Rise of robot commercials in Nigerian advertising



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The Industry WOMEN Conference 2026

/The Changemakers Awards 4.0



Theme:

Voice and Visibility

Amplified: Women, Storytelling, and the Power to Define the Narrative.

Meet Our Panelists



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Victoria Uwadoka

Immediate Past Corporate Communications, Public Affairs & Sustainability Lead, Nestlé Nigeria



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Executive Secretary, Lateef Jakande Leadership Academy (LJUA)



Oluwatosin Odiagbe *(Moderator)*

Snr. Marketing Manager, Simba Group

DATE

Friday 4th, December 2026

VENUE

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Men gather on the Altar of oneness

When we mooted the idea of a programme focused on discussing men and their issues a few years ago, some people thought we were irrational. Why talk about men, they asked, when men already own the table? Our answer was simple: ownership is not the same as oneness.

Today, what looked like a pipedream has become a reality. A platform where men, just as women, gather on the altar of oneness – to interrogate, to inspire, and to impact. The Industry Newspaper has made that possible.

The advent of The Industry Impact Summit, otherwise known as the Top 50 Men of Impact, has redefined manhood. It has moved the conversation from power to responsibility, from ego to essence, from success to significance.

Professionals and practitioners within the Integrated Marketing Communications and allied industries have found their voices through this platform – voices that build, not bully; voices that mentor, not merely manage.

This year's theme, "Responsibility & Impact: The Role of Men as Builders of Brands, Businesses, and Society," encapsulates the mood and the moment, particularly as we join the world in celebrating International Men's Day.

Because in the end, manhood is not measured by what we conquer, but by what we build.

---- AI won't kill creativity. laziness will.

The Nigerian television commercial is at a crossroads. On one hand, clients demand Hollywood-quality ads with Gala budgets. On the other, Artificial Intelligence now promises to write, shoot and edit a commercial in 10 minutes for $20.

For creative agencies, the threat is real.

The first challenge is value erosion. When a client can generate a decent AI ad on his phone, why pay an agency N15 million? Many agencies are already being asked to "just use AI to do it." This race to the bottom kills craft.

The second is authenticity. AI-powered TVCs are slick but soulless. They struggle with Nigerian nuances - the Yoruba mother's tongue-click, the Naija humour, the communal truth that makes an ad resonate in Mushin and Maitama. AI gives us perfect faces, but we sell to real people.

The real challenge, therefore, is not AI. It is agencies that use AI as a substitute for insight, not a tool for it.

The agencies that will survive are not those fighting AI, but those using it to build faster, then adding the one thing AI cannot fake: human truth.

That's the real idea.

FEEDBACK

For opinion, right of reply, articles and feedbacks to our articles, kindly reach us via theindustry.ng@gmail.com, whatsapp: +2348028424987

INDUSTRY NEWS



FITC ThinkNnovation Cybersecurity Conference 7.0

L-R: Group CISO/Data Protection Officer, Access Bank Plc, Dr. Favour Femi-Oyewole; Director, Banking Supervision Department at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Olubukola Akinwunmi; MD/CEO, FITC, Dr. Chizor Malize; Founder/CVO, Digital Encode Limited, Prof. Peter Obadare; Director, Public Affairs, Representative of the Executive Chairman, EFCC, Wilson Uwujaren; CISO, NIBSS, Olusola Odediran; and Group CISO, First Bank of Nigeria Ltd, Dr. Harrison Nnaji, at the just-concluded Financial Institutions Training Centre (FITC) ThinkNnovation Cybersecurity Conference 7.0 in Lagos

Stories by Kate Oboho

Dangote advocates industrial protection for indigenous companies

President and Chief Executive of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, has unveiled plans to establish an extensive petroleum distribution network across Africa through strategic investments in pipelines, storage facilities and supply corridors, while urging African governments to adopt policies that protect domestic industries and accelerate industrialisation.

Dangote said the Group is aggressively expanding its petroleum logistics and distribution infrastructure across East, Central and Southern Africa as part of efforts to strengthen energy security, improve access to refined products and eliminate longstanding supply bottlenecks across the continent.

Speaking during a wide-ranging interview with Financial Times Africa Editor, David Pilling, the industrialist disclosed that the Group recently acquired a 25 per cent stake in a petroleum products pipeline network in Kenya and is pursuing additional infrastructure projects connecting Djibouti and Ethiopia, alongside investments in Cameroon and Namibia.

According to him, Africa's aspiration for economic transformation will remain difficult to achieve without significant investments in infrastructure combined with industrial policies that promote local manufacturing, preserve productive capacity and create sustainable employment opportunities.

"Allowing imports to displace local production means we are exporting our jobs out of the continent and importing poverty into the continent," Dangote said.

Dangote explained that the expansion forms part of a broader strategy to develop an interconnected African energy supply system capable of linking major refining centres with underserved markets that have historically depended on imported petroleum products and fragmented distribution channels.

Rite Foods enters malt market with LIDA Malt



Rite Foods Limited is advancing its innovation drive with the introduction of LIDA Malt Classic, a new non-alcoholic malt beverage developed to expand consumer choice and strengthen the company's presence in Nigeria's competitive beverage market.

Anchored on the proposition "LIDA Malt. Made for You," the brand reflects the company's approach to innovation, driven by an understanding of consumer preferences and a commitment to developing products that fit naturally into everyday life.

LIDA Malt Classic was introduced to the media during a product immersion programme at Rite Foods' manufacturing facility in Ososa, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, on October 15, 2026.

The programme provided media representatives and content creators with an opportunity to experience the new product and gain insight into the manufacturing operations supporting the company's growing portfolio.

Speaking during the programme, Ekuma Eze, Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability at Rite Foods Limited, said the introduction of LIDA Malt reflects the company's continued commitment to product development, quality and responding to evolving consumer expectations.

He noted that Rite Foods' innovation journey is reflected in its expanding portfolio, which includes Bigi Carbonated Soft Drinks, available in 13 variants; Bigi Premium Drinking Water; Sosa Fruit Drink, with five variants; and Fearless Energy Drink

During the factory tour, Eze also highlighted the role of energy management in the company's long-term business strategy, noting that the integration of cleaner energy sources supports operational efficiency, sustainability and business continuity.

NECA, SON, others reject new NAFDAC bill



The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) has rejected provisions of the proposed Food, Medical Products and Related Products (Registration, Etc.) Bill, 2026, which seek to bring tobacco products under an additional regulatory framework, warning that the legislation could create institutional conflicts, duplicate existing regulations and undermine Nigeria's business environment.

In its formal submission to the Senate Committee on Health, NECA cautioned that the proposed legislation, sponsored by Senator Umar Sadiq Suleiman, could add unnecessary regulatory complexity to an industry already governed by comprehensive laws and multiple regulatory institutions.

The Bill, which passed second reading in the Senate on July 21, 2026, seeks to repeal the Food, Drugs and Related Products Act, 2004, and establish a new regulatory framework for food, medical and related products.

However, NECA maintains that extending its provisions to tobacco products would conflict with the existing National Tobacco Control Act, 2015, National Tobacco Control Regulations, 2019, and the Standards Organisation of Nigeria Act, 2015.

The employers' association argued that the proposed framework would create overlapping responsibilities among the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), and the Nigeria Customs Service.

Nwosu, champions purpose-driven leadership



The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Africa Prudential Plc, Catherine Nwosu, has reaffirmed the critical role of strategic leadership in building iconic, future-ready African brands that can compete globally.

Speaking at the Africa Brand Awards 2026 held in Lagos, themed "Building ICONIC Brands in Africa: The Strategic Roles of Business Leaders," Nwosu, who was honoured as one of the winners, shared insights on how Africa Prudential is evolving from a traditional share registration company into a technology-driven capital market solutions powerhouse with over five decades of heritage.

Nwosu, a seasoned capital market professional who assumed leadership of the company in 2024 after serving in various strategic capacities, said iconic brands are built on clarity of purpose and consistent delivery.

"Building an iconic brand begins with clarity of purpose. A brand becomes enduring when people understand what it stands for, experience that promise consistently and trust the organisation behind it," she said.

According to her, Africa Prudential's transformation is anchored on three core principles: Execution, Enterprise and Excellence. These values, she noted, have guided the company's deliberate investment in digital innovation to anticipate change rather than merely respond to it.

A flagship of this strategy is Sabivest, the company's innovative digital platform designed to simplify investment management. Nwosu explained that Sabivest was created to address practical investor pain points such as fragmented investment information, limited portfolio visibility and challenges with dividends and investment-related services.

GEN, Tripoint Travels bankroll 2026 Arewa Festival

The Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) Nigeria has announced a strategic partnership with Tripoint Travels to host the 2026 edition of the Arewa Business Festival, scheduled to hold from November 21st to 22nd in Abuja.

The partnership was unveiled at the Arewa Business Festival reception in Lagos, convened to formally launch this year's festival and engage partners.

According to Olayinka Oguntola, National Coordinator of GEW Nigeria, the Arewa Business Festival is a flagship entrepreneurship festival held as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), a global movement to promote entrepreneurship.

"The Arewa Festival is where we will have over 500 entrepreneurs exhibiting their products and people buying from them.

Global Entrepreneurship Week is an event to promote entrepreneurship, and the Arewa Festival is also an event to promote entrepreneurship.

OTG endows first-ever professorial chair in agriculture

Origin Tech Group has announced the endowment of the Origin Tech Group Professorial Chair in Agriculture at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, marking the first professorial chair in agriculture to be established at the University.

The landmark endowment underscores Origin Tech Group's commitment to advancing agricultural innovation, strengthening research capacity, and supporting the development of sustainable solutions to Nigeria's food security and agribusiness challenges.

The Chair will serve as a hub for cutting-edge research, knowledge creation, and industry-academia collaboration, fostering innovation in areas such as agricultural technology, climate-smart agriculture, value chain development, and sustainable food systems.

All stories continue on www.theindustryng.com

NEWS FEATURE

Ericsson marks 150 years of global innovation and reflects on Nigeria's digital journey

Kate Oboho

·Ericsson is celebrating 150 years of innovation in communications and connectivity.

· In Nigeria, Ericsson has been present since 1978 and contributed to the launch of the country's first GSM network in 2001.

·The milestone recognizes a long-standing role in Nigeria's digital development and looks ahead to the next phase of connectivity.



Ericsson has celebrated its 150th global anniversary at an event in Lagos, bringing together customers, employees, dignitaries, partners and government representatives. The celebration reflects on Ericsson's contribution to Nigeria's telecommunications journey and the role of connectivity in enabling future digital opportunities.

Founded in 1876, Ericsson has evolved alongside the communications industry, from early telecommunications technology to the mobile networks and digital infrastructure that connect people, businesses and societies. Its 150-year milestone celebrates that history of innovation while looking ahead to the technologies shaping the next generation of connectivity, including AI and automation that support the industry's evolution towards autonomous networks.

Ericsson has been present here in Nigeria since 1978, supporting network deployments. A defining milestone came in 2001, when Ericsson contributed to the launch of Nigeria's first GSM network. The development helped move the country into a new era of mobile connectivity.

Ericsson's work in the market has continued to evolve with the industry. In 2022, Ericsson supported the launch of 5G services in Nigeria. In 2024, Ericsson and the Federal Government of Nigeria signed a cooperation framework covering 5G technology development, deployment and innovation, alongside knowledge exchange, capacity building and digital-skills development.

At the event, Ericsson reiterated its commitment to playing an active role in Nigeria's AI evolution. As demand for mobile data grows and digital services become increasingly sophisticated, Nigeria has an important opportunity to strengthen the foundations of its digital economy.

High-performing, programmable networks will be key to enabling new experiences, supporting enterprise innovation and preparing for the opportunities presented by AI.

Majda Lahlou Kassi, VP and Head of Ericsson West and Southern Africa, said: "As we celebrate 150 years of Ericsson, we are not only reflecting on our past; we are looking ahead to Nigeria's future. Nigeria is a crucial market on the African continent, and we believe in its potential.

We are proud of our long-standing presence here and look forward to playing an active role, alongside our customers, partners and stakeholders, in defining the country's digital future."

Lagos Teacher, Busayo Adeyemo, emerges winner of the 2026 Maltina Teacher of the Year Competition

Barakat Olayiwola

Busayo Adeyemo of Lanre Awolokun High School, Gbagada, Lagos State has emerged the winner of the 12th edition of the prestigious Maltina Teacher of the Year Competition held on Friday, October 30, 2026, at Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Adeyemo, who was declared the winner of the 2026 Maltina Teacher of the Year Competition, received a cash prize of ₦10,000,000 (ten million naira), a Honda HR-V, an all-expenses-paid overseas capacity development training, a year supply of Maltina, and a ₦30 million school infrastructure project to be built in her honour by the Nigerian Breweries–Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund. For the winner, the icing on the cake came when Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu rewarded her with a 3-bedroom apartment. Beyond the gift, Adeyemo also won the Maltina Prize for Best STEM Teacher, going home with a cash prize of ₦1.5 million.

The first runner-up, Yusuf Cariyat of Wisdom International School of Excellence (WISE), Sauka, Lugbe, Abuja, FCT, went home with ₦5,000,000, while the second runner-up, Ephraim Jacob Inyangudo of Comprehensive Secondary School, Ediene Abak LGA, Akwa Ibom State, received ₦3,000,000. In addition, 17 other teachers who emerged as State Champions from their respective states received ₦1,000,000 each for their outstanding performance and commitment to excellence in teaching.

Speaking at the grand finale, the host and Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, commended Nigerian Breweries-Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund(NB-FOETF) for its commitment to honouring teachers through the deployment of corporate resources meant to elevate them.

Sanwo-Olu described the intervention by the Trust Fund as the best way to deepen partnership between the company and the public sector while also delivering its corporate social responsibilities.

Also speaking at the occasion, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Tinubu, who was represented by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Dr. Bernard Doro...



L-R: Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Lagos State, Mr. Tolani-Ali Balogun: PRO, Nigerian Breweries-Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund/Corporate Affairs Director, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Mr. Uzo Odenigbo; Gov, Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Winner, 2026 Maltina Teacher of the Year Competition, Mrs. Busayo Adeyemo; Wife of the Lagos State Gov, Dr. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu; Chairman, Nigerian Breweries-Felix Ohiwerei Education Trust Fund/Managing Director, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Mr. Thibaut Boidin; Minister for Humanitarian Affairs & Poverty Reduction, Dr. Bernard Doro; Minister for Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa & Divisional Manager, Sales and Customer Services, Honda Manufacturing Nigeria Ltd, Olabade Badejo during the presentation of the N10 million grand prize and Honda HRV car to the winner at the Grand Finale event held in Lagos on Friday.

APC Lagos unveils campaign brand identity - 'The Lagos Promise / Ileri Eko'

· Lagos Gubernatorial Candidate Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat Launches Manifesto Anchored on Brand Promise of Respect, Work and Truth



The All Progressives Congress [APC] Lagos State gubernatorial campaign has unveiled its official campaign brand and manifesto platform, The Lagos Promise - Ileri Eko, at a launch event held at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts, National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos.

The launch, headlined by APC governorship candidate Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat and Lagos State Governor Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, introduced a new brand architecture that will drive the party's 2027 governorship campaign communications.

Central to the campaign branding is the Yoruba philosophical positioning: Gbese ni Ileri - A Promise is a Debt. A Promise is a Load.

According to Dr. Hamzat in his prepared manifesto speech, the choice of name was deliberate. "I chose those words with care. A promise is a debt. In Yoruba, we say: Gbese ni Ileri. A promise has weight.

"The campaign brand is built on three core values drawn from Hamzat's family tradition, positioned as the brand ethos: Iteriba [Respect], Ise [Work], and Otito [Truth]. The messaging framework states: Respect - the state owes it to every person it serves; Work - the work comes before the announcement; and Truth - a government that publishes the truth about itself earns trust.

Governor Sanwo-Olu, in his address at the event, framed the launch as a moment of continuity, symbolically presenting a baton painted in Lagos State colours as a representation of transition. He noted that successive administrations since 1999 have sustained a pace of development in infrastructure, economy, education, healthcare and transportation.

The Lagos Promise is structured as a seven-pillar brand framework, with each letter forming a policy pillar containing a total of 100 pledges. The campaign disclosed that 87 pledges are classified as firm commitments within the State Government's power, while 13 are aspirations dependent on wider consultation and federal partnership.

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FINANCE



L-R, Jacky Amprou, Country Director, Agence Francaise De Development (AFD), Christopher Lecourtier, CEO, AFD, Dr Olasupo Olusi, MD/CEO, Bank of Industry (BoI), and Rotimi Akande, Executive Director, Corporate Finance, Investment and Substantiality BoI, during the signing of a $30 million MoU credit facility supporting Nigeria's creative and cultural industries between the Bank of Industry (BOI) and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in Abuja.

JPMorgan deposits $38m with CBN ahead of planned Nigeria launch

JPMorgan Chase & Co. has deposited N50 billion ($38 million) with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), according to Bloomberg.

The move is said to be part of JP Morgan's efforts to secure a licence to operate a merchant bank in Nigeria.

The Bloomberg report, said the deposit is one of the final regulatory requirements for approval.

It also signals the US lender's readiness to launch the merchant-banking operation if its application is approved.



A CBN approval will see the bank expand its services beyond the current representative office it operates in Lagos, where it runs its commercial & investment banking business, providing asset and wealth management services.

JP Morgan, according to Bloomberg, hopes to receive the licence by year-end or in early 2027, provided it is able to obtain all the requisite approvals.

Recently, Dapo Olagunji, managing director of JPMorgan West Africa, announced plans to establish a merchant bank in Nigeria, with operations expected to commence before the end of 2026, subject to regulatory approval.

The planned merchant bank would expand JPMorgan's presence in Nigeria as the country seeks to deepen its financial markets and attract international investment.

Stanbic IBTC upgrades transaction banking platform

Stanbic IBTC Bank, has said that it has upgraded its transaction banking platform to FinnAxia 9.0, deepening its partnership with Nucleus Software and strengthening its capacity to deliver digital banking solutions to corporate and institutional clients.

The upgrade, it said, marks another milestone in the more than decade-long relationship between Stanbic IBTC Bank and Nucleus Software, as both organisations continue to invest in technology to improve transaction banking services amid growing demand for faster, seamless and digitally enabled banking solutions.

Commenting on the development, Executive Director, Corporate and Transaction Banking, Stanbic IBTC Bank, Eric Fajemisin, said the upgrade reflects the bank's commitment to continuously strengthening the solutions it provides to clients.



He said, "Our relationship with Nucleus Software has spanned a decade and forms part of our broader commitment to continuously strengthening the solutions and services we provide to clients. As transaction banking continues to evolve, we remain focused on investing in capabilities that help businesses operate with greater speed, visibility and confidence."

Also speaking, Jesuseun Fatoyinbo, Head of Transaction Banking, Stanbic IBTC Bank, said the upgrade would enable the bank to simplify customer journeys while improving the speed at which new capabilities can be introduced.

"Transaction banking today is about delivering intelligent, seamless and responsive experiences for customers.

Zenith Bank to bring global trade leaders together at 10th international trade seminar

Zenith Bank Plc will host the 10th edition of its International Trade Seminar on Non-Oil Export on Tuesday, 25 August 2026, bringing together leading policymakers, regulators, exporters, manufacturers, investors and other key stakeholders to explore practical strategies for unlocking value and accelerating growth in Nigeria's non-oil export sector.



Themed "Unlocking Value and Harnessing Growth in Non-Oil Export", the virtual seminar will examine how Nigeria can move beyond exporting raw commodities to build globally competitive value chains, expand market access, strengthen trade infrastructure and financing, and deepen the contribution of non-oil exports to sustainable economic growth.

The high-level event will feature an impressive line-up of guest speakers, including the Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, H.E. Wamkele Mene; the Chief Executive Officer of Plot Enterprise Ghana Limited, Mrs Patricia Poku-Diaby; and the immediate past President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), Professor Benedict Oramah.

The seminar will also convene leading voices from the public and private sectors in two panel discussions. The first panel, dedicated to public sector perspectives, will bring together key stakeholders driving Nigeria's trade, export, investment and economic development agenda.

It will feature the Managing Director/Chief Executive of the Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM Bank), Mr Abba Bello; the Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service, Mr Adewale Adeniyi; the Director, Trade and Exchange Department, Central Bank of Nigeria,

UBA advances Green Finance and Sustainability initiative



Africa's Global Bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, has launched a Group-wide Climate Action Week to deepen climate awareness, promote responsible environmental practices and advance sustainable finance across its African and international operations.

The five-day campaign, running from October 26 to 30, 2026, is themed "Banking on Africa's Climate Future" and reflects the Bank's commitment to integrating environmental responsibility into its operations, customer engagement and financing solutions.

The initiative commenced with the deployment of waste segregation bins across UBA offices and measures to reduce the use of single-use plastics at the Bank's head offices. These activities underscore UBA's commitment to translating sustainability principles into practical actions within its workplace and across its wider ecosystem.

Throughout the week, UBA will disseminate educational content across its media and digital platforms to highlight the causes and consequences of climate change, including its impact on food prices, energy consumption and urban flooding. The campaign will also promote responsible plastic disposal, recycling and the critical role of financial institutions in financing clean energy, sustainable agriculture and other environmentally responsible businesses.

As part of the campaign's community engagement component, UBA staff volunteers will participate in a Group-wide clean-up exercise on Saturday, November 7, in major cities across its markets. In Nigeria, the exercise will take place in Lagos, Kano and Port Harcourt, mobilising employees to contribute directly to cleaner and healthier communities.

UBA's Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Oliver Alawuba, emphasised the importance of collective responsibility in addressing the growing impact of climate change.

"Climate change is no longer a distant environmental concern;

AIICO Insurance pays N68.1bn in claims, benefits in 2025

AIICO Insurance Plc paid ₦68.1 billion in claims and benefits in 2025 and currently provides retirement income to more than 28,000 annuitants across Nigeria, underscoring its commitment to financial security and retirees' wellbeing.

The insurer reaffirmed this commitment at its 2026 Annuitants Forum, themed "Still More to Live: Embracing Life Beyond Retirement," where management engaged retirees on retirement income security, health, social connections and the opportunities to lead fulfilling lives after active service.

Welcoming guests to the forum, Mr. Gbenga Ilori, Executive Director, Retail Business Division, AIICO Insurance Plc, noted that the company's relationship with its annuitants extends beyond the payment of retirement benefits. He emphasised that while retirement marks a major transition in life, AIICO remains committed to supporting its customers throughout the journey.

"At AIICO, we are much more than a company. We are a companion to our clients. We want to remain connected to you, listen to your experiences, hear your feedback and understand how we can serve you better," he said.

BoI joins renaissance's $4.1bn, N435bn Vendor Financing Scheme

The Bank of Industry (BoI) has been selected as a partner bank under the relaunched Renaissance Vendor Financing Scheme (RVFS), with a subscribed portfolio of US$4.1 billion and ₦435 billion to improve access to financing for indigenous contractors and vendors in Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

The partnership will enable BoI to deploy its development-financing expertise and advisory services to support eligible Nigerian businesses executing contracts for Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited.

The scheme is designed to ease funding constraints affecting project mobilisation, equipment procurement, payroll and other contract-related obligations.

The refreshed scheme was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony in Lagos involving Renaissance and 13 financial institutions. BoI's inclusion, alongside African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and The Infrastructure Bank, expands the framework to incorporate development-focused financing institutions.

All stories continue on www.theindustryng.com

SUSTAINABILITY/CSR

Guinness Nigeria donates advanced diagnostic equipment to NAUTH

Stories by Kate Oboho



Guinness Nigeria Plc has reaffirmed its longstanding commitment to eye care with the delivery of a Takagi Autorefractor Keratometer (ARKM-200) to the Guinness Eye Centre at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), Nnewi.

The donation continues Guinness Nigeria's established tradition of donating major ophthalmic equipment annually to the Guinness Eye Centres at NAUTH and the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH). Sustained over several years, this initiative reflects the company's commitment to supporting healthcare facilities with essential equipment to strengthen their capacity to deliver quality eye care services.

The ARKM-200, identified by the NAUTH Centre as its priority equipment need for the year, supports refraction and essential ophthalmic diagnostic procedures. These include determining the appropriate prescription for eyeglass lenses and calculating intraocular lens power for patients requiring cataract surgery, among other eye assessments.

Guinness Nigeria's commitment extends beyond equipment donations to interventions that directly benefit patients. In 2025, as part of activities marking its 75th anniversary, the company sponsored 150 free cataract surgeries across the Guinness Eye Centres at NAUTH and LUTH, helping beneficiaries access essential treatment to improve their sight and quality of life.

In a letter of appreciation addressed to Guinness Nigeria, Dr Odili Okoye, Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee at NAUTH, commended the company for the latest donation, noting that it "will go a long way in improving our services to the patients at the Guinness Eye Centre, Onitsha." The hospital also acknowledged Guinness Nigeria's broader, sustained support over the years.

UBA drives employee wellness, sustainability across African operations

United Bank for Africa Plc has reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability, employee well-being, and community development by mobilising thousands of employees across its operations in 20 African countries for the latest edition of its flagship wellness initiative, "Jogging to Bond."

This year's event held special significance as it coincided with the 60th birthday of UBA's Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Oliver Alawuba, who chose to celebrate the milestone in the company of staff and colleagues.

A major highlight of the event was a coordinated environmental clean-up exercise carried out simultaneously across UBA's markets. From Lagos to Accra, Nairobi, Dakar, and other cities where the bank operates, employees took to the streets and public spaces to clean their surroundings, demonstrating UBA's unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

Speaking during the event, Alawuba emphasised the importance of wellness, teamwork, and social responsibility in building a strong institution.

He said, "There is no place I would rather be on my birthday than here, surrounded by the incredible people who make UBA what it is today. Our greatest strength lies in our people, in the passion, energy, and sense of purpose that unite us across Africa. Under the theme, 'The Power Within U,' this quarterly initiative brings together employees from across our African network for a day dedicated to fitness, teamwork, creativity, community service, and environmental responsibility.

"When we run together, serve together, and work together to make our communities cleaner and healthier, we are doing more than promoting fitness. We are demonstrating our shared values and our commitment to the people and communities that place their trust in us every day."

In Lagos, the event featured a variety of wellness activities, including spinning bike sessions, fitness challenges, relaxation therapies provided by Oriki, and an exercise station hosted by iFitness, which also offered exclusive discounts to UBA employees.

Sahara Group Foundation expands recycling drive with new go-recycling hub at Sam Ethnan Air Force Base

Sahara Group Foundation, the social impact vehicle of Sahara Group, has commissioned its 23rd Sahara Go Recycling Hub at Sam Ethnan Air Force Base in Ikeja, Lagos, reinforcing its commitment to environmental sustainability, community empowerment and inclusive economic growth.

The new hub advances the Foundation's efforts to transform recyclable waste from an environmental liability into an economic asset, creating income opportunities for households through targeted waste-to-wealth programmes.

It also marks another step towards strengthening sustainable waste recovery systems and empowering host communities across Nigeria.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony, Director of Sahara Group Foundation, Chidilim Menakaya, highlighted the Foundation's continued investment in practical, community-focused solutions that deliver lasting environmental and socio-economic benefits.

"This initiative aligns with our sustainability and development priorities by transforming waste into valuable resources, reducing environmental impact, supporting climate action and creating livelihood opportunities. It demonstrates how communities can advance environmental responsibility while promoting inclusive economic growth," she said.

Air Commodore M.A. Imam, Commander of 651 Base Services Group, commended the Foundation's investment in environmental sustainability and emphasised the importance of collective action in addressing waste management challenges in rapidly growing communities.

LAPO MfB deploys billions to green, agricultural finance

LAPO Microfinance Bank (LAPO MfB) strengthened its sustainability footprint in the first half of 2026, deploying billions of naira to green, agricultural and climate-related financing while expanding clean-energy access, social investments and responsible governance.

The bank's sustainability drive recorded a strong start in Q1, with ₦824.5 million disbursed through its Go Green, Go Clean and Aqua Plus programmes.

The momentum accelerated in Q2, as LAPO MfB disbursed ₦6.41 billion in agricultural loans to 9,857 farmers, including ₦4.70 billion in Climate Adapt Input Finance to 7,742 clients.

The bank also crossed the ₦1 billion mark in clean-energy financing during Q2, supporting access to solar home systems and other renewable-energy solutions. It expanded its clean-energy partnership network and transitioned 20 additional branches to solar power across Nigeria, achieving 40 per cent of its annual 50-branch target.

LAPO also stepped up financing for cleaner mobility. Patronage of the DAG Empower Bajaj CNG Loan surged by 1,225 per cent, with ₦217.38 million disbursed for 53 units, while REXOX CNG vehicle and tricycle conversion loans were introduced in Edo, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory.

According to the Director, Marketing and Communications, LAPO Microfinance Bank, Oluremi Akande, the bank's sustainability strategy is increasingly being driven through its core financial inclusion business.

"Sustainability is not separate from financial inclusion; it is integral to how we create lasting value for our customers and communities.

Our H1 performance demonstrates how targeted financing can respond to environmental and social challenges while enabling individuals, farmers and businesses to become more resilient and productive."

Rite Foods donates 600 protective coveralls, working tools to Ogun waste management workers

Rite Foods Limited, a leading Nigerian food and beverage company, has donated 600 protective coveralls and other waste management tools to workers of the Ogun State Waste Management Authority (OGWAMA), in recognition of their critical role in keeping communities clean and healthy.

The initiative, undertaken to commemorate World Cleanup Day 2026, themed "From Clean Plates to Clean Cities," highlights Rite Foods' commitment to environmental sustainability, waste recovery and the advancement of a circular economy.

The items were formally presented to the management of OGWAMA on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at the Authority's headquarters in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The ceremony was attended by senior officials of OGWAMA and the Ogun State public sector, who commended Rite Foods for its sustained environmental initiatives and support for waste management efforts in the state.

Speaking at the event, the Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Rite Foods Limited, Mr. Ekuma Eze, said the donation was designed to recognise and support the waste management workers whose daily efforts are essential to maintaining cleaner and healthier communities.

According to him, the initiative goes beyond corporate social responsibility, as it demonstrates Rite Foods' belief that environmental sustainability requires practical interventions that create value from waste while supporting the people at the forefront of environmental protection.

100 young Nigerians advance with solutions for a greener future

MTN Nigeria, in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) through its local partner, the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Nigeria, and Deloitte Nigeria, has shortlisted 100 young innovators to advance to the second stage of the 2026 Nigeria PachiPanda Challenge 3.0.

The innovators were selected from the 2,436 applications received nationwide following a multi-stage screening and evaluation process conducted by a panel of 25 assessors from diverse disciplines and industries. Their innovations address some of Nigeria's most pressing environmental challenges, including climate change, pollution, community conservation and environmental sustainability.

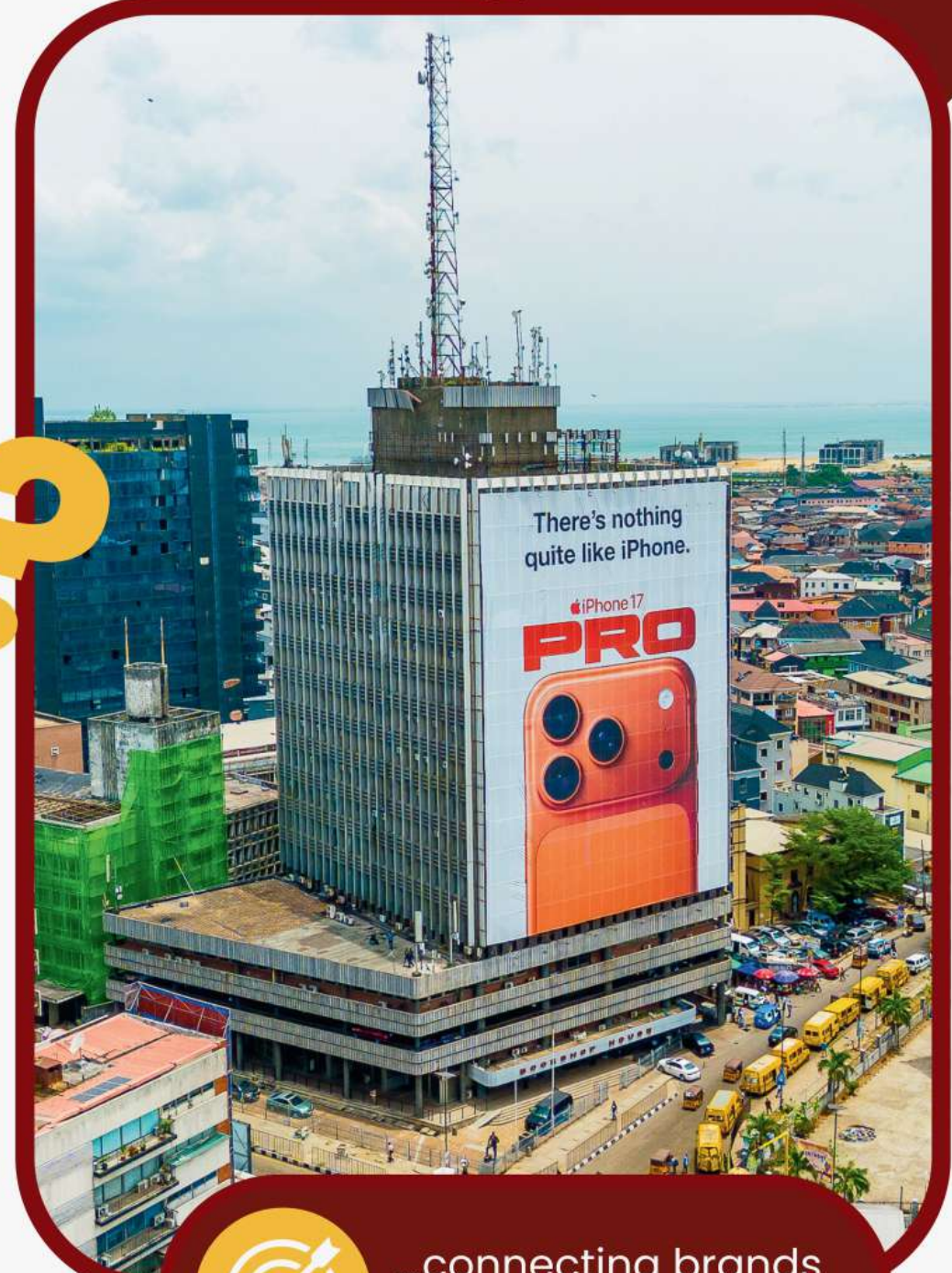
The assessment was guided by criteria designed to ensure fairness, consistency and objectivity while evaluating entries. The framework enabled assessors to identify the most promising green solutions targeted at delivering meaningful environmental and social impact.

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L-R: Software Developer, IXPL, Francis-Akinolu Ayomide; Social Media Strategist, IXPL, Adediran Oluwabunmi; Director, IXPL, Jegede Olayiwola; Director, IXPL, Owolabi Mustapha; Product Manager, IXPL, Omolayo Ajibola; and Business Lead, IXPL, Arayi-Ayana Otseoriselaju, during the official launch of IXPL Limited at Radisson Hotel, Lagos, Friday, October 16, 2026

IXPL debuts in Lagos, unveils platform to power purposeful technology

Stories by Princewill Okike

A new technology solutions company, IXPL Limited, has formally announced its entry into the Nigerian technology ecosystem, with a commitment to building practical, secure, and locally relevant digital solutions that solve real-world problems.

The official launch and Media Parley were held at Radisson Lagos on Friday, October 16, 2026, under the theme "Our Vision. Endless Possibilities." The event was headlined by a keynote address from the Director of the company, Mr. Owolabi Mustapha.

Welcoming journalists and stakeholders, Mustapha said IXPL Limited was founded on the understanding that technology must go beyond innovation for its own sake to genuinely improve lives.

"IXPL Limited was founded on the understanding that technology should solve real problems, not simply exist for the sake of innovation. We recognised that individuals and businesses face everyday challenges that could be addressed through well-designed digital solutions," he stated.

"Our purpose is to identify these challenges and build practical technology that makes processes easier, improves experiences, and creates value. We also recognise that every business has unique needs, which is why we develop tailored applications and platforms to help organisations solve their specific problems."

On the company's long-term ambition, Mustapha added: "Our vision is to grow into a technology company recognised for building useful, innovative, and impactful digital solutions. We intend to continue developing our own products, expand our capacity to solve business challenges through customised technology, and build partnerships that support innovation and growth."

Speaking on the company's positioning, Mr. Arayi-Ayana Otseoriselaju, Business Lead at IXPL Limited, described IXPL as a bridge between problems and practical solutions.

Banks, Interswitch push phone taps to cut payment friction

Interswitch and its banking partners are pushing tokenised card payments as a faster and more secure alternative to conventional bank transfers and physical cards, seeking to reduce the steps customers take to pay for goods and services.

At an Interswitch tokenisation documentary press briefing in Lagos, weekend, the payment technology company and participating banks outlined plans to expand device-based payments, allowing customers to pay by tapping compatible phones and other devices at payment terminals.

The Managing Director for Payment Processing and Switching at Interswitch Purepay, Akeem Lawal, described tokenisation as a potential turning point for digital payments, predicting a shift in how Nigerians pay for goods and services.

"Where we are going is just tapping," Lawal said, describing the next stage of payment adoption after the use of cards and bank transfers.

Tokenisation replaces sensitive card details with a substitute identifier, known as a token, reducing the exposure of original credentials during transactions. When supported by compatible devices and payment terminals, the technology allows customers to make payments using digital wallets and authenticate transactions through methods such as fingerprints or facial recognition.

"You will have reduced the friction of transacting significantly," Lawal said, adding that customers could authenticate payments through biometric methods and complete transactions in fewer steps.

The initiative builds on earlier changes in Nigeria's payments industry, including interbank automated teller machine switching, point-of-sale payments and online transactions.

Jumia using technology to go extra mile for shoppers

As organisations around the world mark Customer Service Week under the global theme "Going the Extra Mile," e-commerce leader Jumia Nigeria shares what exceptional service means in the current digital retail space.

For Jumia, going the extra mile goes beyond handling complaints or closing support tickets. It means taking ownership of the customer's experience from the moment an order is placed through to its final delivery and after-sales support. This approach is part of a technology and logistics journey that Jumia has been building since it launched in Lagos in 2012. Over the years, the company has invested in technology and expanded the infrastructure supporting online shopping across Nigeria and other African markets.

"Going the extra mile means taking ownership beyond simply answering a customer's complaint," says Jumia's Head of Customer Operations. "If a delivery is delayed, or a customer is having difficulty receiving an order, our Customer Operations team coordinates closely with our Logistics team to understand the situation and keep the customer informed until successful delivery.

MTN, NCC address consumer concerns over poor network service

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) revealed that over 75 million telecom subscribers received airtime and service compensations in 2026, alongside 7,000 targeted network interventions deployed across the country to resolve persistent service disruptions.

Speaking at the 95th Telecom Consumers Parliament in Lagos, the Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Dr. Aminu Maida, stressed that while financial remedies offer temporary relief, the regulator's primary goal remains eliminating chronic infrastructure failures.

"Compensation matters, but it cannot make up for losses of small jobs or an important conversation that was taking place," Maida stated, adding that public coverage maps using crowdsourced performance data are now live on the NCC portal to help citizens evaluate provider reliability in their immediate locations.

Civil society groups at the parliament insisted that official statistics must reflect the daily realities of consumers, particularly those on legacy networks. Delivering a keynote address on consumer rights, Professor Chiso Ndukwu-Okafor, Executive Director of the Consumer Advocacy and Empowerment Foundation (CADEF), cautioned against misinterpreting coverage figures. "36% of subscriptions are 2G. We need to be careful how we read these statistics," Ndukwu-Okafor argued, emphasizing that rural communities continue to face network dead zones while being excluded from app-based complaint channels. She called for structural reforms in complaint tracking, declaring,

Spotify puts labels on AI creators

Spotify is introducing a new AI Persona label to help listeners identify artist profiles that present AI-generated, human-like identities. The label will begin appearing from mid-September as the streaming platform steps up efforts to bring greater transparency to AI-generated content and artist identities.

The new badge will appear on artist profiles, in Search and on track rows across playlists, while music from labelled AI Personas will be excluded from personalised recommendations by default.

So, what exactly is an AI Persona?

The new label is aimed specifically at the identity being presented by an artist, rather than whether AI was used somewhere in the making of a song.

That means an artist can use AI as part of their creative process without automatically being labelled an AI Persona. Instead, the badge is intended for profiles where the public-facing artist identity appears to be an AI-generated person.

Spotify says listeners will be able to spot the badge on artist profiles, in Search and alongside tracks across playlists.

And there's another catch: music from AI Personas will be excluded from Spotify's personalised recommendations by default.

So while you can still listen to an AI Persona if you find one yourself, Spotify won't proactively serve their music through its personalised recommendations unless, for example, you already follow the artist.

Airtel Africa launched Starlink Mobile in DRC

Airtel Africa and Starlink today have launched satellite-to-mobile service in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), marking the first commercial deployment in Africa. The service enables Airtel customers with compatible smartphones to access connectivity in non-terrestrial areas wherever they can see the sky.

Starlink, the world's largest satellite-to-mobile constellation with 650 launched satellites, enables light-data apps, including WhatsApp messaging, as well as SMS. Customers do not require specialised equipment or a separate device to access the service.

The launch follows the strategic partnership announced by Airtel Africa and Starlink in December 2025 and the successful testing of Starlink Mobile data and messaging services in Kenya in March 2026. DRC is the first Airtel Africa market – and the first country in Africa – where the service has progressed to commercial deployment.

To use the service, customers must have a compatible LTE Android smartphone, an active Airtel DRC data bundle or data roaming switched on. In the future, the service will also be supported on Apple devices.

Speaking on the launch, Airtel Africa CEO, Sunil Taldar, commented:

"The first-ever commercial launch of Starlink Mobile in Africa is a significant milestone for Airtel Africa through our partnership with SpaceX.

Mastercard, TeamApt set to expand digital payments across Africa

Mastercard and TeamApt Limited, a subsidiary of Moniepoint, have entered a strategic collaboration to strengthen digital payment capabilities for businesses and financial institutions across Africa.

As part of this collaboration, TeamApt will operate directly on Mastercard's global payments network as a non-bank acquirer, enhancing its ability to onboard credible and licensed entities to deliver seamless payment acceptance, transaction processing and acquiring services.

Speaking about the collaboration, Country Manager, West Africa at Mastercard, Folasade Femi-Lawal, said: "Expanding digital payment acceptance is one of the fastest ways to support small businesses across Africa to compete, grow, and reach more customers.

By working with TeamApt, we are equipping MSMEs and informal sector businesses in Nigeria with robust, secure infrastructure to seamlessly process transactions across multiple channels.

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BRAND FEATURE

An Icon, reimagined: Maltina at 50 – new look, same nourishing taste, deeper impact

By Goddie Ofose

For five decades, Maltina has been more than a drink on the Nigerian table. It has been present at birthdays, graduations, family dinners, school inter-house sports, and Sunday gatherings – a quiet witness to how Nigeria has grown. At 50, Nigeria's leading malt brand is not just marking an anniversary; it is reintroducing itself.



This October, Maltina, from the stable of Nigerian Breweries Plc, unveiled a refreshed visual identity – an evolution that keeps the soul of the brand intact while speaking more boldly to a new generation of consumers.

The new identity presents Maltina through a more contemporary lens across its glass bottles, cans and PET bottles. The brand's signature orange has been strengthened to deliver a bolder shelf presence, while enhanced gold elements add a more distinctive and premium feel.

According to the brand, the refresh is deliberate storytelling through design. New cues include the gold crown cork, brighter sunrays radiating optimism, a more prominent golden barley icon that nods to natural nourishment, a bolder calcium coin that reinforces functional benefit, and the "Since 1976" heritage mark that proudly stamps five decades of trust.

"The look may be new, but the nourishing Maltina consumers know and trust remains unchanged," said Sarah Agha, Marketing Director, Nigerian Breweries Plc.

Maltina remains fortified with calcium, with one 33cl bottle providing the equivalent of half a glass of milk, and is endorsed by the Nutrition Society of Nigeria as some non-alcoholic drink rich in Vitamin A.

"For 50 years, Maltina has grown alongside generations of Nigerians. This refreshed identity is an evolution of a much-loved brand, designed to keep Maltina fresh, relevant and connected to today's consumers while preserving the nourishing taste they know and trust," Agha said.

What is striking about this relaunch is not just what changed, but how the brand is choosing to have the conversation. Rather than define the new look for consumers, Maltina is inviting Nigerians to define it for themselves through its "What's Your Word?" campaign.

Across media, retail, and immersive consumer experiences, Nigerians are being encouraged to look again and describe the refreshed identity in one word. Is it bolder? Brighter? Premium? Iconic?

"This relaunch is about more than a new pack. It is an invitation for Nigerians to help shape the next chapter of a brand that has been part of their lives for five decades. We look forward to hearing the words the new Maltina inspires," Agha added.

The refreshed packs are already rolling out in stores, restaurants, bars and markets nationwide, supported by a massive media rollout, trade launches and experiential activations.

Maltina has updated its visual identity several times in its 50-year history, but the October 2026 refresh is arguably its most symbolic – a golden jubilee statement that heritage and modernity can co-exist.

50 Years of Nourishing Nigeria Beyond the Bottle

If the new look is about relevance, Maltina's 50-year journey has been about responsibility. Under Nigerian Breweries Plc's sustainability agenda, Maltina has built a legacy of impact that spans agriculture, education, community nourishment and environmental stewardship.



Building the Value Chain from the Soil: The Maltina Barley Project

For decades, Nigeria spent an estimated $150 million annually importing about 200,000 tonnes of malted barley. Maltina is changing that narrative.

Through the Maltina Barley Project, the brand is building a commercial barley value chain in Nigeria anchored on regenerative agriculture. The project integrates soil regeneration through cover cropping and no-tillage, composting, precision irrigation for water efficiency, crop rotation and carbon-smart farming.

Already, over 1,000 smallholder farmers have been integrated, with field days hosted in barley-belt states like Jigawa. The ambition is to scale to 20,000 farmers by 2030 – boosting rural economies, improving soil health, cutting import dependence and creating shared prosperity from farm to bottle.

Nourishing Minds and Futures: Education and Youth

Maltina understands that nourishment is both physical and intellectual. As part of its 50th anniversary milestone, the brand launched the Maltina Nourishment Tour, a nationwide campaign pledging to nourish 1 million students.

The tour combines nutrition education, delivered through its convenient 25cl and 50cl PET bottles enriched with Vitamins A, B, C and Calcium, with hands-on STEM and science experiments that ignite curiosity in classrooms.

This is complemented by its flagship Maltina Teacher of the Year competition – a multi-million Naira annual initiative that honours, empowers and elevates exceptional educators across Nigeria. In celebrating teachers like Adeola Adefemi and Esomnofu Chidiebube, Maltina reinforces its belief that nourishing the nation starts with those who nurture its children.

Sharing Happiness: Community and Inclusive Outreach

Maltina's CSR philosophy of "Sharing Happiness" comes alive most visibly during the Ramadan season. Through campaigns like "Show Kindness, Share Happiness," the brand partners with mosques and Islamic organisations nationwide to distribute relief materials and provide Iftar meals and drinks to underserved communities.

Its shift to inclusive packaging – rolling out PET variants in 25cl, 33cl and 50cl – has also improved accessibility, affordability and convenience, addressing diverse consumer nutritional needs and lifestyles.

The Bigger Picture: Nigerian Breweries' Sustainability Drive

Maltina's impact is amplified by its parent company. Nigerian Breweries Plc continues to drive decarbonization through partnerships with clean energy providers like CrossBoundary Energy, transitioning its manufacturing operations toward renewable energy.

It also runs impact programmes like the EDGE retail training programme and youth and women skill-acquisition initiatives across multiple states – empowering the ecosystem that sells and sustains the brand.

An Icon That Keeps Giving

At 50, Maltina's story is a rare blend of consistency and evolution. It has remained true to its promise of nourishment while daring to look different, think bigger and do more.

The new gold crown cork, the bolder orange, the brighter sunrays – they are not just design elements. They are symbols of a brand that has shared happiness with Nigeria for half a century and is preparing to share even more for the next 50.]

The look is new. The taste is trusted. The impact is enduring.

The invitation is now open: experience the new Maltina and tell us – what's your word?

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AD FEATURE

ARCON and the challenges of political ads

By Barakat Olayiwola



The Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) has warned that stiff penalties await media houses and platforms that publish unapproved political advertisements ahead of the 2027 general elections, amid fears that politicians, their associates and campaign teams may not play by the rules guiding political advertising.

In a bid to ensure that political communication complies with the law, ARCON on Tuesday, October 20, organised a Stakeholders' Engagement on Political Advertising Regulation in Lagos. The forum brought together political parties, candidates, campaign organisations, advertising agencies and media platforms to discuss the implications of publishing political advertisements without approval.

While regulators, electoral officials, security agencies, advertising professionals and lawyers attended the forum, political parties and politicians – who were central to the engagement – were not adequately represented.

Expressing concern that the resolutions of the forum might not achieve the intended goal, Chief Toye Arulogun, former Oyo State Commissioner for Information, Culture and Tourism and an advertising practitioner, said it was worrisome that political actors and party representatives shunned the gathering.

Arulogun noted that those who commission and finance political campaigns ought to take part directly in discussions that highlight the rules they are expected to comply with.

Amid growing public concern about the political neutrality of the agency, the Director-General of ARCON, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, stressed the need for political actors and other stakeholders to ensure that campaigns strictly comply with the law.

Acknowledging that political adverts affect the electoral process, public order and national unity, Fadolapo said ARCON would work closely with relevant ministries, regulatory bodies and security agencies to ensure that all political advertisements are approved before exposure in traditional or digital media.

To prevent the political communication space from becoming unnecessarily charged, toxic and a threat to national peace, Fadolapo emphasised the need for issue-based campaigns, manifestos, posters and advertisements that explain policy positions rather than casting aspersions on opposition candidates or making unfounded claims. He added that ARCON would continue to work with stakeholders to maintain sanity in the political space.

The Director-General of the Centre for Media Law and Development, Barrister Charles Odenigbo, noted that cutting corners and spreading misinformation are frowned upon by law. He stressed that compliance with advertising regulations is a legal requirement and not just an election-season ritual for political parties, campaign organisations, advertising agencies and media owners.

He described the level of non-compliance and publication of unapproved political adverts across traditional and digital media as alarming, and urged advertising agencies and campaign managers to focus on policy-driven, constructive communication that provides real value to the electorate, instead of personal attacks on political rivals.

The forum noted that liability for unlawful political advertisements extends beyond the publisher to sponsors, campaign beneficiaries, agencies, media buyers, planners and consultants involved in commissioning such unethical practices.

Participants observed that strict adherence to regulatory benchmarks guiding political advertising is not a culture often observed by those involved, despite regular advice urging campaign organisations to submit their materials and media schedules well ahead of publication.

They also noted that the courage by traditional and digital media platforms to reject political advertisements lacking required approval is an ethical ideal not commonly practised.

Speaking at the event, the President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) and Chairman of the Heads of Advertising Sectoral Group (HASG), Lanre Adisa, said political advertising extends well beyond the commercial market and is capable of influencing who governs the country.

Adisa stated that regulation of political advertising should be seen as a means of encouraging responsible political communication and not merely for detecting violations and imposing sanctions. He urged advertising professionals to promote campaigns built on policies, ideas, leadership choices and claims that can be substantiated.

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APPOINTMENTS

Stories by Princewill Okike

Rite Foods wins Global Brand Awards 2026

Rite Foods Limited has further strengthened its reputation as one of Nigeria's innovative and consumer-focused fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies, following its emergence as the Best Foods and Beverage Brand, Nigeria 2026 at the Global Brand Awards in Dubai, October 2.

The Awards, which is organized by the UK-based Global Brands Magazine, celebrates brands that demonstrate excellence through innovation, quality, market impact and strong consumer connection.

This latest recognition highlights the company's sustained commitment to innovation, manufacturing excellence, product quality and consumer satisfaction, while further highlighting the strength and growing influence of its brands within Nigeria's FMCG landscape.

The Global Brand Awards, celebrates brands that have demonstrated excellence across areas including innovation, market performance, brand development and consumer engagement. For Rite Foods, the recognition reflects years of strategic investment in product development, world-class manufacturing and initiatives designed to create meaningful value for consumers.

The company's diverse portfolio continues to deliver products across multiple consumer categories. These include the 13 variants of the Bigi Carbonated Soft Drinks range; Bigi Table Water; Sosa Fruit Drink, available in five flavours; Fearless Energy Drink, in Classic and Red Berry variants; Rite Spicy Sausage Roll; Bigi Beef Sausage Roll; Bigi Flex Sausage Roll, and the recently launched LIDA Malt.

...the symbol of quality

Stanbic IBTC wins big at AMC Awards

Stanbic IBTC Bank was named Brand of the Year at the 2026 African Marketing Confederation (AMC) Awards, with its Together4ALimb initiative also taking Campaign of the Year and Best Cause-Related Campaign.

Held annually as part of the African Marketing Confederation Conference, the AMC Awards recognise marketing campaigns, agencies and organisations from across the continent.

The awards span sectors ranging from tourism and consumer brands to the non-profit and public sectors, recognising work for its creativity, strategic thinking, effectiveness and impact.

The ceremony was held on 24 September at the Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya Livingstone Resort in Zambia, as part of the AMC's 2026 Conference, which tackled the practicalities of how African brands can compete and grow in a rapidly changing global market.

Under the theme Africa Rising Through Marketing Leadership, Brand Power and Value Creation, delegates and speakers brainstormed how to actively shape the continent's commercial future.

The awards recognised work from across the continent, with finalists coming from 11 countries.

Stanbic IBTC Bank's Together4ALimb initiative, which secured both Campaign of the Year and Best Cause-Related Campaign, has supported 250 children living with limb loss across Nigeria since it was launched in 2015, providing prosthetics and healthcare alongside longer-term educational support.

Chain Reactions' reform campaign wins SABRE Awards

Chain Reactions Africa, one of Nigeria's leading Public Relations Consulting giants, has earned another major global distinction, with its "From Promises to Proofs" campaign for the Presidency of the Federal Republic of Nigeria selected amongst the 40 Best PR Campaigns in the world at the 2026 Global SABRE Awards.

The recognition is particularly significant on two fronts. Chain Reactions Africa is the only Nigerian PR consultancy on the global list and stands out as an independent African consultancy amongst a roster largely populated by the world's major multinational PR networks.

In doing so, the Lagos-headquartered consultancy will fly the Nigerian flag on one of the global industry's most prestigious stages.

The 40 campaigns were selected from more than 5,500 entries from over 60 countries across the SABRE Awards' regional competitions, placing the recognition in a highly exclusive category of fewer than one per cent of entries.

Kachi Onubogu joins Dangote Cement



Dangote Cement Plc has appointed seasoned business executive Dr. Kachi Onubogu as Chief Operating Officer, Pan-Africa, strengthening its leadership team as the company accelerates its Vision 2030 strategy to become a $100 billion Pan-African industrial powerhouse.

In his new role, Onubogu will oversee operations across Dangote Cement's markets on the continent, working with regional leadership teams to drive operational excellence, expand production capacity and support the company's long-term growth ambitions.

Commenting on his appointment, Onubogu described the opportunity as both an honour and a significant responsibility, noting that it comes at a defining moment in Dangote Group's expansion journey.

" I am deeply honoured to announce my appointment as Chief Operating Officer, Pan-Africa, at Dangote Cement Plc. In this role, I will lead operations across multiple DCP markets in Africa, collaborating with exceptional teams dedicated to building the future of our continent," he said.

He highlighted Dangote Group's Vision 2030 as a transformative agenda aimed at creating a $100 billion Pan-African industrial powerhouse through increased manufacturing capacity, deeper backward integration and stronger cross-border investments.

According to him, the strategy includes expanding Dangote Cement's production capacity to approximately 90 million tonnes, while supporting industrial development and reducing Africa's dependence on imported goods.

Reckitt appoints Chukwumah West Africa GM

Consumer health and hygiene company Reckitt has appointed Ujunwa Chukwumah as its General Manager, West Africa, effective September 15, 2026.

Chukwumah becomes the first Nigerian and first woman to lead Reckitt's West African business, where she will oversee operations and drive growth across the region.



According to a statement, the Reckitt General Manager brings more than 19 years of commercial and leadership experience across Africa, covering commercial strategy, business transformation, market development and team leadership.

Before joining Reckitt, Chukwumah served as Commercial Director for West and Central Africa at Diageo, where she led businesses across several African markets. She also held senior leadership positions at Procter & Gamble.

Olanipekun joins CAP Plc

Marketing communications expert, Tolulope Olanipekun, has joined Chemical and Allied Products PLC (CAP PLC), a subsidiary of UAC of Nigeria PLC (Est. 1879), as Head of Trade & Consumer Marketing.

In her new role, Olanipekun will lead trade and consumer marketing strategies for CAP PLC's portfolio of leading paint and coatings brands, including Dulux, Sandtex, Hempel and Caplux.

CAP PLC is one of Nigeria's foremost paints and coatings manufacturers and a member of the UAC Group, which also comprises UAC Foods, CHI Limited and other leading businesses.

Olanipekun joins CAP PLC from Mouka, where she served as Head of Marketing and was instrumental in driving brand growth, consumer engagement and market expansion.

Announcing the move, she expressed gratitude and optimism about the new chapter.

"I have joined CAP PLC as Head of Trade & Consumer Marketing (a part of UAC established in 1879, same holding group as UAC Foods, Chi, etc). Still settling in, it's been amazing and I am so grateful to God. In due time, I will reach out to see what we can do together to move Dulux, Sandtex, Hempel & Caplux to the next level. Thank you



for supporting me in Mouka and I am excited for what the future holds."

With extensive experience in FMCG marketing, brand management and integrated marketing communications.

Friesland Campina appoints Chioma Otisi-Igwe as Marketing Manager- Peak Milk

Marketing professional Chioma Otisi-Igwe has been appointed by FrieslandCampina as its Marketing Manager for Peak Milk, its flagship dairy brand.

In her new role, she is expected to develop and execute marketing strategies to strengthen Peak Milk's brand positioning and drive consumer engagement and business growth.

Chioma is a results-driven marketing professional with expertise in developing and executing strategic marketing plans, leveraging data-driven insights to drive business growth, and optimising brand portfolios across channels.

She has a proven track record in market share growth, household penetration and the development of marketing campaigns that strengthen brand awareness, affinity and consumer consideration.

Prior her appointment, Chioma was Marketing Manager at Three Crowns, FrieslandCampina. Before her position as Three Crowns Manger, she held various roles at the same company including Junior Brand Manager, Peak; Brand Manager, Three Crowns; and Senior Brand Manager, Ready-to-Drink (RTD).



She also worked at Nigerian Breweries Plc as Assistant Brand Manager, Fayrouz, having begun her career in Nigeria as a Marketing Intern at Juhel Nigeria Limited.

Indigo, Clients shine at 2026 Edge Awards with multiple honours

Integrated Indigo Limited, one of Nigeria's leading full-service marketing communications consultancy firms, and its clients recorded a strong showing at the 2026 EDGE Awards, securing 13 awards across public relations, corporate communications, sustainability, reputation management, digital commerce, mobility, and corporate affairs.

At the ceremony held in Lagos on Friday, September 25, 2026, Integrated Indigo received the Leadership Award in PR (Corporate), while its Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Bolaji Abimbola, was honoured as the Outstanding PR Personality of the Decade.

The PR campaign, "From Lafarge to HBM: A New Chapter," handled by Indigo for HBM Nigeria Plc, was adjudged PR Campaign of the Year (Corporate).

The Edge Awards also recognised several executives, brands, and campaigns across the agency's client portfolio, including HBM Nigeria, Nigerian Bottling Company, Glovo, and InDrive. The Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of HBM Nigeria

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FOREIGN NEWS

Heineken partners with Amazon for 'Pubscription' streaming service

Compiled by Princewill Okike



Heineken taps into the world's stay-at-home streaming obsession in a new collaboration with Amazon's Fire TV that encourages consumers to get off the couch, get out and socialize.

Now in a pilot in the U.K., the beer brand has launched Pubscription, described as "the first streaming service for nights out."

The app, created with Amazon Ads' creative arm Brand Innovation Lab enables subscribers to search for a nearby local pub by genre or mood and invite friends to meet up. Subscribers will also receive four vouchers for a Heineken or Heineken 0.0., one of which they can redeem weekly via their smartphone.

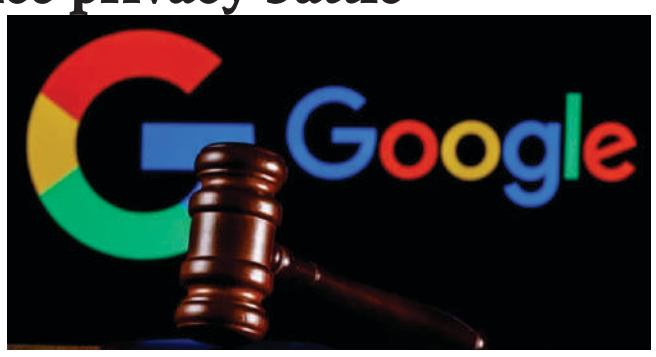
"Streaming services have set the bar for how easy discovery should feel," said Nabil Nasser, global head of Heineken. "We wanted to bring that same simplicity to finding where to meet friends… if technology can help billions of us discover what to watch, then why can't it help people discover opportunities to connect in real life? We've always believed the best moments happen when people come together, from spontaneous pub trips to the nights that turn into unforgettable memories with friends. With Pubscription, we're taking the benefits of streaming to help bring more of these moments to life… "

A short film, seen on the app, promotes the app as if it were a preview for an upcoming feature blockbuster film. As dramatic music plays against a Heineken green background, a very serious-looking shot features two men staring at one another while a bartender polishes a Heineken glass. A super reads "This autumn… get ready to experience… the original entertainment…" as the tension is broken with laughter. "Pubs" reads the super, as the Pubscription app is revealed and shots turn to people enjoying themselves at various pub across the U.K. The ad end with the line, "Turn nights in into nights out."

The app serves as a continuation of Heineken's ongoing global commitment to running global campaigns directly aimed at encouraging more IRL screen-free socializing.

Court sides with Google in AI-Powered customer service privacy battle

Court sides with Google in AI-Powered customer service privacy battle



Siding with Google, a federal judge has dismissed a privacy complaint over its Google Cloud Contact Center AI -- an artificial intelligence service that answers some customer service calls for outside companies including Home Depot.

In a ruling issued Thursday, U.S. District Court Judge Rita Lin in San Francisco essentially said that even if the allegations against Google were proven true, they would not show that the company intentionally violated the state's wiretap law, which prohibits the interception of communications without all parties consent.

The decision came in litigation dating to 2023, when California resident Misael Ambriz alleged that Google monitored a conversation between himself and Verizon, transcribed and analyzed the conversation, and "suggested 'smart replies' and news articles to the Verizon agent."

Ambriz subsequently dropped his complaint, but the litigation proceeded with other plaintiffs who filed similar cases. Three of them -- James Fox, Peter Samish and Christopher Barulich -- alleged that Google listened to calls between themselves and Home Depot.

Google argued the matter should be dismissed for several reasons, including that the plaintiffs consented to the alleged interceptions by accepting Home Depot's privacy policy, which provided that the company records phone calls and discloses them for purposes including "customer care and software-based customer care analysis."

Lin agreed with Google's analysis regarding Fox and Samish, who both had accounts with Home Depot, writing that they "have not plausibly alleged lack of consent because they agreed to a privacy policy that discloses that Google has access to their call

She also dismissed Barulich's claim, though for slightly different reasons. Barulich didn't allege that he had a Home Depot account, so Lin didn't suggest that he consented to the alleged interceptions. But she said that even if Barulich's allegations were true, they wouldn't prove the company intentionally violated the state wiretap law

Stagwell continues owned media diversification, buys Freestar



In a bid to boost its owned media capabilities with programmatic advertising expertise Stagwell has acquired Freestar, for an undisclosed sum.

Freestar works with major publishers including Boston Globe Media, Fortune Media, Legacy, Enthusiast Gaming and more.

The company uses its proprietary pubOS platform and consulting services to help publishers increase advertising revenue, improve operations, and manage programmatic advertising.

The company, based in Scottsdale, AZ, was founded by David Freedman in 2015 and investment firm Abry Partners acquired a substantial minority interest in 2021.

Stagwell says Freestar's technology and publisher relationships will help it connect advertisers more directly with publishers, improve audience data, and create more efficient transactions.

The firm also said the transaction supports Future of News initiative, which promotes sustainable business models for news publishers.

Freestar will integrate with the Stagwell's media and commerce operations, expanding its owned media portfolio, which is led by Ben Berentson. The firm will retain its branding, and both CEO Kurt Donnell and Freedman will continue in their roles.

Freestar said joining Stagwell will give the publishers it works with access to more advertisers, additional technology, and new services while continuing to focus on publisher monetization. It says it has generated more than $1 billion in advertising revenue for publishers over the past decade.

Trump Admin presses bid to vacate 2019 TikTok settlement

The Trump administration will appeal a district court judge's rejection of a proposed settlement with TikTok over charges that the app violated the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act by collecting personal information from users younger than 13.

The deal would have vacated a 2019 settlement between TikTok and the Federal Trade Commission over the charge that the company's predecessor, Musical.ly, violated the same law.

Last month, U.S. District Court Judge George Wu in the Central District of California refused to approve the agreement, writing that the government failed to prove the 2019 order should be set aside.

That order required TikTok to pay $5 million and comply with numerous conditions going forward.

The Justice Department said in its bid to scrap the deal that those conditions were "no longer necessary to serve the public interest."

The government elaborated that the prior settlement grew



Netflix Ad subs rise, time spent does not

Netflix continues to make gains signing up more subscribers for its advertising option than any other tier.

Looking at 12 key global markets, global streaming media measurement and analytics company Digital i estimates that 46.9% of all Netflix subscribers in June 2026 used its "Standard with Ads" tier, while 32.9% used its "Standard" no-ads plan and 20.2% had its "Premium" no-ads 4K household plan.

Although Netflix's advertising-supported package has brought in many paying subscribers, they watch only 84 minutes a day -- less than for the other two Netflix products.

Subscribers to Netflix's Standard no-ads plan watch 93 minutes as day, while customers in its Premium plan view more than two hours a day, at 124 minutes.

The "Standard with Ads" tier has doubled as a share of all its accounts since 2023, Digital i says. In July 2023, it represented 24% of all Netflix business.

The premium plans give subscribers access to more simultaneous streaming and 4K viewing, which caters to the consumers who are heavier viewers in larger households.

Looking at Netflix's recent results, media analysts have concerns over "viewer engagement" -- watching Netflix shows -- which has been slipping over the last year or so.

Japan and South Korea have the largest percentage of Netflix subscribers with the Ads-supported plan -- at 61.9% and 60%.%, respectively. The U.S., Canada, and Australia have the fewest, at 42.3%, 40.8%. And 33.6%.

But in terms of actual ad-tier accounts, the U.S. totals 28.4 million ad-tier accounts -- fully 32% of the total subscriber base across the 12 markets measured.

Publicis expands Marcel, taps Hagedorn as first CEO

Publicis has created two new leadership roles for its AI platform, Marcel, which began as an internal AI-driven communications and workflow system for employees six years ago, but which is now taking on a broader client-facing role.

Scott Hagedorn, global chief solutions architect, has been named CEO of Marcel, and Sam Levine Archer, global chief solutions officer, has been named Chief Strategy Officer. They will lead the expansion of Marcel which has evolved into a broader platform that uses AI agents and other specialized AI tools to help clients with marketing and business decisions.

Both executives will continue in their existing roles. They joined Publicis in 2022 from Omnicom and have helped lead the Groupe's AI and data initiatives since then.

Marcel's expanded offerings include influencer and creator marketing, sports and cultural marketing, content intelligence, and AI-driven search services.

The company announced the news Thursday, noting that Marcel will combine capabilities from Publicis Sapient, Epsilon and Lotame to connect clients' business data, customer data and marketing data, while allowing clients to retain ownership of their data. Marcel, which is named after company founder Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet, is designed to work with multiple large language models (LLMs), rather than relying on a single AI provider, according to the firm.

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Rise of the robot commercials in Nigeria

■ Goddie Ofose & Kate Oboho

The monsters invaded the Earth in an iLot Bet ad. A pot started dancing for Terragold. A phone grew a mouth for Elm Trade. A statue chased a man for BetKing. An alarm clock turned into a phone for Nasco Cornflakes. A sachet of Maggi unwrapped itself mid-air. Crystal turned into perfume for AZUR Fresh. Water splashed on a woman's face from nowhere for Bournvita.

If you watched TV during the last Big Brother Naija, you saw them all. Almost 80% of the ads were AI-generated, practitioners estimate. Nigerians noticed. And they complained.

The commercials were fast, cheap, surreal – and strangely soulless. Foreign. Wrong.

Nigerian advertising is at a crossroads it never planned for. Television commercials that once took weeks of pre-production, casting, shoot days in Lekki, post-production, and ARCON vetting can now be generated in hours on a laptop. The technology arrived with speed, innovation, automation, and opportunity. But with everything new comes a flood of use before understanding.

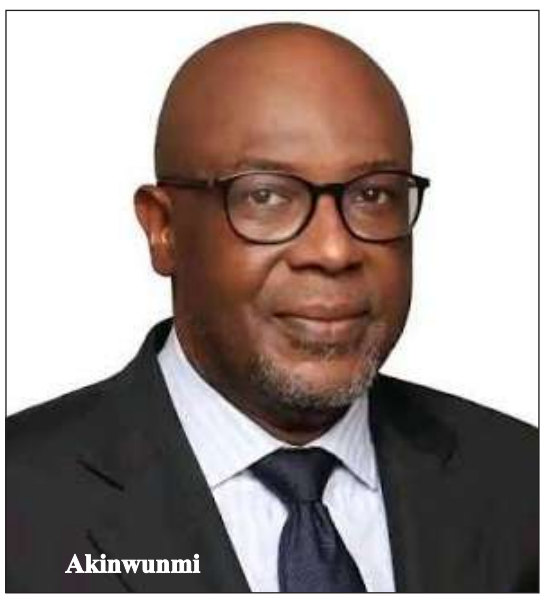
That is the split today. One side sees the shortcut the industry always wanted. The other sees TVCs that are delivered on time and forgotten just as fast.



The question is no longer whether AI has come to Nigerian advertising. It has. The question is: Are brands now lazy?

Creativity vs Craft: Democratisation or Devaluation?

If we are being honest, it is devaluation. That is the blunt assessment of Esosa Osagiede, Group Creative Director at Insight Publicis, who has spent 21 years in the business.


Akinwunmi


Osagiede


Razaq

"Yes, a young creative in Benin with no budget can now show an idea, not just pitch it. But when a film takes hours instead of weeks, clients stop paying for the weeks, and those weeks were where the craft lived," she says.

Her verdict is stark: "On efficiency, AI wins. On effectiveness, not so much.

"The democratization argument is real, but it is the smaller half of the story. Lekan Akinyele, Founder of Think Like A Designer and now Design Ingenious, puts it differently: "The entry level into our industry now is very, very small. As a matter of fact, it is infinitesimal. If you have access to these tools and you have a brain to think, you can actually make things happen.

"But that ease takes away intentionality in craftsmanship. Franklin Ozekhome, advertising and cultural strategist, argues the debate is misframed. AI does not democratise creativity; it democratises production.

"Being able to make something is not the same as having something worth making," Ozekhome says. "As image generation, editing, voice synthesis, storyboarding and visual effects become faster and cheaper, the premium shifts elsewhere: towards imagination, judgement, originality, directing intelligence, cultural understanding and the ability to recognise an idea that deserves to exist.

"For the people behind the camera, the implications are brutal.

"Directors will be reduced to prompt-givers unless they remain the taste that decides what is good. DOPs will lose the thing they are hired for, the judgment of light, because a machine imitates a look without understanding why it works. Production designers may be the quietest casualty, since their work only shows when it is missing. Models will face the sharpest risk: a face can now be generated or borrowed without a casting call, a contract or a fee," says Esosa.

Ayodeji Razaq, GMD of Red Media Africa, is more measured: "What is being devalued is not craft. It is mediocre execution that hid behind big budgets. Roles built purely on execution, such as stock-level modelling, basic post-production and some pre-viz work, will shrink. But directors, DOPs and production designers who understand light, performance and culture are the ones best placed to direct AI tools well."

Emmanuel Adediran, Business Unit Director at Plus Acuity Ltd, brings data to the disruption. Citing the World Bank's World Development Report 2026, he notes that the share of formal Nigerian firms using AI rose from under 5% in 2022 to about 40% in 2025, level with the United States.

"Crew and cast lists will get shorter. Volume work such as cutdowns, versioning and simple product shots will move to AI first. That work matters more than it looks: it is where most of our directors, DOPs and designers learned their craft," Adediran warns.

Kayode Ebatamehi, Group Managing Director of Bluebird Holdings, captures the client pressure driving it: "While AI has democratised creativity, it has also created the risk of devaluing the craft behind great advertising. Some clients see AI mainly as a way to produce work faster and cheaper, and they pass that expectation on to their agencies. This can lead to more advertising being produced, but with less thought and depth."

'Lolu Akinwunmi, Founder/Group CEO of Prima Garnet Africa and former ARCON Chairman, strikes a middle ground: "I see AI as an opportunity to democratise creativity rather than devalue it. However, speed and cost efficiency must never become substitutes for originality and craftsmanship. The challenge for our industry is to adapt, retrain, and evolve."

Authenticity: Why The Ads Feel Foreign

The loudest complaint from Nigerians is not about job losses. It is that the ads don't feel Nigerian.

They are right. Nigerian textures, humour, and emotion are missing. The Red Bull ad touching cooked rice, the Terra tastemaker dancing pot, the Maggi star that unwraps itself – they look polished but culturally weightless.

"They are not complaining about pixels. They are complaining that the ad does not sound like them. Humour in Nigeria is not a joke format; it is timing, tone and who is allowed to say what. A machine trained on everyone's data averages all of that into no one's," Esosa says.

"You spend millions of media to be on BBN only to put AI ads to connect with real humans voting for people in the house."

Lekan Akinyele diagnoses the root cause: sameness and foreign infrastructure.

"What we are beginning to witness is sameness. You're seeing thumbnails from different channels that look exactly the same. There is no differentiation anymore. The providers of AI tools — we don't have Nigerian infrastructure. We all depend on foreign infrastructure, which basically means this infrastructure is fed by foreign data. They're analyzed in a foreign context. There is no machine learning for Nigerians. So you see, some AI now can speak Yoruba, but those are the infrastructures that we need. We need to be able to build that infrastructure that would understand our local nuances."

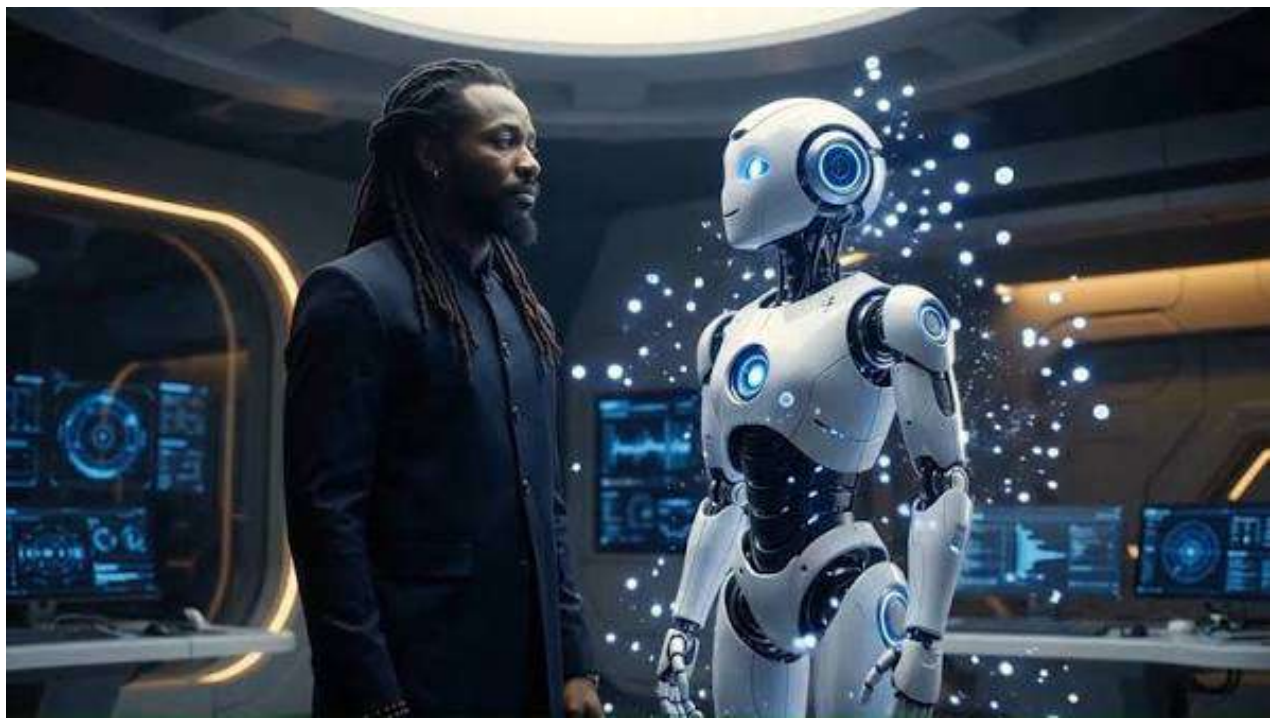
Franklin Ozekhome agrees, but reframes it: "Bad advertising was soulless long before generative AI arrived. The problem is sameness. When everybody has access to the same models, aesthetic references and prompting conventions, we begin to see the same faces, lighting, camera movements, emotional expressions and imagined versions of Africa. Nigeria is not merely a collection of skin tones, fabrics, accents and locations. Culture sits in timing, humour, body language, contradiction, aspiration, language, memory, social codes and the thousand small things Nigerians recognise without needing them explained. That is much harder to prompt."

The data on trust is damning. Adediran cites a Google and Ipsos study: 88% of Nigerian adults used an AI chatbot in 2025, against a

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Why Nigeria's AI-Powered TVCs are polarising the industry

62% global average. Some 80% say they are more excited than concerned. Yet Smartly's 2025 study found 48% of consumers trust ads co-created by a person with AI support; only 13% trust ads made entirely by AI.



In Nigeria, the trust problem is sharper because AI is now linked to fraud. In September and October 2026 alone, ARCON flagged fake AI adverts using the President, the Finance Minister, and Aliko Dangote to sell an investment fund, and a fake drug advert featuring the Minister of Health. When consumers associate AI with fake, every brand using it inherits that suspicion.

But AI can connect when culture leads. Adediran points to the Indomie Mother's Day execution where AI helped drive personalization at scale – because it was built on strong cultural insight first.

As Akinwunmi puts it: "AI may replicate images, voices and environments, but it cannot independently experience the cultural nuances, humour and emotions that define us as Nigerians. When technology takes precedence over consumer understanding, brands risk losing authenticity."

Ethics and Regulation: The Urgent Line

With AI able to clone faces, voices, and create hyper-realistic but fake scenarios, where should the industry draw the ethical line?

Everyone agrees: urgently, and ARCON must lead – but with education, not just enforcement.

"Yes, they should, and urgently. But a regulator can only govern what it understands, so the first job is education, not enforcement. A framework written by people who have never sat through a prompt session will be outdated before it is gazetted," Esosa argues.

His ethical line is simple: “Nobody's face, voice or likeness should be cloned without consent, a contract and a fee. No fake scenario should be passed off as real, especially where it speaks to vulnerable audiences or carries a testimonial. If a consumer cannot tell whether a human was involved, they should be told. Brands declare artificial ingredients on their labels so people know what they are buying. AI should be no different."

Lekan Akinyele is blunter about regulatory readiness: "These are big debates, even in Silicon Valley. The speed at which AI is evolving on a per-second basis is alarming. Here, I'm not too sure if we are ready. Regulators themselves must be properly schooled in how AI functions, the do's, the don'ts, the advantages, the disadvantages. You cannot put regulation around something you don't understand."

Ozekhome lists the real questions: Was someone's face or voice used with permission? Was a real person made to appear to say or endorse something they never said? Does the audience have a reasonable chance of mistaking synthetic evidence for reality? Who owns the underlying creative material? Who is accountable when AI-generated advertising makes a false claim?

Ebatamehi adds another layer often missed: "What happens when a brand uses AI to create a scenario showing a product achieving something it cannot actually achieve, knowing full well that the depiction is unrealistic? Even if no one's likeness is misused, the consumer is still being misled."

The global precedents are already here. Adediran notes the EU AI Act's deepfake disclosure rule has applied since August 2, 2026, with fines up to €15 million or 3% of global turnover. India’s ASCI issued risk-based labelling guidelines on September 29, 2026. Cannes Lions withdrew a 2025 Grand Prix after an agency's case film used AI-manipulated footage, then introduced AI disclosure rules.

In Nigeria, there is a peculiar loophole. To grow local talent, ARCON bars foreign models and voice-over artists in Nigerian ads. But a synthetic face is not a foreign model. It is no one. Current practice still classifies and charges AI ads as foreign productions, and synthetic talent as foreign models – a move that penalises Nigerian-built models like N-ATLAS, the government-backed model for Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and Nigerian-accented English, and YarnGPT, a home-grown voice model that speaks with a Nigerian accent.


Ebatamehi


Akinyele


Adediran


Ozekhome

Ayodeji Razaq reveals that ARCON and the Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups have spent months jointly developing a regulatory model for AI and digital advertising, set to be unveiled at NAC 2026. "The line should be simple: never deceive the consumer about who is speaking, what is real, or whose likeness is being used."

The Future: Both, But in the Right Order

Looking 2-3 years ahead, will Nigerian agencies that master AI storytelling gain a global competitive edge, or will agencies that double down on authentic, human-shot Nigerian storytelling win?

Every voice interviewed rejects the either/or.

"The agencies that win will not be the ones that master AI storytelling, or the ones that refuse it. They will be the ones that master the story and then use AI where it serves it. Anyone can learn the tools in a weekend. Nobody can learn Lagos in a weekend," Esosa says.

The winning formula, according to her: Be human at the core and AI at the edges. Shoot the moments that need a real face, a real street, a real laugh. Use AI to explore, to sell the idea, to speed up, to test.

Franklin Ozekhome says, "I do not believe the agencies that choose AI will defeat the agencies that choose humans. Agencies that understand how to combine both will defeat agencies still treating them as opposing camps. In two to three years, access to generative AI will not be a competitive advantage. Everyone will have it. What becomes scarce again is taste. Cultural understanding. Original thinking. Human judgement."

Lekan Akinyele, who has evolved from designer to art director to creative director to founder, says his competitive advantage is knowing the manual process before automating it: "You cannot automate something that you don't know the manual process of. Those who have gone from analogue to digital to AI will be amazingly prepared for the future. The future belongs to those who have gone back to school just to understand what machine learning is."

For Akinwunmi and Ebatamehi, Nigeria's edge is its culture.

"Our culture, humour, ingenuity and ability to create meaning from everyday experiences are valuable creative assets. If we can combine that cultural intelligence with the effective use of AI, we have an opportunity to produce work that is not only relevant to Nigerian audiences but competitive on the global stage," Ebatamehi says.

Ayodeji Razaq concludes: "AI alone is a commodity anyone in the world can buy. Nigerian cultural intelligence is the one thing nobody else can replicate. That is our export."

Meanwhile, Adediran offers the most practical roadmap for smart agencies right now. Agencies that would succeed must map the portfolio by trust stakes and decide where AI leads and where humans must. Build consented, paid Nigerian voice and likeness assets instead of defaulting to generic synthetic talent.

He said agencies must reprice around ideas and outcomes, not crew days. Disclose AI use before regulation forces it. Ring-fence a share of production for human-crafted work, with apprentice roles built in, and pair every AI production team with a craft mentor.

His final warning should hang on every agency wall: "AI has collapsed the cost of making an ad, not the cost of being believed. The new winners will be the brands and agencies that can own the trust, and the premium that comes with it."

The robot commercials are here. Whether they make Nigerian advertising lazy or legendary depends not on the machine, but on the taste

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INDUSTRY MEN OF IMPACT 2026:
Behold the men moving Nigeria's brands and businesses forward

Behind every brand that is trusted by Nigerians, every campaign that we have ever paid attention to as a people and every business decision that affects the market, there are people making decisions about its focus, outline and delivery.

Often done under pressure and away from the glare of celebration, the Industry Men of Impact 2026 List for 2026 by the Industry Newspaper, is a tribute to such men.

They are the leaders whose work continues to shape how and what Nigeria buys, builds, speaks, grows, wears, eats and drinks.

As always, the list cuts a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines. In public relations and strategic communications, its names guard reputations and steer conversations from boardrooms to newsrooms in an era when trust can be won or lost in a single post. In advertising, they turn insight into ideas that stick and ideas into sales while the data specialists among them make sure every naira spent is explained by evidence.

As a key part of our national life, fast-moving consumer goods feature prominently in what is a reflection of the sector's grip on everyday life. These leaders manage brands that sit in Nigerian kitchens, shops and are part of our celebrations.

Beyond marketing, the List reaches into sustainability, where reputation increasingly rests on responsible practice, agriculture which notes the shift from raw exports to value-added processing and how it could redefine the country's economic future.

What links these men is impact, not titles sector or organisation. They have all left their fields or arenas in a better position than they met it. Taken together, they show that impact is rarely loud but built quietly, through consistent decisions, strong teams and a willingness to lead when the path is unclear.

This is their story, and by extension, that of Nigeria and if you like, Africa as a whole.

INDUSTRY RATINGS : Meet our Top 50 Impact Makers

JAIYE OPAYEMI: Embedding excellence, global recognition into the narrative



A leading public relations and strategic communications professional, Jaiye Israel Opayemi is Chief Strategist at Chain Reactions Africa. And under the watch of the man who holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Lagos, the agency has recorded phenomenal achievements in the last one year.

A historical feat was achieved when Chain Reactions Africa became the first Nigerian independent PR consultancy to win a Global SABRE Award and showcase its "From Promises To Proofs" campaign for the Nigerian Presidency at the PRovoke Global Summit in Chicago. In addition, the agency also triumphed at the Africa SABRE Awards in the Public Sector and Technology categories while ranking third on the Africa Consultancy Performance Index.

The Edge Outstanding PR Agency award followed later. On a personal note, Opayemi also received the highest individual industry accolade, the Edge Grand Prix in PR for the year under review.

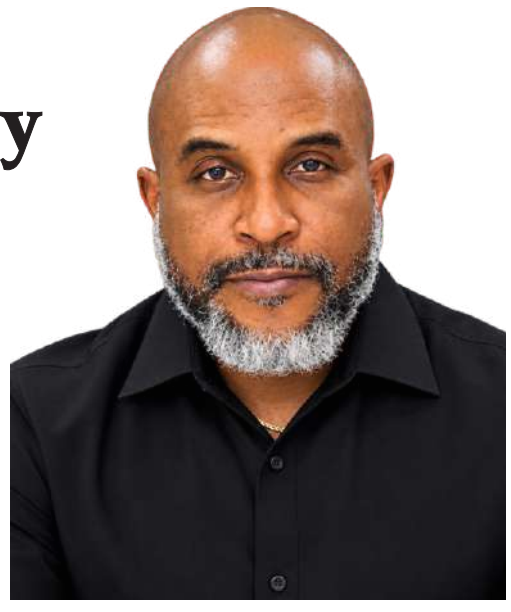
If one takes a moment to put things in perspective, then it sinks in even better, that Chain Reactions Africa now has multiple SABRE awards under its belt over the years, including seven in 2024, four in 2025, and three in 2026.

ANDREW EIREMIOKHAE: Driving execution strategy towards brand visibility

An Executive Director at Oracle Experience, a leading agency in the live-event marketing, brand activations and experiential communications sub-sectors, Andrew Eiremiokhae underwent executive management training at LBS to hone his business and administrative skills and attended the Developing Leadership Competencies executive program at the IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain.

Today, he serves as the Chief Operating Officer of the agency, steering the company's execution strategy and overseeing its expansion into broader pan-African markets like Ghana, Kenya, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Prior to stepping into the COO role, he served as the Executive Director and Logistics Director for Oracle Experience, heavily involved in event production infrastructure and multi-scale brand activations.



Abiodun Coker: Driving brand recognition with efficient strategies and corporate positioning



A Nigerian media relations and corporate communications professional, Abiodun Coker is the Team Lead, Media Relations associated at United Bank for Africa (UBA).

Apart from being versed in media relations, strategic communications, earned-media engagement, executive media preparation and corporate reputation management, Coker is a ranking member of the Association of Corporate Affairs Managers of Banks (ACAMB).

With more than 12 years of experience as a communications professional under his belt, his work involves developing communication strategies, managing relationships with media organisations and positioning corporate narratives for diverse audiences.

Apart from working as a financial journalist at BusinessDay, with more than eight years of journalism experience, Coker, whose professional approach emphasises the importance of building credible relationships with journalists and ensuring that organisations remain accessible and responsive to the media, held leadership roles at notable public relations firms, including BD Consult and Quadrant.

Having managed UBA's media relations, including spearheading bank's 75th Anniversary campaign all year around and being named a "Future Leader in Media Management" in 2025, Coker has earned his place on the Industry Men of Impact list for this year.

OTIS OJEIKHOA: Turning brand objectives into engaging live experiences



Otis Ojeikhoa is the Founder, Managing Director and CEO of Brands Optimal Limited, an experiential marketing agency operating in Nigeria and Ghana. He has led the company since 2015 and is widely regarded as one of the leading voices in the Nigerian integrated marketing communications sector.

Ojeikhoa's leadership is built on a varied career; he was previously Managing Director of Brand Footprint Communications Ltd and Retail Development Director at Exp Nigeria. Before then, he served Kodak NearEast in Dubai as Country Manager and Country Sales Manager and also contributed to the growth of his industry as General Secretary of the Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) from 2011 to 2015.
Ojeikhoa has delivered brand activations and projects for global and local names including Procter & Gamble, SABMiller, Airtel, La Casera, Cadbury, Coca-Cola and Guinness.
His work has earned him recognition, including being named the Experiential Marketing Personality of the Decade in 2023 as well as receiving the Most Outstanding Experiential Marketing CEO of the Year award

With brands increasingly looking for meaningful relationships with consumers, Ojeikhoa leads a business that combines creative development, event execution, audience insight, client management and the careful coordination of campaigns.

His focus is translating a brand's objectives into experiences that people enjoy, remember and respond to, towards ensuring that engagement translates to lasting consumer loyalty.

YINKA ADEBAYO: Working to shape how Nigerian brands invest in media



Yinka Adebayo is Executive Director, Media Investments at Omnicom Media Group West and Central Africa (OMG WeCA). He is one of Nigeria's most experienced media and advertising executives, with more than two decades in marketing communications, particularly media investment, planning and advertising.

His career began at Promoserve Limited in 1995, where he worked in media and client service. In 1999, he moved to Admix Communications as a pioneer member of the agency's team, helping to lay the foundations of its media practice. He later worked with mediaReach OMD, building the experience that now underpins his leadership at OMG WeCA.

Along the way, he has worked with multinational clients across sectors including fast-moving consumer goods, telecommunications, banking, automotive and aviation. That exposure gives him a clear view of what each sector needs from its media spend.

Adebayo's career also traces the evolution of media investment itself: from conventional planning and buying to approaches built on audience understanding, data and commercial accountability. His impact lies in helping brands make that shift, so that every media decision is tied to measurable business value.



DAVID OLADUNJOYE OLURIN: Scaling to match with national diversification, job-creation goals

Mr. David Oladunjoye Olurin is the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Cardinal Torch Company Limited, the Nigerian agribusiness he founded in 2020 and has led from a commodity exporter into an emerging value-added manufacturer.

For six years, under his leadership, the company exported cocoa, cashew, sesame and soya in raw form but Olurin has now steered it into a new phase of local processing, which aligns with the federal government's drive for non-oil revenue diversification, job creation and UN SDG 8.

Today, the company's ready-to-eat cashews are already on supermarket shelves in Nigeria and are exported to the UK, UAE and the Arab Gulf.

In terms of impact, perhaps Olurin's most telling has been in financing and governance, with Cardinal Torch's N10 billion Commercial Paper, Series 1, fully subscribed and listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group. And plans include funding four processing plants in Ogun and Lagos States, covering cashew, soybean, cocoa and fast-moving consumer goods.



OLUSANYA ADESANYA: Aligning customer understanding, distribution effectiveness, consistent execution

Olusanya Adesanya is a commercial and sales executive with professional experience spanning the fast-moving consumer goods and beverage industries. He joined FrieslandCampina WAMCO Plc as Group Director of Sales in 2025, following a storied career at Guinness Nigeria, where he rose from Sales Representative to Commercial Director.

During his time at Guinness Nigeria, he held several commercial and sales leadership positions and was involved in developing strategies to grow revenue, strengthen market share and improve commercial execution. His previous experience also includes senior sales responsibilities at Diageo, where he worked across divisional operations, sales capability, customer development and commercial performance.

Industry observers have pointed to customer understanding, market responsiveness, distribution effectiveness and consistent execution as core aspects of his professional approach.

Also, he brings experience in managing commercial teams and developing growth strategies in competitive consumer markets.

OLUWAGBEMILEKE LAWAL: Shaping brands, driving demand in Nigeria's beverage market

Oluwagbemileke Lawal is the Marketing Manager at Nigerian Distilleries, where he leads marketing for brands in Nigeria's competitive beverage and consumer-products market.

His work centres on brand positioning, product development, distribution support and consumer engagement. These are the levers that decide commercial success in the distilling industry. His core role means constantly turning an understanding of consumer preferences, product differentiation and competitive positioning into clear communication of brand value across different market segments.

Lawal aligns marketing activity with the company's commercial objectives and keeps brand strategy responsive to shifting market conditions, so that each brand stays relevant, distinctive and well placed to grow.





DOZIE OKAFOR: Driving the conversation on data, strategy for Nigeria's iconic brands

An engineer by training, Dozie Okafor is a media and marketing executive whose career has developed across media planning, integrated marketing communications and business leadership. He began his professional journey at OMD Nigeria in 2007 and subsequently built experience across the Nigerian and Ghanaian media markets.

An electrical engineering graduate of the University of Nigeria and an alumnus of the Lagos Business School, Okafor brings an analytical perspective to media strategy and brand development. At PHD Nigeria, he pioneered the agency's strategy and planning function, contributing to campaigns and brand development for organisations including Ovaltine, Hennessy, PZ Cussons, Ariston, Apple and SC Johnson.

He has also served as Media Manager and Integrated Marketing Communications Lead for Coca-Cola Nigeria's West Africa Business Unit and his appointment as Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer reflects his progression into agency leadership and strategic business management.

STANLEY OPARA: Building media partnerships behind Seplat Energy's public voice

Stanley Opara is Manager, Corporate Communications at Seplat Energy Plc, where he helps shape how the energy company communicates with the media, host communities and the wider public.

His work sits at the intersection of corporate reputation, stakeholder relations and the communication of energy-sector developments.

A visible part of that work is Seplat's investment in the media itself. In June 2025, he has advocated for training of media professionals and delivered the opening remarks at a two-day media entrepreneurship training in Lagos.

The training was a collaboration between Seplat and ELOH Consulting for 50 journalists covering the diverse sectors such as capital market, judiciary, finance and business. According to Stanley, the aim was to build leadership skills and help a new generation of media professionals start sustainable businesses.

In November 2025, he declared open the Seplat media workshop in Owerri, Imo State, where 25 journalists were trained in writing and digital storytelling, reaffirming the company's commitment to media partnerships that promote transparency, accountability and national development.

If anything, this demonstrates a consistent streak of advocacy, action and rousing the company to engage with and invest in one of its core stakeholders: the media.



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AUSTEN OSOKPOR: Steering Ecobank Nigeria's voice in a changing media landscape

The Head Of Corporate Communications At Ecobank Nigeria, Austen Osokpor's Professional Background Is Largely Associated With Corporate Communications And Media Engagement, Disciplines That Support The Positioning Of Financial Institutions, The Management Of Stakeholder Relationships And The Communication Of Corporate Priorities.

A Respected Professional With A Solid Base, Osokpor Also Boasts A Robust Academic Background In Media And Communications, Including A Master's Degree From Pan-atlantic University And A Bachelor's Degree In Mass Communication From Delta State University.

He Is A Member Of The Nigerian Institute Of Public Relations (nipr) And A Certified Professional By The Advertising Regulatory Council Of Nigeria (arcon).

Praised For His Outstanding Work In Media Management, Navigating The Ever-changing Landscape Of Media, Technology And National Discourse With Admirable Dexterity,

He Was Named Media Manager Of The Year In March 2026, With Industry Observers Attesting To His Dedication To Strong Work Ethic, Transparency, Professionalism.

BOLAJI ABIMBOLA: Making PR a core part of business strategy



An award-winning public relations and strategic communications professional, Bolaji Abimbola admirably leads Integrated Indigo, a communications consultancy providing services in public relations, reputation management, digital marketing, experiential marketing and event management in Nigeria.

Abimbola's professional philosophy places public relations within the broader context of business strategy towards emphasising the importance of stakeholder relationships and the protection of corporate reputation.

Apart from holding professional affiliations and designations associated with the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, the Institute of Management Consultants and other management and communications bodies, he has been widely recognised for his ongoing industry contributions, including the PR Practitioner of the Year award in 2021, inclusion in Nigeria's PR Power List in 2022 and 2024 and the Outstanding PR Personality of the Decade.



ANIETIE UDOH: Connecting African marketing creativity to the world

A Nigerian marketing and communications strategist, Anietie Udoh's professional experience spans journalism, public relations and integrated marketing communications. A graduate of the University of Lagos, Udoh currently serves as Divisional Director of Marketing at MarketingEdge Publications, where his responsibilities include marketing leadership, strategic partnerships and special-project development.

As a marketing communications professional with a solid base rooted in media and marketing, his work reflects a sustained interest in strengthening the visibility of African marketing creativity and connecting Nigerian industry practitioners with international standards and opportunities.

With professional engagements including jury roles associated with the AME Awards, Effie Awards, Digital Media Awards Africa and the Native Advertising Awards, he has built a profile through his participation in international creative and marketing platforms.

Udoh has also represented MarketingEdge at major industry gatherings, including Cannes Lions, the Loeries and the New York Festivals International Advertising Awards.

DONATUS UKPAI: Turning consumer insight into competitive dairy brands

Donatus Ukpai is a marketing and brand-management professional serving as Category Manager for Dairy at Promasidor Nigeria Limited.

His professional background combines consumer marketing, product development, category management and brand strategy within Nigeria's fast-moving consumer goods sector.

Ukpai holds a Bachelor of Technology degree in Computer Science from the Federal University of Technology and has undertaken executive and professional development programmes in business management, pricing strategy, integrated marketing communications and brand management.

One of the documented highlights of his career is his involvement in the introduction of Peak Yoghurt Drink into the Nigerian drinking-yoghurt market. With his work reflecting the importance of consumer insight, product positioning and disciplined execution in building competitive brands in Nigeria's food and beverage market, he has received industry recognition for marketing initiatives associated with business growth and social impact.



ADEFEMI ADENIRAN: Managing organisational reputation for social impact



Adefemi Adeniran is a corporate communications and stakeholder-relations executive at Airtel Nigeria, where he serves as Director of Corporate Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility.

Adediran, who brings more than 24 years of experience spanning strategic planning and formulation, corporate and investor relations, government engagement, crisis and risk management, corporate social responsibility and sustainability, returned to Airtel Nigeria in January 2023 after serving as chief executive of a state-owned government parastatal.

As one of the leaders of the marketing communications industry, his professional remit reflects the increasingly integrated role of corporate communication in managing organisational reputation, public-sector relationships and social impact.

This is even more reinforced in his experience across government and the private sector, providing the foundation for engaging diverse stakeholders and aligning communication with institutional and business objectives.



MIKE DADA: Creating a meeting point for strategic communications in Africa's creative economy

An outstanding thinker, Strategic PR and Marketing Consultant, Lawyer and Culture and Creative Economy Expert, Dr, Mike Dada's professional interests span strategic communications, culture advocacy, public relations and entertainment.

As Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer at PRM Africa, an agency he has led since 20213, Dr. Dada has driven strategic initiatives across public relations, advertising, brand communication, and political marketing.

Apart from building the agency into a prominent marketing and public relations firm in Nigeria, he has provided strategic consultancy across corporate and public sectors and advocated for data-driven political marketing.

An entrepreneur whose professional journey began in the banking sector, he is also widely recognised as the founder of the All-Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA), which, in partnership with the African Union, has grown in leaps and bounds as a celebration of African musical talent and platform to elevate the continent's music since 2024.

ADEOLA AMOSUN: Leading campaigns and strategy to reinforce brand recognition



A marketing communications and media investment professional, Adeola Amosun is the Group Media Manager at Tolaram Group, with a career spanning media planning, strategy, content development and broadcast media.

Experienced across agency and client-side environments, Amosun was Head of Planning and Strategy at Carat Nigeria, part of the Dentsu network before joining Tolaram in 2022.

With an impressive professional portfolio which includes media and marketing projects for major brands such as Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, Diageo, Beiersdorf, Mastercard, Standard Chartered Bank and PZ Wilmar, Amosun is a leading figure in the marketing communications landscape.

With a bachelor's degree from Ahmadu Bello University and an MBA from Nexford University, industry sources are aware that leading campaigns, including Pampers' #MomsKnowBest campaign and the Nigerian launch of Johnnie Walker White Walker, are associated with his career.



GEORGE ISITUA-ONUKWU: Building brands and leading Nigeria's advertising landscape

As Managing Director of TBWA/Concept, a leading agency in the Nigerian marketing and advertising landscape, George Isitua-Onukwu is an influential player in marketing and communications industry.

A homegrown leader within the company, Isitua-Onukwu spent over a decade climbing the ranks, occupying positions including Account and Media Executive, Group Head, Business Director, Executive Director, and Chief Operating Officer, before his elevation to CEO.

A leader with a solid of base of achievements, he has successfully managed multi-million-Naira portfolios for massive corporate accounts and brands, including Globacom, Stanbic IBTC, and Tiger Brands.

He also notably led the Ford Foundation's award-winning "Proudly Made in Aba" campaign, which won the Africannes Grand Prix and a Gold Hackathon.

With executive credentials from the London School of Economics and Political Science (MBA Essentials), the Digital Marketing Institute, and the Rome Business School, hardly does anyone come better prepared for leadership than Isitua-Onukwu.

EKUMA EZE: Building trust and driving the sustainability narrative at Rite Foods



As the Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability at Rite Foods Limited, Ekuma Eze's role combines two increasingly interconnected areas of corporate leadership – organisational reputation and sustainability management.

A business leader with over 25 years of experience across journalism, public affairs, corporate communications and sustainability, Eze began his career in print media before making a transition to the banking sector where he rose to Group Head, Media and External Relations at FinBank Plc.

From there, he moved to Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company where he rose to Director, Corporate Affairs and Sustainability before his current role at Rite Foods Limited. He has participated in several leadership development programmes and conferences within and outside Nigeria, including cross-continent business projects.

A Member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Chartered Institute of Public Relations, UK and Fellow, Institute of Management Consultants, Eze's expertise covers public policy advocacy, government and regulatory affairs, media relations, crisis communication, community relations, brand management and sustainability.

AKIN FADEYI: Curating sustainable engagement tools for advocacy, public good



A man wis passionate about efficient and sustainable public engagement strategy, media relations, capacity building, crisis management and non-profit leadership. Akin Fadeyi is the founder of the Akin Fadeyi Foundation, an organisation associated with advocacy and public-interest engagement.

A master's degree holder in International Law and Diplomacy following a first degree in English Studies, Akin Fadeyi is an industry leader with a wide-range experience and robust track record spanning about a decade and half across the FMCG and telecom industries in Nigeria.

He has managed media crisis and consulted for the British Council, Airtel Nigeria, Fhi/USAID, Cadbury Nigeria, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, Federal Road Maintenance Agency, among others and founded the Akin Fadeyi Foundation in 2016.

Through the foundation, which has been commended by the United States Mission in Nigeria for its anti-corruption advocacy, recognising the effective use of technology and storytelling to promote transparency and accountability across communities, Fadeyi championed the design of the FlagIt App, a digital platform that empowers citizens to report institutional corruption.

With popular campaigns such as Corruption, Not in My Country and other effective tools, Akin Fadeyi has contributed to nation building and developmental creative initiatives in TV production and social commentary articles and seeks further ways to deepen the foundation's impact.

HENRY ONONIWU: Building networks, partnerships and growth across West and Central Africa



A marketing and business strategist with a career spanning more than two decades across several sectors, including information technology, automotive security, pharmaceuticals, consulting and marketing, Henry Ononiwu is the Chief Marketing Officer of PHD Nigeria.

An alumnus of Lagos Business School who has also participated in professional development and industry initiatives, his remit includes business growth, partnerships and project management, with additional oversight responsibilities in selected West and Central African markets.

His experience in building business networks, developing growth strategies and managing cross-functional teams positions him within the broader leadership of Nigeria's media and marketing communications sector.

He has held responsibilities across human resources, sales and marketing, supply chain, business development, project management and partnerships.

ADEBAYO ADEOSHUN: Fostering communication to achieve sustainable agriculture, food security



As Group Head of Public Communication and Strategy at Origin Tech Group, Awoniyi-Adeoshun's work sits at the intersection of corporate communication, strategic positioning and organisational engagement.

With a role involve aligning of public-facing communication with business priorities, strengthening stakeholder relationships and supporting the organisation's reputation across its operating environment, Awoniyi-Adeoshun's expertise in conceptualising and implementation of communications around large-scale project development has come to the fore with the focus on sustainable agriculture and food security playing a key role in driving the company's operations and partnerships.

With over 27 years cognate experience covering journalism, advertising, Brands and Communication, PR and Communications, Marketing, some of which have been spent across frontline marketing communication consultancies, and the public sector in core areas like hospitality, banking and financial services, furniture and space designing, automobile and entertainment, among others, Awoniyi-Adeoshun easily a ranking place on the list of Industry Newspaper's Men of Impact in 2026.

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EMMANUEL ORIAKHI: Instituting marketing leadership that spans Nigeria, Africa and the world



Emmanuel Oriakhi is a senior commercial and marketing executive at Nigerian Breweries Plc, where he serves as Sales Director.

His career with the company began in 2003 as a Commercial Management Trainee, after which he progressed through increasingly senior roles in marketing, brand management, strategy and business development.

He has managed major Nigerian Breweries brands, including Maltina, Gulder and Heineken, and subsequently took on regional responsibilities as Business Development Manager for Heineken Global Commerce, covering Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

With academic credentials including a master's degree in Global Management from the University of Salford and executive management training at IMD Switzerland and Harvard Business School, Oriakhi's career illustrates sustained progression in commercial leadership within the beverage industry.
He was appointed Marketing Director of Nigerian Breweries in 2018 and later moved into the Sales Director role in 2025.



AYODEJI RAZAQ: Leading creative enterprise across Nigeria, Ghana and the UK

A Nigerian communications executive, entrepreneur and media strategist, Ayodeji Razaq's career spans marketing, digital communications, experiential marketing, storytelling and business leadership.

Leading RED for Africa as Group Chief Executive Officer today, Razaq began his professional journey in youth marketing before developing experience in digital commerce and experiential marketing, working with technology brands and other major businesses.

Moving into broader communications and agency leadership, he became the first non-founder to occupy the Group CEO position in RED for Africa's history in 2023 and now oversees its operating businesses, including Red Media Africa, StateCraft, The Future Project and Red Production.

He is also a co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of The People Company, a creative group with operations across Nigeria, Ghana and the United Kingdom.

EMMANUEL ADEDIRAN: Turning research and insight into effective marketing



Emmanuel Adediran is a marketing strategist and business leader whose work spans integrated marketing communications, media planning, market research, brand strategy and business development.

He serves as Business Unit Director at +Acuity Ltd, where he leads teams delivering marketing and media solutions across sectors including fast-moving consumer goods, banking, financial technology, e-commerce and telecommunications.

His professional achievements include representing Nigeria at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity after winning the Cannes Young Lions Media Competition in consecutive years between 2016 and 2018.

Adediran's professional interests extend beyond campaign execution to industry research and knowledge development, including contributions to marketing trends and audience research initiatives and his work has also received recognition at the WARC Awards for Effectiveness, the Festival of Media Global Awards and the Pitchers Awards.



FRANKLIN OZEKHOME: Decoding creative and cultural tools to build brands that matter

Franklin Ozekhome is a distinguished cultural and brand strategist, advertising professional and innovation thinker whose work sits at the intersection of creativity, technology and consumer intelligence.

As Executive Vice President, Strategy & Advertising at Chain Reactions Africa, he brings extensive experience spanning leading global agency networks, including mediaReach OMD, McCann Erickson, Insight Publicis, Leo Burnett and Digitas.

An entrepreneur and thought leader, Ozekhome's portfolio includes strategic work for major brands such as PepsiCo, MTN, Visa, Samsung, Nestlé, Coca-Cola and Jaguar Land Rover.

Passionate about decoding culture, anticipating emerging trends and helping organisations turn insight into meaningful brand growth and market relevance, he also created HumanOS, founded Pop Culture Varsity, co-founded Maskvrade and pioneered TINK Africa, a consumer trends and intelligence platform.

ADEDOYIN ADEWUMI: Deploying persuasive communication, structured thinking for value addition



A consummate advertising professional whose career, defined by a steadfast commitment to quality, disciplined thinking, and enduring ideas, spans well over three decades, Adedoyin Adewunmi is the Managing Director of CreativeXone.

A leader within Nigeria's marketing communications landscape where agency management requires the coordination of creative development, client relationships, strategic planning and campaign delivery, Adewunmi developed an early foundation in persuasive communication and structured thinking following his graduation from the University of Lagos and further education at the Lagos Business School, among others.

He began his career in client service, gaining firsthand experience in brand stewardship and relationship management and later joined DDB/Casers as a media executive, where he deepened his understanding of audience behaviour, channel strategy, and message delivery.
This dual exposure to client management and media planning gave him a balanced commercial perspective that would later define his leadership approach while his move to Centerspread as a copywriter marked a defining phase in his career.

Recognised for ideas that are clear, strategic, and commercially effective, Adewunmi has led and delivered high-profile campaigns for major local and international brands, including Skye Bank's "YES!" campaign, FCMB's "My Bank & I," as well as projects for Transcorp, Wema Bank, VMobile, Emirates, Etisalat, Chelsea London Dry Gin, Dangote Salt, among several others.

As Group Managing Director of the Creativexone Group, he has overseen the establishment and growth of specialist agencies spanning experiential marketing, digital, media, and audio production, positioning each as a competitive player within its category and remains deeply committed to building capable leadership, nurturing talent, and maintaining high standards of strategic and creative excellence across the group.



ISMAIL ADESHINA: Driving brand positioning with digital product development, innovation

A telecommunications marketing executive serving as Director of Marketing, Brands and Advertising, and Digital Products and Innovation at Airtel Nigeria, Ismail Adeshina's professional experience spans more than 20 years in the telecommunications sector.

With a focus on customer-centred marketing and the use of data and technology to improve business performance, he is known to be a marketing professional who combines customer insight with technology-driven strategies and collaborative innovation.

Adeshina's portfolio of responsibilities reflects the changing demands of telecommunications marketing, where brand positioning increasingly intersects with digital product development, customer experience and innovation.

His role also highlights the importance of integrated marketing leadership in a competitive telecommunications market, where customer acquisition, retention and service differentiation are essential to sustainable growth.

ILYAS O. KAZEEM: Driving market expansion with brand development and consumer engagement



As Marketing Director at Flour Mills Nigeria Plc, one of Nigeria's established food and agro-allied businesses, Ilyas Kazeem has made an impact on the marketing communications sector.

Apart from reflecting the expanding marketing leadership for Flour Mills of Nigeria, he has brought brand strategy close to home, using it to drive product trust, distribution reach and consumer loyalty.

Operating within a sector where consumer engagement and product positioning propel market expansion and commercial performance, Kazeem continues to lead his team to understand changing consumer preferences, competitive pressures and the role of trusted brands in the food market.

In addition, part of his success story for the year under review is his recognition on the ACMO 100 List, a new continental benchmark recognising the executives responsible for shaping Africa's most influential brands.



KENNETH IRUONAGBE: Making a meaning out of digital strategy and performance marketing

A marketing and digital communications executive with more than 15 years of experience in digital marketing, brand strategy, corporate communications and consumer engagement, Kenneth Iruonagbe is the Group Head of Digital Marketing at Tropical General Investments (TGI) Group.

With previous leadership roles at Tolaram Group and marketing responsibilities at Recare Limited, Iruonagbe's areas of expertise include digital transformation, performance marketing, media strategy, consumer insights, data analytics and the use of digital platforms to strengthen brand engagement.
With a role reflecting the growing importance of data-led digital strategy in contemporary brand management, he is a fellow of Advertisers Association of Nigeria and the Association of Digital Marketing Professionals and Chartered Institute of Marketing, with an MBA to boot.

In his current role, his remit includes digital strategy and performance marketing across the group's portfolio of consumer brands.

KINGSLEY URANTA: Combining newsroom experience with media management and professional development



A Nigerian media executive whose career is closely associated with the development of Channels Television and its media-training activities, Kingsley Uranta joined Channels Incorporated Limited in 1992 as its first recruited staff member and progressed through several newsroom and editorial positions, including Editor, Chief Correspondent and Controller of News.

In 1996, Uranta, who currently serves as General Manager of Channels Academy, the station's media-training institution, became the first Channels Television staff member to receive the Nigeria Media Merit Award for Best Television Reporter.

In his current role, the responsibilities of Uranta, who studied Mass Communication at Federal Polytechnic, Oko and the University of Port Harcourt, are connected with training, partnerships and corporate communications.

So far, his career has combined newsroom experience with media management and professional development and he has undertaken professional media training courses at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and Pan-Atlantic University.



MUSTAPHA OWOLABI: Turning brand ideas into experiences that connect

Mustapha Owolabi is the Managing Director/CEO of MaxxConnection, a Nigerian experiential marketing company that creates experiences linking brands with the audiences they want to reach.

Working in live marketing, brand activations and experiential communications, MaxxConnection helps brands move beyond messaging and into moments people feel, remember and share. As the company's Managing Director, Owolabi sets the vision, strategy and direction that shape that work.
His focus is business growth and ensuring that every client's ambitions are matched by outcomes they can see.

His role goes beyond strategy; Owolabi oversees the delivery of MaxxConnection's services and brings together its creative and operational teams, to ensure bold brand ideas become well-executed audience experiences.

In an industry where audiences are harder than ever to engage, Owolabi's leadership keeps MaxxConnection focused on its main aim - connecting brands and people in ways that matter.

KALEEM TIJANI: Fostering market penetration with strategic marketing ideals



A marketing professional widely described as a creative and innovative brand manager with experience in commercial and brand-related responsibilities, Kaleem Tijani is a foremost marketing professional credited with proven impact across the landscape.

He has demonstrated his experience in brand management, development of consumer preference, product positioning, market understanding, effective communication and consistent brand delivery.

A creative and innovative brand manager with years of experience across multiple industries, Tijani started his career in Sales, with his transition to marketing from Veterinary Medicine stemming from his intense curiosity about general psychology, human motivation and consumer behaviour.

Now imbued with wide-ranging skills in new product development, market penetration, and deploying innovative marketing initiatives, Tijani lists strategic marketing, brand strategy and positioning, consumer research and digital marketing among his core competencies.



SAMSON ADEOYE: Protecting reputation and building trust at Airtel Nigeria

Samson Adeoye is Head of Public Relations at Airtel Nigeria, where he leads corporate communications for one of the country's major telecommunications brands.

In a fast-moving, highly competitive industry, public confidence is widely considered a strategic asset and Adeoye's role centres on organisational reputation, stakeholder engagement, media relations and the communication of corporate initiatives.
He helps explain service developments clearly and builds relationships with customers, regulators, media organisations and other stakeholders.

The core of his work also ensures that Airtel Nigeria's messages are clear, consistent and aligned with the company's wider business objectives, so that what the brand says matches what it does.

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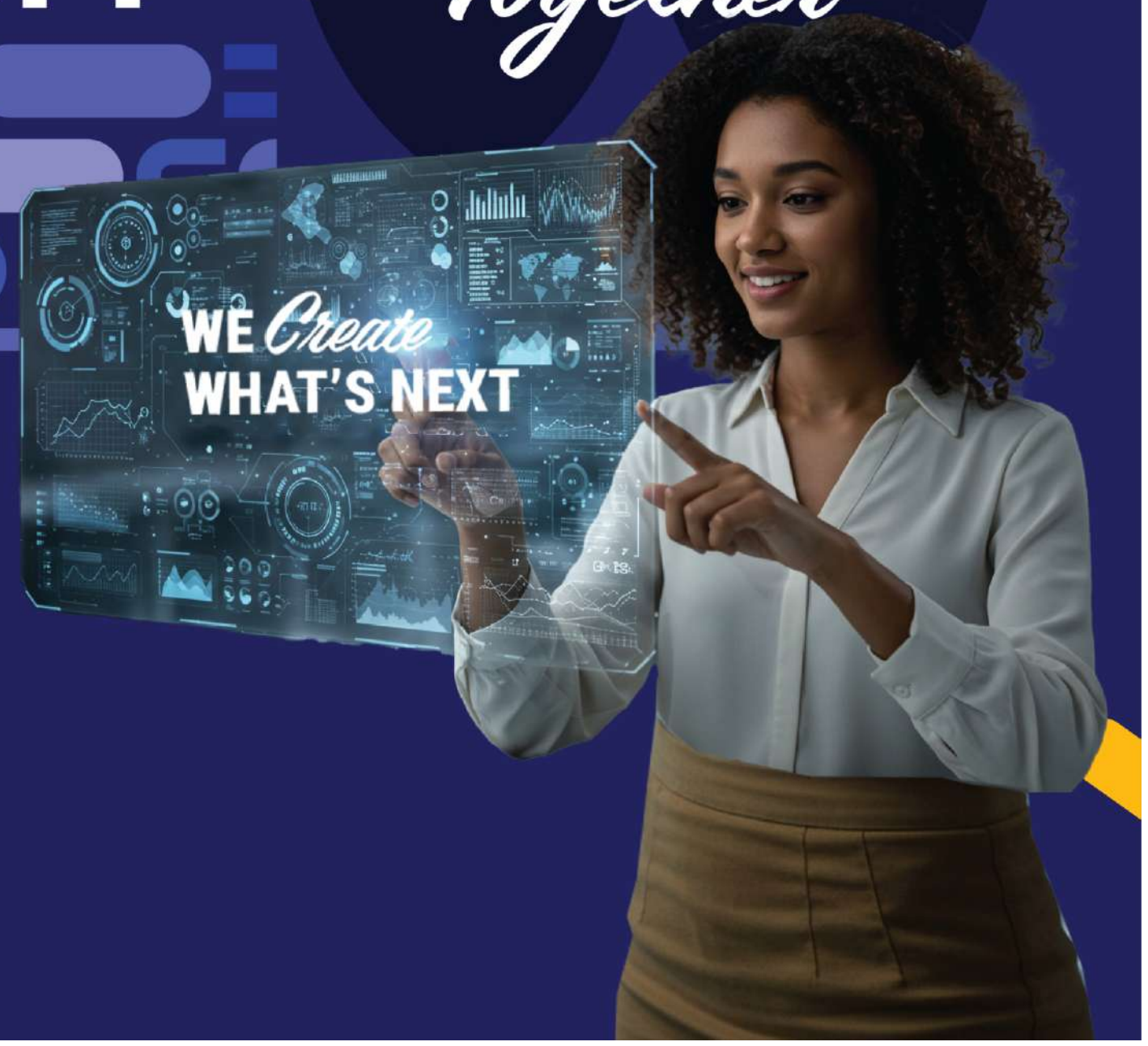
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TONY AGENMONMEN: The marketing leader building brands, institutions and standards of excellence



Tony Agenmonmen is one of Nigeria's most respected marketing and strategy professionals. His career spans brand building, business leadership, consulting and service to the marketing profession.

He joined Nigerian Breweries Plc in 1994 as a marketing trainee and rose to Senior Strategy Manager before retiring in 2016. Along the way, he led teams that built and strengthened some of Nigeria's best-known brands, combining a deep understanding of consumers with strategic discipline, creativity and an unwavering focus on results. An international assignment with Unilever Bangladesh gave him experience managing major household brands in another market.

A graduate of Economics at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, with an MBA in Marketing from the University of Benin, he has attended senior marketing programmes in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, India, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France and Singapore, among others.

In 2017, he founded OE&E Consulting, a management and marketing consultancy that helps organisations tackle business challenges and pursue sustainable growth. In 2022, he founded the Nigerian Marketing Awards.

A Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN), Agenmonmen served as its President from 2016 to 2021. In that role, he championed professionalism, ethical standards and the advancement of marketing as a contributor to business success and national development. He has also served on the Council of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN).

The Nigerian Marketing Awards reflects his belief that recognition should be credible, independently judged and earned by demonstrable achievement. His book, Excellence Is Not by Luck (2016) carries the same conviction: outstanding performance comes from deliberate choices, disciplined effort and consistently high standards.



STEPHEN ONAIVI: Building the blocks of communication excellence across Nigeria and Ghana

Stephen Onaivi is a media investment and marketing communications executive who became Managing Director of mediaReach OMD Nigeria in January 2024.

His journey with the organisation dates all the way back to 2008, when joined the organisation and started developing his career within the business.

In the course of close to two decades, he has undertaken regional assignments in Ghana, where he served as Planning Lead and later Managing Director of mediaReach OMD Ghana between 2018 and 2023.

Onaivi's experience spans media strategy, planning, buying and the development of communication solutions for major brands across West and Central Africa.

Some of the brands associated with his professional work include Diageo, Airtel, Olam, Vodafone, Virgin Atlantic, Google, Uber and GSK. Onaivi studied Philosophy and holds a master's degree in Public and International Affairs from the University of Lagos. He is also an alumnus of Lagos Business School and has professional affiliations with advertising and media industry bodies in Nigeria and Ghana.

RUFAI OSENI: Pressing Nigeria's leaders on governance and accountability



Rufai Oseni is a Nigerian broadcast journalist, television presenter and radio broadcaster at Arise News. He is known for interviews and discussions on governance, public policy, economic issues and national development.

His career began in radio, where he worked at GFM Radio in Warri and at Unique FM, Gold FM and Inspiration FM in Lagos. That grounding in live broadcasting shaped his direct, conversational style, for which he has become notable across the Nigerian broadcasting landscape.

Oseni joined Arise News in 2019 and has since become a familiar voice in its flagship current-affairs programming, where he puts public debate and accountability at the centre of the conversation. Across television, radio and social development, one conviction links his work: that the media can amplify the issues that matter to the nation.

Beyond the studio, Oseni is committed to public-interest and humanitarian work, founding the Oseni Centre to support community engagement and young people.



ODION ALEOBUA: Building and protecting reputations through strategic communication

The Founder and MD/CEO of Creato Urban, formerly Modion Communications, a Nigerian firm in strategic communications and public relations,

Odion Aleobua is a Mass Communication graduate of the University of Lagos and has built his practice across public relations, advertising, strategic communications and reputation management.

His industry experience runs deep, as a leading new generation public relations executive and influential leader in the Nigerian marketing communications landscape.

During his tenure as the Publicity Secretary of the Nigerian Gas Association, Aleobua helped organise industry fora and the West Africa Gas Conference, giving vent to how far-reaching credible communication goes toward shaping confidence in a sector.

Today, Aleobua leads Creato Urban, helping organisations tell their stories clearly and protect the reputations that matter. He has also trained and become certified in line with the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations in the United Kingdom.

UGOCHUKWU UWAJEH: Situating communication beyond visibility to help brands earn trust



Ugochukwu Uwajeh is a strategic communications and public relations professional with about 17 years of experience. He believes good communication begins with understanding people and for him, it is not only about what a brand says, but how it makes people feel, the trust it builds and the relationships it sustains.

As Business Director, Public Relations at SoulComms, he helps brands and organisations tell their stories, strengthen their reputations and connect with the people who matter to their businesses.

His work spans public relations, corporate communications, media relations, reputation management, brand strategy, media intelligence and stakeholder engagement. He combines strategic thinking and creativity with a practical grasp of business, because communication must go beyond visibility to help organisations earn trust, navigate challenges and achieve their objectives.
His leadership values collaboration, clear thinking and developing talent, in an environment where people can do their best work.

Uwajeh holds a Master's degree in English from the University of Lagos and is an alumnus of the International School of Communications, Dubai. He has also trained in crisis management in social media and creativity in communications, and he is associated with the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations.
He was named Outstanding Strategic Communications Personality of the Year this year and has given his time as a publicist to Special Olympics Nigeria and LEAP Africa, supporting inclusion, leadership and youth development.
His philosophy is simple: successful communication is about more than being heard; it is about being understood.



TOLULOPE OGUNJOBI: Making business and energy news clear for Nigeria's broadcast audience

Tolulope Ogunjobi is Business Group Editor at TVC, one of Nigeria's leading broadcast news organisations. A seasoned broadcast journalist, he leads reporting on commercial, economic and corporate developments, helping viewers understand the forces shaping markets, businesses and household budgets.

With business journalism central to public understanding, Ogunjobi's editorial work explains market trends, corporate decisions, investment developments and the policy environment affecting businesses and consumers.
Energy is one of his core areas, he was listed among registrants for the 2025 Offshore Technology Conference. Among several others, this reflects his sustained engagement with the energy sector, which is especially relevant to Nigeria's petroleum industry.

His standing in the media community is also reflected in his role as chairman of the jury at the 6th Industry Summit/Awards in May 2025, where the panel recognised excellence in media management.

Through his work, Ogunjobi brings clarity to complex economic stories, connecting policy, markets and industry to the audience that depends on them.

VICTOR OYARERO: Leading a data-driven media agency for Nigeria's brands



The Managing Director of Plus Acuity, a Nigerian media and marketing communications agency, Victor Oyarero is a leader in the marketing communications sector. The agency he leads describes itself as a media independent of creative and business minds, driven by data and technology.

An alumnus of the University of Benin, Oyarero sits at the head of a business that serves corporate and institutional clients, with his role covering strategic oversight, business development and client relationships as well as coordinating the teams that turn client objectives into media and communication plans.

In a market where brands must justify every naira spent on media, the data-led approach he leads reflects how the industry is changing: planning grounded in evidence, accountable to results and guided by what audiences actually do.

Oyarero's impact is best seen in the quality of the client relationships and delivery that Plus Acuity is built to sustain.



ABIODUN OSHINIBOSI: The "Project Marshal" who turns precision into powerful brand experiences

Abiodun Richard Oshinubosi, widely known as the "Project Marshal", is the co-founder and CEO of one of Nigeria's prominent integrated marketing communications and experiential marketing agencies, Abelinis Limited. His career spans more than two decades of operational excellence, youth mentorship and grassroots advocacy.

Raised in Oyo State by educator parents, he studied at Yaba College of Technology and built his credentials internationally. He is a certified Project Management Professional (PMI, USA) and holds a Masters Certificate in Six Sigma from Villanova University.

He is credited with improving operational efficiency by 35% at Industrial Development Communications Limited, where he rose from Operations Manager to General Manager.

In 2011, he launched Abelinis, built on precision, event marketing, brand design and corporate activations. The firm has grown into a multi-million-naira agency with its own headquarters and delivering campaigns for major multinationals.

His impact goes beyond business. In 2020, his HypeKing Advocacy campaign took COVID-19 health education and safety materials to all 20 local governments and 37 LCDAs in Lagos State and has continued to deliver bold, impactful moves across the marketing landscape.

LANRE OYEGBOLA -SODIPO: Balancing public office with professional pedigree and impact



Lanre Oyegbola-Sodipo is a marketing communications professional whose career began in advertising research, including an early role with a Saatchi & Saatchi affiliate in Nigeria, with his background aligning with strategic planning, client engagement and business development. Across his storied career, the University of Liverpool alumnus has been associated with communication and marketing initiatives through organisations including Verdant Zeal and First2Market.

Oyegbola-Sodipo founded Boomerang Communications Solutions Limited and subsequently drove a strategic affiliation with Havas, one of the world's largest global advertising and media networks, transforming the firm into Boomerang Havas Africa and subsequently, Havas Nigeria and Ghana), where he served as Managing Director and CEO.
Under his leadership, the agency achieved global prominence, with Boomerang Havas named among MADCom's Top 50 Global Advertising Agencies at an industry summit in Dubai in December 2019.

His foray into public office, following his swearing-in as Chairman of Abeokuta North Local Government on November 18, 2024, has witnessed similar demonstration of zeal and impact as his professional career. He is reported to have instilled efficiency and innovative grassroots development to local government administration in Ogun State. His performance led to his emergence as the Southwest Local Government Chairman of the Year at the Southwest Investment Summit and Advancement Awards.
Furthermore, the Federal Government, through the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR), honoured him with an Award of Excellence for outstanding grassroots governance.



JOSHUA AJAYI: Building a stage for Nigeria's marketing communications industry

Joshua Ajayi is the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Brand Communicator, the brands, marketing and sustainability publication he founded in 2008. A Mass Communication graduate of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ajayi has spent nearly two decades in Nigeria's integrated marketing communications sector.

Beyond publishing, Ajayi is also a prolific convener of events and CEO of Awesome Communications. He is the figure behind BRANDCOMFEST, the BRANDCOM Awards, the Women in Marketing Communications Conference and Awards (WIMCA) and the Environmental Sustainability Conference, Expo and Awards (ECOSEA).

Some of his recognitions include PR Journalist of the Year, Most Consistent Niche Media Personality (2021) and a place on Nigeria's Top 50 PR Power List for four consecutive years, most recently in 2026.

His publication has also won LaPRIGA's PR Magazine of the Year (Print) several times and has partnered with South Africa's Loeries and Morocco's Cristal Awards.

KAYODE EBATAMEHI: Deploying creative advertising to achieve product recognition

A leading advertising and integrated marketing communications executive with more than two decades of experience in the industry, Kayode Ebatamehi is the Managing Director of Bluebird Communications.

His career, which began in 1993, spans brand development, product innovation, event planning, brand activation, creative advertising and public relations.

He has led teams on campaigns and brand initiatives involving Coca-Cola Nigeria, Three Crowns Milk, UAC brands, Duracell and the Roll Back Malaria campaign supported by MAPS/USAID.
With a a bachelor's degree in History from the University of Lagos and an MBA in Marketing from Delta State University, Ebatamehi has also undertaken management and leadership programmes at Lagos Business School and IESE Business School in Barcelona.





TOLA BADEMOSI: Helping clients "Own the Conversation" in their industries

Tola Bademosi is Chief Executive Officer of BDC Communications, a Nigerian public relations consultancy. A respected practitioner, Bademosi has led communications firms over a long career, including The Quadrant Company.

The philosophy of BDC Communications is captured in its tagline, "victory without battle and strength in knowledge," and in the aim of ensuring clients "own the conversation in their industry." That means understanding a client's institutional priorities, building communication strategies and managing engagement with stakeholders across different sectors.

At the leadership level, Bademosi's focus is strategic direction, client relationships and service development. The work rests on strong media relations, reputation management and communication programmes that build credibility for the organisations the firm serves.

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From election campaigns to good governance

BY LOLU AKINWUNMI



With this tenth and final edition, we conclude our special series on Building the Political Brand. Our objective has been clear: to encourage a more strategic, professional, responsible and citizen-centred approach to political communication.

Too often, political campaigns are dominated by personalities, slogans, propaganda, attacks and the pursuit of visibility. Yet effective political communication should help citizens understand who seeks to lead them, what they stand for, what they offer and why they deserve public trust.

Throughout the previous nine editions, we have explored the principles of political branding, positioning, messaging, voter understanding, storytelling, consistency and reputation management, drawing lessons from campaigns across different countries.

Our central argument is simple: Political communication must go beyond winning attention. It must build understanding, establish credibility and earn trust.

As we conclude MSS-9, one question brings everything together:

What meaning are we building in the voter's mind?

This is important because:

Activity is not strategy

Visibility is not positioning

A slogan is not a proposition

Communication is not necessarily persuasion.

A political candidate is not a commercial product, but can be understood as a brand around which citizens form perceptions, expectations and judgements. Being famous is not enough. What are you known for? What do citizens associate with your name? Let us revisit the essential lessons:

1. POSITIONING: What Does The Candidate Stand For?

A candidate cannot represent everything simultaneously. Effective communication requires a central organising idea. Margaret Thatcher became associated with markets and national strength. Barack Obama's 2008 campaign emphasised hope and change. Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign focused on economic concerns and putting people first. Different personalities and politics, but each had identifiable positioning. Voters should understand what a candidate represents.

2. PROPOSITION: What Is The Candidate Offering?

What problems will the candidate address? What solutions are proposed? Why should citizens believe the promises? A catchy slogan attracts attention. A meaningful proposition gives the slogan substance. Strategy must precede creative expression, not follow it.

3. MESSAGE: Can The Candidate's Message Be Understood?

Campaigns often communicate too many messages. Every speech introduces another promise. Every spokesperson emphasises something different. Eventually, there is plenty of communication but little clarity. A campaign needs one central message connecting its policies and activities.

4. LISTENING: Does The Candidate Understand What The People Want?

Effective political communication begins with listening, not speaking.

Listen. Engage. Organise.

Understand citizens' concerns, frustrations, aspirations and expectations before deciding what to communicate. You cannot communicate effectively with people you do not understand.

5. RELEVANCE: Is The Candidate's Messaging Relevant?

Governments and candidates love statistics:

Roads constructed.

Investments attracted.

Schools built.

Jobs created.

But citizens ask a simpler question: So what?

Who benefited?

What changed?

How did the policy improve people's lives?

This is the difference between outputs and outcomes. People don't live inside statistics. They live with the consequences of government decisions.

6. AUTHENTIC STORIES: Who Is This Candidate?

Policies explain what candidates propose. Stories reveal the people behind those proposals. Personal experiences, values and authentic encounters reveal character and create emotional connection. But authenticity cannot be manufactured. Good political storytelling should reveal the truth, not invent it.

7. CONSISTENCY: Does Everything Fit?

Consistency is not repeating identical words everywhere. It is ensuring that every communication strengthens the central message. Advertising, speeches, interviews, social media, spokespersons and the candidate's behaviour must reinforce the same political identity. What you say must match what you do.

8. REPUTATION: Who Defines the Candidate?

Opponents will attack. Misinformation may spread. Mistakes and crises will occur. Campaigns must correct falsehoods, provide evidence and accept responsibility when necessary. But responding to every provocation can surrender control of the campaign's agenda. Don't let your opponent control your story. A political brand must be defined by what it stands for, not merely by what it opposes.

9. TRUST: The Ultimate Test

Everything ultimately comes down to Trust:

Strategy establishes positioning.

Advertising creates awareness.

Storytelling builds emotional connection.

Consistency strengthens recognition.

But Trust requires more.

Trust is earned when four things align:

Words

Supporting Evidence

Behaviour

Experience

When these reinforce one another, credibility grows. When they contradict one another, communication loses its power. No amount of advertising can permanently compensate for conduct that undermines promises. Trust must be earned, not merely requested.

...Read more on www,theindustryng,com

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From marketing to commercial growth

BY UGOCHUKWU UGWUANYI

As potent as branding is, it loses its mojo when the cankerworm known as blanding infests it. If it were just a matter of logos, colour palette and other visual markers, it would be tolerable. Blanding delves beneath the surface to create a sea of the same.

That blanding is a neutral industry trend towards minimalism and safe design choices doesn't change the fact that it chips away at brand health and equity. Nothing else makes the case for branding more than instances of blanding, even though the former is meant to avert the latter. Quintessential branding sets a product apart from its rivals but brands without unique personality breach this boundary by conveniently adopting minimalist, hyper-safe, and nearly identical visual identities.

Driven by the idea that simplicity is more versatile and globally recognisable, blanding is the mass homogenisation of corporate identities. According to Karen Maxwell of Fluxbranding, blanding typically borders on characteristics such as sans-serif typography, clean lines, geometric shapes, a limited colour palette, and the overall simplification of logos.

Early adopters of blanding include luxury fashion collections like Balmain, Yves Saint Laurent, and Burberry, streamlining their logos to exude a minimalist, contemporary feel. Tech companies like Google, Uber, and PayPal soon followed suit, coming up with identically clean, versatile designs that align with today's digital-first world.

If it sounds bland, then it's blanding

When a copy or collateral lacks freshness and hits as jejune, expect it to feed into or culminate in blanding. It is for the same reason the broad way is crowded while the narrow path is almost deserted. With most people ill-disposed to heavy lifting and would rather take the easy way out, blanding is far removed from the few who diligently deliver a nuanced brand voice.

Ordinarily, branding should make a product mean something to someone but blanding robs it of that. Since most brands aren't introspective enough to uncover and run with what makes them tick, they are susceptible to sounding like everyone else who is equally interested in matching efforts to industry. It takes ingenuity and curiosity for an organisation to stand out.

Blanding takes centre stage when brand custodians replace curiosity with assumptions. We assume we know what works for each audience segment. We assume certain colors communicate trust. We assume every brand needs to sound conversational, participate in cultural moments, or adopt the latest creative format. These assumptions, which may sometimes be correct, often go uninterrogated. Before you know it, they get hackneyed due to overuse. Curiosity is therefore needed to help marketers understand what's worth creating in the first place, so that it won't be a bandwagon thing.

In this content-first era, there are extraordinary artificial assistants smart enough to create and distribute content. AI can accelerate production, help explore ideas, and make creative work more accessible. However, faster answers won't necessarily make brands more distinctive if everyone begins with the same questions. Technology can expand what we create. Channels change. Technology evolves. Human behaviour gets cultivated overtime. Remember one thing: the buyer and the seller are both human. And humans don't just buy products. They remember how brands make them feel.

Branding builds, blanding hacks

As branding builds connections and memory with stakeholders, lazy competitors lean on blanding to hack the emotional attachment consumers have with brands they trust, identify with, and believe in. Branding builds by creating the meaning, trust and preference that makes one option feel more right than the



others.

Blanding overlooks the power of community-driven content. Genuine user-generated insights often hold more weight with AI than polished PR pieces. Building trust through conversations can be the game changer. Bereft of the ability to build meaning, trust, preference, and experiences that turn visibility into long-term value, blanding resorts to hacking these from branding. Yet, winning brands are etched in memory, not just in the market. They are built, not hacked!

...Read more on www.theindustryng.com

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