an idea come to life drive me. Plus, the opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives is incredibly motivating.

**Who are your role models?**

In addition to industry icons, my mentors and colleagues who challenge and inspire me daily are my role models. Their guidance has been invaluable.

**Who are you? Can we meet you?**

I'm Oyejobi Sheriff, an Art Director at Dentsu Creative. I'm passionate about design, photography, and using creativity to solve real-world issues. Let's connect and create something amazing together.

# NBL PLC relaunches *Ace Roots* low-Sugar herbal drink



**N**igerian Breweries, the leading beverage company in Nigeria, has relaunched its product, Ace Roots, a low-sugar herbal alcoholic drink. Under the portfolio of Nigerian Breweries products, it was first launched in 2015, re-entered the market on April 14th through the 'Big Weekend Experience' 2.0, providing consumers with an exhilarating and immersive launch experience.

Ace Roots is a low sugar drink that perfectly combines a blend of true African herbs, spices and fruits with a great kick of alcohol. Containing low sugar, easy to drink and filtered to give that refreshing herbal enjoyment, Ace Roots offers all alcoholic beverage drinkers a fine blend of herbal goodness and an accessible taste experience. With this relaunch, Ace Roots has a fresh new look in a 45cl bottle and 50cl can.

The 'Big Weekend Experience' which hosted the Ace Roots relaunch, is a highly anticipated event that brings together music, entertainment, and the latest trends. The event is a huge party packed with non-stop entertainment by electrifying music artists. Exciting games and surprises are also major highlights of the event.

Previous editions were held in September and October of 2023 while the first edition of this year was held across major cities like Onitsha, Akure and Warri. This edition, featuring the relaunch of

Ace Roots held simultaneously in Lagos and Ibadan on the 14th of April, creating an unforgettable experience for all attendees. Attendees were among the first to experience the distinctive taste of Ace Roots, as well as engaging in a range of interactive activities and immersive experiences.

In relation to the launch of Ace Roots, the Portfolio Manager, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Sampson Oloche stated that "We are thrilled to introduce Ace Roots to the Nigerian market. This fresh product reflects our commitment to providing consumers with beverages that not only taste great but also offer functional health benefits. Ace Roots is set to redefine the alcoholic beverage landscape in Nigeria."

"The 'Big Weekend Experience' is the perfect platform to re-introduce Ace Roots to our consumers," added Oloche. "This live event will allow them to discover the unique qualities of Ace Roots and embrace the brand's commitment to providing a delightful and healthier alcoholic beverage option."

Ace Roots is now available for purchase at select retailers and distributors across Nigeria.. For more information about Ace Roots and the 'Big Weekend Experience', please follow @ ace\_herbaldrink on Instagram.



## SO&U: Behold Brand Warriors & Creative Mavens Behind Big Ideas



**CREATIVE  
AGENCIES  
MUST  
TRANSFORM  
WITH RAPID  
INDUSTRY  
CHANGES  
- UFOT**



# CREATIVE AGENCIES MUST TRANSFORM WITH RAPID INDUSTRY CHANGES

- UFOT



No brand can consistently remain top-of-the-mind in the market without a constant touch by creative agencies. In this seminal interview, **Mr. Udemé Ufot**, the MD/ CEO of SO&U Group shares creative industry insights and solutions with **MARKETING EDGE**. Excerpts.

**W**hat are some of the noticeable dynamics or shifts that you have observed making waves in the marketing landscape?

We live in a rapidly transforming world and the marketing communication landscape has not been immune to those transformations. Today, we have a world

without media borders where marketers can engage with consumers from anywhere. We have a system where media as we used to know it has changed. We also have practitioners who are not exactly as we used to know them.

As we move forward, we also have a situation where artificial intelligence is coming into play. We do not know for sure how far it will go, but what we thought

was just a matter of grappling with digital platforms has become something to contend with.

So I see a world where you must have very dynamic practitioners, where you need to have very smart people and professionals who are prepared to embrace technology to optimize the performance of their brands and communication activities. It is a rapidly transforming world and





agencies must be prepared to transform with these changes that the industry is experiencing.

One thing I can tell you for sure is that we've gone past that era of having traditional agencies and digital agencies. Instead what we have today is a convergence of the digital and traditional space. Any agency that claims to be either purely digital or traditional is at a risk.

I can also tell you that there's hardly any campaign that SO&U goes into these days without bringing together diverse platforms and disciplines that have to do with traditional and digital.

**How much growth would you say the Nigerian advertising has**

**attained over the years?**

Has it really grown? Well, one cannot say the industry has not grown. I don't have the figures right away. But you need to understand that even in the face of that growth you will find the challenges of inflation and devaluation of our currency.

The challenge we face is an economic situation where, in numbers, the market has shrunk but, in real terms, activities have grown and agencies have been more active.

There are new players coming in at different levels and, of course, the key marketers still expand their budgets.

But one thing you must also note is that those budgets may not be seen in the traditional space because there are more

digital engagements. So, I would say it has expanded but not in terms of what we would expect in the old traditional manner.

**What would you describe as some awaiting opportunities in the remaining part of the year, if there are any?**

There are always opportunities. I think the challenge is for agencies to be sufficiently close to the brands they work on, to know what those brands have to offer to their consumers and also be close to the consumers to know what they really want, what makes them tick.

The job of the agency is to bring the brand and the consumer together, and once we build a love affair, a nexus between



the consumer and the brands with what they want to sell, there are infinite levels of opportunities that we can see. Opportunities are up to agencies using their creativity to discover and, of course, explore.

### **Do you foresee Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) categories shifting from mass to kind of niche brands as a result of the inflationary challenge?**

I will say to you that they are already shifting. The challenges of the marketing environment, the tightness of the budgets, the kind of accountability being demanded of marketing directors will inform the need to be more focused on what delivers the most optimum independent budget.

I'm sure if you scan, you will discover that in the last two years or so, you may not see the kind of broad campaigns by FMCGs which you saw five to ten years ago.

The brands are becoming more focused and activations and visual activity is becoming the order of the day. When you add that to the current situation, especially what the multinational marketers are facing, with the kind of report we have heard about their financials in the last year caused by the Naira devaluation, it will take a while, maybe the next two years, for us to begin to see strong investments, except for the very strong FMCG marketers. There will be more of the niche because the marketing director must deliver accountability, and engaging the consumers one-on-one is more likely the way to go as you can be accountable for it.

### **Earlier, you mentioned technology and AI being strong factors in the industry; how can professionals re-imagine branding in the new age?**

Well, technology is there to make you better, faster and more effective. The first step is for marketing communicators to embrace technology and to understand the creative ways they can use it to optimize their performance. At the very basic levels, we can see what the Internet alone has done for businesses and for advertising.

A few years ago, we needed to deliver disk drives to media houses to run our campaigns. But today you can conclude the work, whether it is a print communication or a television video and, at the click of a button on your laptop, send it to anywhere in the world for deployment.

I still recall when we ran certain campaigns and people had to stand by to fly to Maiduguri to deliver the materials. I think a very interesting world awaits us, and what we must do as marketing communicators is to embrace it by understanding what it can do for us and how we can use it effectively.

### **How would communication leaders across the sectors play a more proactive role in identifying and telling strategic stories to keep up with the changing times?**

The first step is that marketing communicators need to be more professional in what they do. They need to put in place clear strategic framework for delivering their work.

The days of innate or intuitive communication strategies, or creativity are gone. In fact, we are at an advantage where there is so much information now at our disposal. We need to take advantage of such information to be able to craft narratives that can speak directly and resonate with the target consumers.



It is about stories that the consumers can connect with and see themselves in, and, of course, be willing to take the kind of action we expect them to take.

We must focus more and more on how we want to make the consumer feel, because actions are driven by emotions. You know, once you can extract the right emotions from the consumer, the right actions will follow.

### **Still on storytelling and communication; each season we see advertising messages receiving backlash, how can professionals mitigate against this trend?**

Ufot: The approach to communication must go by certain principles. I mean, telling the truth, being guided by certain levels of morality that will not offend the audience receiving the communication. The Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) by its Advertising Standards of Practice (ASP) has rules for mitigating that. But the truth also remains that safe advertising never cut through the clutter. Communicators, especially in creative advertising must be prepared to push more professionally.

Of course, we do need this decency of what will not offend the public. Advertising in itself is, in a way, cultural because communication is cultural. We know the things that are acceptable to our society. So, when we want to communicate, we must communicate within the framework of what our society holds dear.

That's why media advertisers, when they create communication, are sometimes fair or objective enough to say, look, for certain parts of the country where there is more acceptance of Western values, certain kinds of communications are deployed for the brand. But for the same brand, in those parts of the country where the cultural and legal sensitivities are very critical, different adaptations of the same work are being created to reflect the values of specific communities.

It is important, therefore, that in crafting communication, those who know the people should be part of it. That is part of the reason ARCON and its new laws have put things in place to ensure that creative works are conceptualized and produced by Nigerians for Nigerians, as much as possible.

### **Some professionals hold the view that there are more agencies than brands in the industry. Would you say the dearth of brands is the cause of intense rivalry amongst agencies within the ecosystem?**

I think it is a double-edged sword. We certainly could use more of the big brands. I recall an industry colleague once lamented, and it was even before the entry of AB InBev, over the brewery market. And you can see that over the years, apart from AB InBev coming in to become the third heavy contender, the other big players have actually mopped up the small players. So we have a very narrow brewing market.

If you look at other FMCGs, how many companies are producing beverages or family cereals in the country? Others are all imported. What that does is to offer for us a very shallow market. Even when you want to distribute the brands within one big FMCG player, how many agencies have the opportunity to play there? I think the entire economy itself needs to be more sophisticated because advertising thrives in a high quality, highly sophisticated marketing environment.

Maybe part of the dearth of opportunities has to be linked to the fact

that our economy is not that sophisticated.

Let's even start from the government itself. In other markets like the UK, the biggest advertiser is the government. So hiring foreign professionals or a bunch of guys with their briefcases who claim to be marketing or PR professionals doesn't help our industry or the economy either. If we sit down to calculate the kind of budgets that are being spent on these not so professional approaches, you would be amazed.

Let us even go beyond governments. How sophisticated are the average entrepreneurs and businesses in Nigeria? Do they really believe that they need marketing communications? We need to grow in sophistication and in numbers also. But I do believe that what we have at the moment can offer marketing communicators much more than what we are getting.

Anyway, even when or if there are more clients available, more breweries, more telcos, more manufacturers with lots of money, there will still be competition.

Something I learned very early is that everybody will just choose to work with the top three or the number one player in any sector. So what will happen at the end of the day, even if there are a hundred brewers in Nigeria, there will still be stiff competition by the top agencies.

### **Do you foresee intense mergers in the future?**

That's a big question. A merger is a marriage and unless, as in some marriages, a young lady is forced into a man's home, that is not exactly a marriage.

But, in business mergers, that will come from two consenting partners deciding that it will be to their advantage to come together and optimize their potential. That will be driven much more if in the one plus one they can hope to get is three. It will also come in a situation where the owners of the businesses will put away egos and the personal mindset of "it has to be my own". People must choose to stoop to conquer. It's about mindset and I do not think that advertising itself has really done a lot of sophistication in Nigeria.

You can even see that in the banking sector that is relatively more sophisticated, mergers have not been easy. I have had the privilege of working for some of the banks that have been very masterful in mergers and acquisitions, and I am aware of the struggles, the intrigues that have played out by those who were acquired. Not even by the owners, but by the workers of those banks who resist the merger. So it will call for a lot more sophistication, a lot more understanding, a lot more big-heartedness for us to see agencies come together in mergers.

However, I want to see the entire mindset evolve to a point where Mr. X and Mr. Y, both running thriving agencies, come together and say, guys, you know what? My company is strong when it comes to creativity, but we do have some challenges, maybe in strategy. Your agency is weak when it comes to creative products, but so powerful in strategy. Can you imagine if we pull together, what we could do in the industry? So we are talking here of one plus one becoming even four, maybe even five. That is a level of jump





or leapfrogging that we look and think of, but unfortunately, I'm not even aware of anyone moving in that direction.

The sense of ownership is too strong. People just want to own things. I think it's an African or a Nigerian thing for us, and it definitely has to evolve.

### **In today's marketing ecosystem, consumers are becoming more aware, craving for more health-friendly products. How can FMCGs tackle this challenge?**

Well, you can see me smiling. I am smiling because some recent survey indicated that whilst most human beings claim an interest in healthy habits and healthy foods, in real practice, that is not the case. Marketers have jumped on the bandwagon that the consumer is health-focused and have launched products that are supposedly sugar free, low sugar, and whatever that they believe is in interest of the consumer.

Many of these products have struggled because there is insufficient depth in the market to give those products or those brands they've been working on a fighting chance. So everyone talks about health-consciousness, but it's a different thing in practice.

Marketers that look in that direction would simply have to be forced, and this happens all over the world when you are playing in a niche market. What you need to understand is that a niche may not give you the kind of depth that your business needs to survive.

And you have even the capacity to run a business on such a niche because there are limitations to growth. But, my advice to marketers is that they need to look carefully before they leap. Many things are very nice to see, nice claims to make, but in reality, it is not exactly what we think it is. Does this have to do with the consumer's purchasing power? No. It is about consumer habits.

Different brands have launched extensions that spoke to me to be more health conscious. The consumer has seen strongly that it is socially correct to talk about health foods and healthy habits. Maybe it is more practical in the western world. But, in this market where day to day the consumer is faced with more challenges, the basics that the consumer needs to survive is not even there, not even affordable. Maybe the point you made can be true that sometimes affordability is key. The consumer will take what is

available. But, dieting and health foods in the African market actually is the least of our problems.

### **On regulatory standards, what would you suggest the industry to do to enhance its standards of practice?**

Ufot: If the industry runs without rules, it can't be a profession. If there are no rules that inform how practitioners run their trade, there will be anarchy. Even at that, I must admit that the rules must come with a human face. We need to put in place laws and regulations that support boosting the industry, because without successful practices, without successful agencies, the regulator will have no work to do.

Having said that, a lot of dialogue needs to be done between the regulator and practitioners. It does not help anyone where certain sections decide that a certain law is not favoring them and choose to boycott or run a war.

I think as responsible professionals, if there's disagreement with rules of practice, we can come to the table, discuss it and point out how the rules are affecting the viability of our businesses and what can be done to mitigate such challenges. I am afraid that if we don't do that, all we will be having is anarchy and confusion. At the end of the day, the injustice will not be redressed and we will suffer from lack of rules.

For it to be a true professional body, we need to accommodate the rules of the regulator.

### **Your renowned agency, SO&U Group, an affiliate of M&C Saatchi, has just been appointed as the new marketing partner for MTN with effect from January, 2025. What would you say sets your agency apart for this distinctive recognition?**

Late last year, a regional big pitch was called for the MTN business across Africa. It was run out of South Africa. But, of course, the Nigerian market, considering its importance to MTN, was considered a key market, as well as the francophone Africa. M & C Saatchi decided to participate in that pitch and invited us as the local affiliate in Nigeria to participate, or partner with them.

We were involved in the pitch process itself and had a special focus on Nigeria, considering its importance to the



country. Whilst M & C Saatchi focused on the regional pitch process in South Africa, we are required to come up with recommendations for special projects in the pitch process that was focused on Nigeria.

That is the part we played. And we are happy to say that in partnership with M & C Saatchi Africa and with our Côte d'Ivoire partner agencies, MTN did find it more attractive to partner with our affiliate agencies and invited us to participate. Actually, having won the business across Africa, we have had the benefits of enjoying part of that action.

### **What does this signify for SO&U, in terms of repositioning going forward?**





I think it's a matter of great excitement and joy for us. You may remember that about 15 years ago, we were one of the first agencies with TBWA\ Concepts to work on MTN. During our 5-year run on the business, we did some really, really exciting work, if I may say so myself. Unfortunately, in a pitch process, we lost the business at the height of our performance. You can imagine such a piece of business coming back to us. It provides exciting challenges for our creative juices. It gives us the opportunity to relax the kind of things that we did with "O Jerry!", with "Life is Beautiful". It means, of course, that with that size of business, our agency needs to be prepared to amplify its resource base. It will be very exciting for our creative people to do the kind of work that they enjoy

doing, and the ultimate joy is to do great work and see it in the public space.

MTN is the kind of brand that has the projects and the will to put their work in the public space and will support and correct you to be your best at what you do for them. We look forward to that. I believe that it is very exciting times ahead for our agency, for the entire M & C Saatchi Africa. We look forward to January 2025 to get on the road and on the show. That sounds exciting already.

**Would you provide our readers with an overview of your company's product portfolio?**

We have been doing quite some interesting work, but we have a larger product portfolio when it comes to the group.

When I talk about products, I need to mention that it is about the products we offer or the clients and brands we work for.

Let me start with the product portfolio in terms of what we offer to our clients. SO& U Group is an integrated marketing solutions group, one of the few in the industry that is so well structured with different disciplines that cater to a 360 degree offering to our clients.

We have SO&U itself as an advertising agency, and merging the best of traditional advertising with digital amplifications. We have SOULCOMS, which is our PR and acquisitions agency. We offer PR activities, activations, and experiential. That is what they do.

In contemporary business environment, you need to combine

effectively the soft sell with the hard sell. We have our production company, Lucid. So a lot of the productions we do are done by it and the business has actually become so sophisticated.

We have our media agency, Maxi Media, which is involved in strategic planning and buying. And then, of course, we have our latest digital agency, Virus. They all have quite a roster of clients of their own and have been doing some very interesting work.

When I look at the brands that we work and have worked for, they are more telefaceted. Of course, we have worked for the age-old Access Bank. For 8 years, we worked on Globalcom and remained one of the longest agencies on that business. During that period, we did some great outstanding, award winning work for the brand.

We worked for Guaranty Trust Bank from inception and did work that helped to entrench that brand in the minds of consumers and have helped to fuel its growth almost 34 years after.

We still work for Access Bank. We are one of the leading agents on FirstBank and we still do some work for them.

We've worked for PZ Cussons. We do work for Unilever. We launched, Rexona and worked on that for quite a while in terms of activations.

We work on CFO. We launched Toyota last year in Nigeria, and we are set to do more new product launches for them this year.

Reliance Healthcare HMO is one of our key clients.

We launched a new CST last year. It is a Cameroonian client. One of the biggest brewers and bottlers in Cameroon that is into Nigeria and the work for that client is more of the tactical, flanking strategy from the east.

### **Before we let you go, would you tell us what stands you out in terms of principles in your own career trajectory?**

Integrity is key. Integrity means being true to yourself. You innately do the right things at the right time, and ensure that in dealing with other people, you do unto others as you have them do unto you.

You do not want to have yourself in a situation where being a brand yourself, once your name is mentioned, sudden negative reactions occur.

For that reason, integrity in my

personal and business dealings is critical - having a good name.

But that also starts really fundamentally with a sense of self discipline. All of us can choose to be in a bit on the wild side. But I think it is self-discipline that makes you do the right things at the right time, no matter who is watching, no matter where you are. That has worked for me.

A sense of passion for excellence has also helped me to weather the storms. But when you talk about weathering the storms, great resilience is what keeps this business, because there are times it gets so rough.

As the saying goes, it is not how many times you fall, it is in the ability to get up and continue going. But the most critical of my experience and the virtues in all the graces is to have the ability to make friends, keep the friends, and optimize relationships for mutual value.

That has worked for me. So many of the clients that I started with and still plan with, are those of my personal friends.

For about 30 years, almost all the friends I've made are my clients, and we've gone, you know, beyond the business to very strong, close, personal relationships. I believe that it takes self-discipline, integrity, perseverance and a friendly disposition to achieve that.

### **What is one professional mantra you think upcoming industry professionals should hold on to?**

Have a vision for yourself, for your

business. What do you want to achieve? What's your ambition? Let every waking day be a day of purpose that drives you every minute, every hour towards that vision, and stay focused.

Once you have a clear vision of what you want to be, where you want to go to, the passion to drive it and the focus to stay on track, no matter the distraction, you will get there. Be ambitious and focus on the road to achieve your ambition.

There are more and more things that are inclined to distract you, so the power of focus and consistency is so critical.

My word to young people is, keep to your vision. Keep driving it, there are challenges and anything that does not kill you will make you stronger. So stay on track and you will succeed.



**Once you have a clear vision of what you want to be, where you want to go to, the passion to drive it and the focus to stay on track, no matter the distraction, you will get there. Be ambitious and focus on the road to achieve your ambition.**



# Ours is a top choice for innovative and impactful digital marketing solutions in Nigeria

**Deji Atunwa,**  
Chief Operation Officer, Vyrus Digital Engagement

## **H**ow will you assess the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications sector?

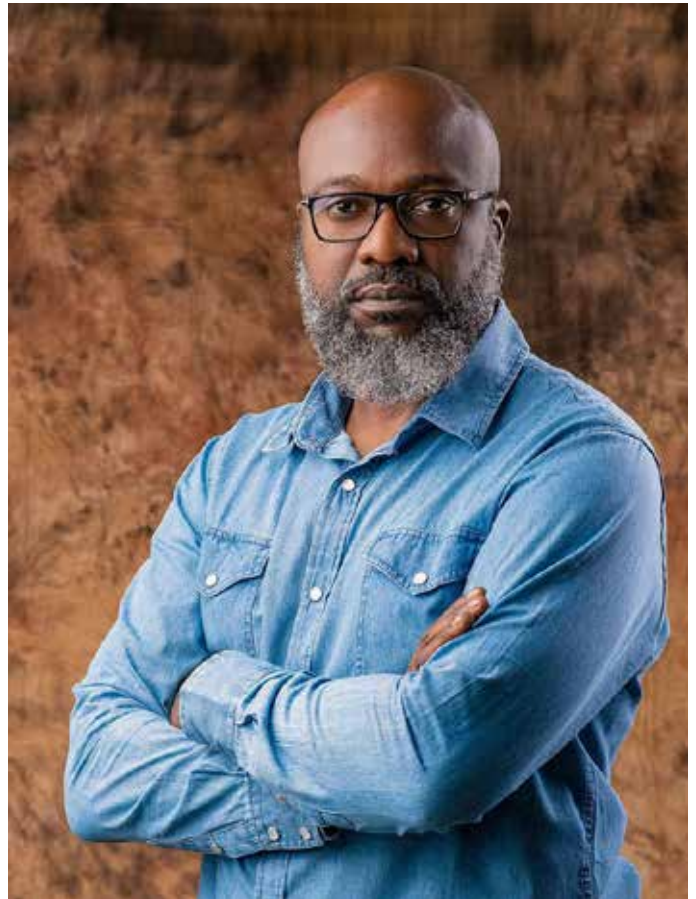
The Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) sector is vibrant and rapidly evolving, experiencing significant growth driven by increasing digital adoption and a youthful population. Companies are leveraging digital platforms to engage with consumers more effectively, showcasing adaptability to changing market trends. Nigeria's diverse and dynamic market offers a wide array of opportunities for IMC firms to create tailored and culturally relevant campaigns, requiring marketers to be highly creative and insightful about local consumer behavior and preferences. Additionally, there is a notable shift towards integrating advanced technologies such as AI, big data analytics, and social media platforms into marketing strategies, enhancing targeting, personalization, and overall campaign effectiveness.

The highly competitive IMC sector in Nigeria drives agencies to differentiate themselves through creativity, strategic insights, and innovative solutions, continually enhancing their offerings to deliver exceptional value to clients. There are ample opportunities for growth, especially in digital marketing, influencer marketing, and content creation. The increasing internet penetration and smartphone usage in Nigeria further expand the reach and impact of IMC efforts. Overall, the Nigerian IMC sector is on a promising trajectory, characterized by creativity, innovation, and a strong potential for growth, albeit within a challenging operating environment.

## **H**ow will you assess your subsidiary's leadership positioning in this sector?

At Vyrus Digital, our strategic approach and innovative solutions have positioned us as a rising force in the digital marketing sector. Our work with prominent clients like Unilever (Axe and Rexona brands), Access Bank, FirstBank, Mars Wrigley (Snickers), Enterprise Life Insurance, Coronation Insurance, O3 Capital and Sterling Bank showcases our ability to deliver impactful results.

Our leadership is rooted in creativity, data-driven strategies, and a deep understanding of the digital landscape. Our curiosity drives us to thoroughly interrogate each brief, ensuring we provide tailored, effective solutions. This commitment has enabled us to exceed client expectations and establish Vyrus Digital as a trusted and forward-thinking digital agency.



## **W**hat would you say are the challenges in this sector?

The Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) sector faces several overarching challenges that impact its growth and effectiveness. Economic instability is a significant issue, as fluctuating economic conditions often lead to reduced client budgets and spending on marketing and advertising. Regulatory constraints also pose a challenge, with changing regulations and policies creating uncertainty and requiring agencies to continuously adapt their strategies and operations. Infrastructural issues, such as inconsistent power supply and internet connectivity, further hinder smooth operations and service



delivery. Additionally, attracting and retaining skilled professionals in the IMC sector is difficult given the competitive job market and opportunities abroad. The highly competitive market environment drives the need for constant innovation and differentiation, while managing diverse and evolving client expectations requires flexibility and a deep understanding of market dynamics. Moreover, Nigeria's cultural diversity necessitates creating campaigns that resonate across various ethnic and demographic groups, which can be complex and resource-intensive.

Within the realm of digital marketing, there are specific challenges that agencies must navigate. Digital literacy remains a concern, as a significant portion of the population has limited digital skills, affecting the reach and effectiveness of digital campaigns. Despite increasing internet usage, low internet penetration and accessibility in some areas limit the audience for digital marketing efforts. Ensuring data privacy and security is crucial, especially with the increasing use of personal data for targeted marketing, and compliance with data protection regulations adds another layer of complexity. Keeping up with rapid technological advancements and integrating new tools and platforms into marketing strategies requires continuous learning and adaptation. Measuring the return on investment (ROI) for digital marketing activities can be complex due to the various metrics and analytics involved. Furthermore, the use of ad blockers by consumers and issues with digital ad fraud significantly impact the visibility and effectiveness of digital advertising campaigns. The digital space is crowded with content, making it challenging to capture and maintain audience attention, and frequent changes in algorithms by major platforms like Google and social media networks require constant adjustments to maintain campaign visibility and reach. Addressing these challenges necessitates strategic planning, continuous innovation, and a deep understanding of both the local market and global digital marketing trends.

### How are you coping with the challenges?

To cope with the challenges in the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) sector, we are implementing several strategic measures. Economic instability is managed by adopting flexible pricing models and offering scalable solutions to accommodate

varying client budgets. Building strong, long-term client relationships also helps ensure a steady stream of work even during economic downturns. To address regulatory constraints, we stay updated with regulatory changes and actively participate in industry associations, allowing us to anticipate and adapt to new regulations promptly.

Infrastructural issues like inconsistent power supply and internet connectivity are mitigated by investing in backup power solutions and high-quality internet services. Remote work arrangements and cloud-based tools enhance operational resilience. Talent acquisition and retention are improved by investing in employee development programs, offering competitive compensation, and fostering a positive workplace culture.

To stand out in a highly competitive market, agencies differentiate themselves through innovation, creativity, and superior service quality. Leveraging local insights and employing diverse teams enable agencies to create culturally relevant and resonant campaigns.

### How will you assess SO&U as a leading creative powerhouse in Nigeria?

SO&U is widely regarded as a leading creative powerhouse in Nigeria due to its rich history of groundbreaking campaigns and a strong reputation for creativity and excellence. The agency's ability to consistently deliver compelling and culturally relevant content sets it apart in the industry.

A key strength of SO&U is its history of maintaining long-term relationships with its clients. This enduring trust and collaboration highlight the agency's commitment to delivering sustained value and understanding the evolving needs of its clients. These long-term partnerships are a testament to SO&U's reliability, excellence, and ability to adapt to changing market dynamics.

### What really excites you about the group?

What excites me about the group is its unwavering commitment to creativity and innovation. The group's collaborative culture, diverse talent pool, and forward-thinking approach create an environment where groundbreaking ideas flourish. The opportunity to work on impactful campaigns that shape brands and resonate with audiences is incredibly inspiring.

### As a member of this creative

### agency, how do you want your agency to be rated?

I want Vyrus Digital to be rated as the top choice for innovative and impactful digital marketing solutions in Nigeria. We aspire to be recognized for our strategic insights, creative excellence, and our ability to drive meaningful results for our clients. Our goal is to be seen as a trusted partner that consistently delivers exceptional value and transformative campaigns.

### What is the unique selling point of your agency?

Our unique selling point is our deep understanding of the Nigerian market combined with our innovative approach to integrated marketing communications. We excel in creating culturally resonant and impactful campaigns that effectively bridge traditional and digital media. Our team's diverse expertise, strategic insights, and creative prowess enable us to deliver solutions that drive significant brand growth and engagement.

### Who are you Sir? Can we meet you?

My name is 'Deji Atunwa.

I am a highly skilled and experienced marketing communications expert with 25 years' experience working in design, advertising & new media. I am passionate about developing innovative and creative solutions.

As the founding Chief Operation Officer at Vyrus Digital Engagement, I oversee strategy, planning, implementation & reporting to ensure Client's digital objectives are met. I am responsible for the day-to-day operations and together with my team, deliver top-notch and customized solutions that guarantee deeper levels of consumer engagement and reach.

Prior to the COO role I served as Associate Creative Director, SO&U, where I managed creative operations for key accounts like Globacom and Conoil.

I have worked with leading local & international brands in various sectors including but not limited to Finance, Insurance, Pharmaceutical, Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs), Oil & Gas, Telecommunications and Education.

I am an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and an Associate Member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria.

# We are driving the future of audio visual production in Nigeria

**Abiola Williams,**  
Chief Operating Officer, Lucid Audio Visual

## **H**ow will you assess the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications sector?

The Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications sector is a vibrant and dynamic landscape. It's a melting pot of creativity, innovation, and diverse cultural influences. With a booming

digital economy and a young, tech-savvy population, the sector is ripe with opportunities for growth. However, it also faces challenges such as economic volatility and regulatory complexities that require strategic navigation.

## **How will you assess your subsidiary's leadership positioning in this sector?**

Our subsidiary has established itself as a premier production house within the sector. We leverage a synergistic blend of creativity and technical expertise to deliver exceptional visual content that stands out in the market.

Our leadership positioning is evident through several key factors:

**Innovative Approach:** We consistently push the boundaries of creativity and technology, producing cutting-edge content that resonates with diverse audiences. Our innovative techniques and state-of-the-art production facilities set us apart as industry pioneers.

**High-Quality Output:** We maintain rigorous standards of quality, ensuring that every project we undertake meets and exceeds client expectations. This commitment to excellence has earned us a reputation for reliability and superior craftsmanship.

**Strong Client Relationships:** Our deep understanding of client needs and market trends enables us to create tailored solutions that drive impactful results. Our collaborative approach and dedication to client success foster long-term partnerships and repeat business.

**Market Influence:** Through our affiliation with a renowned creative agency, we gain valuable insights and strategic guidance that enhance our market influence. This connection allows us to stay ahead of industry trends and consistently deliver compelling, relevant content.

**Award-Winning Projects:** Our portfolio boasts numerous award-winning projects, a testament to our creative prowess and technical excellence. These accolades reinforce our position as leaders in the production space. Lucid is proud to be at the forefront,



driving the future of audio visual production in Nigeria.

**What would you say are the challenges in this sector?**

The sector faces several challenges, including economic fluctuations that impact client budgets, intense competition that demands constant innovation, and regulatory barriers that can slow down progress. Additionally, the fast-paced nature of digital trends and the democratization of creative media content, means we must continually adapt and evolve our strategies.

**How are you coping with the challenges?**

We embrace these challenges as opportunities for growth. By fostering a culture of innovation and agility, we stay ahead of the curve. Continuous investment into self-development and human resources has been key for us. Strong client relationships and a deep understanding of the market dynamics also play a crucial role in our resilience.

**How will you assess SO & U as a leading creative powerhouse in Nigeria?**

SO & U is a beacon of creativity and

innovation in Nigeria. The ability to craft compelling narratives and execute them flawlessly sets the agency apart. They have a knack for understanding the pulse of the market and translating it into powerful campaigns that leave a lasting impact. Their leadership in the industry is undeniable and inspiring.

**What really excites you about the group?**

The group's synergy and collaborative spirit are truly exciting. The diversity of talent and ideas within the group fuels groundbreaking creative solutions. Our relentless pursuit of excellence and willingness to push boundaries to achieve extraordinary results is what makes being part of this group so exhilarating. It is exciting to know that everything and anything is possible at SO&U!

As a member of this creative agency, how do you want your agency to be rated?

SO&U is a trailblazer in the creative industry, known for her innovative ideas, strategic insights, and the ability to deliver unforgettable campaigns. I believe people see and know that. We aspire to be recognized as a trusted partner that consistently drives brand success through creativity and excellence.

**What is the unique selling point of your agency?**

Our unique selling point is our deep understanding of the Nigerian market, combined with a global perspective. We craft culturally resonant, emotionally compelling narratives that not only engage but also inspire. With a never say die attitude and a dedicated leadership, our campaigns always hit the mark and leave a lasting impact.

**Who are you Ma? Can we meet you?**

I am Abiola Williams, the Chief Operating Officer at Lucid Audio Visual. With a passion for storytelling and a background in both creative and strategic roles, I have had the privilege of leading our talented team to new heights. My mission is to craft compelling narratives that captivate audiences and bring brands to life through the power of cinema.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our story. We are excited about the future and committed to driving excellence in the Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications sector.

# We have a strong creative pedigree and heritage

**Femi Adefowokan, MD, Maximedia Global Communications**

**How will you assess the Nigerian Integrated Marketing communications sector?**

The Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communications sector is dynamic and constantly evolving, with significant growth driven by digital technology. It is also intensely competitive. Amidst shrinking budgets is a proliferation of

agencies for a small pool of clients and budget. There has been a significant shift towards digital marketing. Social media, influencer marketing and mobile advertising are increasingly popular and seem to now have a life of their own and traditional advertising now has to justify its value. But this is where expertise and the right strategy comes in, to be able to balance the two and maximize value from the two complementing each other. It is solutions first, then channels.

Even record labels, entertainment companies now have one form of creative or media solution or the other.

Really exciting things are happening in the use of generative AI and data analytics. These tools help us understand consumers better and optimize campaigns for higher ROI.

**How will you assess your subsidiary's leadership positioning in this sector?**



We have been a prominent player in the sector for 13 years. In those 13 years, we have grown to be one of the most respected media agencies in Nigeria. We are known for creativity and innovation. We are known for disruptive media ideas that break through the clutter and solve specific brand challenges. A solution of ours increased brand visibility for one of our clients in the banking sector by 91% across digital maps, websites and apps. It also led to an 80% increase in direct discovery and brand searches. On the traditional media front, we ran a radio campaign for an NGO to promote the benefits of breastfeeding. Three months into the campaign, top-of-mind awareness grew by 45% in the targeted areas for the campaign.

### **What would you say are the challenges in this sector?**

Like every sector, we are grappling with our own peculiar challenges.

I think a key challenge is talent and skill gaps. While we were still struggling to find ways around skill deficiencies, we got hit with the 'japa' wave. An already bad situation became worse.

Second issue is unethical practices and lack of standardization. ARCON is trying in some areas, but more needs to be done in others. The industry itself needs to self-regulate, not just in terms of standards of entry, but of practice. This starts with how we run our individual organizations.

Thirdly, as an industry, we have done ourselves a disservice in terms of how we position as professional service providers. This has led to a 4th problem which is that very few clients understand, appreciate and respect what we do as marketing communications consultants.

Finally, the economy. We are usually one of the first victims of any economic crisis. Clients typically cut their budgets. With the current economic situation in the country, the industry is experiencing this and we are having to use our expertise to educate, encourage and lead our clients in the right direction. High impact, low budget solutions.

### **How are you coping with the challenges?**

By continuing to invest in talent development, embracing new technologies and fostering strong client relationships. We keenly observe consumer behavior and the media scene to see where it is headed



and arrive there ahead of time. Proactivity.

### **How will you assess SO & U as a leading Creative power house in Nigeria?**

We have a strong creative pedigree and heritage. This is evident in several award-winning campaigns we have produced, including 'My Friend Udemé' for Guinness Nigeria, 'Oh Jerry' (Life is Beautiful campaign) for MTN and the 'Bullet Train' for Access Bank. In recent time, the group has done outstanding work like the branding of the Blue Rail for Captain Morgan. In Maximedia, we have just designed and developed an app for one of our clients to drive consumer engagement and conversion for the brand.

### **What really excites you about the group?**

Our mantra - One team, one dream. This is our life and we demonstrate this daily in our engagements internally and externally. We are all plugged in. We also believe that Nothing is Impossible. We always go the extra mile every single time to meet and surpass client expectations.

### **As a member agency of this group, how do you want**

### **your agency to be rated?**

I will leave the rating to our clients and indeed we have references from quite a number of them to show they are appreciative of our expertise. Additionally, I will stress that when it comes to understanding the Nigerian market and how best to reach the Nigerian consumer, we are top. Also, in terms of innovation, strategy and getting the best deals for clients, we are exceptional.

### **What is the unique selling point of your agency?**

We know the Nigerian market and how best to reach the Nigerian consumer.

### **Who are you sir? Can we meet you?**

My name is Femi Adefowokan, I am the Managing Director of Maximedia Global Communications, the media strategy, planning and buying arm of the SO&U Group. An industry expert of about three decades, spanning strategy, planning and buying. I am very passionate about developing people, helping them achieve optimal performance in their professional and personal lives.

# We take marketing seriously because of its value in business

**Banks Adigwe,**  
Chief Operating Officer, Iris Exposures Limited

## **H**ow will you assess the Nigerian integrated marketing communications sector?

The Nigeria integrated marketing communications sector has become very active due to some structural inadequacies that existed before in the communication channels and its tools.

The realization by clients and brands that their communication needs can be achieved more efficiently and effectively using 360 marketing approach made the IMC a welcomed solution.

The Nigerian market place is a complex arena that is full of clutter and competition, the business environment is ever changing, the sector is under pressure to have the best connection with its target markets using the most efficient communication variables.

The nation's business is internet based and the target audience is internet savvy, this development portrays a charming atmosphere of sophistication as brands try to win the market share of mind, share of space and share of pocket using the best of integrated marketing channels.

Three variables are responsible, namely: The Market Place, Media & Communications as well as The Consumer/Target audience. The changes are due to advancement in information technology and audience taste orientation. The result is that target audiences are better informed and choices of brands and services are readily available across all communication platforms.

## **How will you assess your subsidiary, Iris Exposures Limited's leadership positioning in this sector?**

The Out of Home sector is a frontier in technology adoption and innovation and Digital Outdoor powers this, in recent time, same advertising message goes across Television and Digital Out of home channels. This produces a communication synergy that works.

OOH has become very strong in nation's advertising sector; OOH has moved up the ladder so fast, it has moved from being the least in budget classification to actually becoming the arrow head for some brands.

Brands like Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Guinness Stout, Johnny Walker whiskey and a host of other brands have at one point or the other used OOH as the lead channel for its advertising campaign.

The channel is most useful during product launch and it has become a window for alcoholic and tobacco brands as it comes as escape route from government strict control on the brands.



Consequently, the products use all forms of OOH to build connection with the target markets while navigating away from government strict rules.

### **What are the challenges in OOH sector?**

OOH comes with many challenges, one of these problems is weather related. In northern Nigeria wind is a big problem and this comes all through the year while in the west the wind (storm) happens during wet season and this brings about wastage, campaign materials get torn, replacement of materials comes with a price, campaign suffers setback during this period.

Over regulation is another problem affecting the sector, different regulatory bodies come up with different charges and taxes and these in one way or the other affect OOH costing.

Politics is another critical factor that disturbs the sector, State government and Federal authorities directly or indirectly control outdoor owners and forbid them from accepting contract from the opposition parties. Revenues are lost as the government in power has not provided soft landing for these board/site owners in return for the revenue lost.

The digital media on the other hand, suffers so much as some of the screens and panels imported into the country are substandard, this brings about high cost in wear and tear as the warranty on product does not cover every aspect of the transaction.

Recent increase in electricity tariff has a direct effect on business overhead, while there is increase in cost of sales, there is low patronage as brands are struggling to stay afloat.

### **How are you coping with the challenges?**

To solve these problems, Iris Exposures Limited always makes sure its screens and panels come from the best source. This saves the organization from the problems of wasting funds on unnecessary repairs and replacement of panels.

To stand afloat, Iris Exposures Limited has continued to increase its clientele base, having more clients' means having more funds to work with, as a business must be able to pay its bills as well as make profits. Besides, we take marketing seriously because we understand its place in the life of a business; it is our backbone and we will keep doing what is required to be the

best in our world.

The company gives more value to brands; this is in line with our primary responsibility of generating more eyeballs, which shores up reach and sales. Ultimately, these bring in greater returns on investments.

With these brands are encouraged to be on the Retina as they can easily quantify their benefits.

### **How will you assess SO&U as a leading creative power house in Nigeria?**

Among its peers, SO&U is one of the longest running industry players, the firm has been on for over 34 years and it has remained relevant unlike so many other advertising agencies of its age and size that got swallowed up by the challenges of time.

SO&U is very professional in its conduct and administration and has unblemished record of integrity.

The agency is an advertising powerhouse that believes in "people" having the right team spirit powers quality energy and this helps in brand transformation.

### **What really excites you about the group?**

The SO&U group is a collection of professionals that understand that the only way to be relevant in the marketing world is to continuously produce creativity and marketing solutions that work. The SO&U group is on a mission to constantly focus on ideas that grows businesses, transform organization and change perceptions. All components of the SO&U group are doing well in their various areas of endeavor. The group has the discipline to focus on what is important and on ideas that work. They have the task to provide differentiated and refreshing solutions for all marketing challenges.

### **As a member agency of this group, how do you want your agency to be rated?**

Iris Exposures Limited is the youngest member of the SO&U group; the philosophy of the young agency is not different from the parent company. The beautiful thing about Iris Exposures is that everyone that interacts with it loves the agency. Iris Exposures is on a mission to be the best in the digital and Airport advertising. The young agency is futuristic in its drive towards bringing in the best

innovations in airport and ambience marketing.

### **What is the Unique Selling Point of your agency?**

We have a lifestyle channel (screen) that connects mobile audience to advertising messages while they await their flights. The impact of the campaigns is measurable; we have data evidence that shows that Iris Exposures limited through its advertising channel at MMA2 Lagos delivers best reach at the lowest cost. In summary, it is safe to say that our marketing principle is data driven.

Presently in Nigeria, more people travel by air and this is because of insecurity. Travelling by air happens to be the safest and fastest means of transportation. Thus, our screen, the Retina, provides a connection between brands and commuters through refreshing ambience that activates audience best connection moments.

Beyond reach, the Retina is the biggest LED screen in any airport's departure lounge in Nigeria. The screen is 20 meters by 3 meters and has very clear pictures that blends easily with the ambience of the lounge. The Retina's location, MMA2 is a gateway to over ten great commercial centers in Nigeria; Abuja, Kano, Kaduna, Warri, Enugu, Maiduguri, Akwa Ibom, Port-Harcourt, Asaba and Owerri.

### **Who are you? Can we meet you?**

My name is Banks Adigwe, I'm the Chief Operating Officer [COO] of Iris Exposures Limited, a subsidiary of SO&U. Iris Exposures Limited is an Out of Home communication agency that is positioned to bring innovations and excitements in airport advertisement.

Banks Adigwe has a strong background in Media management, Branding and Sales. He has wealth of experience in Planning, Strategy, OOH and Monitoring. Banks has a Master's degree in Political Science with a bias in Administration.

He is an apostle of Best Practice in brand management. In the past, he has played different roles in the promotion of a host of brands like Airtel, FCMB, Pepsi, Johnny Walker brands, Nokia, Samsung and equally, he has a knack for political campaign organization and executions, this role he had done for the two major political parties in Nigeria (APC and PDP)



# We have a track record of developing unique, creative campaigns, events, activations

**Ugochukwu Uwajeh,**  
Chief Operating Officer, Soulcommunications Limited

## **H**ow will you assess the Nigerian Integrated Marketing communications sector?

The Nigerian Integrated Marketing Communication sector is vibrant and evolving, with significant potentials for growth. Whilst there are challenges, the opportunities presented success in this sector will depend on the ability to integrate various marketing channels effectively, adapt to local nuances, and leverage innovative technologies to engage with consumers meaningfully.

## **H**ow will you assess your subsidiary's leadership positioning in this sector?

We have a track record of developing unique and creative PR campaigns, events, activations, and sponsorship deals that have captured attention and driven results for clients. We also prioritize understanding clients' needs and develop strategies to meet those objectives effectively. We have client satisfaction reports, recommendation and industry recognitions to show for this.

## **W**hat would you say are the challenges in this sector?

First is the economic situation that has led to reduced marketing budgets and cautious spending by clients. Also, we are witnessing rapid changes in technology that requires constant upskilling and investment in new tools and platforms to engage consumers. Lastly, the shifts in consumer preferences and behaviours, driven by digital transformation and social media, require agile marketing strategies that agencies must quickly adapt to.

## **H**ow are you coping with the challenges?

We are focusing on differentiation through unique value propositions, high-quality service, and building strong client relationships. There is investments in continuous training to enable the team stay updated with the latest industry trends and leverage new technologies effectively.

## **H**ow will you assess SO&U as a leading Creative power house in Nigeria?

If you take a look at the diversity of Industries, SO&U currently serves across FMCG, technology, finance, healthcare, you will know it is an indication of its versatility and broad creative capabilities. SO&U has won many awards and commendation for its creative work portfolio that has captured the minds of consumers in Nigeria and beyond. It is also important to stress how long clients stay with SO & U. The high retention rates indicate strong client satisfaction and loyalty.

## **W**hat really excites you about the group?

The group's commitment to pushing the boundaries of traditional advertising through innovative and groundbreaking campaigns is truly inspiring. Its dedication to ongoing professional development and staying abreast of the latest industry trends ensures that the team is always at the forefront of the creative landscape.



## **A**s a member agency of this group, how do you want your agency to be rated?

R.I We want Soulcomms to be rated based on creative excellence, client satisfaction and innovation in Public Relations, Events and Experiential Marketing, We also want to be rated for our ability to serve a wide range of sectors effectively, by showcasing versatility and adaptability in our services. It is important to be known for our ability to create highly engaging and interactive campaigns that drive strong audience engagement.

## **W**hat is the unique selling point of your agency?

Soulcomms excels in crafting compelling public relations campaigns that enhances brand's reputation. Leveraging deep media relationships and a keen understanding of the local market, we ensure your story is told in a way that resonates with your audience.

From concept to execution, we deliver unforgettable events and activations that engage and inspire. Whether it is a product launch, corporate event, or experiential marketing campaign, we create memorable experiences that amplify your brand message. We also identify and negotiate strategic sponsorship opportunities that align with your brand values and reach your target audience effectively. Our expertise ensures that sponsorships not only increase visibility but also deliver tangible ROI.

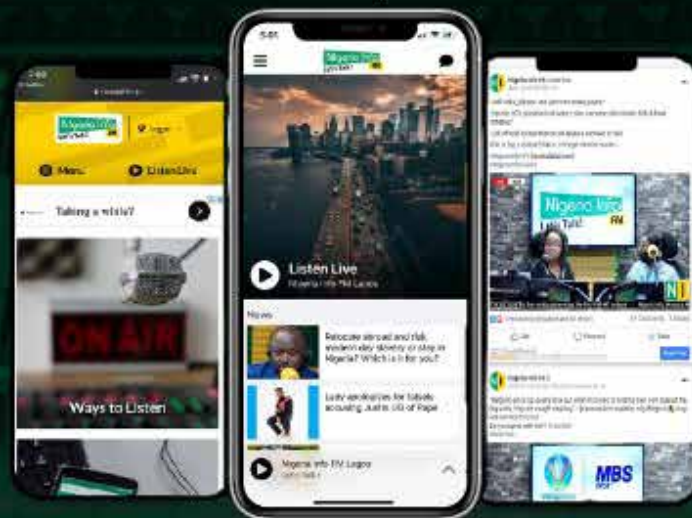
## **W**ho are you sir? Can we meet you?

My name is Ugochukwu Uwajeh, and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Soulcommunications Limited.

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# GEN Zs REDEFINING COMMUNICATION PROCESSES – PROFESSIONALS

By Felicia Nwosu

The advancement of technology and the disruptive nature of Generation Z are changing communication processes in the advertising market. To encourage them, brands and businesses should create an inclusive and collaborative working environment that will bring out the best of their creativity.

The above assertion was made by some young professionals in the Nigerian creative industry while sharing their thoughts in separate interviews with **MARKETING EDGE**.

They pointed out that Gen Zs should be given the opportunity to lead and

contribute their unique perspectives in shaping the future of creative and technology-driven sectors of the economy.

Kunle Sanni, Content Lead at Digisplash asserted that Gen Zs, having spent their formative years in a technology-dominated world, possess intuitive grasp of digital tools and platforms, which has positioned them as innate creators in a tech-driven landscape. He called on advertising agencies to harness their aspirations by offering them mentorship programmes that will further deepen their knowledge for the future.

“Their generation offers a fresh perspective, especially in

the creative industry, which is why they are being regarded as the internet or creator generation. They were born into a digitally-driven world and could hardly be confined by traditional concepts of doing things. That makes them a forward-thinking generation. They always advocate for a better work balance to make their creative processes more commendable,” he said.

Openiteri Joy-Adaeze, a Copywriter with the fast-rising creative agency, Digisplash, admitted that naturally, the Generation Zs possess a unique and remarkable array of skills, styles and values.

She added that such uniqueness has set Gen Zs apart in their delivery of digital innovation and cultural agility, and also challenges advertising agencies to offer dynamic opportunities that align with their hyperactive nature.

“I feel Gen Zs bring a breath of fresh air to creative communication. They come with creativity, admirable styles, energy, and communication gets more creative with them, because of their unique style of doing things.”

Seun Majekodunmi, Motion Designer with Digisplash, reaffirmed that the innate nature of Gen Zs as digital natives allows them to refine processes, amplify productivity and introduce creative approaches.

“From my experience, Gen Zs are already exposed to the internet natives right from birth, they approach issues with a different perspective compared to the older generations, especially in adapting to new developments. They tend to value transparency and even their relationship with brands

is a bit different, because they are not afraid to speak their minds even in issues that earlier generations would like to shy away from. That helps them to define their beliefs and also makes brands know what to bring out for them in terms of products.”

Lara Jawade, another Copywriter at Digisplash, also lauded the various contributions and impacts by these innovative young disrupters. She averred that their presence has created an aura of innovation within the ad space where technological adaptability and forward thinking are paramount.

“Gen Zs are already making an impact. When we check on our social platforms, messages are now more concise, authentic and even shorter because the generation is moving towards shorter videos. Gen Zs are leveraging different work spaces to make a great impact in the industry.”

Tobenna Okonkwo, Brand Manager with Digisplash also confirmed that the influence of Gen-Z has become increasingly critical, especially in their approach to work which is shaped by a blend of digital nativity. She asserted that understanding and harnessing the potential of Gen Z is not just advantageous, but also essential for brands that wish to thrive aggressively in the competitive market.

“Gen Zs are very daring, fearless and also disruptive. It is very critical that we need it in this day and time. We need people who are not afraid to be themselves. Their truth is their truth, which is the one way they can influence communication in general by being disruptive and coming in hard with their beliefs.”







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# ADVERTISING CHIEFS BLAME SECTOR'S LACK OF GROWTH ON LOW ENTRY POINT

By Felicia Nwosu

Some practitioners in the Integrated Marketing Communications sector have averred that low barrier of entry has become a threat to growth of the marketing and advertising space in recent times.

These notable advertising icons, who cut across diverse sectors, stated this in separate interviews with **MARKETING EDGE ONTV**, where they called for more collaborative efforts among stakeholders to tackle the challenge.

Victor Afolabi, Founder, GDM Group and Curator of the Art of Technology Lagos, while evaluating the industry in the face of economic challenges, affirmed that the experiential industry is highly fragmented and competitive due to the fact that barrier of entry is extremely low. He explained that building barriers to entry is critical to increasing business value.

“Not until recently, it was not well organised or even recognized by the regulatory body. I think in the last few years the recognition in bringing in some standards is increasing. What we do expect is that it will evolve a bit more where you begin to see some level of innovation, and this will begin to distinguish agencies. It will be able to add some value and respect to the kind of quality of work that has been produced which has not been the case before now.

“The case before now has been an all comers’ affair to a large extent, close to zero in terms of professionalism, but these things are changing. Again, it is beginning to attract a crop of people who we think should ordinarily be there. We are seeing people who, before now, were just industry people who had been in the industry. People who had worked on rigs and there were not so many intellectual powers and capacities being brought to bear, but things are evolving. We now see new entrants bringing so much dynamism challenging the status quo and that’s what we think will bring the innovation we expect.”

Yinka Adebayo, the Group Executive

Director of Omnicom Media Group, West and Central Africa, affirmed that with low barriers to entry, more and more people are aspiring to be identified with the industry, thereby declaring themselves practitioners, which he said fosters unprofessionalism. He then called for measures to ward off encroachment in the

positioning. I’m happy about the regulation because if we fail to regulate ourselves, what will happen at the end of the day is that we will not have people who are not professionals in our industry coming to regulate us. The earlier we do the regulation, the better.

Otis Ojeikhoa, the Founder and Chief



sector by non-registered practitioners.

“Unfortunately for us, the entry barrier to this sector is so low. That is the only sector that you can have somebody wake up as a medical doctor and tell you I’m practicing advertising. There should be some level of sanity. And I’m happy about the fact that the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) is ensuring that only registered practitioners are participating, which is good. But it should get to a level where just like a doctor will not feel fulfilled until you have become a member of Nigeria Medical Association, accountants will not feel fulfilled until you become a member of ICAN. A practitioner will not feel fulfilled until you become a member of ARCON, and it is all about

Executive Officer of Brands Optimal, also attested to the low barrier to entry, stating the need to institute factors that can prevent or impede non-registered members from entering the experiential marketing sector.

“Low barrier to entry is also a big challenge, because there is the haste to deploy, to practice and that is affecting the industry. People don’t wait to go through the gestation period of the learning curve, so that is beginning to diminish the quality and, of course, the relevance of the practice itself. I don’t want to call it quackery, but there is also that sort of dearth of knowledge in the sector. People are not investing in knowledge acquisition, they just want to go into practice.”



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# Ogilvy's 'Recycle Me' brings home Coca-Cola's first Cannes Lions Grand Prix in a decade

By Zion Rufus

**Y**up! They did not hold back from destroying Coca-Cola's iconic red-and-white logo to get the message across. And boy, did we get the message from that eye-grabbing campaign encouraging recycling.

How excited were you to wander the Palais again this year! I can imagine the nostalgia mixed with timeless excitement sweeping through your body as you watch thousands of delegates gather from across the world, not just to bask in the French summer, but to celebrate the pinnacle of advertising and creativity shaping our daily lives.

Day one had all the expected buzz and magic. Of course, there's nothing like the initial thrill of arrival, we just got here, and we are happy—you know the vibe. But hold your breath, the true spectacle is Friday's grand finale.

The first day also marked the announcement of the initial winners at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, covering Audio & Radio, Health & Wellness, Outdoor, Pharma, and Print & Publishing. The USA snagged three Grands Prix, while New Zealand, Spain, and the UK also took top honors. The UAE clinched the Lions Health and United Nations Foundation Grand Prix for Good.

In the Print & Publishing Lions category, which celebrates creativity in circulation, 734 entries competed, resulting in 21 awards: four Gold Lions, three Silver Lions, 13 Bronze Lions,



and the prestigious Grand Prix. The top honor went to 'Recycle Me' for Coca-Cola, created by WPP Open X, led by Ogilvy New York and supported and activated by Ogilvy LATAM, Ogilvy PR, and EssenceMediacom. This innovative campaign crushed the iconic red cans into distorted logos, mimicking how it would appear on a recycled aluminium can, in a bid to encourage recycling on a grand scale.

'Recycle Me', which debuted in April 2024, rolled out on billboards, transit shelters, and digital displays across Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, complemented by print and social media ads.

The campaign presented a stunning series of images featuring the crushed Coca-Cola logo, urging consumers to recycle.

Yup! They did not hold back from destroying Coca-Cola's iconic red-and-white logo to get the message across. And boy, did we get the message from that

eye-grabbing campaign encouraging recycling. The visual impact of the distorted logos, created using mechanical presses and vacuums, reflected the diverse ways people crush their cans, offering a fresh perspective on the brand's emblem.

While Ogilvy's aim with the 'Recycle Me' call to action, prominently displayed on the cans, was to elevate recycling in the consumer's mind and encourage responsible post-consumption behavior, the campaign also supports Coca-Cola's ambitious 'World Without Waste' goals to make all packaging 100% recyclable by 2025 and to collect and recycle the equivalent of every bottle and can sold by 2030.

The campaign also earned a Cannes Lions 'Gold Lion' in the Outdoor category.

Print & Publishing Jury President John Raúl Forero, President and Chief Creative Officer at DDB, Colombia, said: "Recycle Me' is a reminder of the power of simplicity, boldness, purity, and elegance

in print advertising. In a world that often seeks to dazzle with technology, this campaign stands out by vindicating the classic print. It's a Grand Prix-winning effort for a major brand that will undoubtedly be remembered for years to come."

For 75 years, Ogilvy has transformed brands with iconic, culture-shaping, value-driven ideas, inspired by its founder David Ogilvy. This rich legacy continues with Borderless Creativity, where innovation thrives at the intersections of advertising, public relations, relationship design, consulting, and health. Experts collaborate seamlessly across over 120 offices in 90 countries. Recognized by WARC as the #1 global agency network for creative excellence and effectiveness, Ogilvy delivers impactful solutions for clients and communities worldwide. Ogilvy is a proud member of the WPP family.

# AI market to hit \$184 billion this year

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**



A recent report by Statista revealed that the global market size in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) sector is projected to soar to US\$184.00 billion this year. This growth trajectory is anticipated to continue, with an annual growth rate (CAGR 2024-2030) of 28.46%, culminating in a market volume of US\$826.70 billion by 2030.

In global comparison, the United States is forecasted to lead with the largest market size, reaching US\$50.16 billion in 2024.

A notable trend in the AI industry is the increasing utilization of AI in healthcare, with applications ranging from disease diagnosis to personalized medicine. Additionally, AI's role in enhancing customer

service through chatbots and virtual assistants is gaining prominence. The development of AI chips and edge computing is another burgeoning trend, facilitating more efficient processing of AI applications. Furthermore, the integration of AI with other technologies like blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT) is anticipated to foster innovation and drive growth in the industry.

Several factors are fueling the growth of the AI industry. The proliferation of big data is expanding opportunities for AI applications, as AI algorithms require substantial data for learning and improvement. Advancements in computing power and cloud infrastructure are also enhancing the processing capabilities of AI applications. Moreover, the rising demand for automation and optimization across industries is propelling the

adoption of AI technologies. Consumer-facing applications such as virtual assistants and chatbots are further broadening the market for AI technologies.

Additionally, increased investments and collaborations among technology firms, research institutions, and governments are stimulating innovation and growth in the AI sector.

The AI market is poised for significant growth and development until 2030, driven by the widespread adoption of AI technologies across industries, advancements in AI algorithms and infrastructure, and substantial investments in AI research and development. The market is expected to witness ongoing innovation and expansion, with AI becoming an increasingly integral component of business operations and consumer-facing applications.

# Omnicom PR agencies report 1.1% revenue loss in Q1

By **Oluwaseyi Lawal**

Omnicom has disclosed a 1.1% decline in PR revenue during the first quarter of 2024, marking the third consecutive quarterly setback for the group.

In Q1, the performance of Omnicom PR Group, which encompasses FleishmanHillard, Ketchum, and Porter Novelli, was weaker compared to the holding company's other divisions, which experienced revenue growth, including advertising & media (7%), precision marketing (4.3%), experiential (9.5%), and healthcare (2%). Divisions that experienced losses include execution and support (4.3%) and branding & retail commerce (3.8%).

According to its earnings report, Omnicom reported

a 5.4% worldwide revenue increase to \$3.63 billion for the entire company, with organic revenue growth of 4%.

Acquisition revenue, excluding disposition revenue, contributed to a \$53 million increase in revenue, or 1.5%, mainly due to the acquisition of Flywheel Digital by the precision marketing group. The impact of foreign currency translation decreased revenue by \$2.7 million, or 0.1%.

Comparing organic growth by region in Q1 2024 to Q1 2023: 4.3% for the United States, 3.5% for Euro Markets & Other Europe, 22.3% for Latin America, 3.0% for Asia Pacific, 3.2% for the United Kingdom, and 1.1% for Other North America. The Middle East & Africa experienced a

**Omnicom**  
Public  
Relations  
Group

4.2% decline.

Chairman and CEO John Wren said in a statement, "Omnicom began the year with solid organic revenue growth of 4.0%, led by continued strength in our advertising & media and precision marketing disciplines, including Flywheel Digital. We are uniquely able to combine marketing and sales solutions with a seamless set of information signals

to turn our award-winning creativity into measurable dynamic business outcomes for our clients. Our industry-leading tools and platforms, combined with the strength of our operating leadership, has led to our excellent new business performance and, when combined with the new opportunities we are pursuing, give us great confidence in the future."

In Q1 2024, OMPG suffered its third consecutive quarterly loss, with revenue declining by 2.9% in Q4 2023 and 5.5% in Q3. This marked the first quarterly decline since Q1 2021.

The revenue decline in Q3 followed a stagnant Q2, which ended eight consecutive quarters of PR growth. Prior to this, there was a 5.8% increase in Q1, 12.7% in Q4 2022, 12.6% in Q3 2022, 15.8% in Q2 2022, 14% in Q1 2022, 4.4% in Q4 2021, 10.5% in Q3 2021, and 15.1% in Q2 of that year — a significant improvement from the 3.5% decline experienced in Q1 2021.



# A DECADE OF DEDICATION

## How Guinness Conquered Football in Nigeria



## From Record Jersey to Roaring Crowds

### How Guinness Became a Nigerian Football Legend

Nigeria, a vibrant nation woven from over 300 ethnicities, finds a powerful unifier in football. For over a decade, Guinness has fuelled this passion, carefully curating unforgettable football experiences.

The premium beer brand, Guinness, has unified people through its power of **goodness and communion** and has been a catalyst behind some of the best football moments to life in shared optimism. Guinness saw not just a game, but a beating heart, a chance to unite this diverse nation under the banner of the beautiful game. In 2013 the brand, in a record-breaking feat unveiled the world's largest Nigerian jersey – a powerful symbol of unwavering support for the Super Eagles. This wasn't just a jersey; it was a battle cry.



Guinness knew support went beyond a giant piece of cloth. They launched the "**Fly with the Eagles**" campaign, whisking **200** lucky fans on an all-expenses-paid trip to cheer on the Nigeria team in South Africa. The roar of the crowd, the shared hope, the electrifying energy – it was a journey etched in memory, culminating in a glorious victory – the AFCON 2013 trophy hoisted high!



The love for football, particularly the Premier League, burns bright in Nigeria. Guinness recognized this and became the **official broadcast partner with Multichoice or SuperSport**. Every electrifying goal, every nail-biting save, was beamed directly into homes across the nation, but the story doesn't end there.

"**Every Minute Made of More**" consumer promotions and celebratory ad campaigns kept the excitement bubbling throughout the 2015 football season.

Guinness wasn't just about the big leagues, but also believed in nurturing local talent.

In 2017, an icon walked onto Nigerian soil – Thierry Henry. His presence ignited a fire in young players' hearts, a testament



to Guinness' commitment to growing the beautiful game from the roots up. The following year (in 2018), Guinness partnered with Rio Ferdinand, another legend celebrating the unwavering spirit of Nigerian fans with a country wide tour – a spirit truly "Made of More."

Fast forward to 2019. Guinness wasn't satisfied with just watching the game; they wanted fans to experience it. Enter **Guinness Night Football** – a multi-sensory extravaganza of nighttime five-a-side matches across Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, and of course, Nigeria. This wasn't just any tournament; it was a celebration of passion, featuring teams battling it out under the floodlights, culminating in a final night in Lagos with celebrities like Rio Ferdinand and others not just cheering but joining in the five a-side games with fans. The night wasn't complete without the electrifying performances of top African artists, blending music and football for a memorable experience that resonated deep within the soul.



Even during the grip of the pandemic, Guinness remained steadfast. They renewed their partnership with SuperSport, ensuring Nigerians wouldn't miss a single Premier League moment. What more you would ask? In 2022, in the spirit of fandom, Guinness surprised **20 superfans** with a trip to witness the magic of the EPL live in London.

Because fans deserve more, **Guinness Matchday**, launched in September 2023 to deliver epic live football viewing experience to fans across major cities in Nigeria in events with Giant screens, 360 surround sound and supercharged celebrations of culture through Music and Fashion.



The resounding success of the event transcended simply watching the game. It was about immersing yourself in the atmosphere, the shared passion, and the electricity of live football. Over **500,000** fans were directly reached, with a staggering **1.4 million** live radio community tuning in weekly to the Guinness Matchday Review Radio shows. The digital footprint exploded, reaching an incredible **61 million** and generating **11.5 million** engagements.

Guinness' commitment extends beyond one-off events. Partnerships with giants like **MTN** and **Showmax** ensure fans enjoy data discounts and free access to live matches, extending the reach of the beautiful game further than ever before. This dedication to creating unforgettable experiences is what truly sets Guinness apart. Understanding that football is more than just a game; it's a shared passion that binds Nigerians together.



This is just one chapter in the incredible story of Guinness and Nigerian football fandom. Looking to the brighter future, weaving the magic, stitching football even deeper into the very fabric of Nigerians, Guinness announced its **first-ever four-year global football partnership with the Premier League** to kick-off 2024/25 season.

Guinness will use its distinctive marketing, creative advertising, and history of activating world-class sports sponsorships to create fun and engaging fan experiences. The partnership will look to continue to support and uplift the football community, on and off the pitch, and inspire new connections between its own consumers and passionate Premier League fans in Nigeria and around the world.



# Listicle: TIME100 unveils 'World's Most Influential People 2024'

By **Ralph Tathagata**

In line with its annual tradition of listing the 100 most influential people in the world every year, TIME Magazine has announced its 2024 edition, which asked cultural and political icons to highlight the changemakers of the past year. This year features dozens of athletes, entertainers, artists and politicians.

The twenty-first annual list features: Alex Rodriguez on Patrick Mahomes, Burna Boy on 21 Savage, Maren Morris on Jack Antonoff, Blake Lively on America Ferrera, Kate Hudson on Leslie Odom Jr., Michelle Obama on Thelma Golden, Jon Huntsman on William Lai, Naomi Watts on Tory Burch, Tom Brady on A'ja Wilson, Mark Zuckerberg on Jensen Huang, Ryan Reynolds on Michael J. Fox, Richard Branson on Jigar Shah, Joe Biden on Shawn Fain, and more.

By making the TIME100 list 2024, Burna Boy has consolidated his global vision and acclaim after becoming the first African artist to sell out a U.S. stadium in 2023, and the first Afrobeats artist to sing at the Grammys in 2024.

Commenting on the unveiling, Jessica Sibley, TIME Chief Executive Officer,

said: "The influence recognized on this year's TIME100 list of the world's most influential people spans industries and continents. With our TIME100 partners, we are proud to convene the newest members of the TIME100 community for a day of conversation at the TIME100 Summit and for our annual TIME100 Gala, which we will once again bring viewers inside with a primetime special on ABC."

Of the 2024 TIME100 list, Sam Jacob, TIME Editor in Chief, wrote in his letter to readers, "Influence, we know, is complex: it can be for better and for worse, it can span generations, categories, and perspectives... Now in our 101st year, TIME continues to evolve. Today, we convene our TIME100 community across the globe, with events spanning 12 cities and four continents.... TIME100 is an unparalleled way for us to tell essential stories about the people and ideas that shape and improve the world."

TIME will celebrate the 2024 TIME100 list of the world's most influential people at the TIME100 Summit on 24 April and the TIME100 Gala on 25 April in New York City.

TIME100 further underscores the fact



that a media organisation does not require the permission of any agency or institute to make a listicle in any sector of the economy or industry. Its informed and sagacious editorial judgment is enough to do so.

## OMD Worldwide named Media Network of the Year 2024 at Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity

By **Zion Rufus**

OMD Worldwide, the largest media agency network globally, has achieved another significant milestone by being named Media Network of the Year at the 2024 Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity, following an outstanding performance at this week's festival.

The agency previously won this prestigious award in 2022, while Mindshare claimed it in 2023.

The Cannes Lions Media Network of the Year award recognizes a media network whose member companies earn the most points for shortlisted and awarded entries,

with points only given to companies credited in the Media Placement role in Media Lions.

As the world's leading media agency network, OMD excels in delivering large-scale business transformation for top global brands. OMD ranks first across seven industry rankings by RECMA, COMvergence, Effie, Cannes Lions, and Forrester. Operating in 120 markets, 13,000 OMD experts, including 7,000 digital specialists, drive client growth and innovation.

Collaborating closely with its clients, OMD propels the industry forward with cutting-edge data, technology, and innovation, consistently delivering proven



business transformation and growth.

# ACT Good Report 2024 celebrates best campaigns

By **Ralph Tathagata**



**A**CT Good Report 2024 has celebrated the best campaigns promoting social and environmental responsibility. The report is a collaboration between ACT Responsible and WARC.

Announced as part of its 10th anniversary, the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) by adam&eveDDB London took the top spot for the most impactful social or sustainable work.

The report is compiled by ACT Responsible, the international non-profit association and largest source of the world's best social and environmental campaigns, in collaboration with the WARC Rankings.

ACT Good Report is a unique ranking showcasing the world's most impactful use of creative communications to promote sustainability and social responsibility and raise awareness of significant social and environmental issues. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the report.

The ACT Good ranking is calculated by combining the performance of campaigns across various initiatives of the ACT Responsible Program (such as the ACT Exhibition, the ACT Care Awards, One Minute of Responsibility, The ACT Tributes ...), with the results of the recently published WARC Creative 100, the global benchmark for creative excellence. There are no complicated criteria or categories,

just great work for Good.

A total of 1,250 campaigns produced by 804 agencies for 995 advertisers (non-profit, public sector, and commercial brands) across 76 markets were evaluated for this latest ACT Good Report.

Of the best 40 campaigns featured in ACT Good Report 2024, 22 are for non-profits, 18 for commercial brands (including one produced in collaboration with a non-profit) and three for public sectors. A total of 37 agencies (20 are part of 15 networks and 7 are independent) across 18 markets are represented.

The best 25 agencies are made up of four independent and 21 networked agencies (from 11 different networks) covering a total of 12 markets. Of the best 20 networks, three are independent and 17 are owned by holding companies. The best ten brands include six non-profit, four for-profit.

ACT Good Report 2024 best ranked campaigns & companies promoting Good are:

Campaigns: #1 The Last Photo for CALM by adam&eveDDB London, United Kingdom #2 Anne de Gaulle for Fondation Anne de Gaulle by Havas Paris, France #3 Runner 321 for adidas by FCB Canada #4 Chatpat for SOS Children's Villages by FCB Chicago & FCB India #5 The Unshowables for Vision du Monde by STEVE, France

The highest ranked campaign, 'The

Last Photo' for mental health charity Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) by adam&eveDDB London, launched Project 84 in the UK, a landmark suicide prevention initiative that turned the final photographs of 50 victims into striking portraits, to raise suicide awareness and lessen its stigma.

Agencies: #1 Publicis Conseil, Paris #2 adam&eveDDB, London #3 Havas Paris #4 FCB Montreal #5 FCB India, Gurgaon

Networks: #1 FCB #2 Havas Group #3 Grey Group #4 DDB Worldwide #5 Publicis Worldwide

Brands: #1 Renault #2 Unilever #3 CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) #4 Fondation Anne de Gaulle #5 adidas

Countries: #1 France #2 United States #3 United Kingdom #4 India #5 Canada

The rankings featured in ACT Good Report 2024, now in its 10th year, are available to view online on [www.act-responsible.org/the-good-report/](http://www.act-responsible.org/the-good-report/)

Isa Kurata, ACT Responsible Co-founder, says: "With the Good Report, ACT Responsible pursues its mission to promote, inspire and unite the advertising industry around social responsibility and sustainability. We truly believe that advertising has the power to educate, inform, and enact positive change. It must consistently serve as a catalyst for good and constructive influence. Collaborating with WARC to produce the ACT Good Report is an honour, and we see it as a valuable resource for agencies to enhance their dedication to social and environmental efforts."

Amy Rogers, Head of Content, WARC Creative and ACT'ive Partner, added: "Creativity as a force for positive change has never been more important. WARC is delighted to collaborate with Act Responsible to continue shining a light on the agencies, brands and NGOs that are creating breakthrough ideas that not only matter to society but can change behaviour."



# HOW AGENCIES CELEBRATED CREATIVITY AT PITCHER AWARDS 2024

By **Ralph Tathagata**



**A**dvertising and marketing are dynamic industries. They require constant evolution to remain effective at moving brands and consumers emotionally, behaviourally and economically.

To create business growth and creative effectiveness that resonate in the marketing communications ecosystem, the need to have creative awards that give critical insight into what will be effective in future cannot be overstated. Also, to be meaningfully different, creative agencies need to project their clients' brands meaningfully differently. That is, show that they're thinking and doing things differently to their competitors, which also requires originality. This is why clients hire creative agencies.

At this year's Pitcher Festival, the premier Pan-African celebration of creativity and excellence, agencies were awarded for the best and newest advertising thinking that exposed the best creative experiments to the industry.

According to the organisers, this year's submissions showcased remarkable talent, innovation, and cultural insights, making it truly memorable.

Among the outstanding winners of the Pitcher Awards 2024, Dentsu Creative

Nigeria won Advertising Agency of the Year, while Carat and Dentsu won the Africa Media Network of the Year and the Africa Advertising Agency Network of the Year respectively. PHD Nigeria won Media Agency of the Year and 4 Grand Prix, 25 Gold Pitchers Awarded in Special Awards. Also, Uganda, Zambia and United Kingdom won First Pitcher Awards.

What's more, Dentsu Creative Nigeria secured two Grand Prix awards on Use of Media for their groundbreaking campaign "Reclaim your DNA" for AB InBev/Trophy Extra Special Stout.

Use of Cultural Insights for the same campaign, highlighting the power of cultural storytelling.

Dentsu Kenya also claimed two Grand Prix awards on Digital Mobile Craft for their captivating work on "Give A Generous Voice to Storytime" for Cadbury's Social Craft and Websites Microsites Web Services for the same campaign, demonstrating excellence in digital creativity.

A total of 25 Gold Awards were bestowed upon 11 agencies, recognizing their exceptional contributions to the industry. The winning agencies include: BrandEye Media Nigeria ; Carat South Africa; Carat Nigeria;

Dentsu South Africa; Dentsu Creative

Nigeria;

Dentsu Kenya; EABL Digitribe – Ogilvy Africa; McCann Dakar; PHD Nigeria; Shape History UK and X3M Marketing Ideas Nigeria

On Special Awards, Media Agency of the Year went to PHD Nigeria, Advertising Agency of the Year went Dentsu Creative Nigeria, Africa Media Agency Network of the Year went to Carat, and Africa Advertising Agency Network of the Year went to Dentsu.

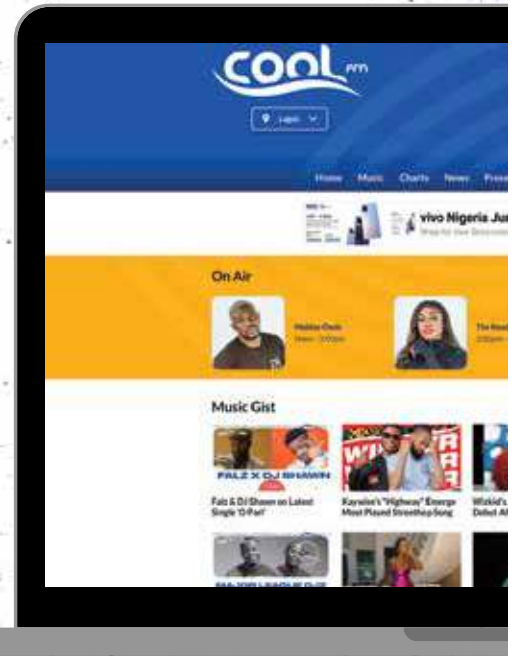
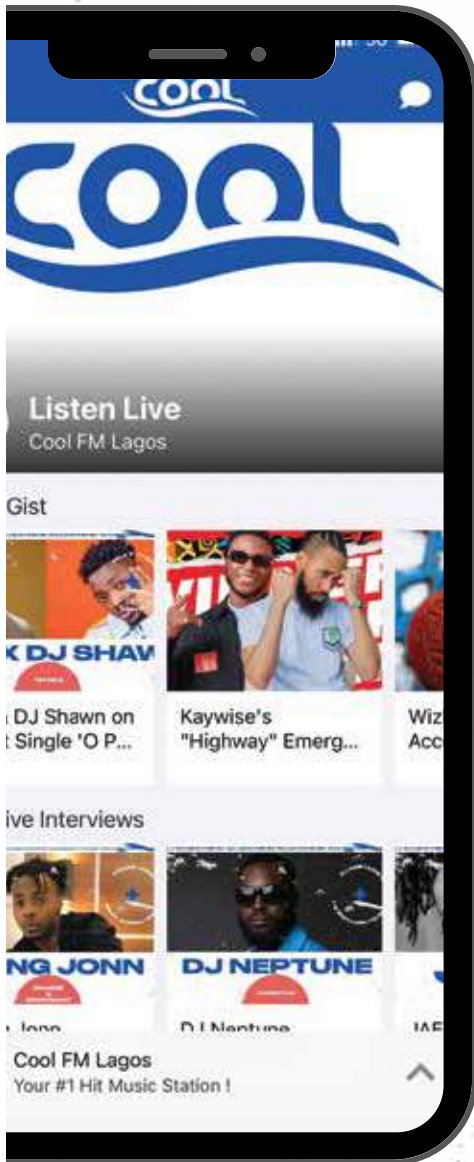
The esteemed jury members were drawn from across Africa and beyond, and through dedication and discernment, they ensured that only the most outstanding campaigns received recognition.

The primary value of creative agencies is not in producing advertising, it's in discovering fresh creative ideas and approaches that have the ability to engage a jaded consumer who is bombarded daily by advertising and blocks almost all of it out.

As the African advertising industry moves forward and upward towards effective campaigns of the future, it is expected that other agencies and practitioners will take learnings from the winners of this year's Pitcher Awards and include those new styles of thinking in their next big marketing effort.



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# ONGA CELEBRATES CULTURE AND TALENT

*\*Rewards customers*



**Host, Bisola Aiyoola, at the Onga Village during the OngaXAMVCA Cultural day.**

Lagos, Nigeria - May 15, 2024. Onga, a leading seasoning brand renowned for enhancing the great tastes and aroma in every dish, solidified its commitment to celebrating African culture and talent by sponsoring both the AMVCA Cultural Day and the Best Lead Actress Award at the prestigious 10th edition of the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA) ceremony.

A celebration of African Heritage and excellence, The AMVCA Cultural Day took place at The Onga Village, Eko Hotel & Suites, Lagos. Anchored by the multi-talented Bisola Aiyoola, the event brought together notable

members of the entertainment industry with guests adorned in stunning traditional African attire and showcasing the continent's diverse cultures.

The feast featured a delightful array of meals like 'Ongalicious' Jollof Rice, Onga's Signature Smokey party Jollof rice, to 'Abula, , Miyan Kuka, kunu, and Egusi' soups representing favourite meals from the Western, Northern, and Eastern parts of Nigeria.

Delicious delicacies from other parts of Africa were also featured on the menu as guests also got to enjoy 'Banku' from Ghana; Pilau Rice and Braised 'Tozo' from Kenya, and Beef 'Matoke' from Rwanda.

The mouth-watering culinary experience provided a rich tapestry of tastes and aromas that were savoured by all with great delight. Onga played a pivotal role as the headline sponsor, ensuring the event was a resounding success.

Guests were also entertained to traditional games and other fun activities. The traditional ambiance of The Onga Village gave meaning to the celebration of African Culture

Performing artiste, Segun Johnson's electrifying performance, tagged the Onga Moment, left guests enthralled throughout the event. His captivating medleys added an extra spark to the already vibrant event.

Among the esteemed celebrities who graced the event were Iyabo Ojo, Saidu Balogun, Kunle Remi, Richard Mofe-Damijo (RMD), Alex Otti, Odunlade Adekola, Lateef Adedimeji, Scarlet Gomez (Wura) and others, adding their star power to the cultural celebration.

Adebola Williams, Marketing Director at Promasidor, expressed the brand's strategic fit with the cultural day celebration. African Culture cannot be celebrated without the people, fashion and most importantly, the richness of African cuisine. This is where Onga plays a strategic role as a brand that delivers great taste and aroma when used in all your meals.

Onga celebrates the heart of African cuisine, and the AMVCA Cultural Day resonates with our values. Sponsoring this event was a way for us to be part of something truly special."We look forward to continuing this journey of cultural appreciation and empowerment through our brand initiatives."

She emphasised that Onga's dedication goes beyond the Cultural Day festivities. The brand also proudly sponsored the Best Lead Actress Award, acknowledging the remarkable talent of female actors in the African film industry. This sponsorship underscores Onga's deep appreciation for the artistry and commitment that these women bring to their craft.

"We take immense pride in supporting talented actresses who are putting African women in the spotlight," she said. "Their creativity and hard work serve as inspirations to us all. Sponsoring this award is our way of paying tribute to their outstanding achievements and recognizing their invaluable role in shaping the narrative of African women."

In a heartfelt acknowledgment, Best Female Lead Actress Kehinde Bankole extended her gratitude to the Onga brand for sponsoring her category at the AMVCA





**Kunle Remi, and Bisola Aiyeola getting their groove on, to Segun Johnson's captivating Owambe vibes during the Onga Moment.**



**Guest enjoying the great taste and aroma of Ongalicious Jollof and other African dishes.**

ceremony. Her words of appreciation underscored the brand's commitment to supporting and recognizing outstanding talent within the African film and television industry.

Promasidor Culinary Category Manager, Oladapo Oshuntoye also expressed his pleasure towards the success of the event. "I am thrilled with the success of our sponsorship at the AMVCA Cultural Day and the Best Lead Actress Award category. It's truly gratifying to see our brand contributing to the celebration of African culture and talent on such a grand scale. Our partnership with the AMVCA reflects our deep commitment to showcasing the best of Africa's culinary heritage and supporting the incredible talent in the entertainment industry."

The AMVCA ceremony serves as a pivotal moment in celebrating excellence across African entertainment. Onga's sponsorship reflects its ongoing dedication to promoting cultural appreciation and empowering artistic talent throughout the continent.

Follow Onga on social media (IG: @onga\_nigeria, FB: @Onga Nigeria, YT: Onga Nigeria, TikTok: Onga.Nigeria) for a glimpse into the amazing experience.



**Kehinde Bankole after receiving the 2024 AMVCA Best Female Lead Award sponsored by Onga.**



**Wale Ojo, 2024 AMVCA Best Actor, with Bisola Aiyeola at The Onga Village**



**Desmond Elliot having fun at the Onga lounge for the AMVCA Gala**



**Delicious meals served in Onga food packs.**



**Bamboo and raffia kitchen setup at The Onga Village.**



**Bisola Ayieola at the Ghana booth savouring the richness of Onga flavours and aroma**



**Cross section of the vibrant cultural attire donned by Guests at the Onga Village**



# Top Tea delights Nigerians on *World Tea Day* with unique celebrations

*(Top Tea's celebration of World Tea Day was a resounding success, bringing joy and a sense of community to Lagos)*



On 21st May, the world celebrated International Tea Day, and in Nigeria, Top Tea took center stage, marking the occasion with vibrant festivities and community engagement. Known for its rich heritage and exceptional quality, Top Tea showcased its renowned black tea goodness beloved by Nigerian tea enthusiasts through its unique “Find your inspiration. You are made for more” Campaign.

The celebrations commenced with a dynamic caravan tour across key locations in Lagos State, including Ojota, Berger, Oshodi, Iyana Ipaja, and Ikeja. This initiative brought excitement to tea lovers and commuters, offering a delightful blend of entertainment and refreshment.

Top Tea, a premium blend by Promasidor, is celebrated for its rich composition, including flavonoid antioxidants and relaxing theanine, delivering a host of health benefits. Despite its premium quality, Top Tea remains affordably priced, making it accessible to a wide audience.

As the caravan made its way through bustling Lagos streets, locals eagerly participated in the festivities. Many were pleasantly surprised by the unexpected treat. “This is an unexpected thoughtful gesture,” remarked one pedestrian, encapsulating the general sentiment of gratitude and delight among the participants.

Top Tea's celebration highlighted its range of flavors: traditional black tea, lemon and lime tea, and ginger tea. Each variant offers the nutritional benefits and antioxidants characteristic of high-quality tea, promoting health and wellness among its consumers.

The company's thoughtful packaging options cater to diverse needs, whether for household use or on-the-go convenience. Options range from a standard household box or economical pouch containing 26 bags to a super-economical box of 100 or a convenient pack of three tea bags. The round tea bags, available in tagged or tagless versions, are designed for quick infusion and optimal flavor release, ensuring a superior tea experience without compromising on quality.

This year's World Tea Day celebrations by Top Tea not only

honored the global significance of tea but also reinforced its commitment to providing superior tea at competitive prices. The initiative demonstrated Top Tea's dedication to enhancing the tea-drinking experience for Nigerians, blending tradition with modern convenience.

As the caravan tour concluded, the joyful reactions from the communities visited underscored the success of the event. The thoughtful gesture resonated deeply with the public, as Top Tea once again reaffirmed its place in the hearts of Nigerian tea lovers.

International Tea Day serves as a reminder of the cultural and historical importance of tea around the world. Top Tea's celebrations in Lagos highlighted the shared appreciation for this beloved beverage, bridging gaps and bringing people together in a moment of collective joy and relaxation.

Through its innovative approach and commitment to quality, Top Tea has made a lasting impact on the Nigerian tea market. As tea enthusiasts in Lagos enjoyed their favorite brew, the celebration readily showcased the timeless appeal and enduring significance of tea in daily life.



# SAMSUNG NIGERIA UNVEILS MID-RANGE SMARTPHONE CHAMPIONS, GALAXY A55 5G, A35 5G

**S**amsung Nigeria has launched two new additions to its Galaxy A series - Galaxy A55 5G and Galaxy A35 5G smartphones.

Both devices are designed to bring the power of 5G connectivity to a wider range of consumers, offering a seamless and fast mobile experience at affordable price points.

Speaking during the unveiling at Samsung office in Lagos, Nathan Lee, Business Manager, Mobile Division, Samsung Electronics West Africa, described the Galaxy A55 5G as a smartphone which stands out as a versatile mid-range smartphone packed with advanced features.

According to him, the device boasts a vibrant 6.6-inch Super AMOLED display with a high refresh rate, delivering stunning visuals and smooth scrolling.

"Powered by an efficient octa-core processor, the device ensures smooth multitasking and gaming performance", he said.

"Cutting-edge mobile experiences are increasingly essential to everyday life. "With continuous enhancements to the Galaxy A series, we're ensuring that more people across Nigeria can access our transformative innovations," Lee added.

Galaxy A55 5G excels with its quad-camera setup, featuring a high-resolution main sensor, an ultra-wide lens for capturing expansive

landscapes, a macro lens for detailed close-up shots, and a depth sensor for stunning portrait mode effects.

"Whether users are capturing everyday moments or creative photos, this smartphone delivers impressive results", said Stephen Okwara, head, Product Management, Samsung West Africa. "Moreover, the Galaxy A55 5G comes with a robust battery that supports fast charging, ensuring users stay connected throughout the day without interruptions.

"With 5G connectivity, users can experience blazing-fast download and streaming speeds, enabling seamless video calls, gaming, and media consumption on the go", he said.

On the other hand, the Galaxy A35 5G caters to consumers looking for a compact yet powerful 5G smartphone.

Featuring a 6.4-inch display, this device offers a comfortable grip and a stunning visual experience for entertainment and productivity.

Powered by a capable processor, it delivers smooth performance for everyday tasks and apps.

The camera setup on the Galaxy A35 5G includes a versatile triple-camera system, comprising a high-resolution main camera, an ultra-wide lens for capturing more in the frame, and a depth sensor for artistic bokeh effects.

This setup ensures users

can capture memorable moments with clarity and detail.

Additionally, the Galaxy A35 5G comes with a long-lasting battery that supports fast charging, allowing users to stay connected and productive throughout their day.

The inclusion of 5G connectivity enhances the overall mobile experience, enabling faster downloads, smoother streaming, and low-latency gaming.

Both the Galaxy A55 5G and Galaxy A35 5G feature Samsung's One UI software, providing a user-friendly interface and access to a wide range of features and customization options.

With security features like face recognition and fingerprint scanning, users can enjoy a secure and personalized experience on their devices.

These new additions to the Galaxy A series underscore Samsung's commitment to democratizing 5G technology, making it accessible to a diverse range of consumers without compromising on performance, features, or design.

The Galaxy A55 5G and Galaxy A35 5G are set to redefine the mid-range smartphone segment with their blend of affordability, functionality, and 5G capabilities.



**L-R: Stephen Okwara, head, Product Management, Mobile Division, Samsung Electronics West Africa; Nathan Lee, Business Manager, Mobile Division, Samsung Electronics West Africa; Joy Tim-Ayoola, Group Head, MX Division, Samsung Electronics West Africa, and Michael Nwughala, Digital Marketing Manager, Samsung Electronics West Africa, during the launch of Galaxy A55 5G and Galaxy A35 5G in Lagos.**





# We're redefining radio broadcasting landscape in Nigeria – Kids FM boss

Serge Noujaim is the Chief Executive Officer of COOLWAZOBIAINFO AND AREWA RADIO. His company recently launched Kids FM, a radio station that is dedicated to children and children-related programming. In this exclusive interview with MARKETING EDGE, he speaks extensively on issues relating to the inspiration for the launch of the station, what stands it out from all other radio stations in this clime; and its strategies for standing out of the crowd, among other things.

## Inspiration for Launching

**Kids FM 101.7:** The inspiration for launching Kids FM 101.7 stemmed from multiple sources, including our own experiences as parents and the realization of the unique role that radio

can play in children's lives. Witnessing our children's need for engaging, educational, and entertaining content, combined with the easy access to radio as a medium, motivated us to create a dedicated platform specifically for young listeners. We

recognized that while there are numerous media options available, there was a gap in the market for a radio station focused solely on children and families in Nigeria. Our aim was to fill this gap by providing a safe, easily accessible, and enriching

listening environment that nurtures curiosity, learning, and imagination. This personal connection to our target audience and the understanding of radio's potential as an educational tool have been driving forces behind the station's creation and continue to guide our programming and initiatives.

### Differentiation from Other

**Stations:** Kids FM sets itself apart from other radio stations targeting children and families in several key ways:

- **Dedicated Children's Content:** Unlike other stations that may have only specific segments or programs for children, Kids FM is entirely dedicated to content for young listeners and their families, ensuring a consistent and focused approach to children's entertainment and education.
- **Educational Focus:** We place a strong emphasis on educational content, integrating learning opportunities into our programming in a fun and engaging manner. This includes interactive segments that cover a range of subjects, from science and history to life skills and language learning.
- **Cultural Inclusivity:** Our programming is designed to reflect the diverse cultural landscape of Nigeria, incorporating stories, music, and traditions from various local communities. This helps children develop a broader understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage.
- **Family-Oriented Approach:** Recognizing the importance of family bonding, we create content that encourages shared listening experiences, enabling parents and children to enjoy and learn together.
- **Child-Centric Engagement:** Kids FM actively involves its young audience in the content creation process, inviting listener participation and feedback. This ensures that our programming remains relevant and appealing to children's interests and needs.
- **Safety and Appropriateness:** We prioritize the safety and appropriateness of our content, with strict guidelines in place to ensure that all programming is suitable for children. This commitment to child-friendly content gives parents peace of mind when tuning into our station.



By focusing on these areas, Kids FM aims to provide a unique and enriching radio experience that supports the development and enjoyment of children and their families in Lagos and beyond.

1. **Selection of Programming Content:** The process of selecting programming content involves careful consideration of the interests and needs of our target audience. We collaborate with educators, child psychologists, and content creators to ensure that our programs are both age-appropriate and engaging.
  2. **Content Strategies:** To ensure that our content is both educational and entertaining, we employ a variety of strategies including interactive segments, storytelling, music, and educational games. Our aim is to make learning enjoyable and to foster a love for knowledge among our young listeners.
  3. **Engagement beyond Broadcasts:** Kids FM aims to engage with its audience beyond radio broadcasts through social media, community events, and interactive platforms where children and families can participate, share their thoughts, and connect with the station.
  4. **Involvement of Local Communities and Cultures:** We plan to involve local communities and cultures in our programming by showcasing local stories, music, and traditions. This approach not only promotes cultural awareness but also helps children appreciate the diversity of their surroundings.
  5. **Content Safety Measures:** Ensuring the safety and appropriateness of our content is a top priority. We have strict guidelines in place and a dedicated team that reviews all content before it is aired to ensure that it is suitable for our young audience.
  6. **Future Plans and Initiatives:** Kids FM has several future plans, including expanding our reach to other regions, introducing more interactive and educational programs, and partnering with schools and educational institutions to enhance our impact.
- We are re-defining the landscape of radio in Nigeria. Through Kids FM, we are showcasing the potential of radio as a powerful medium for positive influence, tailored specifically for the needs and aspirations of children and their families.
7. **Contribution to Educational Landscape:** We envision contributing to the educational landscape in Nigeria by providing an alternative learning platform that complements traditional schooling. Our goal is to make learning accessible and enjoyable for all children.
  8. **Community Feedback since Test Transmission:** Since the test transmission on April 1st, the response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. Parents have expressed gratitude for the creation of a safe and educational listening space for their children, while the kids themselves have been excited about the variety of programs tailored just for them. Educators have also shown support, recognizing Kids FM 101.7 as a valuable resource that complements classroom learning. We've received constructive feedback as well, which we're using to fine-tune our programming and ensure that we continue to meet the needs and expectations of our young audience and their families. The engagement on our social media platforms has been growing, with listeners sharing their favorite segments and providing suggestions for new content. This feedback loop is essential for us as it helps us to continuously improve and evolve, making Kids FM a beloved part of children's daily lives in Lagos.

# Access Bank: Market positioning of a mega financial brand

By **Oluwaseyi Lawal**

Over the years, as technological advancement and innovation take a new shape in the Nigerian banking industry, it is crucial that every financial institution rise to the occasion and evolve with every innovation.

It is no surprise to see every bank in Nigeria vying for the top position in an industry where over 100 banks operate.

In the midst of this, Access bank has no doubt distinguished itself and outstandingly set itself apart from the pack. Acknowledging excellent customer service, technological advancement and community engagement, Access Bank has further strengthened its standing as an established brand in the world's financial markets. Boasting of an impressive track record of accomplishments, strong management, and an absolute dedication to customer satisfaction, Access bank has stood and is still standing as an influential epitome of leadership in the global financial market.

Access Bank was issued a banking licence in December 1988 but it did not commence operations until May 11, 1989 at its Head Office on Burma Road, Apapa. March 22, 2024 made it 22 years since Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede and the late Herbert Wigwe, acquired a small, unremarkable bank and transformed it into one of the country's largest lenders, with branches spanning Africa, Europe, and Asia. Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede served in the capacity of the bank's Managing Director and the late Herbert Wigwe as his Deputy. On the 28th of March 2022, Herbert Wigwe, took over as MD/CEO of Access Holdings Group and served until his demise. Prior to that, he had served in the capacity of the Deputy Managing Director from 2012 to 2014. Following his Demise, the company appointed Bolaji Agbede as Acting Group CEO.

In 2018, Access Bank announced its intention to merge with Diamond Bank and on April 1st 2019, Access Bank and Diamond Bank merger became official. With the release of its new logo, Access Bank announced the launch of an expanded banking organisation. Following the merger, Access Bank grew to have over 42 million customers, making it the biggest bank in Nigeria in terms of assets and the largest bank in Africa in terms of customer base. Today, Access Bank is one of the five largest banks in Nigeria in terms of assets, loans, deposits and branch network.



Access Bank's position in the world's financial sector has been cemented by its deliberate growth, mergers and acquisitions. The bank has operations in a number of nations in Asia, Europe, and Africa. In 2009, Access Bank Ghana was established. In 2019 Access Bank Rwanda was acquired. In 2020, Access Bank Zambia and Kenya were both acquired. In 2008, Access Bank UK was established. Between 2020 and 2021, Access Bank also acquired Banks in Mozambique, Congo, Sierra Leone, and South Africa. With the help of the aforementioned subsidiaries, Access Bank has been capable of providing easy banking products and services in a number of countries, expanding its market presence and worldwide reach.

Still on mergers and acquisitions, Access Bank recently completed the acquisition of African Banking Corporation of Tanzania (ABCT), thereby making it's debut into the Tanzanian market. ABCT will also be merged with the consumer, private, and banking divisions of Standard Chartered Bank Tanzania, which Access Bank is currently in the process of acquiring. Following the merger, the combined entity will operate under the name Access Bank Tanzania.

In the line of first and rankings, Access Bank Numerous honours and accomplishments throughout it's history is a proof of the bank's influence in the financial industry. Recently, Access was ranked as Nigeria's most valuable brand by Brand Finance, a prominent brand valuation consultancy, establishing the bank as Nigeria's leading banking brand. This is the third year in a row that Access Bank has maintained its number one position in Brand Finance's yearly ranking of the top 500 banking brands globally.

Access Bank was also recently recognized as the 'Best Trade Partner Bank West Africa 2024' by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) at the 2024 Global Trade Partners Meeting (GTPM) in Barcelona, Spain. This award is a testament of Access Bank's exceptional performance and dedication to promoting trade finance throughout the continent.

In 2023 alone, among other awards, Access Bank was awarded as the Best SME Bank for Women Entrepreneurs in Africa, Best SME Bank, Best Retail Bank in Nigeria, Best Sustainable Banking Group, Africa, and the Most Sustainable Bank in Nigeria. In 2021, it was ranked as the No. 1 Safest Bank in Nigeria and the No. 1 Financial Sector Leader in Sustainability. These honours are a testament to Access Bank's dedication to setting the highest benchmarks in corporate social responsibility, technological advancement, and in providing excellent service.

Access Bank offers a comprehensive range of financial products and services designed to meet the diverse needs of its customers. These are but not limited to Retail Banking which includes savings and current accounts, personal loans, credit cards, and mortgage services, Corporate Banking which includes trade finance, cash management, treasury services, and corporate loans and Digital Banking which comprises of cutting-edge mobile and internet banking platforms, digital wallets, and fintech solutions. They also offer Wealth Management which has to do with Investment advisory, asset management, and private banking services and lastly SME Banking, (Specialized products and services to support small and medium-sized enterprises).



# Coca-Cola celebrates 138 years of iconic brand status in the global Soda market

By **Ralph Tathagata**

One hundred and thirty eight years ago, when the world knew nothing about cola drink, a carbonated beverage was birthed in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, United States. Later known as Coca Cola, the brand has been a catalyst not only for consumer experience and satisfaction, but for social interaction and inspired innovation.

The over a century journey has seen Coca-Cola extend its product portfolio beyond its flagship cola to encompass a wide range of beverages, including juices, teas, and sports drinks.

While expanding its global and market presence in over 200 countries, Coca-Cola has been serving a diverse consumer base, localizing its offerings to cater to regional tastes and maintaining a consistent global brand image.

Through consistent innovative advertising campaigns, Coca-Cola has penetrated diverse markets. For example, the “Share a Coke” campaign, where personalized names were printed on bottles, and the timeless “Holidays are Coming” Christmas advertisements remain Coca-Cola’s memorable marketing initiatives that did not only enhance brand visibility but also created a strong emotional connection with consumers.

Recently, James Quincy, Coca-Cola’s Global CEO revealed that Key to the brand’s growth is matching consumer desires by using granular consumer insight to dictate investments. Describing the brand’s journey, the beverage giant’s boss said that the last

138 years was about brand Coca-Cola, but now it’s about an expanding total beverage portfolio.

While the Coca-Cola brand is ranked as one of the biggest in the world, the business claims it still sees a “huge opportunity” for growth. The idea is to drive that growth from a total beverage portfolio, across trademark Coke,

making a difference in communities.”

Also commenting, John Ajayi, Editor-in-Chief/Publisher Marketing Edge Magazine, said, “Wow! This is awesome! Coke, the ubiquitous iconoclastic brand has turned 138 years! Great kudos to the inventor and brand handlers of this legendary brand, past and present. You have all done well for building a

legendary brand destined for generations. Kudos to even another 138 years with greater refreshments and nourishments.”

In its diversification and innovation efforts, Coca-Cola recognizes changing consumer preferences and health concerns related to sugary beverages. The introduction of Coca-Cola Zero, Diet Coke, and a variety of non-carbonated beverages demonstrates the company’s commitment to innovation and adaptability, while expanding its presence in the growing market for healthier beverage options.

As a consumer-centric brand and with the help of data and technology, Coca-Cola has been meeting consumer needs through different pack sizes, flavour choices and caffeine or sugar-free options, as well as physical availability.

Through effective global expansion, innovative marketing, diversification, and a commitment to sustainability, Coca-Cola has maintained its leadership position in the beverage industry.

The brand’s ability to evolve with the times while staying true to its core values has solidified its status as a cultural icon and a business model for sustained success in a dynamic market.



sparkling flavours, juices and sports drinks.

In 2017, Coca-Cola reorientated itself as a total beverage business and has remained careful about where and how it invests behind each opportunity, according to Quincy.

Commenting, Amaka Onyemelukwe, 1st

Senior Director, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, The Coca-Cola Company, described Coca-Cola as the most iconic and recognizable brand in the world! “Cheers to 138years of refreshing the world and



# DR. TUNJI OLUGBODI'S DIAMOND JUBILEE IN PICS







# “A Thank You”

## Message from Clients Inspires Us More **-Brand Optimal Boss**

*Otis Ojeikhoa, Chief Executive Officer, Brands Optimal, is an iconic marketing professional who has evidently contributed robustly to the growth of the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) sector.*

*And remarkably too, his expertise and pedigree in the genre of experiential marketing, are manifested in the professional manner he manages his top-notch and award-winning firm.*

*In this interview, the quintessential and vintage Ojeikhoa speaks on diverse issues affecting the sector, his company, what makes the firm tick as a high flyer, as well as his guiding philosophy in life. Excerpts:*

**L**et us start with the Nigerian experiential marketing landscape, how would you assess the growth of the industry?

Like every other discipline, especially experiential marketing, a sub-sector of the marketing communications

industry has seen a steady growth, and it is not because it has to grow, it is because it is driving and adding value to the commercial sphere. In the last few decades, we have seen tremendous growth. Though there has been some sort of decline, which is expected, whenever there's any sort of economic downturn- every aspect of the



economy takes a hit.

But the experiential marketing industry has seen a steady growth, and this is driven by the fact that it is able to demonstrate steady return on investment, it is able to demonstrate provable means of recruiting subscribers and consumers for brands, it is able to demonstrate measurable growth, demonstrate quantifiable sales in real time. So those are some of the fair reasons, yes, there's been a steady growth in the practice and, of course, you will see many more players when they started like, 25 years ago, it was largely dominated by foreign agencies and players. But most of those foreign players, if they are still available or present today, are in the minority and, of course, in declining numbers. So you've seen newer agencies springing up out from indigenous practitioners like Nigerians. Infact, the sector has been growing and we anticipate and forecast continuous growth for their practice as well in years to come.

### **I know that there have been some changing dynamics and you know the brand management system itself is evolving now, how would you say the experiential marketing space has gone through a rebirth after Covid-19 pandemic?**

Covid-19 was definitely a game changer which affected ways of life, it affected everything about nature and humanity to a great degree, it affected all the industries, so to say that especially marketing practice or industry did not feel the impact or was not impacted by Covid-19 in any sort of way would be a very big lie. Everything has been impacted, however, I would not say it has revolutionized the practice, we have seen evolving discipline, evolving practice, changes in the ways that the practice uses tools to deliver results, but the changes are not revolutionary.

We have seen better application of the digital tool, to the practice of experiential marketing; we have started to see the use of augmented reality, the use of Artificial intelligence, and having virtual events. We have seen basically the use of technology and digital tools to enhance experiential marketing, so there has been that sort of evolution.

### **How would you view the true value proposition of experiential marketing in Nigeria?**

Very good question, so this is the core essence of experiential marketing, which is to provide consumers the opportunity to fully interact with the brand in such a way that they are able to understand it. There is this great philosopher Confucius that said that if you tell me, I will forget, if you show me, I may remember but if you involve me, I will understand. Consumers by what they know and what they understand, experiential marketing practice is the only tool in the marketing connections mix that can fully deploy and ensure that the consumer understands the product that has been introduced. This is so because there is that engagement and interaction which also play a different kind of role, because to be honest with you, the respective practice have their areas of strengths where they focus mainly, but through a special practice you are able to interact, generate conversation drive leads, close deals, create awareness and product understanding not at the same degree in all of this, but it is the only practice that you can say in real time is able to drive awareness, engagement conversation and understanding

### **You won the awards in Kenya and also the industry awards. How does this make you feel and how does it position Brand Optimal?**

So what we do here is just to get the job done, no matter what it takes, against all odds to deliver the best return on investment for our clients and the best experiences for our consumers and stakeholders. If doing all of those leads to being recognized by the industry or recognized by the stakeholders in the industry, who am I? I would say I would take it with all humility.

And I would be very grateful to the people that have recognized us. So the truth is we won about three awards in Kenya in December last year. That was a very big one because it was a Pan-African sort of awards event. And we represented Nigeria and we actually made Nigeria proud and so those sorts of feats are appreciated. They are not bad. They are good to have.

But for me, the biggest award I would get is my client sending me a note to say thank you to your team. You guys did very, very well. Like we had, we did some work at the AMVC, the cultural network at the AMVCA. And I got an SMS from a client that said, well done. You did excellently. Everybody is so proud. Well done. Thank you. I put that in the group and everybody went here celebrating. But when we win an award, we celebrate. But I don't think we would jump like that. So for the people in the practice, a job well done is the biggest award that they can ever receive. And for me, that award is very important.

But when stakeholders equally say, like your own sort of magazine, MARKETING EDGE, recognize us and say you guys, you have done well, we will take it and we will be happy. I don't run from receiving awards but I stay humble because for me, I would not go out begging for awards. But if somebody says you have done well, would I say I have not done well? I will say, yes, I've done well. Thank you very much for acknowledging. But the biggest you have done well is the thanks from the clients.

### **So tell our readers, what are some of the product portfolio of your company and what makes the offering stand out?**

Over time, we have worked, we have had the opportunity to work across industries into various consumer segments and in different product categories. Honestly, and I don't think there is any industry where we have not registered some form of presence or experience. And I don't think there's any consumer segment or product category where we have not registered any other sort of presence or experience.

But for me, the ones that are most unique are the sort of market entry opportunities, products launches, so there's been a product launch, it was one to be launched in market, where you want to drive retail recruitment, distributors engagement, drive consumer, sampling consumer and consumer subscription drive, I love such because that is where you truly put your practice to use and the boys are differentiated from the men, so in our case, we have registered the biggest success in that sort of area where brands are those driving market entry sort of situation or product launches.

### **Tell us, how is Bands Optimal positioned for the future and what would you say is your unique selling proposition, how are you leveraging it?**

You know what they say like, content is king, everybody knows our firm is a content creator, so I believe it is like a generative content revenue, how do you monetize the content that you create, whether you like it or not, when you go out to create, it is an experience for consumers. People are deriving pleasure from them and they are finding fulfillment. They are also creating their own sort of content

out of those that you have created or the platforms and they are monetizing such content.

So for Brands Optimal of the future, it's about taking what we have and driving monetization from the content perspective so we are leveraging that. We are going into movie production; we are going to do big content creation, short films and big films. We have actually started taking our experience as far as possible. We are trying to amplify them and try to monetize and get revenues from them so we see content as the future, the one we want to make is to take content in experiential marketing and not content in skits because we don't have experience in doing skits, but we can monetize the content we create in the experiential marketing and use that to upscale.

### **Our esteemed readers would like to know who Otis Ojeikhoa is, so tell us your success story, how has it been for you all through your career trajectory?**

I will just summarize very quickly. This morning, one of my team members came to me. He joined us mid last year. The guy came to me and said, "Sir, I've been wanting to see you."

I said, okay, please come. He said, "sir, can you please tell me a young man like me, what I need to do to be successful, to be influential?" So I told him, I will be honest with you. I will tell you what I think based on my own opinion and what I have seen and read.

But from what I've experienced, there are a few fundamentals that you must have or a few things that you must do to be able to be influential in whatever practice you are in or whatever you will be able to even do well as a human being. And those things are what have also helped me. The first thing I told this young man was that you have to be passionate about what you do.

That means you must find what you are passionate about. You can't be passionate about everything. So you need to find what you are passionate about. I am passionate about creating experiential content. I am passionate about sitting down and creating ideas. I am a creative mind. I like to create things in my head and see them brought to life, so that is my passion and that is what I do today. And actually I told him, you can't buy that in the market. Nobody preaches passion. You can only find what you already have.

Number two is, you must put in the work. There is none that has been done today that was not worked on. Even God spent 7 days working to create the world, so you cannot sit down and wish for it. You have to put the desired work into it. You can work and not succeed, but if you don't put the work into it, you have already failed.

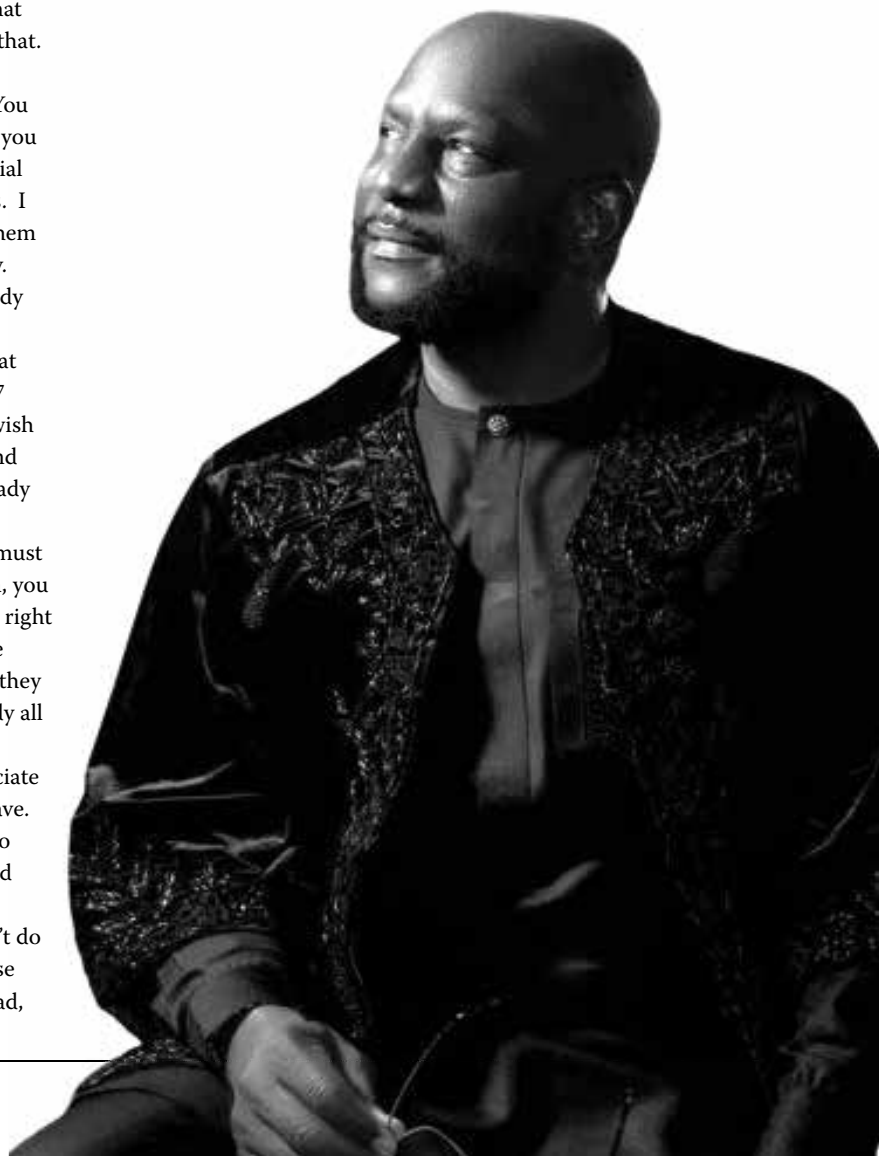
Then number three is, you have to be good to people. You must have the right attitude, because, when you go to school to learn, you get aptitude, but to get to the altitude in life, you must have the right attitude, so, how to deal with people, how to be kind, how to be patient, how to be fair, how to be forgiving, how to be humble, they are all necessary to be able to drive success. And I try to embody all of those because they are very important.

And number four, we must also learn to be grateful. Appreciate yourself for what you have as you push to get what you don't have. People don't understand how to be grateful. They are grateful to people but they are not grateful to themselves. So I have learned that ability to be grateful, to tell myself, well done boy, so you missed this one, it is a lesson. It just tells you what you shouldn't do the next time. So I try to embody all of those. I bring all of those to the practice, and I also try to ensure that the people that I lead,

because I lead them, I'm their leader. I'm not a dictator, but I'm the one leading them. I'm going to help them to bring out the best in themselves. So they also try to imbibe some of those teachings that I try to embody. And I always do whenever I have the opportunity to do so. So if you ask me who I am, one word, I'm a teacher. Teacher by what I do. I have been a lecturer in the university. I have taught in the classroom. Teacher by how I see the people that work with me and how I see my children and my family. Because once you have been put in charge of people, your first assignment is to lead them.

It's to teach them. It's to groom them. It's not to abuse them. So one word that summarizes me, I'm a teacher. I love the things of God. I like to do it right. At times I make a lot of mistakes. Many times, often actually. But the default mode is to do right. That default set is to do right.

I am a family man with two beautiful children. They are in the university now. And I try to now be their friend, to be a friend to my daughter and be a mentor to my son. I was their father when they were younger up to when they were like 12, 13 years old. But now I am trying to be my daughter's friend and being a mentor to my son. Naturally, we will become friends, I mean, my son and I will become friends. But right now, he needs a mentor. I have an NGO and it is about mental health, trying to ensure that people are equipped with mechanisms that will help them achieve a healthier mental health status. What I see as most useful in their tool is how to practice mindfulness. It's not that simple, but it's very easy to practice. So if you can just even learn how to practice mindfulness, then you will be very able to manage how you respond to people when they do certain things.





# We're focused on dominating the content space

## – Verdant Zeal boss

Dipo Adesida is the Chief Operating Officer of Verdant Zeal Group. In a recent interview with AMOS OLADELE, he spoke about the company and its operations as well as the marketing communications industry.

### What does it mean to manage a multi-disciplinary communications group like Verdant Zeal?

Verdant Zeal, multidisciplinary marketing and communications was set up 17 years ago, precisely March 1st, 2007. At the time, Verdant Zeal was set up to offer multidisciplinary marketing communications support for brands and businesses above the line through advertising, below the line through things like consumer engagement and experiences and activations, and through the line – to deepen the connection between brands and their consumers.

Over the years, we have been able to put things like these together through our corporations and subsidiary businesses. As you know, Verdant Zeal Group covers development communications, event management, branding, corporate identity design, experiential marketing and advertising, and others within that sphere, but we also have corollary businesses, specifically Red Gecko PR, which is our Public Relations unit that focuses on things like reputation building, crisis management training, media exposures, and most recently; the use of data-driven social listening tools to help clients understand what their various stakeholders and publics are really interested in and what they're saying about the brands.

For the last decade we've noticed a rise in how content has become a veritable tool in entertainment, but more specifically, the dissemination of information. Unlike the past where you had mass communication where brands send messages to passive consumers or listeners, what we have today is an active engagement where the

messages are produced and how those who listen to it respond. The engagements and interactions allow for real time feedback from the messages that are sent in a particular day and time. This is why we also have an arm of business that focuses on content. And by content, I mean documentaries, short form content like skits, drama series and other forms that have general human interest.

### How did your background and experience prepare you for your current tasks at Verdant Zeal?

I would split this into about 3 responses. I'd say academic preparation, work experience and other factors.

Let's start with academics. I studied dramatic arts from Obafemi Awolowo University and at the time of my graduation it looked like I was going to pursue acting, broadcasting or something that was specifically related to the arts. However, during my service year, I found advertising, and I started as a copywriter and over the year, I've functioned in several lateral roles: creative director, digital portfolio, event management, business development, content, innovation & strategy. I have also been involved in special projects such as overseeing the set up of the transit advertising arm of the business and bring the project manager for setting up a TV station on behalf of one of our clients. Other key functions include managing some of our development partners.

As Chief Operating Officer, my core functions focus on business development, account management, stakeholder management, finance, human resource, and other roles as assigned by the board of directors. All these have given me a

very balanced view of what it takes to run a marketing communications business in Nigeria.

Using the Verdant Zeal example, how would you say integrated marketing communications companies are faring in the Nigeria of today? What are the good, the bad and the ugly sides?

Well, Verdant Zeal has a unique business model. We focus on understanding what the client requires before proposing solutions and I'll use an example by saying that we traditionally do not wait for briefs. What we do is to look at problem associated with industries, and then we create solutions, services or products that will fit those problems. This has always been the strength of Verdant Zeal.

Another thing that adds a lot of verve to our operations is our very young workforce. It has been like this right from the onset. Verdant Zeal has always prided itself in employing very young minds; people who are in touch with the markets and are always trying new ways of doing things. Our brainstorming sessions are usually filled with lots of insights from younger folks who are expressing different things. I mean, right now there's a lot of conversation around working with Gen. Z, but we have always been a young organization. Always focused on the next big thing; the next big wave; the way the younger demographic really think about handling things. So, it's not been surprising for us and this has also helped us in all we have been able to come up with so far.

I may not be in a position to speak for other marketing communications companies, but I can say that for us, we have seen a major shift from what



DIPO ADESIDA

is now called traditional marketing communications, that is: TV, print, radio, outdoor, to user generated and user engaged communications. This is getting real time feedback with the use of different platforms to communicate messaging, understanding the strengths of different platforms, understanding the need to plant information in places where people will receive them at important times of the day; the importance of keywords and SEO, and recently, the importance of artificial intelligence and algorithms, because these are all the things that regulate how information and advertising or marketing content is consumed.

Consumers crave engagement. Today, people will comment, give an opinion and even test what every claims your brand is making. So, we've moved from just being mass communicators to being engagement experts. You now have to deepen the human experience because you are dealing

with a majority younger demographic who believe in testing everything, experimenting and exploring; who believe in personalization as a lot of these have informed how writing is done.

Every brand now has to think deeply about its target audience. They have to think deeply about what their propositions are, and very deeply about how to communicate these messages to an audience that is very vocal, very restless; an audience that explores, and doesn't necessarily take sides just because they have been communicated with.

I think the advantage with that is as long as you can keep on having curated experiences with the emerging consumers of media; your brand will always be relevant now. The other side to it is; this is not a passive thing. It's not a time where you would schedule a campaign and then go to sleep for the next nine months, and maybe come back in 2025. You know this

is about constant retooling, remapping, thinking about what's relevant and thinking about what is trendy; thinking about how to make your messages. So, it has moved from where we used to have planning cycles of three months, heavy campaigns and sustenance of couple of months to where campaigns are done tactically and consistently. Days of the year are leveraged; you are abreast of what is trending and you leverage on these conversations for your campaigns.

### **What were your projections for VZG coming into 2024; how far have those projections been met; and how do you see the second half of the year turning out?**

We got into 2024 with a mandate to recover the lost grounds from 2023 and to also take new territories.

And of course, you know, your business has to stay ahead of internal and external seismic changes, but more importantly, cast the vision for new things. In this phase that we are, we're looking more at conquering new grounds and territories, and acquiring new competencies and skills to work more efficiently and help clients and businesses achieve their objectives. As the year goes by with each quarter and planning cycle, we review and then strategize on how to keep on meeting our obligations and projections.

### **How do you see professionalism in the marketing communications industry in Nigeria of today?**

Every form of productivity that constitutes Nigeria's GDP requires some kind of marketing communications; that's to tell you the contribution of this industry to the economy. And in that process, there are various professional career paths to be considered: brand strategy, copywriting, graphic design, content creation, social media management, media planning & buying, finance, HR, experiential marketing, event management and so many more. SO, there's room for professional development, career enhancement & growth.

### **Your company has been exciting and impacting the industry with such innovations as Innovention and the Verdant Zeal Colloquium. What brought them about? And to what extent would you say they are hitting the Bull's Eye?**

I'll start with the Verdant Zeal Innovention Series. The Innovention series started in 2012 and it is a public/private thought



leadership discourse that focuses building brand Nigeria. It seeks to explore inventions and innovations across the globe for local adaptation in developing various sectors of the Nigerian economy. Over the years the themes have focused on brand building, perception and positioning, content and entertainment, circular economy, artificial intelligence other areas of interest. Through the Innovention Series, Verdant Zeal taps into its vast network of critical stakeholders in public and private sector to focus on development.

The Executive Vice-Chairman of Verdant Zeal Group, Dr. Tunji Olugbodi, is the convener of the Innovention Series, and for 12 years, has committed resources to the enhancement of brand Nigeria. He believes it's his noble & patriotic contribution as a marketing communications professional, advancing the cause of Nigeria.

The Innovention Series makes us all answer some difficult questions: What is Nigeria's core value? Why can't we also have a big idea for the branding of our nation, Nigeria? At least there was a time when there used to be National campaigns for the country. Why isn't this happening anymore? We need to hit the bull's eye on issues like this. I am not saying we are not trying; there are overtures and initiatives, but we really need to do a lot more.

It is Verdant Zeal's vision, that through the Innovention Series, the public and private sector can collaborate and forge a very strong positioning for Brand Nigeria; to give the world a reason to believe, visit, live, work or invest in Nigeria. As individuals, Nigerians are great and interesting people, but as a brand, there needs to be a strong positioning & message that stands us apart. Verdant Zeal will be happy to drive this kind of initiative. And you know, again, those are some of the spinoffs of our Innovention Series.

The advent of digital technology has revolutionized the marketing communication landscape, presenting both challenges and opportunities for businesses. The disruption has also altered the understanding of the concept of marketing communications with several significant changes in how businesses interact and communicate with consumers, thereby necessitating a change in approach to the study and practice of marketing communication globally.

The new era particularly in the field of marketing communications emphasizes the importance of sustainability. This, in essence, implies business must communicate their commitment to these issues and demonstrate concrete



actions that support those values. Also, importantly, the need for relevant knowledge in this dimension has become a necessity for scholars and practitioners in marketing communication and related fields.

To this end, the Centre of Media and Communication Research (CMCR), Pan-Atlantic University, in partnership with Verdant Zeal invited scholars and professionals in Marketing Communication and related fields to a two-day event that promoted fresh understanding in the study and practice of Marketing Communication in the digital era.

Papers presented at this event will be for publication in the Journal of Creative Media (JCM) in December 2024. JCM is published by the Pan-Atlantic University Press and managed by the Centre for Media and Communication Research (CMCR).

### **What do you consider to be the burning issues in Nigerian marketing communications industry today?**

It's how keep on connecting with the consumer. The consumer is always changing. We've had a very long streak with Gen Zs, but then you have the Gen Alphas that are coming up with a different set of values and expectations. 20 years ago, the TV was fulcrum for the typical consumer. In the last 10 years, it's been the mobile phone. What's it going to be in the next five, ten years? We're talking about immersive experiences. Look at artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality. These are the big issues for advancing complications. As people become less and less dependent on mass messages and more focused on customized experiences, how will marketing communications connect people who are

very used to individualized experiences? These are the burning issues.

### **In one sentence, who is Dipo Adesida?**

Dipo Adesida is a man of faith and deep conviction in God, people and country; a great storyteller, passionate Nigerian, focused marketing professional and the silkiest voice ever.

### **What are you passionate about?**

I'm very passionate about Nigeria, great storytelling and positive values. As you can tell, the media is filled with all sorts of voices, but as brand custodians and storytellers, we have a bigger responsibility to ensure that the correct stories are told out there, especially about Nigeria. I love Nigeria so much, and Nigeria needs a lot more vocal advocates to defend its positive values and attributes.

### **What are your management and marketing mantras?**

A leader should set the vision, inspire action and encourage initiative. I'm not big micromanagement. I like to have people focus on their own responsibilities. Set the vision and let people work their way there for marketing. Focus on the consumer and focus on solving the right problem. That's my marketing mantra; the focus on solving the right problem.

### **What are you looking forward to in terms of your personal brand and company's growth in the future?**

For Verdant Zeal's growth, the focus really will be dominating the content space with new products and new things that will connect with audiences. For me, to stay hungry, keep learning and keep conquering new territories.

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# OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALS



# Laura Oloyede

## An Amazon professional with immense ability to drive business growth

At Medicraft 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



**K**nown 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 Medicraft 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 twenty-five 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, a Spokesperson for Ford Motors across Sub-Sahara 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.

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

Laura has extensive communications, marketing and leadership experience in the marketing communications industry and demonstrates her ability to drive business growth.



# Victor Afolabi:

## A Marketing Strategist rides high as GDM's helmsman

Chronicling the career trajectory of Mr. Victor Gbenga Afolabi, Group Chief Executive Officer, GDM Group, is certainly not a walk in the park. This is so, because this marketing and entrepreneurial icon has continued to make indelible marks in the marketing and media technology space given the high pedestal his leadership and managerial acumen have taken GDM Group to over the years.

GDM Group, a marketing & media technology company utilizes data intelligence and analytics to drive value for customers while also guaranteeing maximum ROI by integrating future thinking as an integral part of its marketing strategy.

Though a pharmacist by training, Afolabi has carved enviable niche outside his chosen pharmacy profession, given the inexplicable reality that he remains a strategic manager and brand marketing professional with an “innate ability to create an energized and consumer-centric culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and creative but tailored strategies.”

The GDM's CEO is, undoubtedly, a serial entrepreneur who has sustainably midwived several business ventures in Market access, healthcare, renewable energy, agriculture, and fintech founded the strategic direction. GDM Group has operations in three West African countries with a staff strength of over 200.

He is also the founder and curator of **MarKHacK** (the first-ever media and marketing hackathon in Nigeria) and **AOT**, the largest gathering of tech ecosystem players in Nigeria.

Mr. Afolabi garnered diverse career experience in mainly blue chip companies where he excelled and netted in many outstanding awards.

At various times and epochs, Afolabi displayed tenacity of purpose, loyalty and steel determination in his career pursuit.

He began his working career as a Pharmacist Intern in 2002 with the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria. In 2003, he secured a job as a Medical Representative with Evans Medical Nigeria Plc., a position he held until 2005.

In 2006, the young and dynamic Afolabi got an employment with Nestle Plc. as a Brand Specialist.

Like a man made for the top, Afolabi's career blossomed at Nestle Plc, and between 2006 and 2010 during which time he rose from Brand Manager (Maggi) to Brand Manager, Dairy.

While traversing the diverse career space, the savvy professional acquired core competences in Strategic and Brand Management, Business Strategies and Development, Marketing Communications and Strategy, Sales Management and Business Coaching, among others.

And for his outstanding professional performance over the years, Afolabi has garnered an array of awards, including prestigious **MARKETING EDGE** awards which include Leadership Award in Experiential Marketing and Outstanding Experiential Marketing Personality of the Decade. Others are BrandCom's CEO of the Year 2020; Experiential Marketing CEO; and CEO of the Year 2021 (Marketing Innovation).

The GDM boss is also a member and fellow of many associations and professional bodies. They include, Fellow, Chartered Institute of Public Diplomacy and Management (CIPDM); Full member, National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN); Member, National Institute of Marketing, UK; Member,



Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN); Member, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON, now ARCON), among others.

Also, among his notable achievements, he was bestowed with the Excellence award by the Nigerian Top Executives in the Advertising, Marketing & PR Industry as part of the top 4% of all Nigerian Executives based on company size and international business network strength.

He successfully raised a fast-growing conglomerate to advantageous standards. His company was awarded the Most Outstanding Marketing Agency 2015.

In the same vein, he successfully provided commercial strategy and direct marketing execution for 68 Multinational brands; and implemented the largest social investment programme in Africa (Trader Moni)

Not yet done, Afolabi successfully implemented SAP system in three major countries in Nestlé Central and West Africa Region as Marketing Business Analyst, while achieving flawless transition and 100% End User competency rating in Nestlé Nigeria.

He was able to hone his impressive career after acquiring quality education in first-class rated institutions across the world as he attended: Owner Manager Program (OMP) at

The Pan African University, Lagos Business School, 2012; Masters of Management Psychology, University of Ibadan, 2007; and B. Pharm, (Bachelor of Pharmacy), ABU Zaria, 2001.

He also holds a global Doctorate of Business Administration from

Hult International Business School, Cambridge.

A professional portrait of Dolapo Ogunbambo, a man with short dark hair and a goatee, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Dolapo Ogunbambo

**W**ith two decades industry practice spanning across planning, strategy, business consulting and specialist services, Dolapo has enjoyed the opportunity of multidimensional expertise in media, digital and communication advertising. His current specialization is in business strategy & transformation and he is the Chief Operating Officer at Insight Publicis, Nigeria's foremost advertising agency.

Prior to Insight Publicis, he led Business Strategy & Innovation at Starcom Media Perspectives, a frontline media advertising agency in Nigeria and has garnered experience working with multinationals and corporates across different sectors; telecoms, manufacturing, financial services, breweries, food beverages, airline etc. managing account portfolios in excess of ten billion naira annual billings.

He has championed several initiatives, including the launch of Nigerian Media Advertising Guide in 2015, which was relaunched

in 2018 as a first of its kind mobile app, an industry report that essentially serves to provide actionable business insight to marketing professionals and other industry stakeholders in a reader-friendly format.

Dolapo has been part of several seminars and trainings on business strategy, in-country and offshore especially in the post digital age and emerging economies.

He has had the opportunity to serve on different industry panels such as ADVAN Awards for Marketing Excellence Jury Member, Cannes Nigeria Jury Member, Pan African Media Research Organization (PAMRO) Planning Committee member amongst others and is a registered member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON). He is currently a board member of the prestigious LAIF Awards

# Akam Ekpo Enoch

A distinguished media practitioner and strategic leader

**A**kam Ekpo Enoch is a distinguished media practitioner and an expert in investment management.

She has impressively garnered over 16 years of extensive experience across the investment, media, finance, accounting, public relations, digital strategy, and corporate communications.

Currently serving as the Director of Buying & Investment at Media Perspectives Limited, one of the foremost media planning and buying agencies, Akam oversees investment management, media procurement, media buying, compliance, and control functions for the agency.

Her keen analytical skills, honed through a solid foundation in Accounting, enables her to blend creatively with strategic insight, driving exceptional results and leadership in every project she undertakes.

Akam's media career began at MediaReach OMD, where she excelled as an Executive in Buying & Control, contributing to the success of prominent brands such as Promasidor, GlaxoSmithKline, Guinness, Etisalat, and PZ. Her remarkable performance facilitated these firms' growth and delivered significant returns on investment.

Soaring through the industry, Akam rose as a Senior Media Executive at Media Perspectives Limited, managing major accounts like MTN and VISA. She later

transitioned to Media Manager, overseeing procurement, media planning, and lead buying for clients including MTN, Samsung, ARM Pension and Union Bank.

In her current role, Akam continues to excel in overseeing investment management, media procurement, media buying, compliance and control functions, consolidating her reputation as a results-driven strategist and passionate leader.

Akam's career is marked by her exceptional ability to integrate analytical prowess with creative strategy, making her a formidable leader in the media and investment management landscape.

In addition to her professional achievements, Akam has dedicated herself

to service within the industry. She served as the Assistant Publicity Secretary for the Media Independent Practitioners' Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) for two terms, convincingly demonstrating her commitment to advancing the profession. She sits on the Board of St. Jude's Anglican Church Magodo Crèche.

Akam holds a B.Sc. in Accounting from the University of Calabar and an MBA in Marketing & Communications from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. She is an Associate Member of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered) (AMNIM).





# Emmanuel Oriakhi

## Charting the Course of Excellence as Marketing Director at Nigerian Breweries PLC

With a legacy of transformative initiatives and strategic achievements, Emmanuel Oriakhi, Marketing Director of Nigerian Breweries PLC, continues to lead Nigerian Breweries into a future marked by innovation, resilience, and growth, having charted an impressive trajectory over his 18-year journey in channel strategy, communication development, sales strategy, insight generation, innovations, and brand building.

A key figure in the industry, Oriakhi has been a force for good in Nigeria, steering the commercial function of Nigerian Breweries towards a culture of innovation and excellence. One of his significant accomplishments was the delivery of over 12% of OpCo revenue in 2020 through strategic renovations and innovations, showcasing his prowess in

driving tangible business results.

Under Oriakhi's leadership, the Heineken brand soared to number 1 status in Africa, contributing to substantial growth in AMEE's regional beer volume, revenue, and Functional Gross Profit (FGP). Not only did he secure the brand's equity, but he also positioned it as the volume leader within Africa, marking a remarkable achievement for both Heineken and Nigerian Breweries.

Still under the outstanding leadership of Emmanuel Oriakhi, and despite challenging economic factors ranging from heightened operational costs, continued pressure on consumer disposable income, escalating inflation rates, FX volatility, amongst others Nigerian Breweries (NB) Plc recently announced its intention to raise N600 billion fresh capital via rights issue to restore the company's balance

sheet.

This is to restore the company's balance sheet to a healthy position following the net finance expenses of N189 billion recorded in 2023, driven mainly by a foreign exchange loss of N153 billion resulting from the devaluation of the naira. Although 2023 was a tough year, NBC did not relent on its objective to raise fresh capital to settle outstanding foreign exchange payables and part of the local bank facilities.

Emmanuel's odyssey with Nigerian Breweries commenced in 2003, a journey that has seen him rise from the ranks of a management trainee to his current role as the exceptional Marketing Director. His story is one of tenacity, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Assuming the role of Marketing Director in 2018, Emmanuel Oriakhi brought a wealth of experience to Nigerian Breweries, contributing significantly to the company's growth and success. Prior to this, he served as the Heineken Business Development Manager for Africa, the Middle East, Russia, and Belarus from 2015 to 2018. In this capacity, Emmanuel managed the global Heineken brand, led market share, volume, and profitability development, and played a pivotal role in aligning strategies with global objectives.

Emmanuel Oriakhi is a marketing with 18 years expertise in building brands, channel strategy, communication development, sales strategy, innovations, brand experiences, and managing multiple territories in Africa. He reached significant career heights by enhancing the volume, profitability, and brand value of Heineken Nigeria's portfolio through improvements in business performance.

Emmanuel's global outlook on marketing was further honed during his tenure as Heineken Regional Marketing Manager for Global Marketing in the Africa and Middle East region from November 2014 to July 2015. Based in Amsterdam, Netherlands, he drove equity and volume growth for the Heineken portfolio across multiple markets, including Algeria, Morocco, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Ivory Coast, and Gulf operations.

Throughout his illustrious career,



Emmanuel Oriakhi has achieved notable milestones that have significantly impacted the fortunes of Nigerian Breweries. He played a pivotal role in re-establishing an innovative culture within the commercial function of Nigerian Breweries, delivering over 12% of the company's revenue in 2020 through renovations and innovations.

Emmanuel's strategic prowess is exemplified by his role in growing the Heineken brand to the number one position in Africa. This accomplishment contributed to substantial regional growth in volume, revenue,

and functional gross profit. Furthermore, he spearheaded Project Horizon, a strategic initiative aimed at identifying future growth segments, profit pools, and investment choices, fortifying Nigerian Breweries' position in 2012.

In 2013, Emmanuel played a crucial role in the successful implementation of the Building Winning Portfolio (BWP) for Nigerian Breweries, collaborating closely with the company's management team and the global commercial team.

Emmanuel Oriakhi's commitment to innovation and digital transformation is

evident in his establishment and coordination of two Regional Digital Hubs (SSA & Dark Markets) in 2016. These hubs were pivotal in driving the Heineken® brand's social media agenda and digital programs for Africa & the Middle East, making it the most talked-about international premium beer brand on social media platforms in the region.

As a visionary leader, Emmanuel specializes in marketing strategy, market research, consumer insights, budgeting and allocation, and strategic planning. His leadership has seen him develop and implement a broad

array of commercial activities, driving top-line growth and managing a premium channel sales force.

Under Emmanuel Oriakhi's strategic direction, Nigerian Breweries Plc has recently announced impressive financial results. The Board of Directors revealed a revenue of N277 billion for the half-year ended June 30, 2023. This figure marks a marginal growth compared to the N274 billion recorded in the corresponding period in 2022, showcasing the company's resilience and continuous commitment to excellence.

# Babatunde, a media strategist with Midas touch



**S**heriff Babatunde is the Business Director, Strategy, Planning & Implementation at Starcom Media Perspectives Limited, a leading integrated media advertising Agency in Nigeria.

As a strategist with over 12 years' experience in the

marketing communication industry, Sheriff has a proven track record and experience in crafting and executing comprehensive media strategy and planning that drive brand visibility, engagement and ROI across multiple channels.

Sheriff's work experience cuts across various sectors that

include Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), finance, telecoms, aviation, technology, and public sector.

He is an expert in negotiating and securing favorable media deals while maintaining meticulous attention to detail in ad placement for clients.

Prior to his role as Business Director and Strategist, he was the Senior Media Manager where he developed and executed media strategies and plans for brands like Cadbury, Visa, Dangote Cement, Leadway and ARM etc.

He also worked as Senior Account Executive, Media – Media Trak.

As a media practitioner, Sheriff's key achievements and leadership qualities include his ability to lead his team to drive successful launch of Terra Cube seasoning campaign across media touch points which saw an improvement in brand awareness.

He is also the Head, Out Of Home unit of the Agency where he coordinates the team to deliver on cutting-edge OOH strategy and executions. He spearheaded the

successful launch of the Nigeria edition of Share A Coke campaign on Out Of Home which resulted in an exponential growth in brand engagement and brand love.

He was an integral part of the team that repositioned Cadbury TomTom to appeal to the GenZ consumers as opposed to the erstwhile positioning of the brand being for the older generation alone.

The media expert has worked on brands like MTN, Coca-Cola, Union Bank, Cadbury, Terra Cube, Visa, Dangote Cement, Leadway and ARM etc.

Sheriff studied Mass Communication at Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, where he obtained OND. He has HND in Mass communication, and MBA in Marketing at Ladoko Akintola University, Ogbomosho.

Sheriff is a certified Media Practitioner and a member of Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON). He is a member of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN), and also an alumnus of O2 Academy.

# Dr Taiwo Afolabi: A Maritime Entrepreneur par excellence

**D**r. Taiwo Olayinka Afolabi, Group Chairman, SIFAX Group, is an exceptional entrepreneur of many accomplishments in diverse fields. Unarguably too, this Ondo State born lawyer and businessman has made more remarkable and lasting impacts in the maritime sector, where his SIFAX Group has become a household name.

Afolabi whose foray into the maritime space took the sector by storm, began his working career with a shipping firm, Nigeria Agencies Limited after graduating from the University of Lagos, where he obtained a degree in Law as well as a Master's in International Law and Diplomacy. He was later called to the Bar.

At work, he became an outstanding young manager in shipping operation and port management before traveling abroad to study Shipping Management. After his studies, he came back to work in the same firm as its Head of Operations.

However, because of his burning desire and passion for developing the maritime in 1988 established his own company - SIFAX NIGERIA LIMITED. The company started as a clearing and forwarding firm in Lagos, Nigeria.

SIFAX Group has become a leader in port management, shipping, bonded terminal operation, aviation, oil & gas, haulage & logistics, financial services and hospitality.

Afolabi is also the Chairman of Mac-Folly Hospitality Limited, which prides itself as a giant leader in the hospitality industry in Nigeria.

The iconic entrepreneur has also extended his investment ingenuity into the financial sector with the establishment of Sky Capital and Financial Allied International Limited, a financial services investment firm.

Afolabi's foray into the financial sector is not limited to the boundaries of Nigeria, as three banks have been acquired in Gambia, Guinea and Sierra Leone by the SIFAX Group's subsidiary.

He is a Fellow of various professional institutes, among which are: The Nigerian Institute of Financial Management (FIFM), The Nigerian Institute of Freight Forwarders of Nigeria (FIFF), The Certified Institute of Shipping (CIS), The Nigerian Institute of Shipping (NIS), Port & Terminal Management Academy of Nigeria (of which he is also the Chairman), among others.

He is also the patron of many organizations amongst which are YOMAFSA, Freight Forwarders Academy of Nigeria, Actors Guild of Nigeria, Maritime Reporters Association of Nigeria, etc.



He is a member of the Institute of Directors Nigeria; Ikoyi Club 1938; IBB Golf Club, Abuja, amongst many others.

Afolabi is a philanthropist who has deployed his resources to bring succour to a teeming number of the less privileged in society. Through the vehicle of Ajoke Ayisat Afolabi Foundation (AAAF), a charity organization he established in memory of his mother, he has been able to provide full scholarships for hundreds of students across Nigeria. He has also made handsome donations to many worthy causes including medical equipment and facilities.

He has received different honorary doctorate degrees from various universities in Nigeria and abroad, including Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration from Cornerstone University and Theological Seminary, Jerusalem, Israel and USA; Doctor of Technology (Honoris Causa) - Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, among others.

His contributions to the development of cooperation between Nigeria and the Republic of Djibouti were recognized in 2010, as he was appointed the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Djibouti.

In 2010, Afolabi was conferred with the prestigious honour of Member of the Order of the Niger (MON) and the Commander of the Order of Niger (CON).

In 2014, he was honoured with The Sun Newspaper Business Man of the Year Award in recognition of his exceptional performance as one of the pillars on which the nation's maritime sector stands.

Also, in 2016, Afolabi was conferred with the Vanguard Newspaper Business Man of the Year award.



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**BRANDS &  
AGENCIES TO  
WATCH**

SERIES TWO

# Discover the 'So Creamy, So Good' Benefits of Cowbell Milk



Cowbell, a brand synonymous with quality and value, continues to set the standard for milk products in Africa with its ongoing thematic campaign, "So Creamy, So Good."

Reiterating the leading dairy brand's commitment to delivering delicious, nutritious, and high-quality milk products, the campaign highlights the unique nutritional benefits of Cowbell Milk, enriched with VitaRich and Vitamin B9, making it a delicious and essential addition to the diet of every family.

With its rich blend of essential vitamins and minerals, Cowbell Milk supports the health and well-being of families across Africa, embodying the vision of providing quality, affordable nutrition to the people of Africa.

Cowbell Milk is

celebrated not only for its creamy, delectable taste but also for its remarkable nutritional profile. Enriched with VitaRich, a fortified blend of essential vitamins including A, C, D, E, and K, Cowbell Milk supports various aspects of health and development. These vitamins play crucial roles in maintaining and enhancing the body's functions, making Cowbell an ideal choice for families aiming to nourish their loved ones with quality nutrition.

Vitamin A in Cowbell Milk is indispensable for eyesight development and immune function. It ensures that vision remains sharp and that the body's defenses are robust, protecting against common infections and illnesses. Meanwhile, \*Vitamin C\* aids in fighting infections, promotes wound

healing, and is necessary for the absorption of iron, making it a vital component for overall health and well-being.

Vitamin D is another cornerstone of Cowbell Milk's nutritional benefits. It helps the body maintain appropriate levels of calcium and phosphorus in the blood, which are essential for strong bones and teeth. This is particularly important for growing children and aging adults who need to keep their skeletal system robust and healthy.

The antioxidant properties of Vitamin E protect body tissues from damage and are crucial for the formation and protection of red blood cells. This ensures that oxygen is efficiently transported throughout the body, supporting overall vitality and energy levels. Vitamin K, on the other hand, plays a critical role in blood clotting, helping the body to heal wounds effectively and prevent excessive bleeding.

Beyond its vitamin content, Cowbell Milk is rich in proteins, calcium, and phosphorus. The proteins in Cowbell Milk provide the building blocks essential for making and repairing body tissues such as muscles and skin. Calcium and phosphorus are fundamental for

maintaining strong bones and teeth, making Cowbell Milk a comprehensive nutritional package.

Cowbell's versatility is another aspect of its appeal. It makes an excellent milk drink, a delicious yogurt, and is ideal with porridge, cereals, and for cooking. Whether enjoyed as a refreshing beverage or used as a key ingredient in various recipes, Cowbell Milk consistently delivers on taste and nutrition.

In addition to its superior nutritional profile, Cowbell has expanded its product range to include flavored milks, UHT, condensed and evaporated milk, and processed cheese. This variety ensures that there is a Cowbell product to suit every preference and dietary need, reinforcing its commitment to providing innovative and value-added milk products.

Cowbell's dedication to quality is evident in its careful selection of ingredients. Made with fresh skimmed cow's milk and vegetable fat, Cowbell Milk contains no cholesterol, making it a heart-healthy choice for all family members. The convenient packaging options, ranging from small sachets to larger refill sachets and tins, ensure that Cowbell Milk is accessible and affordable for everyone.

# AXA Mansard Insurance Plc: Serving the local market with global best practices

**A**XA Mansard Insurance Plc was incorporated in 1989 as a private limited liability company and is registered as a composite company with the National Insurance Commission of Nigeria (NAICOM).

Its products range from Life to Property and Casualty for individuals, commercial solutions for SMEs and corporate organisations.

The Company is rated B+ by A.M. Best (2022) for Financial Strength. It is also certified ISO 9001:2008 compliant by the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) for quality management systems.

AXA Mansard Insurance has a 24-hour dedicated Customer Interface team which is responsible for resolution of customer enquiries and complaints.

“Our goal is to be accessible whenever and wherever our customers need us and serve them satisfactorily.

Declaring its Purpose, the Company states:

“Act for Human Progress by Protecting What Matters”

“As a member of the largest global insurers, our purpose is to empower people to live a better life. This purpose is shared by each employee throughout our organization, as we tailor our services and solutions to each of our 105 million customers around the world, one person at a time”.

“We strive to give you more choice, more innovation and more power to decide how, when and where you access our products and services, while making sure we provide



excellence, quality and a strong financial foundation for everything we deliver, at the right cost to you”.

Its vision is: “To transform AXA’s value proposition “from payer to partner”; we will deliver new services complementing the traditional insurance coverage and build new business models to increase the protection of our customers.”

AXA Mansard is a member of the AXA Group, a worldwide leader in insurance and asset management, with 149,000 employees serving 95 million clients in 50 countries.

# Checkers Custard – Leading the Pack in Its Category



**C**heckers Custard is the flagship product of Checkers Africa Limited which was founded in 2018 as a trading company with a focus on food products.

Over the years, Checkers Africa has evolved into a manufacturing, sales, and

distribution company, offering a diverse range of high-quality food products such as Checkers Custard, Checkers Oats, Checkers Corn Flour, and Checkers Crunchy Peanuts.

The brand has become the market leader in its category, with four exciting variants of Vanilla, Banana, Milk, and Chocolate.

Checkers Custard is deliciously produced into ready-to-eat and savory custard blend that provides instant relief from hunger.

At Checkers Africa, the mission is to be the strongest food product market distribution company by offering excellent service and affordable products that

delight the end consumer. The company is committed to providing its customers with high-quality food products that meet their needs, while also ensuring that its products are accessible and affordable to everyone.

Its mission is to become the benchmark in the fast-moving consumer goods industry and category with the highest quality foods and snacks, with unsurpassed customer service.

In its words, “We aim to be the go-to source for the highest quality food products in African homes, providing customers with products that are not only delicious but also nutritious and beneficial to their health”.



# Banks recapitalization to fuel advertising boom, industry growth

By **Seun Johnson**



A groundbreaking shift has been projected in the Nigeria's advertising industry with the latest decision of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), mandating all banks to increase their capital reserves, a move that indicates a possible surge in advertising spend.

The Apex Bank had in a circular released on its official website late last month, directed all commercial banks with international authorization to jack up their capital base to 500 billion naira while those with national licences are required to meet 200 billion naira threshold.

The statement, which was signed by its Acting Director of Corporate Communications, Sidi Ali, also compelled banks with regional authorization to increase their capital floor to 50 billion naira while non-interest banks with national and regional authorization are expected to meet 20 billion and 10 billion naira capital base respectively.

Reacting to the development, the Managing Partner and Chief Executive Officer of MediaFuse Dentsu Nigeria, Emeke Okeke posited that, while the decision will

have a crunching effect on the manufacturers, it is going to be a boom to the advertising industry.

Okeke disclosed this while speaking in an exclusive interview with **MARKETING EDGE** on how the advertising industry had fared in the first quarter of 2024 and the prospects it holds for its players in the second quarter.

According to him, advertisers are steadily coming back in this second quarter.

"As soon as SEC starts approving petitions for Initial Public Offers (IPO), we are going to go back to the trenches for a piece of the action as we say it. There will be initial public offers and there will be private placement. I think the worst is over. I like to remain optimistic about our market. It's going to grow and the growth is going to come out of heightened activities."

Continuing, the Dentsu Boss said: "The extended part of it is that a lot of these multinationals because they were edging against losses, have lots of inventory of naira in the market. So there is likelihood that many of them are going to approach agencies that have regional clouts in

Nigeria to be able to buy across jurisdiction, and to be able to use their naira inventory in another jurisdiction. That's another massive opportunity for those who are playing at the continental level. So those are opportunities we will see in the marketplace," he stated.

Reflecting on first quarter, Okeke identified political upheavals, electioneering activities and policies that were churned out by government such as fuel subsidy removal without careful thinking, floating the naira without element of control as reasons for the high tension experienced in the first quarter.

He, however, expressed

confidence on how the government is rising up to the occasion by correcting some of the mistakes it made and churning out policies that have not been seen in the past.

"We can see it is already having positive effects on the local currency and invariably, bringing back confidence of advertisers and local manufacturers in the marketplace because the most crushing one was the insane free-floating of the local currency. We lost values, our lives, houses, foods and everything were devalued but thank God there is a relief and I hope it is not peace in the graveyard," he said.

## CBN withdraws Heritage Bank's operating licence

By **Emmanuel Osadare**

In a significant move impacting Nigeria's banking landscape, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has taken decisive action by revoking the operating license of Heritage Bank. Effective immediately, this decision marked a pivotal moment in the banking sector and sent ripples through the financial community.

The Ag. Director of Corporate Communications at the apex bank, Hakama



Sidi Ali, said that the action was part of CBN's responsibility to enhance a stable financial system in Nigeria, and was done using the authority granted by Section 12 of the Banks and

Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020.

Ali stated that the bank had violated Section 12 (1) of BOFIA, 2020, and noted that both the Board and Management of Heritage Bank failed to enhance their financial performance, posing a risk to financial stability.

He said, "After extensive engagement and implementation of supervisory measures by the CBN aimed at halting its decline, the bank, unfortunately, persists in its downturn with bleak prospects for recovery, necessitating the revocation of its license."

Ali expressed regret as he noted the persistent suffering of the bank, coupled with the absence of viable recovery prospects, thereby justifying the imminent necessity of license revocation.

The CBN mentioned that it acted to boost people's trust in the banking system to make sure the financial system stays strong.

Consequently, the CBN has designated the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) as the liquidator of the bank in accordance with Section 12 (2) of BOFIA, 2020.

"We wish to assure the public that the Nigerian financial system remains on a solid footing. The action we are taking today reflects our continued commitment to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and soundness of our financial system," the statement added.

As the news reverberated throughout the financial community, attention has now turned to the implications for Heritage Bank's customers, as well as the broader repercussions for Nigeria's banking industry as a whole.

# FirstBank bags best SME Bank Awards in Africa and Nigeria

By **Seun Johnson**



In recognition of its notable growth in the Small and Medium Enterprises business, First Bank of Nigeria Limited has been named the Best SME Bank in Africa and Best SME Bank in Nigeria.

The leading Nigeria's financial institution bagged these honours at the 2024 Asian Banker Global Excellence Retail Awards.

The Excellence in Retail Finance Awards Programme, which includes the Global Excellence in Retail Finance Awards and The Annual Digital Bank Awards, is one of the most established awards of its kind that recognize exceptional innovation, leadership, management, and performance in the financial sector.

Since its inception in 2001, the programme has recognized leading financial institutions worldwide that are dedicated to building a sustainable and profitable retail finance franchise and to meeting customer needs above and beyond its peers. It is also the most rigorous and transparent awards programme for retail financial services.

The scheme evaluates banks and non-bank institutions on a global, regional, and country level through a comprehensive evaluation process, covering more than 60 different award categories.

According to The Asian Banker's Strategic

Business Intelligence for the Financial Services Community, FirstBank demonstrated exceptional performance, notably in its SME sector, by achieving more than 100 per cent revenue growth while maintaining a reduced cost-to-income ratio of 16.5 per cent.

It also revealed that small and medium-sized enterprises contributed 26 per cent of overall bank revenue. Furthermore, the institution's SME customer base grew by seven percent, reaching a total of more than one million.

For this significant growth in the SME business, the bank was awarded the Best SME Bank in Nigeria and Best SME Bank in Africa.

For many years, FirstBank has been renowned for supporting customers by offering exceptional value propositions that are tailored to each industry sector, enhancing its processes through digital innovation, providing diverse financing options, and fostering strong relationship banking to achieve best-in-class customer engagement.

The bank's integrated platform helps businesses to grow, reduce cost while at the same time, enable expansion into regional and international markets through its Sub-Saharan Africa subsidiaries.

While expressing delight at the Bank's performance, Ms Folake Ani-Mumuney, Group Head, Marketing and Corporate Communications, First Bank of Nigeria Limited said: "We thank the Asian Banker Awards for the recognition and dedicate these awards to our esteemed SME customers that have progressively impacted the socio-economic growth of not just Nigeria but also the African continent given their critical role as the engine of any economy.

"For 130 years, FirstBank has continued to enable the giants in our customers including our SMEs as well as other stakeholders, and we remain committed to delivering the ultimate 'gold standard' of value and excellence."

# The Hook, Insight Publicis win Airtel Nigeria's account while media goes to Algorithm

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**



**A**irtel Nigeria, a leading telecommunications company, has shifted its creative business to The Hook and Insight Publicis, marking a significant change in its marketing strategy. This move entrusts these agencies with the task of either continuing the legacy established by Noah's Ark Communications or steering the brand in a new direction.

The Hook and Insight Publicis are now responsible

for developing multi-platform creative campaigns that capture Airtel's brand essence and drive engagement among its diverse customer base. This will involve crafting compelling narratives across traditional media channels such as TV, radio, print, and out-of-home advertising.

In a parallel development, Airtel Nigeria has reassigned its media planning and buying responsibilities from MediaReach OMD to Algorithm Media. Algorithm Media will leverage advanced analytics and audience insights to create highly targeted and efficient media strategies, including programmatic buying to reach specific audience segments on digital platforms.

Noah's Ark Communications, renowned for its creative prowess, has concluded its successful nine-year partnership with

Airtel Nigeria. During this period, Noah's Ark significantly enhanced Nigeria's global advertising presence, earning numerous local, continental, and international accolades. Their work was featured on esteemed platforms such as Ads of the World and Lürzer's Archive.

Notably, Noah's Ark's collaboration with Airtel produced acclaimed campaigns like the 'Data Is Life' series, featuring prominent Nollywood actors such as Lateef Adedimeji and Ngozi Nwosu. Their 'Lost' TVC, a metaphorical commercial for unreliable data service, garnered multiple awards, including the prestigious Grand Prix at the Lagos Advertising & Ideas Festival (LAIF) in 2017 and Gold at the Epica Awards in Paris.

In subsequent years, Noah's Ark continued to excel with

campaigns like 'Prayer Warrior (Amin)' in the 'Data is Life' series, which won the Grand Prix at the African Cristal Festival in Morocco in 2018. The agency earned nine medals at the festival, including three Gold and two Silver.

Throughout their tenure, Noah's Ark was repeatedly named Agency of the Year at various award shows, with their campaigns for Airtel consistently winning Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals, showcasing the agency's creativity and significant impact on the advertising industry.

As Airtel Nigeria embarks on this new chapter with The Hook, Insight Publicis, and Algorithm Media, the telecommunications giant aims to continue its legacy of creative excellence and strategic media planning.

# Apple breaks \$1 trillion brand value, leads with innovation

**I**n a remarkable achievement, Apple has become the first brand to surpass \$1 trillion in brand value, marking a 15% increase from last year.

This milestone was highlighted in Kantar's BrandZ global ranking, which incorporates insights from over 4.3 million consumer interviews across 532 categories and 21,000 brands in 54 markets.

Apple's success is underpinned by its continuous trailblazing in innovation.

The company has introduced groundbreaking AI features expected to boost iPhone demand, countering a recent sales decline in its flagship product due to fluctuating consumer spending and intensified competition. These innovations have reinforced Apple's strong market position and solidified its brand equity.

For the third consecutive year, Apple has retained its title as the world's most valuable brand. Following Apple in Kantar's ranking are Google owner Alphabet,

with a brand value of \$753 billion, and Microsoft, at \$713 billion. Despite a close market capitalization race with Microsoft, which stands at \$3.22 trillion compared to Apple's \$3.18 trillion, Apple continues to lead with its robust brand value.

Nvidia also made headlines, debuting in the top 10 most valuable brands globally, thanks to a surge in AI enthusiasm and booming chip demand. Nvidia's brand value nearly tripled to over \$200 billion from the previous year, placing it sixth in

Kantar's ranking.

Apple's unwavering commitment to innovation and its ability to stay ahead in the competitive tech landscape underscore its market leadership, setting new benchmarks for the industry.





# MTN returns to SO&U Saatchi & Saatchi in latest global account review



By **Ralph Tathagata**

In a new era of innovation, the MTN Group has announced the appointment of M&C Saatchi Abel and Group of Companies, a pan- African marketing services firm, as its new marketing services partner across all MTN Group operating companies. Effective 1 January 2025, the partnership underscores MTN's ongoing commitment to pioneering innovative and impactful marketing strategies across diverse markets.

**The partnership will focus on creative, media and digital.**

A close source at SO&U Saatchi & Saatchi Nigeria hinted that the agency would be having a network

leadership meeting later this week to clarify expectations.

It would be recalled that in Nigeria, SO&U Saatchi & Saatchi, a global advertising and media agency, has produced some of the most memorable brand campaigns that Nigerians have ever experienced. Having served many notable and respectable businesses across Africa and the world, the agency has created disruptive marketing masterpieces for brands such as Guinness, Diageo, MTN, Unilever, PZ, Akwa Ibom State Government, Ibom Icon Hotel and Golf Resort, Globacom, Access Bank, Malta Guinness, Polo Luxury, Captain Morgan, and Guaranty Trust Bank amongst others.

According to the MTN Group, M&C Saatchi Abel was selected

following a meticulous process for their expertise in fostering growth and enhancing brand value for multinational corporations.

“Their proficiency in digital transformation and customer engagement strategies perfectly aligns with MTN Group's forward-looking vision,” the company said in a statement.

“We look forward to commencing this new chapter with M&C Saatchi Abel and their Group of Companies,” remarked Bernice Samuels, MTN Group Marketing Executive. “Their progressive perspective and achievements in the marketing domain are precisely what MTN requires to elevate our brand. We believe this partnership will not

only redefine our brand presence but also enrich the experiences of our customers globally,” the statement added.

Commenting on the new business partnership, Jacques Burger, Group CEO of M&C Saatchi Abel and Group of Companies, said, “It's a great honour to partner with MTN Group, a distinguished leader in the telecommunications arena. We are dedicated to applying our comprehensive industry insights and cutting-edge marketing strategies to support MTN's growth ambitions and boost customer satisfaction. We are eager to achieve remarkable milestones together in the industry.”

Also, the MTN Group extended its deepest gratitude to TBWA Group, part of the OMNICOM network, for their service and significant contributions over the years.

“Their dedication and performance have been instrumental in shaping the MTN brand, and we wish them continued success in their future endeavours.

“This partnership marks a new phase for MTN Group, focused on delivering unparalleled value to our customers and stakeholders,” the tech and telecom giant said.

# Oando boosts Project Gazelle with \$550M contribution

By **Ibidunni Banjoko**



Nigeria's indigenous energy group, Oando Plc, has revealed the impact of its strategic role in the recent successful closure of a \$925 million financing arrangement for Project Gazelle, coordinated

by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank). Oando Trading, a subsidiary of Oando Plc, contributed \$550 million to the total amount, while the remaining \$375 million was raised by other parties.

Project Gazelle, a \$3.3

billion structured crude oil-backed forward-sale finance facility, is sponsored by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Limited). The \$925 million financing, arranged by Afreximbank, is the largest syndicated loan ever raised by Nigeria in the international market and one of the largest syndicated debts in Africa in recent years.

Wale Tinubu, Group Chief Executive of Oando Plc, emphasized the significance of this achievement. "The successful completion of this facility signifies another win for the company and the country

at large. This transaction further reinforces Oando's ability to create value and establishes our status as the indigenous partner of choice in Nigeria,"

Tinubu also highlighted Oando's commitment to supporting the sustainable development of Nigeria. "As a proudly indigenous company, our ambition has always been to use our platform to support the nation's development. Project Gazelle will be instrumental in realizing the Federal Government's efforts to boost the country's socio-economic indices," he added.

Afreximbank, as the lead arranger, continues to support African corporations, both public and private, enhancing confidence in the market and the continent.

# Nigeria's crude oil plummets in May to 1.25 million bpd - OPEC

By **Felicia Nwosu**

In its latest Monthly Oil Market Report (MOMR), the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has revealed a significant decline in Nigeria's crude oil production for May 2024. The report shows that Nigeria's average daily output fell to 1.25 million barrels per day (bpd), down from 1.28 million bpd in April 2024. This drop of 30,000 bpd marks the second lowest production level for the country this year, only surpassing the 1.23 million bpd recorded in March.

Despite this downturn, Nigeria maintains its position

as the largest crude oil producer in Africa, ahead of Angola and Libya. OPEC's report also highlighted that the total crude oil supply by OPEC+ members stood at 40.9 million bpd in May 2024.

Contradictory reports from within the sector suggest that Nigeria's crude oil production may have actually increased by 74,000 barrels during the same period, rising from 1.34 million bpd to 1.41 million bpd.

The report also indicated some discrepancies to ongoing complexities and challenges in accurately tracking oil production figures.



The decline in Nigeria's crude oil production comes amidst broader concerns about the stability and sustainability of oil output in the region. As

OPEC and its allies continue to navigate the global oil market dynamics, Nigeria's production levels will be closely monitored in the coming months.

# Akpabio assures Nigerians of self-sufficiency in fuel production

**G**odswill Akpabio, Nigeria's Senate President, has assured Nigerians that the country will become self-sufficient in Premium Motor Spirit (Petroleum) production in the next four weeks (July, 2024).

Commending President Bola Tinubu for having the courage to remove fuel subsidy,

Akpabio, who spoke in Calabar, the capital of Cross River State, during a one-day South-South APC conference, said he had conducted surveillance across many refineries before arriving at

such conclusion.

"I went round the Dangote refinery and found out that by this July 2024, Nigeria is about to become self-sufficient in the production of PMS.

"As of today, it produces enough diesel and it's already exporting to other countries. Same with fertiliser and Urea. So we are getting to that era in the country where we produce what we consume and consume what we produce," he said.

"The economy we met was not in good shape at all, I call it a foamy economy. Despite that, the president consistently



tells me, 'I cannot complain; I campaigned and danced for this job, so I must do it and

I must do it well,' Akpabio stated.

## NLNG's Train-7 reaches 67% completion



**T**he Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limited (NLNG) says its ongoing \$4.3 billion Train-7 project has reached 67% completion, and has employed over 9,000 Nigerians.

The plant expansion project, aimed at ramping up its production capacity to 30 million metric tons per annum (mtpa) from the current 22mtpa, has achieved a significant construction

milestone of over 45 million man-hours without any Lost Time Injury (LTI), according to the natural gas giant.

Andy Odeh, the company's General Manager, External Relations and Sustainable Development, reaffirmed in a statement, NLNG's commitment to delivering economic benefits to Nigerians through the project.

The multi-billion-dollar project at Bonny Island, the

company's production location in Rivers State, was awarded to a consortium of three international Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) firms, including Saipem, Chyodda and Daewoo, otherwise called the SCD consortium, led by Saipem.

NLNG said its officials, who spoke at a reconvened session of the Senate and House of Representatives Joint Committee on Gas, provided necessary information and clarifications to address issues raised by the committee.

"NLNG confirmed that the project, with a total contract sum of \$4.3 billion, has reached an overall progress of 67 per cent completion, achieving significant construction milestone of over 45 million man-hours without any Lost Time Injury (LTI).

"The project was already

delivering on one of its benefits with over 9,000 Nigerians working in the project on Bonny Island, and numerous indirect jobs and businesses emerging and booming as a result of the construction," the statement said.

The company stressed the significance of the project to the federal government's "Decade of Gas" initiative.

It emphasised that the project was aligned with Nigeria's gas development aspirations, as the outlined initiative was both timely and essential to secure the country's future, particularly as the global movement towards a net-zero future accelerated.

The liquefaction firm further expressed its respect for the National Assembly and committed to collaborate with the legislature to transform Nigeria's energy landscape.





# BUA Foods delights widows in Lagos

Celebratory cheers filled the air at the International Women Society's (IWS) Skill Acquisition Centre in Lagos State on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 as Abdul Samad Rabiu Initiative for Africa (ASR Africa), donated BUA Foods products as a palliative to widows.

The palliative, comprising IRS Pasta, IRS semolina, and BUA Rice – and N10 million grant were donated by ASR Africa during the 2024 Widows Feast and Empowerment programme organised by the IWS in Lagos State.

While speaking to journalists at the sideline of the event, the widows expressed their heartfelt appreciation to ASR Africa and BUA Foods' chairman, for the donation of essential food items, hailing the quality of BUA Foods' products.

They were delighted that the IRS Pasta, IRS semolina, and BUA Rice donated to

them would provide vital sustenance and access to nutritious meals for them and other family members.

ASR Africa, supported by BUA Foods, donated food and N10 million grant to bring relief to many widows facing economic hardship in commemoration of the 2024 International Widows' Day.

"In our role as a company, we believe that our responsibility extends beyond business. It is about making a meaningful impact on the lives of those around us."

"Our commitment to corporate social responsibility drives us to engage in initiatives like this, where we can make a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most," the Managing Director of BUA Foods, Ayodele Abioye, said.

Many widows highlighted the positive impact the donation of BUA Foods products would have on them.

Expressing her gratitude, one of the

beneficiaries, Mrs Khadija Rufai, said, "We are overwhelmed with gratitude for ASR Africa for this generous donation of food items to us.

"This donation will alleviate significant pressure on my household, allowing me to focus on my children's well-being and education."

Another widow, Mrs Adebimpe Lanre, said, "This donation of BUA Foods' product by ASR Africa is a lifesaver for many of us. It will make a huge difference in our households, allowing us to focus on other important needs."

"Since I lost my husband, I've had to be resourceful in providing for my family. I know how nutritious and delicious BUA Foods' products are and I am delighted to be going home with some, especially the IRS spaghetti, today," a widow who is a resident of Lagos, Mrs Catherine, said.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of ASR Africa, Dr. Ubon Udoh, said the N10 million grant was part of ASR Africa's ongoing efforts to invest in social development as one of its primary focus areas.

He mentioned that "the grant is a testament to the commitment of the Chairman of ASR Africa and the BUA Group to improve the livelihoods and welfare of Nigerians".

He added that "the grant, which will be distributed to widows in partnership with IWS, is aimed at bringing relief to the beneficiaries while ensuring its relevance and sustainability".

Speaking at the event, the Chairperson of the Widows' Trust Fund of IWS, Mrs. Adeola Adebanke, also expressed her utmost joy and satisfaction toward the food donation and grant to the organisation by the Chairman of ASR Africa and the BUA Group, Abdul Samad Rabiu.

She prayed that the Chairman would continue to make giant strides and break new boundaries.

BUA Foods, a leading force in the Nigerian food industry, is known for its high-quality and nutritious products. BUA Foods is a company dedicated to social responsibility, actively supporting communities, nourishing and enriching the lives of Nigerians across the nation. With a diverse portfolio of products, BUA Foods is dedicated to serving the needs of all Nigerians and empowering communities.

# TVC Communications appoints Din-Jacob as Editor-in-chief

By **Abimbola Mohammed**



**V**eteran broadcast journalist Barrister Stella Din-Jacob has been announced as the new Editor-in-Chief of TVC Communications.

Jacob as a seasoned broadcaster with extensive expertise in the media industry is set to bring fresh perspectives and dynamic leadership to the media company.

Stella has over 20 years' experience in local and international media. In her new role she will oversee and implement the strategic direction and management of TVC News as it enters a period of vigorous investment and strategic change in editorial and programming output.

Her leadership will undoubtedly shape the future direction of the network, reinforcing its position as a leading broadcaster in the region.

Congratulating Stella on the milestone achievement, Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang extended his heart warm felicitations to the latest Editor-in-Chief in town.

Gov Mutfwang was delighted that Stella, an indigene of Plateau State, commands high respect in the

media industry, in view of her impactful leadership marked by dedication and commitment to excellence.

The governor said as a good Ambassador of Plateau State, Jacob will bring on board innovations and purpose driven initiatives that will place the media outfit as the most competent and reliable broadcast station in the country and beyond.

Expressing her excitement on the new position Stella stated that "I'm delighted to join TVC Communications and I look forward to the challenge of leading the news team, harnessing creative growth and professional development of dedicated professionals."

Prior to her appointment as the Editor-in-Chief, she was the Director of News TVC Communications for over 5 years. She was also the General manager News 24GM, Silverbird Communications where she was responsible for the general direction for a team of professionals at STV and Rhythm stations in the news and current affairs department.

The Executive Producer NEWSMEDIA Productions, also the worked as the Media Consultant to the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Group Head of Content and Quality Assurance, Minaj Systems LTD, and National Head of News and Current Affairs, Silverbird Television

She studied Foundation Course in law from the University of Warwick, has LLB in University of Kent, and B.L from the Nigeria Law School.

# Insight Redefini appoints new digital marketing experts for Digitas Nigeria

By **Ralph Tathagata**



**Y**ear 2024 marks a period of hierarchical transition and growth for the Integrated Marketing Communications industry, and Digitas Nigeria is at the forefront of this movement.

In a strategic move to bolster its leadership, the agency announces the appointments of Omotayo Oladipupo as Chief Operating Officer (COO)/Head of Business and Adebola Ajose as Creative Director. Omotayo Oladipupo brings over a decade of extensive experience in digital marketing, showcasing a remarkable track record in leading high-performing teams and driving innovative marketing strategies for top brands. Her expertise spans market strategic planning, brand development, omnichannel marketing integration, business development, and investor relations. In her previous role as the Head of Digital at Starcom Media Perspectives, Omotayo led a team responsible for managing major brands such as Meta, Mondelez Nigeria, Samsung, Visa, ARM, and TGI. She consistently demonstrated excellence in team management, strategic planning, and enhancing client relationships.

As the new COO, she will direct the strategic direction and operational oversight of Digitas Nigeria, focusing on cultivating a high-performing team, nurturing client

relationships, and identifying opportunities for expansion into new markets.

Adebola Ajose, with over 20 years of industry experience, steps into the role of Creative Director. Adebola has led the development and launch of numerous groundbreaking digital campaigns and products for renowned brands including Prime video, Nestle, Heineken, Pepsico, and Keystone Bank. His ability to craft award-winning solutions that resonate with audiences and surpass expectations has positioned him as a creative powerhouse.

In his new role, Adebola will lead the agency's creative team, spearhead innovative campaigns, and drive business growth. His expertise and leadership will be instrumental in helping clients navigate evolving market landscapes and achieve their marketing objectives.

Dr. Tayo Oyedeji, Group Chief Executive Officer at Redefini, expressed utmost confidence in both leaders, stating: "Omotayo and Adebola are exceptional talents with a profound understanding of the digital marketing landscape and creative innovation. Their appointments reflect their outstanding leadership capabilities, strategic vision, and commitment to excellence. We are confident that they will lead Digitas Nigeria to new heights and drive significant industry impact."

# Tesla shareholders approve Elon Musk's \$56bn compensation package



Tesla has announced that its shareholders have approved CEO Elon Musk's \$56 billion compensation plan, reflecting strong endorsement of his leadership and motivation to maintain his focus on his primary source of wealth.

This approval highlights the significant backing Musk receives from Tesla's retail investors, many of whom are ardent supporters of the enigmatic billionaire. The proposal was approved despite resistance from several major institutional investors and proxy advisory firms.

During the annual shareholder meeting in Austin, Texas, Elon Musk described himself as "pathologically optimistic." He said, "If I wasn't optimistic, this wouldn't exist; this factory wouldn't exist. But I do deliver in the end. That's the important thing." He that the proposals were receiving overwhelming support.

However, this approval doesn't settle the ongoing lawsuit concerning the pay package in a Delaware court. Some legal experts believe this legal battle could continue for months. In January, the judge invalidated the pay package, calling it "unfathomable."

Musk could encounter new lawsuits regarding the package, which would be the largest in U.S. corporate history. Shareholders had approved this package in 2018.

"This is not over," stated Brian Quinn, a professor at Boston College Law School. The Delaware judge will examine the vote

and require Tesla to demonstrate that the process was free from coercion or improper influence by Musk, he explained.

The judge had previously criticized Tesla's board, calling it "beholden" to Musk, and noted that the plan was put forward by a conflicted board with close personal and financial ties to the top executive.

Shareholders also approved a proposal to relocate the company's legal headquarters from Delaware to Texas. They also endorsed other measures, including the re-election of two board members: Kimbal Musk, Elon Musk's brother, and James Murdoch, son of media magnate Rupert Murdoch.

Additionally, shareholders increased investor control by approving proposals to shorten board terms to one year and to reduce the voting threshold for proposals to a simple majority, despite the board's opposition to these changes.

# Jeep anticipates up to 50% increase in Plug-in Hybrid SUV Sales in 2024

Jeep aims to increase U.S. sales of its plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) by up to 50% this year, leveraging the technology as an interim solution between its conventional gas-powered SUVs and future all-electric models, due to a slower-than-anticipated pace of EV sales.

According to Jeep CEO Antonio Filosa, the Stellantis brand anticipates selling between 160,000 and 170,000 PHEVs in the U.S. this year, marking a 40% to 50% rise from last year's figures, he shared with CNBC.

Jeep aims to grow its U.S. sales of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) by up to 50% this year as it introduces its first all-electric SUVs in the country, starting with the Wagoneer S.

"It's the perfect time to remain adaptable, which we are," CEO Antonio Filosa stated in an interview on Thursday after unveiling the brand's new EV in New York. "One key to market growth will be offering freedom of choice."

PHEVs, which combine internal

combustion engines with electric vehicle technology, could serve as a transitional step towards fully electric vehicles, potentially speeding up consumer adoption of electrified cars.

Jeep's projected PHEV sales for this year would surpass Stellantis' total U.S. sales of PHEVs in 2023, which were around 143,000 units. This target would also exceed industry expectations for a 27.5% growth in the PHEV segment this year, according to AutoPacific, compared to the firm's 17% growth forecast for EVs.

Last year, Jeep sold 113,113 PHEVs, including 67,429 Jeep Wranglers and 45,684 Jeep Grand Cherokees. In the first quarter of this year, sales reached 31,750, a 47% increase from the same period last year, making Jeep the leader in U.S. PHEV sales.

Jeep has focused heavily on PHEVs to counterbalance the sales of its gas-powered SUVs amid stricter emissions and fuel economy regulations.

Upcoming Jeep models include the

Wagoneer S EV this fall, followed by an EV resembling the Wrangler called the Recon, and a replacement for the discontinued Cherokee midsize SUV in the first half of next year. Additionally, in 2025, the automaker will introduce new plug-in "range-extender" models for its gas-powered Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer large SUVs.

"We have a game plan. We have a business plan, and we believe that price position and product wise, we are perfect to meet the volume we want to make," Filosa said.





# “Kids Say the Darndest Things” makes a triumphant return for the series in Africa with Paramount Global and What Media Group partnership

The family favourite, “Kids Say the Darndest Things,” is back for its third season, bringing more laughs, more surprises, and more heartwarming moments.

This season marks a groundbreaking partnership between the iconic show and two entertainment powerhouses: Paramount Global Content Distribution and What Media Group. With the broadcast platform being The What Network and the production partner being Mansa Studios, the show is set to deliver its unique blend of humour and authenticity to audiences.

The collaborative force behind the new season aims to enhance the viewer experience by delivering a world class production of the Paramount Global Content Distribution series alongside the local expertise of What Media Group. This format licensing deal is not just a commitment to quality entertainment but a celebration of African children and their unique voices and perspectives.

“We are thrilled to be working with What Media Group to bring the Kids Say the Darndest Things format to audiences across Africa,” says Lauren Marriott, SVP, Content Partnerships and Brand Strategy, Paramount Global Content Distribution. “Opening up the show across the African continent will allow kids and parents alike to watch this hilarious reimagined format together as a family.”

CEO of WHAT MEDIA GROUP, Chichi Nwoko, echoed this enthusiasm, emphasizing the show’s commitment to celebrating the diversity and originality of African Kids: “With the support of Paramount, we’re setting the stage for a season like no other. We’re dedicated to maintaining the show’s essence, where the candiness of our young stars takes centre stage. In the past the show focussed on Kids from Nigeria, but this year we are excited to open it up to kids from across the African Continent. Our aim is to keep the content fresh, engaging, and true to the experiences of today’s connected and vibrant generation.”



Lauren Marriott

Prepare to be amused, amazed, and moved as “Kids Say the Darndest Things Africa” brings the unfiltered brilliance and humour of Africa’s children to the forefront, in what promises to be the most memorable season yet.

The new season promises a diverse cast of children from across Africa, sharing their spontaneous and often hilarious insights on life. In keeping with the show’s tradition, these young stars are not professional actors, and they are not rehearsed. This ensures that their responses remain genuine and unpredictable as we never know what they are going to say.

As “Kids Say the Darndest Things Africa” prepares for its return, the production team is hard at work, setting the groundwork for a season that promises to captivate, entertain, and inspire. Casting calls will be announced shortly, inviting children aged 4 to 11 from all over Africa to share their unique perspectives.

The U.S. version of “Kids Say the Darndest Things” is produced by CBS Studios in association with Anvil 1893 Entertainment and She Ready Productions. The format rights are licensed by Paramount Global Content Distribution.



Chichi Nwoko

Stay tuned for more information on auditions, premiere dates, and exclusive behind-the-scenes content as we get ready to embark on another unforgettable journey with Africa’s youngest and brightest stars.

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# Engaging media content grows audience, attracts advertisers

## - Hanlon & Redmond

*In this interview with MARKETING EDGE, Andrew Hanlon and Ronan Redmond, former TVC Communication CEO and Commercial Director shared what media owners and professionals need to give the audience to maximize advertising profitability and growth.*

**H**ow would you describe your career adventure and sojourn in Nigeria as CEO of the leading broadcast station in Nigeria?

**ANDREW:** Well, nothing but fond memories.

A huge amount that was achieved through partnership with the staff was a very important part. As I've explained, once we started listening to the problems and the issues that our staff had, we were able to transform the organisation. We worked together as a team, whereas before the staff and the management were totally divided. It was very, very important that we got that right. How did we do that? We did basic things like pay them on time every month and introduced a key performance indicator programme so that every member of staff was assessed every quarter. And if they hit certain markers, they would get a pay raise at the end of the year, depending on how well they scored. There weren't any smallish pay raises, but it could be anything between 3 and 10%.

But the great thing was for annual pay increases. Every year they knew if they worked well and scored highly, they would be in line for a pay increase. Then we were very transparent about promotions so that people understood that they could be promoted within the organisation. They knew they weren't going to stay at the same level. And therefore if they got promoted, they could earn even more money and take on more responsibilities. So, things like that were really important.

Another thing that we did, which was a huge contentious issue, was about different styles of management. One of the issues the staff had was that they felt there was an indiscriminate policy of sacking people, which is quite a common thing. So we introduced a policy straight off that nobody could be fired unless there was a thorough examination of the issue, of the particular member of staff. So I think in the seven years that I've been in the seat, I could count on one hand



the number of people that were sacked. And then if there were, of course, there were always going to be disciplinary issues. But the people would get a fair hearing from their management and from other members of staff and senior management. Then ultimately I would get involved as the CEO and I would make the ultimate judgement. That made the staff feel that they were very secure. Some of them did screw up. They had to go. But the number of people being forced out of the company was dramatically reduced. That again instilled trust between the management and the staff. So things like that were very, very important.

And then as you know, we had some very trying moments. We all suffered through COVID. But then we also had the fire which followed during the ENDSARS or at the end of the ENDSARS issue. So when our business was burned to the ground, our beautiful facilities that we had invested so much money in, we were able to get back on the air within three days. When everybody, including all of our competitors had us written off, the industry said, that's the end of TVC. But because of the relationship that we had built, and the trust we built with the staff, they came to our rescue. They all came in, and within three days they got us back on the air. So that's how that partnership paid off. And it just goes to show you that if there is a trust between management and staff, and if there is goodwill between them, and if you look after your staff, your staff will look after your company.

### **What really inspired you to come to Nigeria?**

**ANDREW:** Well I've worked in broadcasting all my life as a young reporter, journalist, news anchor, all of those things. So I worked at the coalface for years. And then I worked in management for many years as well, in broadcasting. So when I got a call from a recruiter in London, and they said, we've got this job opportunity down in Africa. And I said, oh where? And they said Nigeria. I laughed because I said there's no way I'd be going to Nigeria. That's one of the most unsafe countries in the world. You've got to be kidding. I put the phone down and I thought about it driving home that night.

I said I should talk to them about this. I rang them back the next day and said, tell me about it. And over a period of six months, there were a lot of interviews and discussions. I came in, I visited the board, I made a presentation to the board. As soon as I got here, I realized very quickly that this was a very hospitable place, and that my perceptions of Nigeria were wrong, even though I know the country had a lot of problems. But the biggest selling point to me was the strength of the people. Nigerians are very like the Irish; very open, warm and kind people. And that to me was the biggest selling point of all.

Then as far as the business was concerned it was in a bad place, but I knew that the board had the determination and will to invest in the company and for us to bring it to the level that they wanted it at. So I knew from the outset that they were prepared and ready to invest. For me, it was a huge challenge to do that. And I said, this is a challenge that I don't want to turn down.

### **What really gave you that courage and boldness to face the task given the challenges on ground?**

**ANDREW:** I believed that we had the capacity and the capability to turn on TVC Communications. It wasn't TVC Communications as at that time. It was Continental Broadcasting. At that point, I knew the first challenge that we had was to clean up our commercial division.

Ronan read about me coming down here. He called me and said, look, if you're looking for somebody to come and take a look at the commercial side of the business, I'll come down and take a look. And I said, fantastic, because we'd worked together in TV and radio back in Ireland. So Ronan came down. I asked him to give me a report within three weeks. He gave me the report and it wasn't pretty. And he and I spoke about it. We knew what we had to do. He said, look, my family is on the continent. If you're interested, I'll come in here with you and help you do this. So this man was an integral part of the turnaround of the company. He was invaluable.

We worked together as a team and we achieved a lot. But I couldn't have done it without him because I know if I'd have had to find somebody else from commercial broadcasting, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, with the same skill set and experience. So I was blessed that he was available and that he wanted to come down and do it.

### **Upon your arrival, how did you see the Nigerian media market, particularly the broadcast sector, and the challenges as well as the opportunities?**

**ANDREW:** Well, it was quite clear very early on that whilst there were a lot of broadcasting companies, television broadcasters, radio broadcasters, upon closer inspection, there was actually only a handful of them that were performing in any reasonable way that we would want to be aligned with. I think when we started, Radio Continental was our radio station at the time. Lagos, I think, was a 35 station market. There are now 57 stations in Lagos, which is an incredible number. But again, there's only two stations in the market and there's only one group besides ourselves that is profitable in radio. Whilst there are many, many broadcasters, and you can say the same for television stations. Channels is an excellent business. Ourselves, one or two others may be making some money, but a lot of other broadcasters are just not generating enough revenue, aren't commercially focused enough, and they are funded by their shareholders on an ongoing basis. We didn't want that. We had to stand on our own two feet and get out there and sell.

### **To a very large extent in your period of stay, you've been able to minimise, if not reduce, the ownership influence on the editorial policy and direction of the media group. How were you able to achieve this?**

**ANDREW:** It's a very simple one to answer. With my hand on my heart, I never suffered one bit of editorial interference, and the board was absolute from day one. You're an editorial man, Andrew, you understand the business. We're handing this over to you. Do what you need to do and just run it as a professional company. We do not want any accusations or claims of bias one way or the other and I said well that's if we all understand each other, that's how I'm going to proceed and that's it.

**RONAN:** That's what the agencies want, and then your customers and others say, okay, we have to be there, we have to advertise with these guys. They know what they're doing and they've got big audiences.

### **In the seven years that you've been here, what would you say is your biggest achievement till**



### now?

**ANDREW:** Well, it's what I said earlier. It was bringing the staff along with us. If we'd have continued the style of management that existed before, the staff would have run a mile from us. They would just come in, do their job, probably not very well, and go home. But because we built a relationship with them, and we trusted them, and it was mutual trust and respect, that changed everything. Because the staff then felt invested in the business, and they became proud of the business, and they, as you guys say over here, felt they had power and bragging rights. They wanted to tell people they worked for TVC Communications.

### What were the strategies you put in place to achieve commercial turnaround and growth for the TVC Group?

**RONAN:** Well, it comes from what Andrew said. The commercial model is very, very simple. First and foremost, you focus on your audience. You've got to give the audience what they're looking for, and they're looking for engaging content. When you give them engaging content, you'll find that they will engage with you, and the audience will grow. Once you can demonstrate that you're growing

your audience, then you have a strong proposition to give to the advertisers. But that's only the first part of the story. When you're talking to the advertisers and the agencies, especially in a recessionary market, they all need value. An agency needs to be able to demonstrate to its client that it can find them value within a recessionary market. That was one thing that we didn't do prior to our arrival in TVC. That skill set wasn't there - to be empathetic with the advertisers, to understand that they had a job to do as well - to try and reach agreements and deals and partnerships that were win-win for both parties.

When we got there, Andrew and I, as Andrew said, went to all the advertisers. We tried to understand what they were trying to achieve, the challenges their business had, and then we tried to reach win-win partnerships with them. They wanted more than spot advertising. They wanted product placement. They wanted branded content opportunities and activation. Over a period of time, we grew the audience and were able to offer them more robust content and cross-platform solutions. And as Andrew and I often joke, we built it, and eventually they came.

### Coming from a different

### background into the African market, what would you say was the greatest challenge in breaking into the market?

**RONAN:** For me, because I have been coming to the continent since 2005, I understand and like Africa. But business is business, no matter where in the world you are. The media market is fragmented and within that there's an opportunity to build a company that can offer an engaged mass audience. That's where we saw the opportunity.

The cultural differences were more within the company. I think what Andrew and I saw, in particular, was that we had a huge young workforce. I think what Andrew did was certainly feeling that it was our responsibility to create the environment that would enable us to do business and allow the workforce to be the most productive. In particular, we allowed the young people to have a voice, whereas prior to our arrival, they didn't. And by that I mean some of the best business solutions that we have created have come from the young people being given a voice and saying, should we not do it this way? And when we listen to what they say, we look at the research and say, in actual fact, they're right.

I think our experience from abroad allowed us to come in. We didn't try to bring a European perspective to Nigeria. We tried to bring our media experience, because Andrew and I have travelled a long road in the media business, and we tried to ally that experience with the best talent that we had on the ground.

### Seven years down the line, how would you say you have positioned the group, the corporate brand in the market and in the minds of stakeholders?

**RONAN:** Our objective was to create one of Nigeria's leading media broadcasters, commercial media broadcasters. I think we have done that regardless of the scale and breadth of competition out there. Whether you talk about the media agencies or on our side in terms of broadcast. If you want entertainment, you go to DStv. If you want news, you go to Channels, Arise or TVC Communications. If you want radio you go to Wazobia or you go to Max FM. That is it in a nutshell because, certainly under Andrew's guidance at TVC



communications, everything we make gets invested back into the business to make it better, so that we can keep offering better content to the audiences and more value to the advertisers.

What we have done is to position TVC communications to be one of those very few leading broadcasters in Nigeria that can stand on its own two feet and hold its own fire when juxtaposed with all the international media outlets that operate in this market as well.

**ANDREW:** We wanted the company to be a mass-market media company. The audience growth went from 5.3 million audience a day to 22.6 million audience a day, so that firmly put us into the mass media camp. You don't need to have a set-up box in your house with access to the internet to watch us or to listen to us. So free-to-air media in Africa throughout the continent I believe is going to be here for another 20 or 30 years because people just can't afford data. They can afford a very small amount of it, but they can't afford huge chunks of it because incomes are quite low and you've got better things to be spending your money on, like food and shelter and putting your kids to school. Unlike the rest of the Western world, it's all about subscribers.

For as long as people want free-to-air media advertisers will buy it from you because you're mass media. So we achieved what we set out to do.

### **If you look at the Nigerian Media market, oftentimes, the privately owned establishment tends to be more successful than the public owned institution, what would you say is responsible?**

**ANDREW:** You've got to bring in enough revenue to pay the bills, to pay everybody, and with a bit of luck make a profit. Public broadcasters all over the world, not just Nigeria, have a different mindset. They're subsidised, they're paid for by the central government, a lot of them, or by taxpayers. And that's a completely different environment. That breeds a different type of culture, the commercial broadcast culture, which Ronan and I have worked in all our lives. It's a very different environment, and it demands different skill sets and different results.

### **What would you want to say about the partners that you formed to achieve your objective and goals?**

**RONAN:** In the last couple of weeks, we've been saying goodbye and I have gone around with Andrew to meet all of our big clients. They're not clients anymore, they're actually friends. Andrew and I came from a marketplace in Ireland that had been through a recession. We understood how commercial broadcasters need to operate through recessions. That's giving value to your partners who themselves are suffering in the recession. We brought that philosophy into this marketplace.

### **What would you say are your most memorable contributions to the growth and development of the Nigerian media market within the period you have been an active participant?**

**RONAN:** As the commercial director of TVC, first and foremost, my responsibility was to TVC. But again, in a recessionary marketplace, you've got to look beyond your own company. You've

got to look at the sector and you've got to try and understand why the sector is suffering.

It happens everywhere in the world, we're in the advertising communications business, but we're very poor communicators. So we don't tell enough stories of what advertising can do and the benefits it can bring return of investments to advertisers. One of the jobs I thought we could do was telling the advertisers the value they can get from the advertising and the media sector.

**ANDREW:** I think trust with clients is what Ronan and the team had to build up, and once trust was established then you have a partnership with your clients. But it took several years to do that because it's about, as he said, delivering on the campaigns you promised and not lying to people, not telling people a false narrative, not trying to tell them something that you can't actually deliver. And that's one of the hallmarks of how Ronan operates. Don't over promise, and he and I would both subscribe to that. Over deliver and then show people that you can really produce the results for them, that leads to trust and partnership and a great relationship between both parties.

### **During the ENDSARS, how did you feel seeing yourself at the helm with that kind of unexpected calamity befalling an institution in which you are highly devoted and dedicated to?**

**ANDREW:** I was frightened, I was watching it on TV down at the Toll Plaza, just like everybody else. But first and foremost, our thoughts were for our staff. Thankfully none of our staff died or were badly injured in that attack. My immediate thoughts were for the staff and then how we get our business back up and running very, very quickly. It goes back to what I said then earlier; having the relationship and the trust with our staff is what got us back on the air within three days. There wasn't time to be in a state of shock for any long period of time. We just had to get back on the air. We had to make sure we salvaged what we could for the business and the funny thing is that despite ENDSARS and COVID we still managed to grow the business in terms of revenue and audience that year. It was quite something we never expected but we kept selling until we got back on the air. Our content was still good but it was compromised.

To some extent because our facilities had been damaged so we were operating at a subpar level but our numbers continued to rise because we had partnerships with our advertisers and our viewers and our listeners were fans and we had their loyalty and they stayed with us.

**RONAN:** Just to follow on that, we had a lot of credit in the bank from our advertisers post COVID and ENDSARS happened after COVID. Because during COVID, when again, there was a lockdown and people stopped, you know, consumers couldn't go around. They weren't purchasing. Advertisers couldn't get their messages out there because people weren't purchasing. We changed our strategy over March and April during COVID, whereby we reached out to each of our corporate partners who themselves were engaging in huge CSR campaigns, if you remember. Because the world was suffering, Nigeria was suffering, so the likes of the Airtels, the MTNs, the Dangotes, were all doing great work around CSR.

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# I have positioned Eat 'N'GO to be Africa's largest QSR company, says McMichael

From being just a very small company of 63 stores in 2018, today, Eat N'GO, a leading Quick Service Restaurant has grown to become a market leader with 175 stores in twenty states of the Nigerian federation. This is no mean feat, especially against the backdrop of different economic headwinds. However, the sailor behind the ship Mr. Patrick McMichael outgoing Chief Executive Officer of the topmost QSR company has completed his tour of duty and on his way out of the Country. In a no-hold-barred interactive chat with MARKETING EDGE

team, the iconic leader and astute manager of men and resources, Mr. Patrick McMichael disclosed to MARKETING EDGE team that he has successfully built and positioned Eat N'GO to become Africa's largest QSR. He spoke glowingly about team Eat'N'GO, huge opportunities in the Nigerian market and all the exciting moments working in Nigeria. He also advised other prospective investors in Nigeria to take the bull by the horn as the future of the Nigerian market is bright and beautiful. He spoke on several other issues as well. Excerpts:



**H**ow will you assess the Nigerian economy in terms of opportunities and potentials for growth?

The Nigerian economy:

The Nigerian economy offers so much opportunity. Nigeria has a big population that is very young. As the country continues to develop these opportunities will only become bigger opportunities with more and more customers. The opportunities within Nigeria were the main reason that I accepted the role of CEO for Eat'n'Go in 2018. When I joined the company had 63 stores. My team and I have built the company up to 175 stores in Nigeria in 20 states through some very challenging times. Imagine where we could have built to with stability globally and locally. My view is that we have at least 200 more stores to develop in Nigeria. As the new policies of the current government settle in I believe stability will improve and opportunities will accelerate. There are exciting times ahead for Nigeria. Big infrastructure falling into place that will certainly help.

**Would you say Nigeria offers any hope for foreign investors?**

Foreign Investors: I believe that foreign investors need to have a long-term view on investing into developing countries. There are great opportunities that require patient capital structures. There have been many companies that have left Nigeria recently. I expect that they will return in the years

to come as the opportunity of Nigeria has not gone away. Many companies had the wrong supply chain or capital structure to handle the shock of the last five years globally and domestically. There is a huge developing customer base in Nigeria. As the national power grid becomes solid and fuel is refined locally things will change. The more that Nigeria can reduce imports and become a producer, more companies will want to be in business in Nigeria. This will then lead to Nigeria becoming a multi-industry exporter to the world.

**What was your first impression about the country Nigeria when you came almost 10 years ago?**

My first impressions: Despite so many people arguing that Nigeria has not developed over the last decade, I would disagree with this. I recall when I first arrived in Nigeria driving on the dirt road from the airport to the office on Victoria Island. I saw buildings cut in half etc.... That road is now a proper freeway. The third mainland bridge is now impressive. I remember running the Lagos marathon across that bridge. It was in bad shape. The new international airports are open, several big rail projects have been completed. I always judge development by how many cranes I can see across the city skyline. Despite the recent economic challenges that have faced Nigeria, there are quite a few cranes for new buildings coming up. My first impressions were that this is a developing country, and it is going

to take time. Having worked in Indonesia as CEO of Domino's Pizza, I was already well conditioned to developing countries. I actually felt quite at home when I arrived in Nigeria. Everyone spoke English which was very different to Indonesia. Secondly Nigeria has a great vibe. The people were all very welcoming everywhere that I went. I will miss this a lot when I leave.

**Were you apprehensive or anxious about anything when you first heard you would be posted to Nigeria? If Yes, how did you resolve this?**

Working in Nigeria as an expat: I get this question all the time here in Nigeria when I am overseas. Working in any country you have to take time to understand the country and culture of your host country. You then need to respect the culture and the people of the country. I have found that a simple smile and a "hello" is a great ice breaker in whatever situation I am in. I had a sign up in my office that I feel is critical to understand. It read very simply; "I don't care about your job title, how much money you have or your social status. I only care about how you treat people" As an expat in a developing country you often live a life of privilege that demands that you be courteous and have manners. Beyond this basic rule, I have had a very enjoyable life as an expat in Nigeria. I have made a lot of friends that are a mixture of expats and Nigerians. I was lucky enough to meet my partner Ania here in Lagos. We have an amazing life here for five years now. I have found the local population to be so welcoming. I have had some awkward moments for sure, however I have managed to break them down with a smile. I hope that that is something that I am remembered for in Nigeria.

**How will you assess the state of Eat'n'Go which you were to head when you came? How will you assess the growth and development of this company in this past one decade?**

Eat'n'Go: As I previously stated Eat'n'Go was a much smaller company when I arrived. It has 63 stores between Lagos, Abuja and Ibadan. There were 4 commissaries to support the business and a small warehouse. During my time with Eat'n'Go, my team I were able to build the company up to 193 stores in two countries with the acquisition of the Dominos and Cold Stone franchises in Kenya during





the pandemic. We have expanded from 4 commissaries to 11 commissaries and relocated to a much larger warehouse to create a proper national distribution centre to support the company's operation in 20 states of Nigeria. We created employment opportunities for over 3000 people in Nigeria. This does not count the employment that was created in companies that supported the growth of Eat'n'Go. The ripple effect of the success of Eat'n'Go has further benefited the Nigerian economy. As the company was growing quickly, we further developed the operating systems of the company to support the growth through strong operations. The Eat'n'Go of today is a much bigger and more complex business than it was in 2018 when I arrived. I am very proud that we have grown our sales every year during my tenure. We have maintained our margins despite strong headwinds in the economy. We were able to raise funds through bonds to drive our expansion on three occasions maintaining an investment grade rating at all times. It is a credit to the hard work of the entire Eat'n'Go team.

**You were said to have brought several innovations and creativity to grow this business during your term of office. What inspired you to achieve these?**

Innovation: Innovation has been a key pillar in the success of Eat'n'Go. The management team has been very focussed on ensuring that we remain at the forefront of customers thoughts during my time with Eat'n'Go. We have continued to innovate with new products. We quite often infused local flavour into the new

products which has been very popular. We launched the very popular jollof rice and roasted chicken to the Dominos menu. Rice is served in many Dominos markets around the world. We introduced hot dogs into Cold Stone to get more lunch trade. We launched the very successful Smallie pizza which took the market by storm as it was very affordable for the general population. We were able to introduce a call centre to help our customers order from better trained agents. This has worked really well. It also allows us to call our customers back to get feedback on our products and service. We introduced QR code customer feedback options. We win customers one at a time and we have to do everything we can to keep our customers happy. We further partnered with aggregators to be more convenient to our customers. I have a big sign on the wall of the marketing office. It is very simple, "Think like a customer". So many companies forget to do this. They tell customers what they want and how they will buy it. My view is just the opposite. Listen to customers and create options that work for customers. Innovate in ways that work for your customers and make your company faster and better. Dominos Pizza Nigeria was the first market globally to launch the 20-minute delivery guarantee for customers. This really brought a lot of focus in the stores to making sure that we provided the best possible service.

**How will you describe or assess the workforce you met on ground? And how will you assess the workforce and the management you are leaving behind as legacy?**

Team: I have been blessed to have worked with some excellent team members in Eat'n'Go at all levels of the company. One of the first things that we agreed on in 2018 was that whenever possible we will promote from within. This has created a career path for our team to grow as the company grows. It has been very successful. It is great to watch your team enjoy career success as the company has success. This is so critical in building positive culture in any company. There is a lot of talented and well-educated people in Nigeria that are looking for the right opportunity. When I arrived in Nigeria, we employed 14 expats in Eat'n'Go. As of today, with my departure we have only four. We were described as a textbook case study in developing local talent in the recent senate inquiry into expat employment in Nigeria. I am very proud of the focus that we have had on developing our team.

**What were the most memorable things you did while you were in the saddle?**

Most memorable: I have really enjoyed working with the Eat'n'Go team for so many reasons, however if I have to narrow down to my most memorable activity, it will have to be our involvement with the Slum to School charity. I believe that when you are succeeding in business that you must give back to those less fortunate. Over the last six years Eat'n'Go has donated over 80 million Naira to support thousands of Children to

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