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The Industry

...in Support of business

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Corporates should be honest with CSR

As a result of the growing sense of corporate offenses, the concepts of ethical behaviour and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) have been on the front burner in recent years in both developed and developing countries.

The idea that businesses have some responsibilities to society beyond that of making profits for shareholders has been around for centuries. Meanwhile, the last one year of Coronavirus pandemic crisis has seen companies articulating their values and taking a stand on CSR initiatives in record numbers.

For many corporates, however, the noise and passion for something greater than earning a profit is not always elegantly executed. Many industry watchers believe that the speed at which businesses are becoming vocal about their CSR initiatives and values may not really align with their motives. Keen observers still think that corporates are involved in issues or support causes just to improve their reputation.

So the question of how, when, where, and why corporates share the stories of their efforts so that their good work will boost, rather than hinder the public's perception of their brand now becomes even more significant.

Among the surefire methods corporate leaders and marketing communications teams can use to improve the way they talk about their CSR efforts to gain credibility and positive attention, candour remains on top of the list. Without being candid in implementing your initiatives and communicating your values and good work, it will be difficult to shift public perception about your CSR plan.

With consumers, investors and employees increasingly interested in companies' social and environmental performance, honesty is becoming a corporate necessity.

While considering CSR, it is important for corporates to balance the interests of customers, communities, business partners and employees with those of shareholders.

As CSR has become both a watchword and a buzzword in management circles, being more honest is one clear way that corporates can close the trust gap. Happy reading!

PR slip-up between BUA Group and CACOVID

Goddie Ofose

For large corporate entities, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are low hanging fruits that often offer these top organisations the opportunity to 'brag' and leverage the soft side of their brands.

This, in a way, takes the brand closer to the benefiting community. Consumers are likely to see the brand in good light and in most cases the government tends to reward the organisation with tax rebates if the initiative is a far reaching one.

Recently, The Industry witnessed a public relations disaster from BUA Group that announced the purchase of one million doses of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines for Nigerians. The PR misstep occurred between BUA Group, and Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID), a private sector led initiative geared towards a perfect standard of life for Nigerians as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.

Although BUA's announcement was received by many as a major step towards getting Nigerians inoculated, and that vaccine was imminent, but the high expectation suddenly deemed as CACOVID countered BUA's early claim that it had purchased 1 million doses of vaccine.

What looked like a major PR achievement and CSR breakthrough for BUA Group swiftly became a case of PR disaster for the brand. BUA may not be as loud as Dangote in the media, but the brand is gradually warming itself into the firmament of strong brands that care much about their image. To nip in the bud the BUA's supposed rising image as a caring brand, CACOVID released a statement immediately entitled: CACOVID disowns BUA contribution of vaccine.

In a statement issued to clear the air on the COVID-19 vaccines purchase, the Coalition noted in part that, "These claims are not factual as CACOVID operates on a collegiate fund contribution model. There is no agreement between BUA, CACOVID and Afreximbank."

According to the statement, CACOVID



Abdulsamad Rabiu, Founder, BUA Group

leadership agreed to contribute \$100 million to procure vaccines for Nigeria, noting that "these 1 million doses from Afreximbank worth \$3.45 million, being the very first tranche. CACOVID will purchase vaccines through other credible and subsidised mechanisms such as COVAX."

The coalition further rubbished BUA's position by stating that "CACOVID would like the Nigerian public to understand that vaccine purchase is only possible through the Federal Government of Nigeria, and that no individual or company can purchase vaccines directly from any legitimate and recognised manufacturer."

Unknown to BUA, South Africa has put its rollout of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine on hold after a study showed "disappointing" results against its new Covid variant. The trial, involving some 2,000 people, found that the vaccine offered "minimal protection" against mild and moderate cases.

BUA had already named the vaccine and this caused some disbelief in some quarters. In a



Aliko Dangote, President, CACOVID

face saving move, BUA released purported purchase receipt that was quickly countered by CACOVID.

In a statement by BUA, the company said, "BUA receives with utter shock, report allegedly attributed to CACOVID, disowning its earlier payment through CACOVID for 1 million AstraZeneca doses for Nigerian via AFREXIM vaccine platform."

According to BUA founder, Abdul Samad Rabiu, "BUA decided to secure these 1 million vaccines by paying the full amount for the vaccines on Monday (February 8, 2021) because these vaccines became available only last week through AFREXIM. We expect the vaccines to be delivered within the next 14 days and hope priority will be given to our frontline workers who have committed their lives to managing the pandemic".

He said the purchase was coordinated by the President of the Afrexim Bank, Benedict Oramah, and the Central Bank Governor,

Godwin Emefiele, through the CACOVID Private Sector partnership.

"BUA did this gesture in good faith as it has done with its interventions throughout the pandemic."

Sources said that BUA's gestapo move on the controversial vaccine purchase was targeted at Dangote Group that always positioned as the CACOVID front company. The announcement was to deal a hammer blow on Dangote Group and its founder, Aliko Dangote.

In the industrial sector, Dangote has always been seen as the leader. Therefore, attacking the leader at the right time was going give BUA a ladder to climb, but it miscalculated it.

Perhaps, BUA communication team did not take into consideration the Robert Greene's 48 Laws of Power, which Law 1 says "Never outshine the master."

Had BUA succeeded, Dangote brand would have been perceived as non-caring—exploitative-brand by the larger public. There is no gaining saying that BUA's team didn't do a good job and completely ignore Greene's Law 5 that says "So much depends on reputation, guard it with your life."

Greene advised organisations and brands to always be alert to potential attacks and thwart them before they happen.

Meanwhile, he said, learn to destroy your enemies by opening holes in their own reputations. Then stand aside and let public opinion hang them.

Doubt is a powerful weapon, Greene stated. Once you let it out of the bag with insidious rumors, your opponents are in a horrible dilemma. Once you have a solid base of respect, ridiculing your opponent both puts him on the defensive and draws more attention to you, enhancing your own reputation.

There is no doubt that BUA's intention was to ridicule its biggest opponent and if it has succeeded, Dangote would never have recovered.

LASAA wins at Court of Appeal



A Court of Appeal sitting in Lagos has affirmed that the Lagos State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law, No. 9 of 2006, is constitutional and valid.

According to the Director, Civil Litigation, Lagos State Ministry of Justice, Mr. Hammed Oyenuga, the Court gave ruling in the matter with Appeal No CA/L/888/2012 – Bunjay Integrated Service vs Attorney-General of

Lagos State.

He said the applicant (Bunjay Integrated Service) had earlier prayed the State High Court for a declaration that the Lagos State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law No. 9 of 2006 is illegal, null and void, as well as unconstitutional, because it is inconsistent with Section 7 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Oyenuga averred that the Court of Appeal in its judgement held that the appeal is

unmeritorious, stating that the Lagos State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law No. 9, 2006 is Legal and Constitutional.

Recall that the State High Court had earlier ruled in favour of the Lagos State Government in its judgement delivered on July 10, 2012, stating that the issue of advertising and signage are residual matters; hence the State House of Assembly can legislate on it.

As Burger King Hits Nigerian Market

Burger King, the American popular fast-food giant, has announced interest in moving into Nigeria, the African largest market.

For several reasons Nigeria has become the bride for many investors over the years. Across Africa, investors' confidence has steadily grown with Nigeria in focus.

This is largely due to Nigeria's growing population and appreciable potential for greatness. The country's large labour force and abundant natural resources, including petroleum and natural gas.

Vast arable land and water resources in the country also increase foreign investors' interest in this market.

Putting all the above factors into consideration, Burger King, an American multinational hamburger fast-food chain headquartered in Florida, has concluded plans to open outlets in Nigeria.

Antoine Zammariéh, the Franchisee of

Burger King in Nigeria, who made this development known recently on LinkedIn, revealed that the hamburger maker in a show of interest in the Nigerian market had signed a development agreement for the Nigerian market.

Zammariéh explained that the recently signed agreement to bring the fast-food chain to Nigeria would give more confidence to the

Nigerian market and consumers in general, especially during these hard times.

His words: "it's with great pleasure that we announce our signing of a development

agreement with Burger King for the Nigerian market. I believe this would be a tremendous

step towards giving more confidence into the Nigerian market and consumers in general, especially during these hard times. I always believed in Nigeria and in its people. I am confident this venture will go a long way and prove successful for Burger King, Nigeria and our company."

Many industry analysts are concerned about how the new entrant

would fare in Nigerian market. Already brands such as Pizza are already in this are.

market and have consistently deepened its market share.

However, analysts are of the view that Nigerian consumers have the tendency of switching brand loyalty when there is a new entrant with a better offer.

To these analysts, examples abound that Nigerian consumers are quick to have a taste of a new brand in the market. Therefore, how such a brand retains these consumers remain the responsibility of the brand handlers.

Another advantage to Burger King is the fact that it is also the operator of the WOW Creamery, a subsidiary of Iceberry, the biggest ice cream store in Russia.

In all of these, the marketing arsenal that the handlers of this brand will use to generate demand for the brand and the response of Nigerian consumers will determine its success in Nigeria.





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Chicken Republic's strong arm tactic paying off



In the quick service restaurant segment in Nigeria, Chicken Republic, founded by Deji Akinyanju in 2004, was never a force to be reckoned with though the brand came with unique proposition.

The brand debuted and prides itself with aesthetic ambiance, full chicken offering, unique structural effect and Jollof rice. But it wasn't too long, KFC arrived from the US and all that changed.

Chicken Republic retreated a few years ago but made resurgence late last year and began aggressive brand expansion across Lagos.

It started by upstaging Mr Bigg's from Mobil Filling Stations across the state. Mr Bigg's a pioneer QSR brand had struck a deal with the downstream oil giant, Mobil to use it fuel station for its restaurants that largely worked until franchisees began to mess things up for

the brand.

Now, Chicken Republic did not only ouster Mr Bigg's but it has matched KFC offerings for offerings, aesthetic for aesthetic, space for space, strategic location for strategic location. Everywhere you turn you find CR, at Oba Akran, Ogba, Agidingbi, Victoria Island, Lekki Phase 1, Ikeja GRA and several other places.

Again, there revolution called 'The Place' coming through. It will so dwarf competitions in the food segment in Lagos.

Akinyanju indeed, had vision and Chicken Republic that is a Nigerian quick service restaurant chain and franchise that specializes in chicken recipes, especially fried chicken is ready to take on competition especially with the imminent arrival of Burger King. Bullish move.

Pepsi reinforces fizz campaign with Messi, Pogba, Burna Boy

Pepsi, the world's leading football entertainment brand, has introduced a new bold global campaign celebrating culture with pop and fizz of the irresistible cola. The campaign stars the world's best across football and music including Leo Messi, Paul Pogba, Shanice Van De Sandem and Jadon Sancho. Global super star Becky G and Pepsi Nigeria ambassador and two-time Grammy nominated Afro-fusion musician Burna Boy completes the cast.

This year's global football campaign in support of the UEFA Champions League partnership is led by a high-energy film, Fizz to Life, that showcases epic football skills set to a custom music track, Rotate, created for the campaign by Becky G and Burna Boy. The Creative fizzes from beginning to the end, quick-fire storytelling style showcasing how Pepsi football breaks the bubble of the 90-minutes game.

Commenting on the new Pepsi campaign, National Marketing Manager, Seven-Up Bottling Company, Mr. Segun Ogunleye said: "The bold new Pepsi Fizz global campaign provides Pepsi Nigeria with a great platform

to engage our consumers on two key passion points of music and football. In tandem with our consumer-centric policy we will continue to give the Nigerian consumer great experience of enjoying his refreshing Pepsi while watching the UEFA Champions League Matches."

At a time when the world could use a little more fizz, Pepsi delivers in a highly entertaining new campaign that cuts across cultural backgrounds with the uncontainable fizz of the brand.



Fidelity Bank brings back classic TVC

Fidelity Bank has been preaching loyalty in its classic television commercial created for European Champion League. For a while, the ad was rested because of COVID-19 pandemic, however, the resumption of the European league competition means the tvc has been reworked and aired.

What is interesting is not the TVC but how the creative agency has been able to adopt it to fit the present times.

For those who never saw the television commercial for the third generation bank, it is about keeping promises even to your kid.

In the tvc, parents are ready to go for an outing and about 5 year old daughter felt she should be part of the evening jaunt and asked her father to be taken along. The storyline stretched to the father making a deceptive pledge and decided to take off with the wife when the little innocently dashed into her

room to pick her pair of shoes.

For her, hopefully, making her way to the sitting room to join the parents, she, regrettably found that the parents had left without her. Therefore, in her despair, her father and mother showed up to reassure her that nothing would make them leave without her,

This is a classic storyline commercial that reassures your brand proposition, but the bottomline is how the bank has adapted the classic message to fit the current public health crisis.

To encourage Nigerians to keep apart as COVID-19 pandemic continues to persist, the in a creative maneuver kept its logo apart to show that even corporate symbol can be separated in time of critical situation.

The creative agency that work on this understands the important of time, space and emotion. Thump up Fidelity Bank

Guinness new TVC rocks



Guinness Stout has had some of the most iconic television commercials in recent time but "I am the new best thing" tvc can't be mentioned among those classic "Michael Power Race Against Time", "The Ticket", "Every Minute Made of Black" and "Men and Women shouldn't live together".

However, the new tvc currently airing on match day live on SuperSport can't go without mention. Even my 3 year old girl is held

captive by the storyline, which is basically captured in slow motion.

The tvc preaches togetherness and the suspense is well articulated. If you are a lover of Premier League, you won't the ad before, during and after the every match.

It might be difficult to narrate but it is captivating and sensational though in motion picture. I love it Guinness.

Trophy reinforces dominance with tallest beer bottle in Lagos



International Brewery flagship brand, Trophy has unveiled the tallest beer bottle to the delight of its customers.

The bottle was unveiled at Ikeja City mall in Lagos amid fun and fanfare.

According to the organisation, the beer bottle stood at a height of 14 metres (45.9FT) and 3.8 metres (12.5 FT) in diameter.

Marketing Director of International Breweries Plc, Tolulope Adedeji, described the period in which the bottle was unveiled as

a momentous time in history.

He said, "Today, we are unveiling Nigeria's tallest beer bottle to commemorate our number one position in Nigeria, and considering that this feat would not have been possible without the support and patronage of our loyal consumers, it is also an opportunity for us to acknowledge and celebrate them through our unique waa gbayi experience."

"As the flagship product of International Breweries Plc, a proud part of AB InBev (the

world's largest brewers with more than 400 beer brands), Trophy has consistently sets the pace when it comes to recognising and rewarding consumers, going one-step further to tag them "Honourable".

According to Marketing Manager of Trophy, Bamise Oyegbami, the brand is unique in many ways and represents the qualities of hard work, ambition, integrity and camaraderie.

Even the Wolf howl for Heineken



For some consumers, the Heineken Champion League television commercial is not spectacular, but others may consider it inspirational and creative. Even though wolves bark, woof, whine, whimper, yelp, growl, snarl and moan a lot more often than they howl, it is howling that defines the wolf, and fascinates us.

The 'you are not watching alone' campaign

has generated massive reviews. Have you ever watched a football with dog? Do you monitor their reactions when you reacted? Then if you have followed this with keen interest you will understand what the Wolf did the Heineken advert.

When every football fan was reacting, wolf could only howl because it is what it knows how to do, while human may be reacting by

punching the air, jumping around, making uncoordinated noise and hugging one another, the catch of the ad, wolf, could only howl.

Most consumers don't remember Thierry Henry, a footballing icon is in that tvc. This has reinforced the position that celebrity brand endorsement strategy is a drainpipe for the brands. Wolf made it happen not Henry.



On the move with
Goddie Ofose

Glo gets Shaki's 'I dey come' right

Glo television commercials (TVC) have been largely below par to say the least. Yes, the light green telecommunication giant could be credited for his celebrity engagement strategy otherwise called brand ambassadors.

Glo rarely give room for competitions to have access to Nigerian celebrities, this has been a regular escape for the brand. Kudos to Glo for this empowerment tactic but this is a discussion for another day.

For a while, Glo creative works especially tvc has left much to be desired. If you have seen Simi and Gordons ads for NIN awareness, you'll understand that those creating those content are doing so to be the first to the market.

While Simi with a tiny voice was ludicrous, Gordons in a couch looks appalling.

However, the telco giant made up with Shaki's classic.

From indication the Shaki's tvc is intended to communicate the strength of Glo data and that works. There is an online meeting of friends obviously anchored by Simi. Everyone was ready for the meeting but Shaki.

He kept getting calls from friends, who perhaps, had waited for him. Eventually, when he got into the meeting, he was asked his best kept secret and he revealed with noticing his mother's presence.

Shaki told the online audience that "I like to steal meat from my mama soup pot" and the net thing was a slap from his mom that dashed him.

The lesson is simply, nemesis will always catch up with you. One of the best moral message conveyed by Glo ads. Great thinking



COVID-19: Industry practitioners rethink business for survival



Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo

For Ayobami Babatunde, an integrated marketing communication consultant in Lagos, 2020 was the most difficult year for the advertising industry. The integrated marketing communication industry comprises core advertising, experiential marketing/brand activation, public relations, brand management, outdoor advertising, digital advertising and media buying and selling.

The 2020 began well for brands that launched into the market earlier. Some marketing activities had commenced for several brands and products. Organisations such as MTN, Nigerian Breweries, Airtel and Glo had launched thematic and/or tactical campaigns.

However, the high hopes the year 2020 presented was suddenly thrown into the state of despair as

Coronavirus pandemic hit the nation in early March of 2020. Several organisations called in to halt or out rightly cancel their planned marketing activities.

Marketing thrives when people come together. The worst hit were fast moving consumer goods segment particularly, the alcohol beverages as government issued several guidelines hitherto, shutting down hotels, bars and restaurants nationwide.

According to EMarketer, overall ad spending will decline by 4.9% worldwide this year, a significant drop from last year's 6.3% growth and from our pre-pandemic 2020 forecast of 7.0% growth. The total figure will come in at \$614.73 billion, which represents \$76.99 billion less new revenues than previously expected.

Industry practitioners believed that worldwide digital ad spending will achieve 2.4% growth this r

year, the lowest on record. Although this figure is still positive, the category has never been in single digits. The \$332.84 billion total for 2020 represents \$36.11 billion less spending than our pre-pandemic forecast.

On the ad spending compare with search, EMarketer said, "Idiosyncratic outcomes associated with the Coronavirus' social impact have hindered the search ad business more than the display ad business. We estimate that globally search ad spending will decline by 0.2% this year to \$135.25 billion, whereas display spending will increase by 5.3% to \$179.39 billion.

In Nigeria, while 2020 was lost on COVID-19, industry watchers stated that 2021 was going to be better than last year; however, the trend so far, has continued to pose a threat for the survival of several fast moving consumer goods and agency business in Nigeria as government continued to encourage individuals and corporate bodies to imbibe responsible behaviour.

Agencies owners have already written off the first quarter of 2021 due to the second wave of covid-19. Most points of sales have been shut across the country. This has forced several FMCGs to suspend campaigns and other marketing activities. But the telecoms have offered a little respite so far.

Speaking on the prospect of 2021 Mr. Israel Opayemi, President Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN)/CEO Chain Reactions said, "2021 will be a mixed bag of opportunities for key operators in Integrated Marketing Communications."

For those in the Public Relations sub-sector, the money will be in advisory. Clients will be looking up to their PR partners to help understand the minds of consumers and their stakeholders in the midst of the pandemic.

For advertising and experiential, Opayemi said, "Government will have need for the smartest social marketing campaigns to be able to convince a skeptical populace about the Covid-19 vaccines. So there will be money here for those in advertising and experiential marketing as big corporate organisations will make interventions in this area too.

PRCAN President believes that for agencies to survive the crunch year, agencies would stop looking and/or waiting for briefs but partner with clients to solve critical problems that would eventually make the agencies stakeholders rather than just agency.

"My honest opinion is that practitioners remove the agency thinking cap by not waiting for briefs to come. We have to be all out to our

clients to help them spot opportunities in trends etched in this new normal," Opayemi said.

Recently, Statista published that contrary to trends in the U.S. or Europe, where the lion's share of ad budgets is focused on internet and TV marketing, between 2018 and 2020 the majority of advertising dollars in Nigeria will be devoted to TV and video promotion.

In developed markets internet advertising expenditures are expected to surpass TV, however, in Nigeria TV advertising is and will remain strong in the near future. The second most popular ad medium in the country is out-of-home, which is also projected to grow in the three years. Internet is ranked third based on advertising spending.

On the impact of COVID-19 on IMC, Mr. Charles O'Tudor, Lead Consultant/CEO Adstrat BMC said, "The IMC industry has gone through a "shake down "due to the covid-19 pandemic. Based on the reduced spending capacity most consumers are now very finicky in deciding what spend on.

This, no doubt, automatically affects most of the brands. This no doubt has created a reduction in the budgets of most brands. It is imperative that practitioners focus their strategies on the online platforms.

O'Tudor believes that the

reduction in advertising spend would definitely create a new normal in the sector. "That no doubt would create the "new normal" in connecting with the consumers. The future is online, he said.

Some industry agencies have started refocusing their business offerings to remain relevant. For instance, the CEO of USP, Kayode Muiyiwa said that "Our company has been making a strategic refocus away from the IMC business. We are therefore not focused on the industry going forward.

EMarketer predicted that Google will suffer a 3.3% loss in ad revenues this year (its first negative result since our tracking began), driven in part by a huge decline in travel-related search queries. Facebook will muddle through with 5.9% growth on the strength of its display business. This is still a significant downturn compared with Facebook's 26.6% growth in ad revenues in 2019.

Conclusively, the President of Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria, (EXMAN), Mr. Tade Adekunle stated that It will be a challenging year because COVID-19 still roving around. "This is the time for us to put on our thinking caps to re-invent ourselves. Innovation more than ever before will be a cutting edge for survival."

'Ad Academy crucial to survival of advertising industry'



Steve Babaeko, President, AAAN

President, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Mr. Steve Babaeko, has disclosed that a soon-to-be-launched academy is crucial to the survival of the advertising sector in Nigeria.

In February, AAAN had announced a partnership with Henley Business School, Africa, to launch Ad Academy—a virtual hub where the next generation of creatives will be birthed and nurtured.

According to Babaeko, the

idea of the academy was first introduced during the tenure of Biodun Shobanjo, the past president of the association.

"Even though I was just a junior creative then, I imagined that at the core of the idea was the imperative to broaden the talent pipeline of the industry and the need to also upskill existing talent pool of member agencies.

That vision hasn't changed even today," he said.

"Rather, it has taken a much more urgent dimension because of the seismic shift caused by technology. This has totally disrupted many industries including ours. Thus, we have no choice than to launch the academy as part of our mid to long-term survival strategy."

He said the objective of the academy is to train the next crop of advertising entrepreneurs, adding that students would benefit from a diverse pool of courses ranging from business administration, creativity and brand management.

"The benefits of the

partnership with Henley are multi-dimensional, but I will highlight a few. As a global business institution with solid heritage, they provide a pool of world-class resource team to give the Ad Academy that edge," Babaeko said.

"Secondly, I have always felt that we have enough local experts to teach creativity, strategy and brand management, but I believe that we need to include business management because the goal of the Ad Academy is to groom the next generation of advertising entrepreneurs. This is where Henley comes in with their robust business curriculum."

He added that the association is working on securing an Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) accreditation for the Ad Academy.

The AAAN president noted that the academy would fully begin operations by the first quarter of 2022.

LASAA fetes operators on OOH regulations

The Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) has flagged off the first phase of an awareness campaign to sensitise the general public on the need to comply with the regulations guiding outdoor advertisement in the state.

The regulations cover on-premise and off-premise signage displays as well as registration of mobile adverts.

Speaking during one of the agency's awareness campaigns in Lagos, Managing Director of LASAA, Prince Adedamola Docemo, in a statement, said it is important to sensitise and educate the public on the need to comply with the LASAA law before the agency begins enforcement.

He noted that the exercise would provide another opportunity for LASAA to remind clients on the importance of always being on the side of the law as good individuals and corporate citizens.

He urged residents of Lagos to cooperate with LASAA so that the state government can



Prince Adedamola Docemo, CEO, LASAA

successfully deliver the dividends of democracy to them through its revenue optimisation effort.

Also speaking, Deputy General Manager, Corporate Communication and Strategy, LASAA, Temitope Akande, noted that LASAA has a tradition of embarking on an awareness campaign to clients and the public in general in February and March every year. The campaign will focus on the need for clients to be on the side of the law as enforcement would commence afterwards.

"Our plan is to utilise all available medium of communication to sensitise the public on the need to that

register their advertising business signboards, temporary campaigns, road shows and billboards as well as branded vehicles to avoid falling foul of the enforcement drive that will follow this awareness exercise. We plan to engage our clients across all platforms to achieve our objective," Akande said.

Head, Mobile, Small Format and Temporary (MS&T) Department, Adebayo Aluko, said the purpose of the awareness programme is to ensure that at least 95 per cent compliance is achieved for all branded vehicles operating in Lagos State and also boost the revenue of the agency vis-a-vis that of the state.

"Hopefully, the enforcement on branded vehicles without the 2021 mobile advert permit within the state will be minimal," Aluko said.

Explaining that branded vehicles without valid permits are usually grounded or impounded and made to pay the amount due before the vehicle is released, Aluko appealed to owners of branded vehicles to follow due process in good time and avoid enforcement and sanctions.

Konn3ct bites from \$75 billion world's virtual market



Femi Williams, CEO, Newwaves Ecosystems

A Nigerian tech start-up firm, Newwaves Ecosystems Limited is pitching for a major stake in the multi-billion-dollar global online meeting market with the launch of its virtual conferencing platform, Konn3ct.

Chinese company, Zoom Video Communications in 2020, emerged as the global leader in the virtual conferencing business, controlling 14.73 percent of a market that has more than 140 other competitors. Market research firm, Research and Markets projects the world's Global Web Conferencing Market, to reach a valuation of more than \$78 billion by 2030, up from \$2.1

billion at the end of 2020.

Konn3ct is entering the market with more than 40 differentiating propositions carefully infused into the platform for enhanced user experience and quick adoption and which could place it in firm stead to compete with Zoom and a host of other players that include; Huawei Technologies, Adobe Systems Inc., Cisco Systems, Inc. and Microsoft Corporation.

An analysis of Konn3ct reveals that it is the only product in the market with capacity to enable a break-out session during a large conference. As explained by Femi Williams, CEO, Newwaves Ecosystems, this feature

enables conveners of large virtual conferences to create up to eight rooms within the same meeting room for participants break out into smaller groups for private sessions.

Konn3ct has a video-sharing feature which, Williams explained, enables participants, especially those leading presentations to stream YouTube, Vimeo, Twitch and other forms of audiovisual material during sessions. The feature, the Newwaves CEO highlighted, also has voice-over capability that allows audible conversation even while the video plays.

"In envisioning this platform, we also took into consideration, the importance of smooth viewing experience and created a solution with high-definition (HD) default audio quality while the video allows for picture quality bands ranging from low to high definition," Mr. Williams, who founded the company after spending years as lead solution provider for Chams Nigeria Limited, said.

Konn3ct, he revealed, also enables the administrators of meetings to record both the main meeting and break-out sessions. This, he said, minimizes the need for the distractions from having participants taking notes during sessions, ensuring also that rapporteurs have the benefits of second playbacks for more accurate documentation of meeting details or summaries. The main and breakout rooms sessions can be recorded and accessed from the Admin dashboard.

Unlike other solutions in the market, Konn3ct enables the preloading of multiple presentation documents in the virtual meeting room for download by participants to, according to Williams, "save bandwidth

and make for seamless admin management of meeting paraphernalia."

"We also thought of the need by certain institutions and organisations to secure their conversations from the public internet and embedded in Konn3ct with a security protocol known as the Secure Socket Layer Encryption (SSL Encryption). This is a protocol that protects data during transfer and transmission by creating a channel, uniquely encrypted, so that the client and the server have a private communication link channel over the public Internet," he explained.

The current global crisis due to COVID-19 has compelled companies to come up with innovative solutions which will allow employees to work without being afraid of contracting the virus. Attributed to this, several businesses have now adopted the work-from-home model, thereby allowing people to avoid unnecessary travel. It has further been found that employees who work remotely can work for an additional 1.4 days per month, as compared to normal working situation. This means that employees are able to contribute an additional 17 workdays, thereby increasing the productivity.

In Nigeria, where commercial cities such as Lagos and Port Harcourt, witness chaotic traffic that cost workers many hours on grinding road traffic every day as they commute to work, developments in online meetings ecosystem will even save employers additional time while also relieving the health challenges associated with road traffic stress.

This may explain the speed with which virtual meetings solutions such as Konn3ct had been adopted in Nigeria and other countries.

Sony Pictures, MTN, launch 'Sony One' app



Sony Pictures Television ("SPT") has announced the launch of 'Sony One' – an app platform developed in association with MTN, the leading ICT company in Nigeria. Sony One provides a selection of SPT film and television favourites, making them available through special MTN mobile data packages. MTN users can stream a selection of SPT content and rent the latest Hollywood blockbusters through the app at affordable prices. New users also have access to a 3-day free trial. The partnership is in furtherance of MTN's resolve to continue to provide a superior digital experience for customers and make life brighter.

Speaking on the launch, John Rossiter, who oversaw the development of the app as Sony Pictures Television Executive Vice President, Networks and Distribution, CEEMA, said, "Sony One is tailor-made to the increasingly flexible way we see media being consumed in Nigeria and across Africa today. Today's launch marks the first step in an inspiring journey for SPT: we have spent a couple of

years reviewing and evaluating effective ways to serve our excellent SPT content to, and engage with, this hugely important continent. It is fantastic to launch this platform, and there is no better partner to launch with than MTN in Nigeria."

Also speaking, Srinivas Rao, Chief Digital Officer, MTN Nigeria, says, "We are proud of our association with Sony Pictures Television. This partnership aligns with our GoodTogether philosophy; with it, our customers, who are at the heart of everything we do, will be assured of quality international content, including movies, music and favourite shows all in one app."

Users will have access to four plan categories including streaming bundles that offer data and access on the Sony One service, binge plans that offer affordable streaming service on the app, rental plan for content on the app as well as content only plans. Sony Pictures Entertainment ("SPE") blockbuster titles available for rent on the platform are 'Spider-Man: Far from Home', 'The Equalizer 2', 'Bad Boys for Life', 'Bloodshot', 'Angry Birds 2' and 'Black & Blue'.

Spotify offers Nigerian brands ad opportunity on streaming service

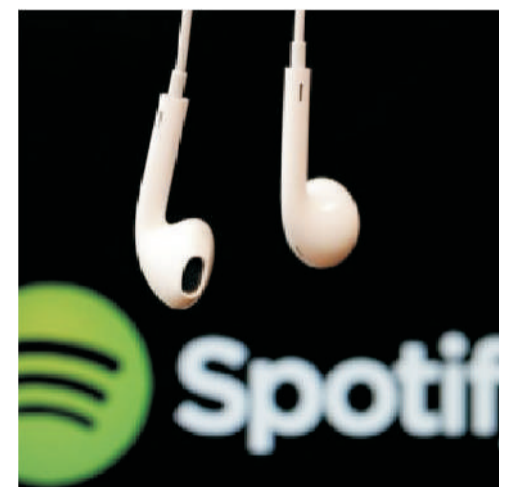
Spotify, the world's most popular global audio streaming subscription service, has opened a Nigerian office, and it is offering brands a new opportunity to reach millions of engaged listeners through its innovative and creative ad-supported free tier. Ad Dynamo will serve as Spotify's local advertising sales partner. Advertisers can also sign up for the waitlist for the platform's self-serve channel, Spotify Ad Studio, beginning today.

Available for free to all in Nigeria, since February 23, Spotify offers the best listening experience for local and international music of over 70 million tracks across thousands of devices. This makes it simple for people to soundtrack every moment of their lives as they workout, cook, entertain, study, and everything in between, wherever they are.

This streaming behavior is the foundation of Spotify's Streaming Intelligence, its unique first-party data and insights that are based on users' streaming behavior. For advertisers, this presents an unparalleled opportunity to reach engaged listeners with the right messages in the right context.

Since launch, Spotify has partnered with a limited selection of brands to advertise on Spotify Free in the region. These partners are Telkom Kenya Limited, East African Breweries Limited in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, Guinness Nigeria Limited in Nigeria, and Guinness Ghana Breweries in Ghana.

"We've seen brands succeed with Spotify Advertising in South Africa, and now look



forward to working alongside in more African markets. The opportunity for brands to connect with an audience enjoying the music they love is immense," said Sean Riley, CEO of Ad Dynamo.

"We're in the midst of the audio renaissance. Digital audio is one of the most exciting spaces in media today and millions of people worldwide turn to it every day for entertainment, education and moments of respite," said Lee Brown, VP, Global Head of Advertising Business at Spotify. "We're excited to unlock the power of Spotify's audio-first platform and the unique data and insights it affords to help marketers connect with their audiences in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda."

As startups become eye-openers to big banks

Until the impressive money-spinning innovation of a few start-ups many big banks in Africa, Nigeria especially, have looked down on the huge financial prospects lurking in the agency services and payment methods.

In Europe and United States of America, new research has shown that San Francisco and London are the world's leading hubs for venture capital (VC) investment into tech solutions. More commonly referred to as "Impact Tech", this method of doing business has changed the rate, speed and profit in the upwardly mobile world.

No keen watcher of digital-driven modern industries would underscore the importance of the impact of tech startups.

Tech solutions for such pressing issues as the climate crisis and social inequality have seen a 280% increase in global VC investment from 2015 to 2020, while investment in this space more than doubled in both cities over the past five years.

Investment into London-based impact tech startups has grown by almost 800 per cent since 2015, compared to 3.1 times in Europe as a whole. London's impact firms have also secured 429 deals between 2015 and 2020, more than any other city globally.

San Francisco's impact-based tech companies have also shown strong growth over the past five years. Available data revealed that VC investment into its impact tech companies has almost tripled from 2015 to 2020. Impact tech companies in San Francisco have attracted \$1.7 billion of VC investment in 2020.

Funding rounds, including at least one North American investor made up \$234 million of VC investment so far this year in London, up from \$85 million in 2018, and equating to a fifth of all VC investment into London's impact startups.

Funding rounds for London impact companies involving North American investors in 2020 include a \$118 million growth equity round into Arrival by BlackRock, an \$80 million Series B round for COMPASS Pathways and a \$25 million Series C funding for Tractable.

Meanwhile, impact startups are crossing the pond in both directions. Arrival is now operating in Los Angeles, while Octopus Energy launched in the U.S. market in September after closing a \$360 million funding round in April and acquiring Silicon Valley-based startup, Evolve Energy. And San Francisco-based Allbirds, the sustainable shoe retailer, opened its first European flagship store in London in July 2018.

When Stripe announced that it had picked up another \$600 million in funding, it said one big reason for the funding was to expand its API-based payments services into more areas.

Stripe is acquiring Paystack, a startup out of Lagos, Nigeria and Stripe provides a quick way to integrate payments services into an online or offline transaction by way of an API.

Paystack has about 60,000 customers, including small businesses, larger corporates, fintechs, educational institutions and online betting companies.

Terms of the deal are not being disclosed, but sources disclosed that it's over \$200 million, making it the biggest startup acquisition to date to come out of Nigeria, as well as Stripe's biggest acquisition ever.

The deal underscores two interesting points about Stripe, now valued at \$36 billion and regularly tipped as an IPO candidate.

First is how it is doubling down on geographic expansion: even before this news, it had added 17 countries to its platform in the last 18 months. Second, Stripe is putting a bet on the emerging markets of Africa specifically in the future of its own growth.

"There is enormous opportunity," said Patrick Collison, Stripe's co-founder and CEO.



"In absolute numbers, Africa may be smaller right now than other regions, but online commerce will grow about 30 per cent every year. And even with wider global declines, online shoppers are growing twice as fast. Stripe thinks on a longer time horizon than others because we are an infrastructure company. We are thinking of what the world will look like in 2040-2050."

"It is observed that the deal will give Paystack a lot more financial strength to build out further in Nigeria and expand to other markets," CEO Shola Akinlade said.

Paystack had been on Stripe's radar for some time prior to acquiring it. Like its U.S. counterpart, the Nigerian startup went through Y Combinator — that was in 2016, and it was actually the first-ever startup out of Nigeria to get into the world-famous incubator.

Stripe, with its business firmly in the world of digital transactions, already has a strong line in the detection and prevention of fraud and other financial crimes. It has developed an extensive platform, but even with that, incidents can slip through the cracks.

However, while those troubles continue to be worked through, Paystack's acquisition is a notable foil to those themes. It points to how talented people in the region are identifying problems in the market and building technology to help fix them, as a way of improving how people can transact, and in turn, economic outcomes more generally.

Tunde Kehinde noted that there would be more exits of promising startups either by going public or getting acquired. He added that Stripe's move is a vote of confidence not just for the potential of the region, but for those putting in the efforts to build tech and continue improving outcomes for everyone.

Similarly, Flutterwave, like other fintech services provider firms across Africa, just had a huge boost as it closed \$170 million valuing the company over \$1 billion.

In total, Flutterwave has raised \$225 million and is one of the few African startups to have secured more than \$200 million in funding.

Launched in 2016 as a Nigerian and U.S.-based payments company with offices in Lagos and San Francisco, Flutterwave helps businesses build customisable payments applications through its APIs.

Flutterwave had processed 107 million transactions worth \$5.4 billion. Right now, those numbers have increased to over 140 million transactions worth more than \$9 billion. The company, which also helps businesses outside Africa to expand their operations on the continent, has an impressive clientele of international companies, including Booking.com, Flywire and Uber.

Flutterwave said more than 290,000 businesses use its platform to carry out payments. And according to the company's statement, they can do so "in 150 currencies and multiple payment modes, including local and international cards, mobile wallets, bank

transfers, and Barter by Flutterwave."

Year 2020 was a pivotal one for Flutterwave; its second investment came just in time before the COVID-19 pandemic hit Africa, negatively impacting some businesses but not payments companies like Flutterwave.

The growth resulted from an increase in activities in "COVID beneficiary sectors" — a term used by Flutterwave to describe sectors positively impacted by the pandemic. They include streaming, gaming, remittance and e-commerce, among others.

Besides, Flutterwave's response during the pandemic-induced lockdowns was instrumental as well. The product, which went live across 15 African countries, helps over 20,000 merchants to create storefronts and sell their products online.

Flutterwave's \$170 million mammoth raise and its billion-dollar valuation represent a landmark achievement for the African startup scene.

Unlike the others, Flutterwave checks all the boxes of what a billion-dollar African startup should ideally look like — founded by Africans in Africa while reaching a \$1 billion valuation in fewer than 10 years.

Owing to the huge financial minefield in the fintech venture capital, GTBank is leading other big money managers to veer into what is hitherto seen as arena for small businesses.

GTBank has launched a N3 billion, about \$15.2 million, scheme in partnership with Agence Française de Développement (AFD) to promote Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) development in Nigeria.

In a statement issued by the bank in Lagos, the initiative is designed to boost financing for business start-ups and development projects in Nigeria.

"The partnership with GTBank, which is the first in Anglophone Africa, will support the growth of SMEs by providing a risk sharing mechanism on loan advances," it said.

It added that the scheme provides banks, private equity investors and other financial institutions a safer platform to increase participation in SME financing by providing foreign guarantees to local credit facilities advanced to SMEs.

The Ariz Portfolio Guarantee Scheme, since its inception in 2008 had expanded to over 20 francophone countries in Africa and teamed up with more than 40 partner banks worldwide.

The statement quoted Denys Gauer, the French Ambassador to Nigeria, as saying that "SMEs has a key role as drivers of economic growth and employment".

Gauer said that the objective of the scheme was to facilitate SMEs' access to finance by supporting the development of the GTBank portfolio of SME loans.

The statement added that Mr. Segun Agbaje, GTBank Managing Director, said that empowerment of SMEs remained pivotal to the sustenance of growth and development in emerging economies across the world.



Vaccines: MTN fulfils promise made to Nigerians

The Nigerian government has taken delivery of the first set of 300,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines out of a total of 1.4 million doses designated for Nigeria by the African Union (AU). The vaccines are a combination of doses of AstraZeneca vaccines from the COVAX facility, and from the African Union's (AU) COVID-19 vaccination programme, towards which the MTN Group contributed \$25 million.

The vaccines will be distributed among health workers in Nigeria by the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency.

Commenting on the vaccines, Dr Faisal Shuaib, Director-General, National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHDA), said "On behalf of health care workers in Nigeria, we commend the efforts of the Nigerian government and the African Union in the fight against COVID-19, and we thank MTN for their collaboration. The arrival of these vaccines is a major step, as we try to stay ahead of the virus. We need all the collaborations we can get, and I implore more organisations to join this drive for the Nigerian people."

Also Speaking, Director General, Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, expressed appreciation on behalf of the government. "The donation of COVID-19 vaccines is truly helpful, and we are grateful. We can only succeed against COVID-19 when we fight together. These vaccines will go a long way in protecting health workers, who are on the frontline, and need all the protection they can get at this critical moment, hence the prioritisation of their vaccinations."

Expanding on the power of partnership and collaboration, Chief Executive Officer, MTN Nigeria, Karl Toriola, said "I thank the Nigerian government and the African Union for the opportunity they granted MTN to collaborate and contribute towards the delivery of these vaccines. The ongoing threat of COVID-19 requires a vast and accelerated effort by both the private and public sectors. Partnerships like this practically demonstrate what can be achieved when we work together for Africa's (and indeed Nigeria's) progress."

We are truly privileged to have been able to play our part in contributing towards government's efforts to protect and save lives."

At the start of the pandemic, MTN Nigeria collaborated with government to curb the spread of the virus, in large part via the introduction of MTN's Y'ello Hope platform.

Y'ello Hope encompasses a broad range of interventions and programmes valued at approximately N25 billion, that are designed to offer relief where it is needed most. These are aimed at supporting Nigeria's people, customers, communities, and the various levels of government.

Through Y'ello Hope the company provided free-to-access services (including SMS and data) to the most vulnerable, facilitated zero-rated access to healthcare websites, deployed the 'Wear-it-for-me' campaign to help create awareness around the importance of wearing masks, and made a N1 billion donation to the private sector-led Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID).

“IMCs haven't done a better job of persuading clients to spend during adverse operating environment”

Gbenga Adebija is a multi-disciplinary administrator, technocrat and Business Leader. He has over 27 years of top level work experience in both the private and public sectors in Nigeria. Adebija has a widely acclaimed track record for excellence and purpose-oriented leadership. Adebija is an alumnus of University of London, University of Ilorin, Nigeria Institute of Journalism and the Lagos Business School. He also received broad-ranging business education around the world especially in the USA, UK, Denmark, Holland, France, Poland, UAE, China, India, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Republic of Benin, Singapore and Nigeria. After his post-graduate studies, he worked for Cadbury Schweppes between 1993-2007 where he occupied various leadership roles at local, regional and global levels as well as auxiliary responsibility for organisational initiatives in areas such as Human Resources, Administration, Corporate Strategy, Marketing, Business Development and Corporate Communication for the Europe, Middle East and Africa operations of the multi-national company. In 2003, he won the AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE, the highest and most prestigious Award in Cadbury for consistently excellent performance over a period of 10 years and was a key member of THE BEST PERFORMING TEAM in 2002. Adebija is also a recipient of numerous local and international awards including the prestigious Global Brand Excellence Award in 2013 conferred by the World Brand Congress in Singapore. He served as SA to a Federal Minister, providing support in the areas of Organizational Communication, Operational Integration and Strategic Planning. He has an impressive media profile spanning over three decades across the print, electronic and social media (including being a panel judge on THE INTERN, a business reality show) radio presenter and contributor/columnist for several major Nigerian newspapers. Adebija is a member of Ikoyi Club 1938 and zonal leader of the Knights of St. Mulumba (KSM). He is married to Yetunde and they are blessed with three children.



Gbenga Adebija

How would you describe the IMC industry in 2020?

Like most sectors, it was impacted by the global pandemic which required all stakeholders and major players to review their playbook and reinvent themselves in order to remain relevant. It also provided an excellent opportunity for the sector to engage in a comprehensive and broad-ranging evaluation of key imperatives and a thorough examination of the fundamental practices and operating philosophies. Hopefully the outcome of all of this should lead to greater standards of stakeholder value now and in the future. There was a lot of expectation in the first quarter of 2021, but second wave of COVID 19 seems to have scuttled that.

What is your forecast for the industry in 2021?

Lessons have been learnt from last year and these insights should be creatively deployed to ensure a much better outing in 2021. It is unfortunate that IMCs are usually the most adversely impacted whenever there is an industry downturn. However, this is a perennial occurrence and it is expected that by now IMCs should have adjusted to this situation. It goes back to what I previously shared about a comprehensive review of the business to achieve appropriate scaling in the relevant areas in order to achieve business continuity. By now, IMCs must have intrinsic flexibility and adaptability as well as implementing innovative solutions during periods of diminished activity. Any serious IMC player must have prepared extensively for 2021 based on the 2020 scenarios so I

confidently expect a much better outlook for 2021 despite the prevailing pandemic.

Advertising has suffered greatly since the outbreak of the Coronavirus early last year. What are the options for the agency owners?

By now it would be expected that all IMC players would have strategically reviewed their operations and refocused better on value benefits for stakeholders. Internally, there has to be a review of manning levels, skill audits, internal capabilities, profitability, work methods, business process and all other essential aspects of business sustainability. Externally, agencies must consider partnerships and alliances, client profiles, service standards, client requirements and other key elements of the ecosystem within which they operate in order to deliver on

stakeholder expectations.

Due to lack of productions, clients have cut-down on marketing communications budget. What should an average manufacturing firm do to sustain drive in the marketplace despite dwindling revenue?

Actually, it is during periods of diminished economic activity that manufacturers need to increase visibility, boost brand profile and achieve the greatest social capital with stakeholders so that they actually become the brand of choice. IMCs may not have as yet, done the best job of persuading their clients of the transcendental opportunities in an adverse operating environment.

Government has been criticised for not being able to communicate properly during this crisis time. As a communication specialist, how well can this be done?

I have had the privilege of engaging with the Presidency several times as well as with state governments on this particular issue, and it is obvious that there is a massive skills gap which needs to be filled. It starts with an awareness of a gap in the skill set in the public sector and therefore the need to bring in the relevant capabilities either through the process of knowledge transfer or as installed capabilities.

Let's look at PR sub-sector of the IMC. How well or bad has the industry been? What can the practitioners do to improve upon it?

As with other sub sectors of the IMC, the PR industry was also adversely impacted but experientially this is familiar territory and it is expected that PR practitioners would have devised the relevant initiatives as coping mechanisms. The broader issue is how PR needs to position itself as an integral aspect of business and a core priority for the achievement of company objectives.

Which of the IMC sub-sector has suffered more - core advertising, experiential marketing or PR, and why?

It is difficult to make that determination without access to the relevant statistics. However, by deductive reasoning, the various subsectors would be proportionately impacted based on market share.

You have been a bit quiet in the industry sir; what is your next move?

In the last few years I have been mostly focused on promoting bilateral trade between Nigeria and Germany as well as the UK. This has been a significant chapter in my career because of the broad-ranging exposure to key players in these geographies and a better understanding of the dynamics of multi-lateral institutions. I am on the board of CBI Television a cable TV station which should debut soon. I am working with an agency to animate some storylets I have written over the years into a TV series and I am involved in all kinds of projects within and outside Nigeria at varying levels of implementation.

Nigeria's creative advertising sub-sector needs to be more innovative and daring – Kelechi Nwosu

In a world where hard facts and figures are oftentimes overrated, creativity can hold the reputation of being soft, instinctive, hard to measure or quantify. According to the 2020 World Economic Forum (WEF) report, however, the predicted top five skills needed in the future will be complex problem-solving, critical thinking, people management, coordinating with others, and creativity.

While technology has evolved, it hasn't changed the fundamental need for creativity. Going by the mantra of Stephan Vogel, Ogilvy & Mather Germany's chief creative officer, "Nothing is more efficient than creative advertising." Vogel holds that "Creative advertising is more memorable, longer lasting, works with less media spending, and builds a fan community faster."

In reality, perceived creativity is measured along five dimensions, which include originality, flexibility, elaboration, synthesis and artistic value; and studies have found that creative campaigns are, in general, more effective than other types of ads. Put simply, as the essence of advertising and branding, creativity is what gives life to messages about products and services that may otherwise be boring or insignificant in the hearts and minds of target customers. This explains why advertisers often turn to advertising agencies for the design and development of ad campaigns, even if it means taking a gamble on what will work best.

While responding to The Industry's enquiries on contemporary issues in the Nigerian marketing communications space, Kelechi Nwosu, Managing Director, TBWA\The Disruption Company, and one of the industry eggheads, emphasised on the age-old mantra, creativity, while addressing numerous germane issues.

Describing the country's creative advertising space as tough, but growing, Nwosu advocated more agency collaboration within the disciplines of marketing communication. "We need to be more innovative and daring, and we need to reflect more on our contemporary Nigerian culture. Clients are also asking for results: we ought to prove that we provide value (which we do) and we need to ensure we get remunerated for it."

The agency boss stressed on the need for agency businesses to develop own platforms and products, considering the fact that the "market is too shallow to wait for others to develop and then pitch the businesses", while also calling on the Federal Government to stimulate and support the MARCOMM industry by following the regulations that will allow only licensed and registered practitioners to provide advertising services.

"Unregistered firms from abroad that provide services to Nigerian advertisers must be regulated and stopped (where non compliant) since that practice is not supported by Nigerian laws and is a loss of tax revenue for the country."

Nwosu summed up 2020 as a tough year regarding the marketing communications industry, coupled with the fact that Covid-19 pandemic dropped Nigeria into a recession. "Except for a few advertisers with an eye on the long-term value of brands who maintained their advertising, even if modestly, most other advertisers quickly cut their marketing communications spend."

On the 2021 industry projection, Nwosu expressed cautious optimism, citing the World Bank prediction of a recovery and growth of 2% for Nigeria. Specifically, he anchored his optimism on the resilience and tenacity of many brands to brave the conditions and see how to recover from last year. "Those are motivating factors that suggest that the year will have a modest recovery for the IMC sector." He, however,



Kelechi Nwosu, MD, TBWA

noted that the recovery will be skewed positively towards agencies that are supporting brands in the growing sectors such as telecommunications, fintech, e-commerce, health & pharmaceutical, food & processing, among others.

Asked how the pandemic has affected the African advertising ecosystem, the TBWA\The Disruption Company's helmsman cited the absence of studied figures as reason for not speaking authoritatively on the matter. Meanwhile, he opined that the trends in Nigeria, South Africa and the world will not be different. "Advertising supports demand and where there was little or no demand, the industry and the players suffered loss of revenue to varying degrees. The rate of loss of revenue will be correlated to the diversity of the account portfolio of the agencies all over Africa. We must also realise that Africa is underdeveloped and generally under advertised."

Referencing an article titled, "Nigeria Advertising Sector, Path to Growth", by

"Our country is in dire need of creativity and productivity; it cannot be left to advertisers alone. Agencies should utilise the skills they have built to create these.

For us at TBWA\CONCEPT, The Spirit of Lagos Behaviour change campaign (2012-2014) and Proudly Made in Aba (2017 & 2017) are great examples."

TBWA\CONCEPT, The Spirit of Lagos Behaviour change campaign (2012-2014) and Proudly Made in Aba (2017 & 2017) are great examples."

TBWA has been in the forefront of helping SMEs, and Nwosu, while sharing some of the agency's major projects with The Industry, mentioned SME SHOP initiative as its deliberate response to the SME market. "Realising that the sector was critical to growth in Nigeria, we studied the market for four years and launched our offering known as the SME SHOP. Clearly, we still have a lot to learn about SMEs and their communication needs, but we have, however, had modest successes in capacity training, consulting for SMEs in branding, business growth, and how to get loans and set up financial processes."

He also noted that typical challenges for SMEs were exacerbated by Covid-19, but stated that TBWA\CONCEPT, in partnership with the Ford Foundation, had designed and is now implementing programmes SME SHIFT, which answers some of the identified challenges. "The programme has free training videos in modules with experienced and deep facilitators speaking on different need areas which we learnt via a pre-programme research. Mrs. Nike Ogunlesi of Ruff 'n' Tumble, Ms Uloma Ike of Bank of Industry (BOI), Ranti Atunwa of TBWA\CONCEPT and six other prominent facilitators are part of the faculty. Check it out on smeshop.ng. So far, we have trained over 1000 businesses online, offering free business clinics to 50 SMEs, majorly female owned."

On the impact of the Aba project and government's contribution to it, Nwosu said that the Proudly Made In Aba (PMIA) initiative, developed and supported by Ford Foundation over three years ago, has been a success. "It attracted businesses to the SMEs in Aba and generated enquiries that led to revenue increases. The leather sector and the textile sector reported N1.6 billion direct sales during the campaign period in 2018. An estimated \$100,000 worth of free, positive publicity was generated for brand Aba."

He further revealed that there was a HACKATHON sponsored by Ford Foundation that resulted from the first phase of PMIA and over \$100,000 was given as prizes to the winners who were selected based on how they would use technology to build brands out of Aba, adding that Clintonel, a second prize winner, has successfully started a CAD supported manufacturing Lab in Aba.

He, however, noted, "We were minimally supported by the Abia State Government (ABSG) via logistics and information, but we are yet to get their full support to help the government strategically build some strong brands in fashion, textile, leather, and fabrication out of Aba. All attempts to gain the attention of the ABSG have failed."



UBA reinvents the wheels in e-banking space



Kennedy Uzoka, CEO, UBA

Pan African financial institution, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, is set to change the face of digital banking services with its new mobile banking app aimed at delivering first-rate services to customers.

The new UBA mobile banking app has been armed with benefits and features designed to give its customers increased control and accessibility to carry out transactions with ease.

UBA's Group Head, Digital Banking, Kayode Ishola, who spoke about the new banking app to members of the press during an international virtual media parley recently, explained that apart from being able to decide where they want their cards to operate and block,

customers can view or request new cards straight from the app to suit their specific needs, as the app has been tailor-made to give customers what they want, how and in the way they want it.

Reeling off some of the features and benefits of the app, he said a lot of investment in cutting-edge technology and attention to details was put into the new UBA mobile app.

Ishola said, "The new UBA Mobile App is your personal finance manager built with a distinctive user interface that will change the face of banking. With this app, we are reimagining banking as our engagement has moved from being channel-based to being platform-based. The

speed of the platform has been made to match the speed of light as we have cut down significantly on the number of processes expected to carry out your transactions."

"Interestingly, we have worked towards creating behavioural insight for our customers and working around this to address the real needs of our customers using the omnichannel platform and running on our open digital platform, which is very interactive and armed with lifestyle services. It is sleek and trendy with seamless user interface," Ishola stated.

UBA's Head, SME Banking, Sampson Aneke, said that apart from the fact that the app has been created with journey that has a high-level of intelligence - as it can work based on frequent transactions, it can also speak to the specific country where it is being used as the new mobile app runs concurrently in the 20 countries of UBA's operation interacting in different languages and cultures in line with the specific needs and regulation of the country in focus.

"This all-encompassing platform which boasts of a new user interface because of its sleek, modern nature of

delivering seamless experience across several devices. It can be used as a budgeting tool, loan application and also allows customers view their expenses according to their various categories such as the amount spent on data within a particular period," Aneke explained.

On the security features of the app, UBA's Group Chief Information Officer, Onyebuchi Akosa, said that security of the app are best in class, adding that the new platform, which will revolutionise the way banking services are offered, promises to deliver increased personalised banking via a watertight and highly-effective security system.

"The new app has also been built with the best-in-purchase security features and has been modelled appropriately to ensure that all the features are working properly to secure transactions maximally. It is also important to mention that the bank took into consideration the virtually impaired, and thus has used voice recognition as a channel for transaction which suits both convenience and the visually impaired customers," he said.



Sterling Bank's 'SocialPay' design to boost quick purchase

Sterling Bank Plc. has introduced SocialPay, a secure and convenient solution that allows buyers and sellers to make and receive payment on social media with just a link.

The newly introduced solution provides secure online payment solutions to physical store owners and retailers selling on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Once subscribed to the solution, they can create and share payment link to get paid instantly for their products and services.

Divisional Head, Retail and Consumer Banking, Sterling Bank Plc, Shina Atilola, said SocialPay was introduced to make payment easy for Nigerians engaging in digital commerce.

"Our customers, both

retailers and buyers, are now selling and making purchases through social networks. Following this cue, we introduced SocialPay to make it convenient to make and receive a payment within that same ecosystem," Atilola disclosed.

According to Atilola, "SocialPay is a secure payment solution for businesses selling online through websites, social media pages/handles, or WhatsApp for Business.

"With social media networks becoming the centre of everyday life for almost 25 million Nigerians, SocialPay will ensure that these digital natives can make quick purchases and receive payments from social stores.

"SocialPay makes payment as simple as clicking a button and the money is immediately transferred. The biggest benefit of the payment solution is that the transacting parties (sellers and buyers) are protected," Atilola explained.

Beyond its quick payment and funds receipt capability, SocialPay also eliminates the invoicing challenge facing thousands of micro retailers on social media. Within the application, business owners, offline and online, can send and manage their invoices on the go at any time. This ensures they get paid by their customers who perceive them as credible because they provide documentation of services rendered and payment owed.

Union Bank makes digital investment trouble-free for customers

Union Bank of Nigeria (UBN) Plc has launched the M36 digital investment platform that would offer a wide range of investment opportunities to investors through a self-service app.

The M36 also offers loans, personal travel allowance, will and trust services and many more essential products under its life essentials menu.

It was also designed to deliver a wide range of investment options not readily available on self-service digital platforms like foreign currency transactions, commercial papers, local and foreign-denominated bonds, treasury bills and other fixed-income products.

The Head, Treasury at the UBN, Mr. Chuka Emerole, said, "The M36 eliminates the traditional barriers to investing and offers investors direct access to financial instruments that would usually require the service of



an investment or relationship manager.

"We've designed M36 to ensure simplicity in the onboarding and investing process while also empowering the customer to make sound investment choices based on their financial objectives. We worked with key partners to deliver both the experience and products on M36 and are confident that we have launched a superior product in today's marketplace."

He continued, "With its 24-hour concierge service, the M36 users can access round the clock support from investment advisors as they

actively manage their portfolios.

"The M36 is a timely financial product meant to keep abreast with the rapidly evolving environment and changing consumer behavior that is fueled by technology and growing access to information."

The M36 is also part of the UBN's strategic focus on delivering superior customer solutions by leveraging technology and innovation.

The bank partnered with several asset management companies to deliver the broad range of investment products on the M36 platform.

ATM, POS transactions made easy by FCMB

In what looks like a major breakthrough in automated transaction machines and point of sales transactions, one of the second generation banks, First City Monument Bank (FCMB), has introduced an array of transactions for customers.

This innovation can be used through the use of fingerprints and Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs).

This followed the introduction of paperless transactions within the bank's over 200 branches in Nigeria. With this innovation, customers no longer require deposit slips, withdrawal booklets, or cheque books to carry out over-the-counter transactions.

In addition, FCMB customers now have the opportunity to enjoy cardless banking experience by just using their fingerprints to withdraw and deposit cash at 575 select biometric Automated Teller Machine (ATM) points of the Bank spread across the country and via biometric Point of Sales



(PoS) terminals available within the bank's branches.

Beyond this, the 575 biometric ATMs of FCMB can be used by customers for intra and interbank transfers as well as change of PIN and data update. The simple, convenient and secure cardless services are available for use when customers do not wish to go out with their debit cards or their accounts are inaccessible due to loss or damage.

With these innovations, FCMB has again taken a bold step towards driving value-added digital banking solutions in Nigeria that would significantly promote financial inclusion.

Explaining the new

addition, the executive director, Retail Banking of FCMB, Mr. Olu Akanmu, described it as another turning point and milestone in the digital transformation drive of the lender.

"The FCMB cardless biometric transaction on ATM is a pioneering innovation in digital banking in Nigeria that provides wider access to ATM usage for many more people who may not have debit cards. It delivers greater financial inclusion. Its biometric identity factor also delivers enhanced security and convenience for customers, taking their digital experience to the next level," he said.

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New battleground: Soft drink giants fight dirty over energy drink market

GODDIE OFOSE writes on how soft drink companies in Nigeria are battling one another to dominate the new PET bottle energy drink segment as major contenders- Red Bull, Power Horse retreat.

In the early 2000, the carbonated soft drink market in Nigeria was a straight fight between Nigerian Bottling Company bottler of Coca-Cola products and SevenUp Bottling Company bottler of Pepsi products. Coke had a straight fight with Pepsi, Sprite was on a head on collision with 7Up and Fanta met its match in Miranda. Until now, the battle is still fierce. For an average consumer, it is either Coke or Pepsi, Sprite or 7up and Fanta or Miranda.

The trajectory changed, when Big Cola entered the fray. It was not too long that the big two: Coca-Cola and 7Up, gave the new entrant a bitter lesson that soft market in Nigeria was not about volume of content.

It was not too long Big Cola learnt a bitter lesson and retreated to its original position.

Because Big Cola failed in its bid to upstage the big two, or perhaps, break into the space and gain some marker share, there was a new revolution in Rite Foods. Rite Foods launched Bigi variants and upset the market when even the established soft drink brands were feeling the heat.

Like every industry, there is a cabal and in soft drink market, one can simply say, Coca-Cola and 7Up are the cabals. At the time Bigi came in, it was like the cabals had concluded plans to hike the price of carbonated drink per bottle. But that seems to have thwarted by Bigi entrant as the brand remained resolute and maintain previous price of N100 per bottle.

Entry that change the game:

Coca-Cola and Pepsi never battled on the pedestal Rite Foods came to upset the market. Coke and Pepsi have always claimed superior on taste, however, Bigi came in to empower the poor hawkers on the street by giving them more than Pepsi and Coke.

Ifeanyi Ekeh, an Ebonyi indigene and a Lagos active traffic hawker, told The Industry that it was very easy to embrace Bigi. According to him, "It was at a time Coke and Pepsi was not giving us anything and Bigi came and give us everything," he said.

Ekeh, who is the regular soft drink hawker on Mobolaji Bank Anthony in Ikeja revealed that the margin on Bigi was attractive and everyone fell for it. Yes, Coke and Pepsi are superior brand, he affirmed but "you go for what put food on your table."

It would be recalled that when this happened was when Coca-Cola and Pepsi increased their price per bottle to N150 as against Bigi N100 per bottle. Ekeh revealed that because transit consumers do not like to look for 'change' that is balance, they simply switch to Bigi that was ready to offer N100 per bottle.

Water battle:

While these organisations were going on holding one another at the jocular, a new segment was created albeit a foreign brands. When Coca-Cola was tired dragging the share of the soft drink market with 7Up, it created a juice segment with Five Alive.

There was an ease in the carbonated drink segment with the launch of Five Live and Eva water. 7up never wanted to go into the juice segment but launch Aquafina water to counter Coca-Cola's Eva. Aquafina did not stop Eva water sojourn. The water battle lasted few years until the industry was democratized and we started seeing sachet water and other unknown water brands.

Today, like the carbonated soft drink's fierce battle, water supremacy has abated as Eva and Aquafina have assumed premium status and can be found in highbrow areas in the urban market.

The old horses:

Prior to the new entrants coming in, Red Bull



and Power Horse, both foreign energy drink brands have held the market monophonically. Power Horse was the first to arrive the shore of Nigeria but got complacent until Red Bull came in and pulled the rug off the feet of Power Horse.

Both in Can, a traditional way of brewing energy drink, Red Bull and Power Horse kept on this tradition until there was an innovation.

Red Bull and Power Horse tactically made energy drink a premium brand. The Industry once spoke to one of Power Horse's senior officials, he said, "energy drink is not a mass market product," he stated with confidence.

Unknowingly to these two, the energy drink market has been heavily democratized.

Predator Vs Fearless

For fear of dominance and outright displaced, the Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) has been dragged to court for trademark infringement on its Predator energy drink, with a lion insignia in resemblance of the well-liked market leader, a product produced by Rite Foods Limited.

In a publication in the ThisDay and the Guardian newspapers editions of Friday, March 19, 2021, court forms initiating contempt proceedings against the Managing Director of NBC were published in respect of injunctions granted by the Federal High Court, Ikoyi against NBC.

In the suit No. FHC/L/CS/92/2021, the plaintiff, Rite Foods Limited, had filed a motion ex parte for interim injunction against the defendant, NBC, restraining it from further promoting or using any sales promotion material for its Predator energy drink in a manner that infringes or passes off or that is capable of infringing or passing off the plaintiff's Fearless energy drink, until the interlocutory application for injunction is determined.

The alleged infringement negates the common law property right in the goodwill of "Fearless" energy drinks and Trade Marks Act, Cap T 13, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, which offers exclusive rights to get ups and designs of products already in use by a proprietor.

Investigation reveals that the plaintiff, Rite Foods' Fearless energy drinks, which consist of the Red Berry and Classic brands, were launched into the Nigerian market on June 15 and 16, 2017, respectively, and has gained a wider market share before the NBC's Predator brand which made entrant in June, 2020.

This points out that the trademark has been

in use by the Rite Foods' brands before NBC's Predator drink was launched into the market.

According to the plaintiff, it owns the exclusive right to get up which has been a mark of identifying its market leading.

Fearless energy drink brands

It posits that with the infringement by NBC, consumers are likely to assume (mistakenly) that the aforementioned energy drinks in the case are from one source.

According to the company, the degree of similarity between the lion symbol on its Fearless brands and the NBC's Predator energy drink is high, and that since both compete in the same market spectrum, the mark is likely to cause confusion in the minds of consumers, about the source or sponsorship of the brands offered under the defendant's mark.

Further proceedings for the case at the Federal High Court are slated for March 24, 2021.

However, while the Predator brand is struggling to gain acceptance among consumers, Rite Foods' Fearless energy brands has attained a very high market share of the lucrative beverage market, cutting across the different demographics, mainly the youth segment.

The Fearless brands provide consumers limitless benefits and contain high quality ingredients.

The energy drinks contain Vitamin B6, a water-soluble nutrient that is part of the vitamin B family, which supports adrenal function, helps calm and maintain a healthy nervous system, and are necessary for key metabolic processes. Also, included is Vitamin B12 which is essential for building blood cells and maintaining healthy nerve cells in the body.

Few cases of trademark infringements in the country were those of Nabisco Inc., v Allied Biscuits Company Limited in 1998, where the trademark RITZ was the issue before the court.

Allied Biscuits first registered the mark eight months before Nabisco, and the court held against the appellant, Nabisco, on the premise that it has not used the mark sufficiently to acquire a reputation for the mark in Nigeria, that its intention is to destabilise the Nigerian market and her economy.

Also on October 18, 1993, Pfizer dragged Lyke Merchandise to court for infringing on its trademark, Combantrin Plus, with the mark Combantrin, which was likely to confuse consumers.

The plaintiff's (Pfizer) action for injunction, order of delivery up for destruction of the infringing product (Combantrin) and general damages succeeded.

Predator fires back:

To counter Rite Foods claims NBC said that they will vigorously contest case against Rite Foods. In a statement from NBC, "We note recent media coverage relating to the legal case between Rite Foods Limited and Nigerian Bottling Company Limited (NBC), regarding the Predator Energy drink. Given that the case is now going through the due legal process, we are limited in what we can say publicly."

"However, in the interest of clarity and accuracy, both NBC and Predator Energy would like to make two things 100% clear: firstly, we are well within our rights to continue to sell the Predator products and secondly, neither NBC nor its Managing Director, is in breach of any court order.

"Naturally, we will contest the case vigorously and after due consideration of the merits of the case we are confident that the court will confirm our rights based mainly on the facts that the bottles and logos are not confusingly similar and Predator Energy's established use of the Predator brand and logo in many other markets around the world.

Gainers, Losers:

Rite Foods believes Coca-Cola has a better distribution chain to ouster Fearless in the market with Predator that possess almost similar characteristic of its brand hence its complaint and effort to stop Predator to gain strong entry into the market.

Red Bull and Power Horse are still stuck in their old ways of getting energy drink across to consumer. No consumer in a rural market is ready to part with N500 per can of Red Bull or Power Horse when they can drink same quality and brand for N100 per PET bottle of

Fearless or Predator.

While Red Bull and Power Horse are still in slumber and confused on what to do, 7up Bottling Company cashed in with Supa Komando.

A salesman is when he or she knows when to strike. Supa Komando from 7up knows that Coca-Cola Predator and Rite Foods' Fearless are at each other jugular hence it grand entrance two weeks ago. Now that Fearless and Predator are locked in legal battle, Supa Komando has capitalized on the imbroglio to fester.

On traffic, at the stores and shelves, no one is asking for Fearless or Predator but Supa Komando. Supa Komando is winning while Fearless and Predator are battling passing off infringement and Red Bull and Power Horse are snoring away.

Adeduntan, FirstBank CEO says technology necessary to drive growth post-Covid

Dr Adesola Adeduntan, Chief Executive Officer, First Bank of Nigeria Limited said technology, innovation and enhanced capabilities have become necessary to achieve significant business growth in the post-COVID-19 pandemic.

Adeduntan made this remark on recently during a Digital Disruption Series webinar organised by the Surrey Business School of the University of Surrey, England.

The webinar was themed, "Digital Disruption: How Can Companies Thrive in Africa Post-COVID-19."

According to the FirstBank boss, it is about studying the environment and leveraging

the digital space to proffer solutions tailored to suit emerging challenges.

Adeduntan cited FirstMobile, the bank's mobile banking and *894# USSD platforms as some of the digital disruptions that had impacted positively on the financial institution, the banking industry and the financial ecosystem as a whole.

"We have the largest bank agents – close to 90,000 of them spread across the country, helping to bring in people that were financially excluded into the financial system," he said.

On barriers to growth in creating innovative and indigenous knowledge, the CEO cited capital constraint, social infrastructure and



cultural approach as some of the limiting factors encountered by businesses in Africa.

"In Nigeria, to solve the capital constraint, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Banker's Committee contribute certain percentage of our

profit to a pool of fund to serve as equity for entrepreneurs," he said.

According to the FirstBank CEO, absence of social infrastructure in African countries has denied citizens the ability to lead better and quality life, thus leading to the migration of many young

and brilliant minds from the continent.

He said the bank evolved a deliberate approach in its employment, remuneration, exciting work roles and talent development to inspire and retain its young workforce.

Dr. Adeduntan added that there were significant opportunities in Africa, with over one billion population, while noting that opportunities were available for young and innovative people willing to work smart and hard.

The FirstBank boss noted that the bank had been in existence for 127 years, and had been strategically positioned for exponential growth through its ability to leverage innovation to reinvent itself.

Also speaking at the event, Prof. Kenneth Amaeshi, Thought Leader, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, said COVID-19 had unravelled the need to realign Africa's institutions, and convert challenges to opportunities.

Amaeshi said African governments should evolve more favourable policies and incentives that would encourage renewed innovation, increase investment in education, research and development and intellectual property protection.

"As much as we want to celebrate technology development in Africa, we need Africans to participate and contribute to the knowledge going on in the digital space," he said.

Stanbic IBTC marches impressive gender equality scorecard with top executives' elevations



Stanbic Bank
A member of Standard Bank Group

In no doubts of its impressive gender based opportunity, Stanbic IBTC Holdings has announced the promotions of several of its women to top executive roles across the Stanbic IBTC Group.

These included the promotions of Wunmi Ehis-Uzenabor as Executive Director, Operations, Stanbic IBTC Asset Management; Busola Jejelowo as Executive Director, Investments, Stanbic IBTC Asset Management; Emi Agaba-Oloja, Executive Director, Stanbic IBTC Trustees; and Sakeenat Bakare, Executive Director, Business Development, Stanbic IBTC Insurance.

These promotions which were in line with Stanbic IBTC's corporate governance structure and succession policy further showcased the financial institution's posture as an equal opportunity organisation. Both male and female employees have the privilege to rise as far as their skill, talent and dedication permit them".

Stanbic IBTC has always been forward-looking in terms of its recruitment and succession policies. Having held the belief that females are as talented as their male counterparts and can contribute immensely to

businesses and the society's growth if given equal opportunity, the belief was underscored at the commencement of operations by Stanbic IBTC many decades ago.

Over 30 years ago, when Atedo Peterside conceived the idea to establish an investment bank, one that would be matched as the best in the industry and transform the investment and corporate banking landscape in years to come, he realised the importance of engaging the best hands and minds. He set to work to achieve that and opted for a gender-balanced workforce as he employed as many females as males in senior management roles.

Sola David-Borha was appointed Head, Credit and Marketing Department; Oluwande Muoyo was appointed head of the Treasury and Financial Services Department, and Angela Omo-Dare became the Company Secretary and Head, Legal Services of legacy IBTC.

These appointments were against the grain. At that time, the financial services industry, particularly the investment and corporate banking sector was male-dominated, with C-suite and D-level executives being mostly men. Atedo was,

however, determined to redefine the industry, and he knew that only the best would help him achieve his objectives, irrespective of gender.

Thus, he built a reliable team consisting of both male and female players. The tradition was established at the commencement of the business to give both genders equal opportunity in recruitment, on-the-job training, human capital development, promotions, and remuneration.

Sola David-Borha rose through the ranks to become the Chief Executive of the bank and later of the Holding Company before moving on to a higher role with the mother brand, Standard Bank Group. Yewande Sadiku rose to become Chief Executive of Stanbic IBTC Capital, the Group's investment banking arm and later Executive Director, overseeing Corporate and Investment Banking at Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc before she took up a government appointment.

Bunmi Dayo-Olagunju was also Chief Executive of Stanbic IBTC Asset Management before becoming the Executive Director, Operations of the bank. Other top females in the Group included the Chief Executive of Stanbic IBTC Stockbrokers, Titi Ogungbesan; an Executive Director with the pension subsidiary, Nike Bajomo; Oyinda Akinyemi and Olusola Carrena as Executive Directors in Stanbic IBTC Capital, among others. Today, the Stanbic IBTC workforce is highly symbolic with 57% men and 43% women.

Access Bank tasks women to show strength



Given the challenges women face in the workplace and their attempt to break away from societal stereotypes, Africa's largest retail bank, Access Bank Plc., held a virtual fireside chat recently. The chat analysed the issues women face and proffered solutions to help them own their voices, fight impostor syndrome and maintain assertiveness in a non-inclusive workplace.

The fireside chat was themed "Take the Centre Stage: Speak Up!", and featured keynote speakers such as Dr Dere Awosika - Chairman, Access Bank Plc.; Aishah Ahmad - Deputy Governor, CBN; Ayona Trimmell, Group Head, W Initiative at Access Bank, as well as an interesting line-up of panelists, including Marketing and Innovation Director, Guinness Nigeria - Adenike Adebola, Director

of Governance and Sustainability, Sahara Group Limited - Pearl Uzokwe, amongst other remarkable women.

Dr Herbert Wigwe, the Group Managing Director and CEO, Access Bank Plc, gave the welcome address for the event while the keynote speech was given by Aishah Ahmad. Ahmad discussed the challenges women have faced and are still facing, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic – highlighting issues ranging from unemployment to domestic violence.

Speaking on the notion that women have to work twice as hard as men to stay ahead in the workplace, Aisha disagreed and said, "I don't think women have to work twice as hard, I think they are working hard enough; what they need to do is to network more." Emphasising the need for women to own their voice

in the workplace, Ahmad encouraged women to speak up, saying, "I always tell people 'don't be a chair!' If you can't think of what to say, you can amplify what someone else has said".

Dr Awosika, in her address on impostor syndrome, shared some interesting insights which highlighted the various ways women can overcome self-doubt.

She said, "As women, we must understand and realise that we live in a world that recognises confidence, so be confident. A woman must wear her confidence and not throw a pity party for herself.

We must change that long-standing narrative that women must be pious and stop fostering narratives that promote impostor syndrome in women. Identify allies - mentors, advocates, friends, who are supportive of your talents and professionalism and work with them."

Matters Arising: Yahaya Bello as 'Poster Boy' of APC



Gov. Yahaya Bello

Kogi State governor, Yahaya Bello, did a very brilliant cover-page advert for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in a few national dailies and the advert run for days if not weeks during the party's 2021 nationwide membership registration exercise.

The governor of the confluence state's efforts at canvassing more members for his party on whose platform he contested for his second term in office should ordinarily attract commendations from party members and lovers of party loyalty but his untoward antecedents at least since he assumed office as the number-one man in the state following the tragic death of Abubakar Audu while the election results were still being counted.

Yahaya Bello, being a governor whose age still put in the youth category, has not done much to brighten the hope his generation has in taking the governance of the country over from the class of the 50s and the 60s.

Aside that, Bello who has succeeded in enlisting himself as the son of the president, Muhammadu Buhari, has not only taken governance in the state on downward trend but has also in no small measure dimmed the chances of the youths he purportedly represents in attaining position of power in the country.

At the heat of the terminal disease that caught the whole world napping and gasping for breath, Bello persistently, albeit ignorantly, maintained that Kogi State is Covid-19-free. Even when the National

Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) countered his unfounded conclusion he insisted without any proof that his state was off the reach of the pandemic fast dwarfing the world population similar to the Spanish flu or influenza pandemic of 1918.

His re-election bid to the Lugard House, Lokoja, was yet another misguided outing by the Kogi State governor. The 'taataa' election, apology to Senator Dino Melaye, cast a very dark cloud on the viability of Bello as a vivid representative of the youth constituency.

So when he chose to make himself the self-appointed 'poster boy' for the APC during the party's registration exercise, not many saw him as the right face to intercede for the party in the court of public opinion.

So, on reading deeply researched articles on the same poser, one is forced to conclude that APC might have just shot itself in the leg by allowing the man with sinking prestige to interface for the party.

After reading Eniola Bello's typically brilliant and virtually exhaustive treatise titled "Yahaya Bello: The Ugly Face Of APC", you feel there's little to add to the very illuminating discourse. This is one write-up which should be read and read again by lovers of Kogi State and followers of this geo-polity. This is one state which keeps failing to realise the dreams of its people and the expectations of watchers of sociopolitical developments in the state.

Again if one probably also read Idowu Akinlotan's "They Too Want To Be President" the piece so succinctly x-rayed early aspirants to President Muhammadu

Buhari's job, including Yahaya Bello, governor of Kogi State, who Akinlotan notes, has comically elected himself a son of Buhari, to underscore his desperation to succeed his 'father'. Nigeria hasn't yet become Equatorial Guinea, where the father, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo is President, while his son, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mangué, is the Vice President, by the way.

Giant billboards bearing Bello's image with payoff lines conveying his presidential bid flash past your face as you commute on highways abutting the confluence state. In the estimation of his aides and associates, he either has transmuted from Government House, Lokoja to Aso Villa, Abuja, or he is waiting in the wings. And so they churn out billboard after billboard.

Without waiting for any insider to buttress how much he must have expended on the publicity stunts, Yahaya Bello must have committed billions of Kogi taxpayers' money on a project that is 'dead on arrival'. Still found it hard to place who must have (mis)advised the governor to bite more than his public image can chew.

From whichever part of the trans-national highway you access Lokoja, the state capital, your sensibilities will most likely be assaulted by the naked putrefaction that confronts you in the name of urbanisation.

If you are coming in from above the Niger River, the Kaduna-Abuja road, you drive past the naval formation, NNS Lugard in the sleepy village Banda, and thenceforth to the

main approach into the state capital. The area is known by residents as "Nataco," and it welcomes you with "Oshodi-style" bedlam. You navigate man-sized potholes, striving with every turn of your car wheels, to avoid collision with oncoming vehicles. On either side of the road, trailers are parked with reckless abandon; restaurants and bukaterias, watering holes for commuters, spill into the highway; retailers of all manner of wares, man their wooden stalls constraining the road, either side of the North-South highway.

Should you be unfortunate to be on the road on a "market day," your pace and timing will be further impeded by the buying and selling at the self-styled "International Market," as you progress to the intersection which takes you southward towards Okene or Obajana or left ward into Lokoja.

If you are driving northwards from the Okene-Osara or Kabba-Obajana sections of the country, into Lokoja town through the famous "Barracks Road," you will most likely drive through an earth road, long-designed as a dual carriageway, but which remains a monument of neglect and dereliction.

Perchance your route takes you through the Ajaokuta-Ganaja-Lokoja road, popular with commuters from the South-South and South East of the country; you will have to endure a pitifully dilapidated road, further ravaged by the last rains which virtually severed the road from Lokoja on your route.

And from whichever of these three accesses you traverse Lokoja, you will be confronted by the same overwhelming spectre of abandonment; assailed by the rancid stench of decay; numbed by pervading stasis; disturbed by the prevailing despondency in a city which once hosted the seat of Nigeria's administration, during the colonial era.

"At the heat of the terminal disease that caught the whole world napping and gasping for breath, Bello persistently, albeit ignorantly, maintained that Kogi State is Covid-19-free. Even when the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) countered his unfounded conclusion he insisted without any proof that his state was off the reach of the pandemic fast dwarfing the world population similar to the Spanish flu or influenza pandemic of 1918.

Publicis wins Toyota account



The Toyota media account has gone to Publicis Groupe, according to industry insiders.

Toyota Australia has been reviewing its media agency account, previously held by independent The Media Store, since the start of 2020.

Saatchi & Saatchi will continue for brand and select product portfolios.

BWM Dentsu will continue to lead retail and Hero has also been appointed for select product portfolios.

Publicis Media's Spark Foundry has been appointed the media strategic planning and buying services agency for Toyota and Lexus.

"The automotive industry is undergoing a once-in-a-century transformation that will require innovative customer-focused solutions through next-generation vehicles, services and communications," said Toyota Australia's vice president of sales and marketing, Sean Hanley.

"Our new specialist agency partners are best positioned to support us with innovative

marketing as we enter this new exciting era."

Hanley paid tribute to the incumbent media agency, "The Media Store (TMS) has been a trusted partner for over two decades and has made a great contribution to Toyota Australia. The agency has helped build our brand to where it is today. This decision was particularly difficult and we sincerely thank TMS for their service and support."

Stephen Leeds, TMS CEO said: "The team at The Media Store is incredibly proud of our work with Toyota spanning more than two decades – you don't hear of such incredible tenures these days.

"We've supported the client to become a market leader and retain that position, through an always on client-first approach, continuous improvements, bespoke processes, transparency and innovation – it's what has made TMS famous.

"It is a sad day for TMS, but an opportunity for a fresh start and new beginnings. We wish the Toyota team every success and will effect a smooth and collaborative lengthy transition process."

The total automotive category ad spend is around \$650 million a year, according to Nielsen.

Toyota, including Lexus, had a reported \$69 million in estimated media spend in the year to November 2019.

Publicis, contacted for comment, referred enquiries to Toyota.

Wunderman Thompson acquires mobile commerce business NN4M



Wunderman Thompson has acquired NN4M, a leading mobile commerce partner for global brands.

NN4M, with commerce services for retailers, provides solutions across mobile (smartphone, tablet, apps) and in-store channels.

WPP said the acquisition is in line with the global group's accelerated growth strategy and focused M&A approach to build on existing capabilities in growth areas such as marketing

technology and e-commerce.

The world's biggest advertising group reportedly plans to invest more than \$US200 million to build a new data operation.

The Wall Street Journal said WPP plans to centralise data resources the GroupM media agency network to help marketer clients manage and use data to reach consumers NN4M,

forming part of Wunderman Thompson Commerce, will strengthen the global e-commerce consultancy's multichannel offering.

Headquartered in Edinburgh, NN4M employs 50 people across multiple markets and regions.

It works with brands including Selfridges, Nestlé and River Island, to drive loyalty, increase customer engagement and grow revenue.

JCDecaux unveils programmatic for all its digital inventory

Outdoor media specialist, JCDecaux unveiled its programmatic offering recently, across 100% of its digital inventory.

JCDecaux's sees programmatic making up 2% to 4% of its digital revenues in 2021 and 15% by 2023.

The business also revealed a restructured team in Australia, with senior appointments, and is actively recruiting for additional roles.

Cassandra Cameron has been promoted to the expanded role of executive general manager, revenue strategy and operations.

She has a remit over pricing, packaging, campaign operations and multiformat trading, including programmatic. Cameron joined the company's Australian executive leadership team in 2019.

"Programmatic out-of-home used to be just an idea, now it's a reality and we are excited to be the pioneers in Australia," said Cameron.

Brad Palmer is appointed national programmatic director. He has extensive media experience with recent roles as national programmatic manager at



both Allure Media and Pedestrian Group.

Kasey Climpson joined as programmatic operations manager, and would be bringing an extensive ad operations background from within JCDecaux, previously holding various roles in campaign delivery, including digital verification manager.

JCDecaux CEO Steve O'Connor said: "These changes align the talent in our organisation to deliver on our business strategy. As a business we are match-fit and ready for an inevitable rebound.

"Our unique programmatic offering changes the way advertisers can plan and transact out-of-home and reflects our strong commitment to growing the out-of-home channel and

leading through change.

"Programmatic out-of-home is now part of the broader digital universe, sitting alongside programmatic online in omnichannel buying platforms. This gives us an opportunity to take a share of the \$9.5 billion invested in digital media in Australia each year."

JCDecauxPROGRAMMA TIC offers brands access to OOH inventory with control and flexibility.

Advertisers and agencies can execute and optimise campaigns in real time, with the company guaranteeing supply for programmatic advertisers, setting aside at least 5% of its digital networks to be published via its exclusive supply side

platform (SSP), VIOOH.

JCDecaux's offering is already off to a strong start, surpassing \$1 million of revenue traded programmatically in its first few months, prior to its official launch.

"Our business is primed and ready to change the conversation, giving advertisers a solution for buying Out-of-Home that's as easy, and as sophisticated, as web or mobile audience buying," said Cassandra Cameron.

"By reducing operational barriers, we anticipate a range of new advertisers will leverage the power of this valuable channel.

"Today, more than ever, our clients look to us to understand the future, and the future is now. Advertisers can be confident that when they plan a programmatic out-of-home campaign with JCDecaux they will have access to Australia's most desirable outdoor formats and locations, whenever they choose to be active."

The Australian launch of JCDecauxPROGRAMMAT IC will officially go live in mid-April.

Leo Burnett appoints DDB's Amanda Wheeler as chief client partner



Amanda Wheeler

Leo Burnett Australia has appointed Amanda Wheeler as chief client partner on Suncorp and Craveable Brands.

Wheeler brings to the role more than 20 years' experience working in the

advertising industry.

Her expert knowledge across a broad range of skills comes from her background practicing as a journalist, strategist, communications manager, public relations manager, senior planner, team leader, general manager and managing partner.

Wheeler was managing partner at DDB Group Australia, where she managed a portfolio of blue chip clients, including Volkswagen, Skoda, Freedom and Unilever.

Prior to this role, Wheeler was general manager of Innocean Australia and responsible for helping to establish the agency in its

early days.

Here, she developed and expanded on Innocean's capabilities and services in Australia, leading the agency's partnership with foundation clients Hyundai and Kia.

"I've been lucky enough to have had roles right across the industry from through-the-line advertising and strategic planning through to public relations, event management and sponsorship activation," Wheeler said.

"I'm a passionate advocate for creativity that extends well beyond a television showreel and therefore truly excited to join an agency that acts like a true all-

encompassing creative powerhouse."

Leo Burnett Australia CEO Melinda Geertz said she was thrilled to welcome Wheeler to the agency.

"Her passion for ideas and creativity is infectious, and her track record for creating outstanding client partnerships that encourage award-winning ideas is impressive," Geertz said.

"Amanda is also a lovely human being – someone who shares our values and respects our culture."

This is the latest senior appointment at Leo Burnett, which also recently appointed Emma Montgomery as CEO of its Sydney office.

McCann retains Menulog following global pitch

Online food delivery marketplace Just Eat Takeaway.com, which operates Menulog in Australia and New Zealand, has retained McCann Worldgroup as lead global creative agency.

The incumbent battled it out in a four-way pitch with Adam & Eve/DDB, Bartle Bogle Hegarty and TBWA\London.

Following a number of successful global and local Australian campaigns, the delivery brand reported a 104% year-on-year (YOY) order growth across ANZ, with 166% YOY growth in Q4.

"McCann has been a key strategic and creative partner

amid a period of rapid growth here in Australia," Menulog marketing director Simon Cheng said.

"Their work localising our global Snoop campaign in particular has been outstanding, including shooting new Australian work with Snoop during the height of the pandemic and originating our record-breaking TikTok Delivery Dance campaign. We are delighted to be able to continue this great relationship to deliver even more in 2021."

With orders increasing globally by over 42% last year, Menulog Australia and New Zealand is the fastest

growing market within the Just Eat Takeaway.com Group.

"Menulog is a brilliant McCann client and testament to our focus on creative delivery like a G," McCann creative chairman Ben Lilley said.

"We're really proud of the growth and results our work together has achieved for Menulog and look forward to continuing to be part of their incredible success."

Recent local work by McCann Australia and Menulog has included a colourful State of Origin TVC featuring a kick-off from Snoop Dogg himself, a nostalgic '90s inspired low-



rider spot celebrating the brand's most recent partnership with Macca's and a TikTok campaign that inspired over 21.5 million Aussies to be part of the Menulog Delivery Dance.

THE INDUSTRY EVENING SUMMIT 2020



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1 L-R: Erhumu Bayagbon, Communications Specialist, Airtel Nigeria, Odion Aleobua, CEO, Modion Communications Ltd, Martin Mabutho, Chief Customer Officer, MultiChoice Nigeria, Mojisola Saka, MD, Soulcomm, Lekan Lawal, CEO, M778, Goddie Ofose, Convener, Bunmi Oke, Ladybird Advertising, Israel Opayemi, CEO, Chain Reaction and Dr. Felix King Eiremiokhae, CEO, Oracle Agency, all panelists at 2020 The Industry Summit
2 Goddie Ofose, and Charles O'Tudor, CEO, Adstrast BMC
3 Lolu Akinwunmi, former APCON Chairman/GMD Prima Garnet and Tony Agenmonnen, President, NIMN
4 Goddie Ofose, Charles O'Tudor, Emeka Maduegbuna, Chairman, CandF and Odion Oleobua
5 Goddie Ofose, Gboyega Akosile, Chief Press Secretary to Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Charles O'Tudor
6 Erhumu Bayagbon, Airtel, Odion Aleobua, Martin Mabutho, Mojisola Saka, Lekan Lawal, Bunmi Oke, Israel Opayemi, and Dr. Felix King Eiremiokhae
7 Gboyega Akosile and Udeme Ufot, Former APCON Chairman/ GMD, SO&U
8 Gboyega Akosile, Emeka Maduegbuna and Goddie Ofose
9 Goddie Ofose, Udeme Ufot, Lolu Akinwunmi, Emeka Maduegbuna and Gboyega Akosile
10 Lanre Adisa, GMD Noah's Ark and Charles O'Tudor
11 Carol Ogbuma, Executive Head, Communication, MultiChoice Nigeria, Isreal Opayemi and Martin Mabutho
12 Israel Opayemi and Dr. Felix King Eiremiokhae
13 Michael Dada, President Afrima and Goddie Ofose
14 Lanre Adisa and Bunmi Oke

Gulder, Harp, Coke, others, suffer line extension experiments



Stories by: Goddie Ofose,

Nigerian corporate organisations, particularly the fast moving consumer goods segment of the manufacturing sector, have had a fairly infamy reputation towards brand extension marketing strategy. Most products given birth to as result of the marketing exercise usually frequently experienced hiccup hence their early exit from the market.

Brand extension or brand stretching is a marketing strategy in which a firm marketing a product with a well-developed image while using the same brand name in a different product category. The new product is called a spin-off. Organizations use this strategy to increase and leverage brand equity. This, in Nigeria, has been a more frequent marketing activity. Prominent brands are usually the first to jump at the idea of line extension either to consolidate on the existing equity or ward off competition. More often than not, the resurgence in competition mostly in price will give rise to this effect. Besides, trying to consolidate on the existing marketing segment or warding off competition, line extension

can also seek to recreate new market environment for the brand. For instance, a telecommunication company can branch out to financial segment with the same operating name such as MTN Bank, Airtel Bank and even Glo Bank or GTBank Telecom, Access Mobile and so on.

For most brands rather than consolidate their positions, they tend to lose their equity, market share and never recover from the setback even for the primary brand.

Examples abound for brands that jumped into the murky waters of line/brand extension. Some of the brands that tried unsuccessfully to brand-extend are Gulder Max, Star Lite, Zero Coke, Maggi Signature- Jollof, Miya and Pottages, Maggi Machop, Pepsi Lite, Star Triple X, Harp Lime, Heineken Magnum and several others. According to a book, "Pitch: Debunking Marketing's Strongest Myths" written by a foremost brands and marketing journalist, Ikem Okuhu, stated that "A line extension can be a way to make a brand more relevant, interesting and visible. In doing so, it can create a basis for differentiation, build

audience for the advertisement of a tired brand and stimulate sales.

In most cases, before the line extension takes place, the mother brand should be a formidable brand in terms of market leadership, market share, equity and strong enough to fund the activity of the extended brand.

Organisations that have fell prey to this attractive but slippery marketing exercise are Nigerian Breweries Plc with Gulder for Gulder Max, Star Lager for Star Lite and Star Triple X; Guinness Nigeria with Extra Smooth and Harp Lime; Maggi with several variants and Maggi Machop, and Indomie with Indomie Pepper Soup and Relish.

Other very unsuccessful brands that jumped into the murky waters of line extension include Coke Zero, Pepsi Lite, and Heineken Magnum.

Gulder had done well in its segment particularly when it chose to bankroll a reality TV show programme, Gulder Ultimate Search (GUS). Maybe because of how the show was viewed by consumers, the brand decided to introduce Gulder

Max, a stronger version of the Gulderlager.

Supported with huge marketing outlays, the new innovation, as it was called could not make it beyond few months because Gulder was (is) already a masculine larger hence it demise.

Heineken Magnum was caught in the same web. A hugely successful line extension in other markets, Magnum could not excel in the Nigerian market because of peculiar drinking culture in the country. An average Nigerian beer consumer loves to count bottles but Magnum does fall within that category hence its early withdrawal.

Indomie has been a success story in the Nigeria new market development experiment. The brand enjoyed absolute monopoly until recently. To further protect its territory, Indomie began to get involved in unnecessary brand extension.

Pepper Soup and Relish are yet the most unsuccessful in the venture. Today, these products are lying uninspiring in the shelves. It is, however, gathered that Indomie has concluded plans to finally withdraw these products from the market in the coming months.

Maggi made a terrible mistake with Machop. Machop is alien to the African market and it could not fly despite any marketing strategy. Although, the brand was a massive success in American market, its introduction to the Nigerian market was a miscalculation. The launch of Machop was a funfair as well as a drainpipe for the Maggi brand. Nestle Nigeria could have used the outlays to push other Maggi variants that were not doing well in the market instead.

Guinness Extra Smooth

currently enjoying Guinness Nigeria's marketing communications attention through the brand's sponsorship of English Premier League has been a 'sick' line extension for the dark beer brand.

Guinness Nigeria introduced extra smooth to wrestle the female segment of the market from Legend extra stout that was more appealing to the younger female dark beer category. Investigations have revealed that extra smooth is yet to generate income to embark on its marketing campaign.

Several campaigns embarked upon by the brand has been bankrolled by the Guinness Extra Stout revenue hence the new campaign to sustain conversation and generate income from the brand.

Another misstep from the Guinness Nigeria family was the introduction of Harp Lime. From the stable of popular but struggling Harp larger beer, Harp Lime was introduced. Launch in 2012, Harp Lime struggled from the beginning and was discontinued in 2013.

According to a beer consumer, Taiwo Alabi, Guinness did not think through the gains and consequences of introducing a lime beer. Nigerian beer drinking market is very sensitive to what they consume; therefore Harp Lime was not appealing to this segment at all.

Coca-Cola premium soft drink brand, Coke is very popular because of its taste. Like the saying goes, 'If it's not Panadol it can never be Panadol'. Coke wanted to appeal to the elderly segment by drastic reduction of sugar or sweetener in Coke.

This, according to experts, backfired with Coke Zero. Coke Zero ended up tasting like a different brand causing

consumers to query the brand line extension strategy and development. Same goes for Pepsi Lite.

Apparently, Pepsi, a major Coke competition wanted to wrestle that segment with Coke Zero by introducing Pepsi Lite. Coke and Pepsi are unique in their own ways and that is the reason both brands are sitting atop the ladder, therefore diluting the sugar or sweetener in the normal Coke or Pepsi bottle or PET would end up diluting the market equity of both brands.

Many brands have failed to learn from the frequent failure in brand/line extension hence several grocery stores are adorned with brand extension brands and products.

Experts said, "Today, 9 in every 10 new grocery products are extensions. The reason why brand extensions are so popular is obvious: when a company has saturated a market with one product, it has two options for future growth.

"Either it expands into a new market or a set of markets or it launches a new product. If the firm chooses the latter option, it is choosing to exploit, perhaps, the most important asset owned by a business- the brand," Darlington Okere, a communications expert, said.

Marketing experts, Jack Trout and Al Ries, spent most of their writing careers arguing that line extensions cost market share and can devalue the identity of the brand in the long term. But the success of extensions like Diet coke, Gillette shaving cream and almost everything the virgin brand has done (except Virgin Cola, of course) has proven that brand extensions, if well executed can work.

APCON boss reads riot act, seeks ad industry growth



Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo

The Registrar and Chief Executive of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, has reeled out some of his plans on regulating and uplifting the standard of advertising practice in Nigeria.

Some of his plans include industry reform, solving tax

related issues, copyright issues, agencies pitching for government communications jobs, among others. He revealed these at the IMC Industry Grand Reception organised to honour him. The event was organised by multiple award-winning frontline brands and marketing publication, Brand Communicator in collaboration with the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

Similarly, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) practitioners tasked APCON to ensure that it adheres to growth based regulations that will help strengthen the industry rather than killing the industry businesses.

Commenting on the state of regulation in the country, Dr.

Olalekan said, "Nigeria is the only country in Africa that practices double regulatory system as at today; we have the government regulatory system and self regulatory system. In other market, it is purely self regulation. The sectoral group comes together they outline best business practices, they sign MoU and it becomes a law, but in Nigeria we always find it difficult to conclude that process."

Therefore, he said that he is working on how to bring the sectoral group to work together, in the interest of having an industry all can be proud of.

On the industry reform, "Again the industry reform has been a major challenge. The industry reform can create jobs, the industry reform will improve the Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) of APCON and the

government, and it will help us stabilise our industry. I spoke to the president of all the sectoral groups and they all agreed we need to go ahead with the industry reform," he explained.

He added that the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, has already approved it but there are some challenges that need to be taken care of before the industry review is fully implemented which include court cases.

Meanwhile, it is in talk with the National Assembly and the bill is set for the second reading, stating that, "APCON is here to regulate and not to kill the industry. We are not regulating to strangulate, and we are regulating to bring the best out of every one of us."

In another vein, he said he is in talks with Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and

they plan to set up help desk for advertising industry to listen and ensure that issues that relate to the industry are resolved, adding that some of the issues are double taxation; application of withholding tax and others. He said those that do not practice advertising may not understand the fundamentals, stating that the withholding tax should be applied on the net income.

He added that the sectoral groups have already sent their report to APCON and it will be meeting with FIRS soon on some of the tax related challenges its members are facing.

Another issue he pointed out is the issue of copyright the industry is facing. He said the DG of Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) told him that most of the issues of copyright at the court can be resolved at

industry level. "Today, APCON is talking to NCC on the possibility of setting up a help desk for agencies that need advice on ownership of copyright and copyright issues. We will be organising a webinar soon and the DG has agreed to speak on this issue."

In another vein, he stated, "One of the major projects of the government is the digital switchover; APCON has been requested to manage the audience measurement aspect of the digital switchover."

On a different note, he said APCON members do not get most of government jobs, and APCON certification is not listed on qualification requirements for hiring professionals for government jobs while it is currently in talks with the Bureau of Public Service Reforms on amending that.

Supporting children mental wellbeing our goal - MD Cadbury

Cadbury, a leading food and beverages making firm in Nigeria, has re-emphasised its commitment to promoting initiatives designed to support mental wellbeing of children while helping them to achieve their dreams even beyond the school activities stipulated in the curriculum.

Bourn Factor, an initiative in its second edition, is not only committed to providing the right nourishment for children to enable them pursue their dreams but doing so using their talents to also attract development to their school by winning first, second or third position in the annual creative contents.

Cadbury Bournvita, a nutritious cocoa-based food drink fortified with key vitamins and minerals such as vitamins D, B2, B9, and B12 for healthy development of children is a favourite of many young and old in the country.

Managing Director, Cadbury Nigeria, Mrs. Oyeyimika Adeboye, said education, whether formal in the classroom or informal outside of the school walls, is a critical aspect of the child's development.

Adeboye noted that in Cadbury "We are passionate about educational

development and have created, at different points, a variety of programmes targeting specific concepts that feed into the 360 degree development of the child."

Cadbury had in the past promoted similar initiatives like Bournvita Magic Flight, Bournvita School Programme, and Cadbury Bournvita Tech Boot Camp, all targeted at supporting the mental wellbeing of children.

She added that "we take all aspects of their growth seriously. It was only fitting that we would develop an initiative that emphasises the principles of recycling and impact - themes that are critical for the 21st century - in addition to the school curriculum.

"The Bourn Factor programme was developed to enable children from schools across the country showcase their talent, compete and win prizes for their schools, while raising money towards a social cause."

The programme also emphasises the principles of recycling and impact, such themes that are critical for the 21st century in addition to the school curriculum.

Participating schools are required to accumulate a



Mrs. Oyeyimika Adeboye

minimum of 30,000 points from returning empty jars and sachets of Bournvita. Any school that meets or exceeds this number qualifies for the second round. Qualifying schools then share with the organiser a three-to-five-minute recorded video of a performance by the students.

These videos are reviewed by a panel of judges who select the top three entries based on performance and teamwork.

According to the Managing Director, Bourn Factor programme is put together to encourage important soft skills and character building in children collaboration, selfless giving.

"We want to encourage and showcase students with extracurricular talents beyond academics as we recognise that not all students excel in academics. We also know that schools have projects that need funding and the prize money will support such projects."

Cadbury had worked with the first prize winning school to set up an ICT facility, helped the second prize winner renovate their school and supported the third winner to set up a playground and a borehole.

The first edition of the competition in 2019 had no fewer than 183 schools participated and submitted

over 800,000 jars and product wrappers.

In 2020 the second edition, due to the disruption in the school resumption schedule, only 163 participated but over 2.7million jars and product wrappers were submitted.

Adeboye noted that the winners remain connected with the firm even after the competition. "Our work with the schools continues long after the presentation of prizes. For us, these winners represent millions of Nigerian children who, if given the opportunity, will add value to Nigeria's growth.

"Consequently, we have a number of initiatives that support teachers and parents to encourage these children in nurturing their talents and building their dreams."

In addition she said Cadbury would work with this edition's winning schools to donate products to orphanages of their choice, within their states. This is in line with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy of Cadbury that seeks to build sustainable communities as well as the United Nation's Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs).

"By doing this, we can inculcate in the children, the habit of selfless giving, which ties in with our nutrition and healthy lifestyle project, currently managed by Helen Keller International (HKI)."

She opined that Cadbury has the vision of creating a culture of community and social awareness among children and encourage nurturing and building talents. Through the programme, schools are also thought the importance of giving to the less-privileged children or contribute to a social cause. That way, they are aware of the privileges they have and their broader roles in the society.

"We will consolidate on our impact through the Bourn Factor programme in the past two years with the third edition. We are keen to receive the submissions from the many schools who choose to participate. We will continue to come up with more ways to delight and nourish our consumers. With our Cadbury heritage, we will continue to focus on initiatives that promote the mental wellbeing of our children."

Terragon advises brands to take customer first-party data seriously



The CEO of Terragon, Mr. Elo Umeh has explained the critical role, ownership of Customers First-Party data plays to Brands, and the exponential value they add in Online Advertising.

Umeh who explained this during a chat with our correspondent in his office stated that: "First Party Customer data is the most valuable data businesses own and is the starting point for any form of customer engagement. Now more than ever, the need for businesses to own and manage first-party data could be the difference between staying in business or going under."

"Customer behaviour is dynamic and ever-changing as well as the landscape

within which they operate (for instance the impact of COVID-19). The first step towards understanding and responding to customer needs is through data - to prevent churn and increase lifetime value."

First-party data refers to information Brands collects directly from their customers or audiences, from various touchpoints such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, actions or interests demonstrated across websites or apps, customer feedback, completed customer surveys, forms, etc. First-party data is usually consented to and so privacy concerns surrounding it is minimal.

Speaking on how some

forward-thinking Brands are taking advantage of first-party data, the Chief Executive Officer of Terragon said, "Our Customer Data Platform (CDP) was used by a top global FMCG Brand in Nigeria to surpass their target of building a verified database of their customers with 1 million first-party data. Owing to the success of the previous target, the brand is currently in discussion with us to grow that database to 4 million this year."

He added, "A number of Top Tier banks have also been using our CDP to enrich their first-party database for various levels of customer engagement including cross-selling and up-selling their products and they have reported an improvement in returns on their Ad spend."

Over the years customer journey has become a multi-platform and multi-device, such that their footprint goes across various touchpoints including desktops, mobile phones, TVs, apps, watches and lots more - thereby creating the need for Advertisers to have a unified view of each customer. With the help of a number of tracking methods - including the use of third-party

cookies, advertisers have been able to collect data and follow customer journeys and tailor ads to suit their preference and interests.

However, with customers' increased attention to data privacy, stricter regulations to enforce compliance and phasing out third-party cookies especially by Google Chrome which tracks over 60% of internet users, the ability to track customers and serve personalized Ads this same way is significantly threatened.

While a few solutions are being developed to solve this, the importance of First-Party Data remains a common consensus; giving rise to the importance and need for a software to aggregate and manage data in a privacy-compliant manner - a Customer Data Platform (CDP), Umeh said.

A CDP is designed to pull data from multiple sources and touchpoints and create a 360-degree view of each customer. This allows for personalised and contextual advertising. For instance, to market a specific brand of beer to male customers in the East during a premier league football match, as against a female in the North; or promote travel insurance to a

bank customer who just made a payment for a flight ticket.

This sort of segmentation and personalised marketing capability is made possible on the Terragon CDP. Uniquely equipped with over 108 million profiles to enable enrichment of first-party data using strict data privacy compliance methods, advertisers are able to create audience buckets based on various criteria including demography, location, behaviour and interest; and target them via available multi-channel options - offline (mobile) and online (web).

Speaking on the uniqueness of the Terragon CDP, Umeh said: "No one knows Africans like we do. We are the only Africa-founded Customer Data Platform (CDP) Company in the market today and the only Africa-founded CDP partner for the Facebook Conversions API. Our unique Telco integrations give us access to over 108 million consumer profiles, driving our enhanced market relevance and reach by offering seamless offline (mobile) and online (web) channel access and continuous data ingestion.

With these very strong Unique Selling Propositions,

some of the largest digital platforms from Google, Facebook, Telcos such as MTN, and several others have given a nod to our platform"

The Terragon CDP utilises Artificial Intelligence (AI) and well modeled Machine Learning (ML) to allow Advertisers use First-Party Data as a base for creating lookalike audiences that mirror their best customers, thereby expanding their reach (beyond their existing customers) and giving a higher chance of conversion.

On Online Advertisement in the post-cookie era, the CEO said, "Some of the seismic shifts happening within the digital world are being influenced by the phasing out of cookies. The software string called cookies has had a significant role to play in the growth of the digital advertising industry to a \$300bn market. Cookies enable seamless attribution and measurement, which is at the core of digital. Without cookies, brands will be unable to retarget, segment, track and deliver personalized ads; and will have to rely on software platforms like the Terragon CDP to manage first-party data in facilitating the measurement and attribution process."

Ayeni takes BHM to the UK

Adekunle Ayeni's BlackHouse Media, a Nigerian public relations and communications company, has attained another first by becoming the first Nigeria full flesh PR firm top set up a shop in the United Kingdom without affiliation.

BHM announced the commencement of its UK operations recently amid cheers

Founder, Adekunle CMPRCA, MCIPR will serve as principal consultant and chief executive officer.

Stephen Waddington FPRCA, FCIPR, of Wadds Inc has been appointed adviser and non-executive director, alongside Molihi Molekoa, managing director of Magna Carta South Africa.

Oladotun Ayeni, human resource management expert and doctoral researcher at the University of Edinburgh, and Femi Falodun CEO of Lagos-based ID Africa will also serve as directors.

Founded on November 6, 2006, BHM is one of Africa's promising agencies, representing market leaders in FMCG, ICT, and Media. Nigeria Breweries PLC (Heineken), Nigeria's leading brewer has been a client since 2013. MTN Nigeria Communications PLC, the continent's telecommunications leader, has retained BHM for brand



Adekunle Ayeni, Group CEO, BHM Group

and corporate communications since 2017.

The company has worked for Coca-Cola, the world's leader in non-alcoholic ready-to-drink beverages since 2019, as well as MultiChoice, Africa's leading entertainment company since 2018. Other clients include Reckitt Benckiser and the Project Management Institute.

BHM has also pioneered several innovations on the continent, introducing a PR App in 2014, the annual PR report in 2016, and the Global Day of Influence in 2020. A proposed World PR Day is billed to debut on July 16, the birthday of Ivy Lee.

Ayeni Adekunle said, "We recognise the importance of the UK, in the global PR industry, as well as the bilateral opportunity

between Africa and Britain.

So it's only natural that this is the home for our first international operations. We want to help organisations in Nigeria and other parts of Africa build better relationships and explore opportunities the UK provides, while also providing insight, intelligence, and advisory that will help British organisations make better sense of Africa partnerships, trade, and investment."

The World Bank says Africa presents the opportunity to create the world's largest free trade area - if the African Continental Free Trade Area goes right - by connecting over one billion people in 55 countries with a combined GDP of almost £3 trillion.

And UK-Africa trade that increased by 7.5% to £36 billion in 2019, is something

to watch, Adekunle stated.

For Waddington, "Wadds Inc. is pleased to be advising Ayeni and his team at BHM as they set up in the UK. The public relations industry is in need of some new perspective and ideas, and it's about time we pay attention to what Africa, a continent of over one billion people, and so many experts, has to say. I have no doubts the UK will benefit from a company that has done so well in Africa, and knows the UK well."

Ayeni worked as a journalist and columnist before setting up BHM in 2006. The company worked with celebrities and entertainers before winning a ViacomCBS pitch in 2010, followed by Moët Hennessy. He is a fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, a council member of the PRCA, and a committee member of CIPR Scotland.

He lives in Lagos, Nigeria and Edinburgh Scotland where BHM UK was incubated.

The company will have offices in Edinburgh and London but BHM advocates remote and flexible working for employees. With an additional 25 hires in the past year, staff strength is now almost 100.

Enitan Kehinde (Lead Consultant, FMCG), who studied public relations at Sheffield Hallam University before joining BHM in 2016 will return to the UK as general manager.



Prince Adedamola Docemo, CEO, LASAA

LASAA wins at Court of Appeal

A Court of Appeal sitting in Lagos has affirmed that the Lagos State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law, No. 9 of 2006, is constitutional and valid.

According to the Director, Civil Litigation, Lagos State Ministry of Justice, Mr. Hammed Oyenuga, the Court gave ruling in the matter with Appeal No CA/L/888/2012 - Bunjay

Integrated Service vs Attorney-General of Lagos State.

He said the applicant (Bunjay Integrated Service) had earlier prayed the State High Court for a declaration that the Lagos State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law No. 9 of 2006 is illegal, null and void, as well as unconstitutional, because it is inconsistent with Section 7 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Oyenuga averred that the Court of Appeal in its judgement held that the appeal is unmeritorious, stating that the Lagos State Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law No. 9, 2006 is Legal and Constitutional.

Recall that the State High Court had earlier ruled in favour of the Lagos State Government in its judgement delivered on July 10, 2012, stating that the issue of advertising and signage are residual matters; hence the State House of Assembly can legislate on it.

Nigerians trust in NGOs, businesses than politics - Edelman



Relations firm in the world. It is the world's most robust exploration on Trust, in society's long-standing institutions of business, government, NGOs and media.

Presenting the 2021 Nigeria findings with the theme: 'Pandemic's Ongoing Impact on Trust', CEO of Edelman Africa, Jordan Rittenberry, noted that Nigerians are looking to civil society organisations and businesses to assist the government in uplifting communities and driving positive change.

The Report also showed that Nigerians' fear losing their jobs more than they fear coronavirus, with a high degree of vaccine hesitancy revealed as only 26% expressed readiness to take the COVID-19 vaccine when made available.

A diverse panel critically analysed the implications of the survey report after Rittenberry's presentation.

They include Senior Special Assistant on Media to President Muhammadu Buhari in the Office of the Vice President, Laolu Akande; Director, Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre; Dr Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi; veteran journalist, Dr Reuben Abati; and Senior Director, Global Government Relations for Africa at Procter & Gamble, Temitope Iluyemi. Veteran broadcast journalist, Anike-Ade Funke Treasure, moderated.

Akande suspected that the distrust of government is a result of Nigerians' natural cynicism and the testy historical relationship between government and citizens.

Elo Iyayi's AdTraders makes grand entry



Elo Iyayi, MD, AdTraders, Media Ltd

AdTraders, a young, vibrant and pioneering media buying agency, has been launched to redefine the media buying industry in Nigeria. The agency is for an environment where the only certainty is change said Elo Iyayi, Managing Director of AdTraders.

According to Iyayi, no one could have anticipated the effect of Covid-19 on an already fragmented audience. Even advertisers who anticipated the decline of TV's power in the wake of the Internet must be aghast at the impact of streaming channels and podcasts, while less time in the car and office has made significant inroads into radio's listenership.

Such innovation can create havoc for an advertiser or with the right media buying partner by their side, it can create enormous opportunity. This is why it makes sense to join forces with AdTraders; an agency with the flexibility and foresight to adapt to this ever-changing landscape.

She said, AdTraders' approach is a long-term one. The agency strives to nurture relationships rooted in a thorough understanding of the brand, its goals and aspirations, so that - through ongoing measurement and a data-driven response - the agency is able to adjust strategies in order to achieve optimal effectiveness.

Iyayi believed that the flux to the media landscape is just the beginning. Going forward, it is inevitable that the trends that defined innovation today will be forgotten by tomorrow. This is why AdTraders focuses on helping brands get to grips with what may come to be, rather than what is."

Therefore, in line with this, the agency works non-stop to create real value. This is

achieved thanks to the input of a highly experienced team of negotiators, skilled at creating deal structures that make media spend work harder for clients. Added to this, the team is well-versed in the pros and cons of all media touchpoints, objectively identifying that which offers the most cost effective buy for clients.

According to Iyayi, as a newcomer to the industry, AdTraders brings a fresh perspective that turns its back on the staid and irrelevant, helping clients to plug into a new type of consumer living in a new type of environment.

Industry stalwart Iyayi said, "AdTraders is fast developing a reputation for achieving results for clients striving to make their mark in an increasingly competitive brand world. Iyayi's qualifications are as impressive as her experience: after obtaining a Master of Science degree in Media and Communications from the Pan African University (now the Pan Atlantic University), she went on to graduate from the Lagos Business School.

Her career in advertising kick started in 2004. Stints at

such prestigious agencies as McCann Erikson, Lowe Lintas Lagos, 141Worldwide, Leo Burnett Lagos and SHAREMIND Lagos helped hone her skills in advertising and media for both above- and below-the-line campaigns, and saw her develop a flair for providing strategic oversight.

Iyayi's experience includes the likes of Nigerian Breweries Plc, handling prestigious Nation No. 1 brands, Star and Maltina, British Airways, Unilever Nigeria Plc, where she lent her expertise to well known and loved brands like Close-Up, Knorr, Lipton and Omo, as well as Hayat Kimya, custodians of Molfix, Bebe, Familia and Papia. Her portfolio further includes British American Tobacco (Dunhill, Benson & Hedges, Pall Mall and Craven), as well as Philip Morris-Malboro and Chesterfield.

Working on Comium Telecoms in Sierra Leone and Liberia, Peugeot and Vmobile has not only helped her gain insight into international brands and their workings; it has seen her amass knowledge and expertise in all major industries.

Airtel takes 'The Voice Nigeria to people' homes

Leading telecommunications services provider, Airtel Nigeria, has announced its sponsorship of leading international singing competition, 'The Voice Nigeria Season 3', which is scheduled to premiere on Saturday, March 27, 2021.

The music competition, which launched in Nigeria in 2016, aims to discover and nurture new talents, offering them a credible platform to be positioned at the forefront of the country's music industry, whilst preparing them for the global stage.

Music lovers will be able to watch the show live on Airtel TV by 8pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The Airtel TV app, which is available on Android and iOS, is subscription-free and offers registered users unlimited access to live TV, news and the entire Airtel TV content library.

Commenting on Airtel's sponsorship, Chief Commercial Officer, Airtel Nigeria, Dinesh Balsingh, expressed delight at the company's drive to contribute to the growth of the Nigerian music industry through resourceful partnerships that will not only help groom and nurture local talents but also offer them a platform to international stardom.

"Airtel is delighted to return as a sponsor of 'The Voice Nigeria Season 3,' which has grown, over the past two seasons, to become one of the most watched television programmes in Africa. This sponsorship is a glowing testimony to Airtel's passion and commitment to empower and invest in young,



talented Nigerians and also offer them a strong platform to showcase their talent to the world.

"Airtel remains committed to supporting the Nigerian music industry, which is making waves globally by connecting with hearts and souls not just across Nigeria, but across the world," he added.

This highly anticipated season 3 of The Voice Nigeria will be produced for the first time in Nigeria in partnership with UNITY

Limited and Livespot360.

The show's innovative format features four stages—beginning with the Blind Auditions, followed by the Knockouts, then the Battle Rounds and, finally, the Live Performance Shows. The coaches of the show, Darey, Yemi Alade, Waje and Falz will seek twelve talents for their teams and work with them during the show to hone their skills and prepare the successful acts who make it to the Live Performance Shows to battle it out on a global

stage.

The season will be hosted by award-winning TV host, Nancy Isime alongside popular On-Air Personality (OAP) and Entrepreneur, Toke Makinwa.

Talents and fans will go home with over N100,000,000 in prizes, with the Winning Talent of The Voice Nigeria Season 3 walking away with a monetary reward, a brand-new car, and an international recording contract.

Multichoice Boosts Viewers' Fun During Lockdown



Multichoice, the biggest paid television provider firm in Africa, has shown that the pleasure of its subscribers across the continent is paramount as it topped up sports and entertainment channels during the Corona Virus-induced lockdowns.

Maintaining social distancing and ultimately obeying the lockdown order by the government many people besides those offering essential services were forced to stay home to be saved. Multichoice chose this critical period to boost the fun-line of its viewers by offering free channels like Supersports, Big Brother Nigeria and lot more entertainment channels to make the stay at home pleasurable.

A subscriber noted that "despite my issue with MultiChoice, I have been mightily impressed by the company's sensitivity to its customers' the situation since the outbreak of COVID-19, which has ripped through everybody's, including MultiChoice's, finances in the last one year."

Multichoice announced huge discounts on its DStv and GOtv decoders as part of its efforts to lessen the economic impact of COVID-19 on Nigerians and widen the access to entertainment available on the two platforms.

The discounts took the form of lowering the entry point to the Confam bouquet on DStv and Jolli bouquet on GOtv, meaning

that customers are required to pay N9,900 for a decoder plus a free one-month DStv Confam subscription which was previously N18,900 or N6,900 plus a free one-month GOtv Jolli subscription which was N8,400.

Those generous discounts were preceded by similar shows of sensitivity, which came in the shape of a campaign tagged "We've Got You".

The campaign, which ran from April 20 to June 30 2020, offered active and disconnected DStv and GOtv customers the opportunity to get upgraded to the next viewing package when they renewed subscription on the packages they were on.

Multichoice also granted subscribers access to Free-to-Air news, kiddies and sporting channels. To cater to customers' spiritual needs, the Hallelujah pop-up channel was launched to provide a church-at-home experience for subscribers during the closure of worship places, with the African Easter pop-up channel, in partnership with TBN Africa, becoming available during the month of Easter on both DStv and GOtv platforms.

For Muslim faithful, Sunna TV was launched on both platforms to provide wholesome Islamic content beginning from the holy month of Ramadan.

To lessen the gloom imposed by the lockdown, subscribers on both platforms were also offered access to the hugely popular party-themed Turnup Friday and Owambe Saturday as well as COVID-19 Hope for Africa Concert, in partnership with One Africa Global Foundation.

Alongside these relief initiatives to the consumer, ran others for the general public. At the onset of the pandemic last year, with the government shopping for money to finance the pandemic response efforts, MultiChoice was one of the major supporters from the corporate sector, making cash donations of N200 million and N50 million to Federal and Lagos State governments respectively.

Multichoice similarly assisted with public education on the pandemic, carrying

Educational Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in partnerships with the United Nations (UN) and the United States (U.S.) Embassy.

The firm also committed N400 million to safeguarding income of cast and crew of its various productions. It is instructive to note that this was at a time that productions were at an all-time low.

Multichoice's efforts at contributing to Nigeria's war against the virus also saw the company highlighting the help-lines of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) on more than 10 channels across the DStv and GOtv channels, the cost of which was estimated at over N550 million.

MultiChoice also committed up to N400 million to ensure that professionals impacted by the pandemic were paid during the lockdown when they could not work.

The company also donated 60,000 units of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to hospitals and Non-Governmental Organisations, 10,000 face masks to dealers and other components of its value chain as well as a staff-care initiative that saw it provide PPEs, sanitizers and multivitamins to employees.

In South Africa Multichoice opened up Channel O for music lovers, PBS for the kids on extended holidays, SuperSport Play and Christian-based channel TBN. It also provided free access to several 24-hour news channels.

The channels which are now available to stream for free are: 100 – DStv, 180 – People's Weather, 238 – SuperSport Play, 313 – PBS Kids, 320 – Channel O, 343 – TBN, 400 – BBC World News, 401 – CNN, 402 – Sky News, 403 – eNCA, 404 – SABC News, 406 – Newzroom Afrika and 414 – Euronews Now.

In addition, episodes of some of South Africa's best-loved soaps are available free, including Igazi, The River, Isibaya, Binnelanders, Suidooster and Die Ware Naarheid.

MultiChoice declared R2.5 billion profit for the year ended March 31, 2020.

The group reported a 'solid' performance, despite global and country-specific macro-economic challenges, highlighting a 38% growth in core headline earnings, to R2.5 billion.

"We are certainly facing unprecedented times but are pleased with our performance and the resilience we have demonstrated this year," said Calvo Mawela, chief executive officer. "Our healthy balance sheet positions us well to weather the uncertainties in our markets going forward."

However, top line momentum was affected by modest subscriber growth due to rising consumer pressure, a decision not to increase prices of its Premium package in South Africa, and the fact that last year's growth benefited from specific one-off events, the group said.

MultiChoice said it will continue to focus on producing local content, noting successes in this segment so far.

In addition to compelling local stories, it said it will continue to broadcast the best of sports and international contents and will now integrate third party streaming services onto its DStv platform.

"The recently signed distribution agreements with two major international Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) providers will ensure that customers have access to a wider variety of contents, all in a single place," it said.

"As our industry evolves, we believe that we are well positioned to benefit from both worlds – a large, growing pay-TV market in Africa, as well as an emerging over-the-top (OTT) opportunity, where our own OTT services and aggregation capabilities can drive success."

The group said it also has an exciting product line-up that will launch during the year, including a much-anticipated DStv streaming product.

MultiChoice said that its South African business "held up well in a tough consumer climate," with subscriber growth of 6% year-on-year, or 500,000 subscribers on a 90-day active basis.

Appzone ready to run with Efosa, Omonuwa



Efosa Aiyebomwan

Omonuwa Olulano

In preparedness to create massive impact in the FinTech industry, the Board of Directors of Appzone Group, sub-Saharan Africa's leading Fintech company, have appointed Efosa Aiyebomwan, group chief marketing officer of the company and Omonuwa Olulano, group Chief Human Resources Officer.

Appzone, founded in 2008, is Africa's leading Fintech disruptor and provider of home-grown software solutions for the continent's Financial Services industry.

With a team of over 160 professional and clients in seven countries, Appzone processes over \$2 billion in transactions annually serving 18 commercial banks and over 450 microfinance institutions across the continent.

The announcement comes as Appzone ramps up activities across Africa.

With a career spanning 13 years, Omonuwa brings to bear a wealth of knowledge and an array of experiences across diverse sectors including Financial Services, E-Commerce, Non-profit and Technology.

Some of her previously held roles include Vice President for People and Culture at SoftCom and HR Business Partner at Konga.

A member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management and graduate of Electrical and Electronic Engineering from the University of Benin, Omonuwa's experience includes the provision of strategic HR leadership and organizational change with expertise in the areas of organizational design and development, Talent Acquisition, Talent Management, Performance Management, People Operations and Analytics.

Efosa joins Appzone as Group Chief Marketing Officer, bringing over extensive experience in the technology, entertainment, broadcast media and consulting sectors. Efosa was previously the Head of Communications (West Africa) at Uber and has also held managerial roles at Universal Music Group and MultiChoice Nigeria.

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Glo's creative unit consolidates with Chuka Obi



Chuka Obi

There is a new sheriff in town at the Glo creative and innovation department. The new man at the helms is Chuka Obi, who was recently appointed new director to oversee the unit by the foremost Nigerian telecoms brand, Globacom.

The Industry gathers that the new director responsibility is to manage creative works, strategy and innovate concepts that will enhance growth in the light green telecommunication brand.

Chuka came with lots of work experience in various creative functions which are music & sound design, graffiti artist, art director, illustration and music, sound design and copy

writing with different leading brands.

Prior to him joining Insight Publicis, Chuka was the Executive Creative Director at DDB Lagos and before that he worked at Literamed Publications as an Illustrator/Creative from 2005 to 2007. He also joined SO & U Saatchi & Saatchi as Copywriter/Art Director from 2008 to 2010.

He was promoted as the Associate Creativity Director at DDB Lagos in 2013 and in 2015, he was appointed Creative Director and also in 2016 he was promoted again as Executive Creative Director of the agency.

Obi did ad campaigns for MTN,

Interswitch, Absolut Vodka, Chivas, Fidelity Bank, Mansard Insurance, Mouka, Knorr, Royco, Lipton, Guinness, Malta Guinness, GTAssur/AXA Mansard, Wrigley's, Oando, P&G, Interswitch, Verve, Quickteller, Golden Penny, Wakanow, Johnnie Walker, Pepsi, Star, Heineken, Maggi and many more.

He was the brain behind the famous MTN Saka "I Don Port" advert when he was at DDB Lagos as Creativity Manager. He also worked on others award-winning advert campaigns for MTN Nigeria, Unilever, Fidelity Bank, FCMB, P&G, McVitie's, Wrigleys and many more.

Hughes-Obisesan makes giant strides at Insight Redefini



Sinmisola Hughes-Obisesan

To ensure that creative works from the group are synchronised and managed appropriately, the umbrella company in charge of advertising consumables, Insight Redefini Group, a member of Troyka Holdings has deployed Sinmisola Hughes-Obisesan to the role of Group Creative Director Insight Redefini, in furtherance of its Power of One initiative.

Formerly playing the role of Creative Director of Leo Burnett Lagos, this new redeployment will see Sinmisola Hughes-Obisesan steer the creative operations of the group. With her vast knowledge across an array of

sectors and over 14 years' experience on a plethora of global and local brands, she has led teams across both agencies to deliver award-winning work in Nigeria and across other international markets for brands such as Pepsi, Heineken, Nivea, Amstel Malta, Cadbury, P&G, Nestlé, Tecno Mobile, AXA Mansard, FCMB, Leadway Assurance and others.

Speaking on her new redeployment, Group Creative Director, Insight Redefini Group, Sinmisola Hughes-Obisesan said, "as a creative storyteller, well known for my ability to create deep experiences between brands and consumers, my

goal continues to be to create clutter-breaking, impactful content that resonates with today's digital consumer."

As a firm believer in co-creation and collaboration in order to produce 'creative magic' she went on to speak about her philosophy. "My driving philosophy is to win consumers, not just to sell or tell, but to build meaningful relationships" she said. In her new position, she joins the group leadership team to drive the 'Power of One' and 'Humankind' way of working and winning for Clients.

The Group CEO, Insight Redefini, Dr. Ken Onyeali Ikpe, has expressed optimism for the new chapter of the group, as it just recently celebrated its 41st anniversary. "With this new redeployment, we will be elevating our reverence, agility, deep thinking, and magic with the aim of continuing to lead the existing marketing communications landscape and drive continuous innovation." he said.

Insight Redefini Group consists of five integrated marketing communication companies which also includes; Quadrant MSL, Starcoms Media Perspectives and All Seasons Zenith.

Fabusoro replaces Fadolapo at AAAN

After six months that the former director at the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo was appointed the Registrar/CEO of Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, the leading sectoral group in the advertising industry has appointed a replacement and new Director to take on the affairs of the Association. The new director, Kemi Fabusoro resumed as the head of the AAAN secretariat on Monday, March 8, 2021.

According to President of the Association, Mr. Steve Babaeko, the appointment of Mrs. Kemi Fabusoro is a milestone for the Association as she is the first female director since the inception of the Association. He further noted that her appointment is transformational for the Association as it puts into perspective the Association's effort in advancing gender balance in leadership of AAAN.

Kemi is a goal-oriented senior management executive with measurable track record in Brand Management, Marketing and



Kemi Fabusoro

Media Strategy, Digital Excellence, Team Capability building.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Mass Communication from University of Lagos and a Post Graduate Diploma in Digital Marketing from the Digital Marketing Institute, UK. She has an Executive Education in Marketing Strategy at Harvard Business School, USA. She's a Certificate Marketer by CIM and a registered APCON member.

She started her career at Hunters Advertising Limited in 2004 where she was responsible for the launch and market penetration of a

lot of electronics brands such as Akira, Sharp & Novartis etc. Afterwards, she joined Insight Communications as a senior executive and she rose to the post full manager, before she joined Mediareach as the head of Media Strategy and Planning working on various FMCG clients.

Kemi has also worked with Cadbury Nigeria in different capacity from heading Marketing Communications, Media and Agency relations to brand management across West Africa. She was responsible for driving the brands to success which earned her a number of awards and recognition within Nigeria and EMEA.



Tomi Ogunlesi makes a major switch at Interswitch

Dedication to work and attention to details have earned the former head of corporate communication at Interswitch, Tomi Ogunlesi a promotion to group head, marketing and communications.

Interswitch is considered Africa's leading technology-driven company and the company has developed Verve that is giving Visa and Mastercard a good run in the financial technology card segment in Nigeria.

The new group head, marketing communication has worked with Interswitch for over 5 years. His new role is to provide marketing and communications leadership

for Interswitch's Masterbrand and corporate/B2B Sector (2 business lines – Payment Processing & Industry Verticals), with broadened responsibility for delivering brand equity, market share and return-on-marketing-investment (ROMI) through brand and product marketing/communications strategy and execution, and primary accountability to Group Chief Marketing & Communications Officer.

Ogunlesi has over 12 years of cognate experience in strategic brand building, business development and marketing, and has established himself as one of West Africa's finest

Corporate Communications' experts.

He completed high-level executive programmers in Marketing and Strategy both at the Wits Business School, Johannesburg and the Judge Business School, Cambridge respectively, in addition to being a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK), the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) and the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM).

Ogunlesi is a well-rounded, commercially-minded integrated marketing & communication professional with experience in strategic brand building, insight-driven marketing & communication, idea leadership and business development.

He specializes in building brands that accelerate business growth, shaping brand positioning and image to create stakeholder value and capable of distilling brand essence and key drivers into simple, scalable activities that deliver returns on marketing and communications investment. previously at Promasidor, Cosse, The Jupiter Drawing Room, Volcano Advertising and First Bank, Ogunlesi has designed and implemented marketing and communication campaigns that help communicate brand value and move markets.

Stanbic IBTC Bank elevates Bridget Oyefeso

The head, marketing and communications at Stanbic IBTC, Bridget Oyefeso-Odusami, has been given another task, but this time as non executive director at bank's asset management company, Stanbic IBTC Asset Management Limited.

The appointment, which is about 8 months old expands Oyefeso-Odusami's horizon.

Bridget, who joined British Airways 9 years ago, has consistently moved up the career ladder in marketing and communications. She joined Aero Airlines in January 2009 as marketing manager and left after 7 months to become executive director at Change-A-Life, where she worked from



Bridget Oyefeso-Odusami

September 2009 to June 2010.

Bridget, whose responsibility at Change-A-Life was to ensure that CAL has a long-Orange strategy which achieves its mission, and towards which it makes consistent and timely progress joined FirstBank

Nigeria as head sponsorship and event.

On November 2010 where she joined FirstBank, Bridget improved the overall strategy for sponsorship and events for the bank including the delivery of events within or under the approved budgets, while ensuring the delivery of contractual commitment.

She was with FirstBank until May 2017 when the marketing expert joined Stanbic IBTC Bank as corporate Investment Banking marketing manager. She was subsequently promoted to acting head, marketing and communications and in January 2019, she made substantive head, marketing and communications at the bank till date.

Amaka Onyemelukwe climbs the ladder at Coca-Cola Nigeria



Amaka Onyemelukwe

The Coca-Cola, a cola giant Nigeria business, has promoted Amaka Onyemelukwe, from Public Affairs, Communications Manager to the position of Director, Public Affairs, Communications & Sustainability at Coca-Cola

Company in Nigeria.

Onyemelukwe, who expressed excitement at the new development on a popular social media platform, LinkedIn, said "It's the month of March, a month when women are celebrated and reminded to dream without any form of restriction."

According to her, "I am excited on my new responsibility as the Director, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability for The Coca-Cola Company in Nigeria. I am indeed humbled to

embark on this new leadership journey."

"I have over the past few years- achieved remarkable feats in driving difference across our communities," she said adding that "I look forward to the next phase of extraordinary work with my team and valued partners."

While thanking those who have expressed excitement over her promotion, the communications expert said, "Thank you so much for all your warm wishes and messages. I have been overwhelmed by your love and kind words."

Advertising and the power of the Nigerian story



Lanre Adisa, CCO/CEO, Noah's Ark Comms. Ltd

First, I would like to thank Goddie and his team for considering me worthy of delivering this keynote speech in a gathering of very distinguished men and women of inestimable knowledge. The subject at hand is one that has gained currency in the past few years. In a brand new world where digital disruption drives every aspect of our lives, life itself becomes too mechanized and regimented without the soothing balm of storytelling, otherwise known as content. Everyone has a story.

Everyone tells their stories. Some have made an art of it and have spawned a whole new industry teeming with influencers, content creators of all sorts and a host of hitherto unimaginable vocations.

Nations tell stories. Sometimes they tell it themselves through what they do or what they say about themselves. Sometimes their stories are subsumed in the stories and heroics of their people. At other times, outsiders tell their stories, cobbled together from a myriad of odds and bits done by them or their people.

The latter is never desirable. In that instance, you're not in control of the input and therefore cannot determine the output. In today's world, truly powerful nations have gone beyond jostling for control in the real world to extending their frontiers in outer space and now the next battle is the dominance of cyberspace in its entirety.

One is tempted to ask: what is the Nigerian story and how much power does it command? But first, let's talk about another kind of power - the power of advertising. Advertising works in the realm of the mind. Its aim oftentimes is to influence the way you think or feel about the things around you. These things may be products, services, issues or opinions that have a bearing on our lives. In most instances, the desired action is immediate. At other times its effect can only be felt over a period of time. But the real power of advertising is in what it was not created to do.

What do I mean by this? It's in the overarching power of the subconscious. Every form of content that we come across speaks to us at two levels; the level of the intended message as well as that of the unintended. Every piece of advertising done in a particular epoch mirrors that era and beams the light on the future. By this, I mean the entire industry inadvertently creates a body of work with anthropological import.

Advertising, when done properly, comes embedded with the traits of its time. Think back to "Enjoy the brighter life with Star".

You can still remember the happy folks raising their glasses in merriment, speaking to a time when life was simple and enjoyable. Think back to "weke-weke" with Vitafoam.

Think back to Obion 6. Think back to "Black thing good o" with Guinness. Take it down the lane to the Milo clap, down to Thermocool "making things better, making better things". Remember "who get this rain coat from Gold Circle condoms? What about Bagco Super Sack and the jolly fellows that turned a mere commodity to a super brand? And don't forget.

"Tally Number" from ETB. Interestingly, the last example wasn't just about reflecting a

period in time; it also reshaped the future of banking.

Inherent in all these examples and a whole lot more not cited, is the hidden power of advertising. Charles Saatchi was reported to have gone down to the creative department of Saatchi & Saatchi London to commend a young creative team on a brilliant campaign they had just created. In his admonition, he told them to always remember that every ad is an opportunity. And that's the point most people in our industry tend to miss. It takes the same effort (perhaps even more sweat) to create a mediocre as it would take to create a brilliant and timeless one. The difference is in your understanding of the opportunity you have been given. It takes that understanding of the human condition and a good sense of anticipating how your audience is likely to receive the message. It is up to you to determine what you would like them to think, feel and do after receiving your message.

When the full power of advertising is unleashed it changes the fortune of brands for good. Its power is unbelievably transformative. I've been privileged to be part of one or two such campaigns and for this I'm forever grateful to share in the joy of helping to move the needle for a few brands in the span of my career.

In 1998, Peak milk was faced with the challenge of not just maintaining its premium positioning, but also making itself appealing and accessible to a new generation of young home makers trying to make sense of justifying their choice of Peak over a new cheaper challenger brand that was in sachets.

I remember Dr. Biodun Shobanjo putting together a new crack team to attend to this challenge, which eventually led to the Peak Generation to Generation campaign. The campaign was so effective and memorable it made a comeback with a remake in 2018.

I joined TBWA\Concept as a Creative Director in 2003. Our biggest client then was MTN. In 2004, we were tasked with creating a new campaign for the brand. After so many agonizing weeks of developing scripts that were not deemed good enough, we finished off one of our sessions with the client with some feedback and discussion that gave birth to perhaps one of the most talked about, some would say controversial, telco ads ever - Mama Na Boy. It ran for a limited period owing to the dust raised by gender equality advocates. A year after the client rested the campaign it was still rated as the best ad of the year in public surveys.

In 2009, Noah's Ark won the Indomie account. In 2010, we were tasked to create a thematic campaign for the brand. Taking into cognizance the fact that Nigeria is one country with two distinct markets, the South and the North, we came up with a campaign for the North, which the client felt was good enough to run in other markets. The campaign started its life as Mama'n Yara in the North and got extended to Mama Do Good in Pidgin English and Mama Ewe in Yoruba. It remains undoubtedly the most popular campaign for that category till date.

In 2015, we received a surprise email from Airtel inviting us to pitch the business. For a brand that had suffered a lot of bruises from intermittent name and ownership changes, sending out a brief with a charge to make the brand the most loved brand in the country was the most impossible dream one could have thought of. It took more than a year of understanding the brand and the right client-agency chemistry to finally hit on what has become a watershed campaign that keeps exciting audiences in Nigeria and beyond.

At a time when all of its competitors had 4G networks, Airtel was the only brand which couldn't boast of this new technology.

Working with the client, we were able to assess our situation with clear eyes. Despite our seeming disadvantage, we knew we needed to play up on whatever strength we could lay claim to and quickly establish a space for the brand in the hearts of our audience. So while the competitors went about celebrating their new technology, we took the issue head-on by focusing not on the technology but what will work in the best interest of the subscriber. And we thought the

best way to do this was to tell stories that were relatable. From two brilliant commercials, Lost and Alex & Joe, that could easily pass for short films, we were able to focus the minds of the audience on the need to connect in this new data world without worrying about the technology that delivered that human need to reach out. The entire campaign was subsumed under the theme Data Is Life.

One common thread in all the examples I've cited is the need for relatable stories that connect with shared human situations. When our audience can identify with the conflicts, emotions and resolutions that make up our story, we don't just have their attention, we also earn their love. They invite us into their world and will easily forgive us when we make mistakes as we are bound to do at some point. Any brand that can achieve this and goes further by suffusing it all with a sense of shared identity will definitely enjoy brand nirvana.

In a society where the appreciation of art cannot be said to be mainstream, the easiest vehicle for art and entertainment is advertising. In most climes, advertising, through its use of national monuments and other paraphernalia of culture overtime helps to paint a particular image of that country to its people and the world at large. It's amazing how we easily resort to using the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower in ads created for other people outside of their countries of origin, while we struggle to find the right monuments to represent our country. I recall that in the early 90's we created an ad for an American airline selling its direct flight from Lagos to New York. In looking for images with pictorial similitude, we ended up with an image of the Statue of Liberty and an illustration of the Eyo masquerade holding up its opanbata staff to mimic the torch of the Statue of Liberty.

Our nation may have a problem agreeing on the best way to represent itself, but we as an industry have a lot to do to sell Nigerian imagery and monuments for them to attain iconic status. As beautiful as JP Clark's Ibadan poem is, I do not know if it has evoked any action from the people of Ibadan to make it their own and part of their legacy in the modern age. Think about it, the American national anthem, The Star Spangled Banner, came from a poem by a lawyer and amateur poet, Francis Scott Key. The same country refers to itself as the land of the free, home of the brave. Here in Africa, the South African national anthem started its life as the anthem of the ANC. That nation brands itself as the Rainbow Nation. I'm not too sure if Ghanaians will argue about the part of their country where the kente fabric came from before accepting it as a national treasure. Go to the East and the North, you find people celebrating weddings with the asooke caps and head gear. Yet no one dare project it as a national treasure.

This is where those of us in the creative business come in. Be it in our films, our music, in our ads or any form of artistic expression, it behoves us to be deliberate in projecting our identity through stories and scenarios that are relatable and uplifting. One of the things that excite me today is the current evolution of Nollywood from quantity to quality. From script to screen, the stories are getting better and the production values are far better than where we used to be. Together with some of emerging literary writers, sportsmen and entertainers, they are the ones projecting the Nigerian story to the outside world.

While one can see a new zest for storytelling in advertising, the truth is we need more of this for it to have impact and birth what we can truly call Nigerian advertising the same way the world celebrates Brazilian, Indian, Australian or even Thai advertising. This will only come from a body of work that reflects the spirit of the Nigerian - the spirit of grace under pressure - the optimism that lets you

achieve in the face of odds. In my opinion, we are just scratching the surface. There is the need for us to challenge ourselves more. We need to dig deeper into our world and express ourselves in a way that will earn the attention and respect of the wider world.

Sometime in January, Chude Jideonwo of Y Naija published a list of the 150 Most Interesting People In The Culture for the year 2019. Our agency was the only ad agency that made that list. This is what he had to say about our work: "Its series of short films (they are not, in fact, ads) for the Airtel brand have captured the attention of the Nigerian viewing public via storytelling intensity and made advertising sexy in the public imagination again."

Should that make us feel giddy with pride? Not necessarily. Yes, one is grateful for the opportunity and for being recognised and celebrated. However, that commendation should be for our industry in totality as a mark of recognition for what we do to project the human and Nigerian story. Simply put, we need more stories. More original and engaging stories told in ways no one could ever have imagined. We need more healthy competition within our industry for us to compete with the world. When we do this the world will hear our stories and they will feel and respect the power that drives it.

Unlike the other players in the creative business, we are easily the most dispensable. Being agencies, we are often at the mercy of our principals. What we create doesn't belong to us. Yet what we do is what gives people the advantage and power of knowing what to choose or do. Think back to June 12 and the power of the On the March Again work from Rosabel. Think back to the numerous decisions you've taken at different times



influenced by the messages in your subconscious from the work you've been exposed to.

As stated earlier, the starting point is for us to realise the transformative power of our trade. Today, with all that digital technology offers us, we have a wider canvass to tell our stories. We cannot afford to limit ourselves. As you can see in some of the examples I have cited, magic only happens when we have a good understanding of our role backed by a good understanding of the audience. It gets even better when there's a sense of partnership between the client and the agency as we have enjoyed on most of our successful campaigns. The Nigerian story is vibrant and uncommon. Nigerians can't have enough of it. The world needs to hear it. No one can tell it better than us. So we need to shun all the excuses. Make it as beautiful as it can be for the brands in our care. For Nigeria and all it stands for. The time to do that is now. The power is in our hands.

Thank you.

Lanre Adisa, Lagos, 6 March, 2020



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Imperatives of managing public communication in a polarised democracy

In the aftermath of the recent #EndSARS protests and the resultant riots, there have been interesting conversations around the way the government and the police managed the communication element from their end. This is not necessarily a post mortem or an appraisal of how those in charge of communication discharged their duties under the circumstance. It is, however, an attempt to highlight the critical imperatives of managing information, engaging a diverse population and checking the pulse of the people and using the outcome to plan communication in government and indeed the public service.

Public communication is essentially similar to corporate communication except that the motive is not necessarily profit or likeability. It requires the same level of understanding of the target audience, their expectations, the available tools for communicating with them, clear objectives and regular feedback. Communication without feedback is



incomplete even wasted. Public communication, therefore, can be loosely defined as a process of strategic, deliberate, planned, targeted, timed and measurable information to create mutual understanding between government and the public, provide information, clarification and promote buy-in of the public into government actions and inactions.

In a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-faith, diversified (read highly polarized) society like Nigeria, managing public communication is, and ought to be, a daunting task. It is not a one-way stimulus-response or hypodermic needle communication situation. Even so, we are not globally recognized as one of the countries where the people obey traffic lights!

It is important to note that perception or rather the way people receive communication are biased by either their ethnic or religious orientation. Typically, education and exposure as well as peer groups or other associations have the tendency to influence the way people perceive communication. In Nigeria, ethnicity and religion are, perhaps, the most moderating impact on communication. It must be stated that the current economic realities of the country have all but destroyed any semblance of tranquility



By Emeka Oparah

amongst the populace especially the youth population, which is in clear majority at about 60% of the population. Add to these, the burgeoning effect of New Media or Social Media, which, for now is uncontrolled (or uncontrollable) and has totally democratized free speech as much as it has democratized recklessness. Therefore, there are certain imperatives of communication peculiar to such an audience under such circumstances, which can only be ignored at great costs and peril. I will address them in no particular order.

1. Professionalism: For so long, there has been an argument over the appropriateness of putting round pegs in square holes with regards to the appointment of government spokesmen and indeed those responsible for managing public communication. The juror may still be out but it is neither debatable nor a subject of any conjecture that the best men and women should always be appointed to critical positions in government. Much as government appointments reflect party loyalty and support, the best thing would be to fit round pegs in round holes. The culture of appointing journalists to public communications positions has, generally speaking, proved counterproductive over the years. This is not to say journalists are not good. Far be it from me any such suggestion. What I mean is that journalists, by the training, are reporters or chroniclers of news.

They are not always imbued with the knowledge and skills of strategic thinking and planning required for such positions. Yes, they may be famous and connected in the media, but the job is not only about media relations or publicity. It goes beyond those operational activities to the more strategic and certainly more demanding tasks of developing strategies and advising the government or the boss not only about what to say or do but when and how to say or do them in order to foster better awareness, understanding and cooperation of the public.

The time has come for political leaders, especially presidents and governors and others in key positions to think deeply about this. Even the private sector is not immune to this malady. I propose the job specification and person specification of the positions are clearly defined and professional recruiters engaged to hire the right fit.

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Zoom, Messenger's room: Key lessons in creativity and innovation

As the business environment becomes more competitive and race for the consumers' pockets is becoming keener by the day, it is imperative for brands to evolve on a constant basis in order to meet these rapidly-changing trends and tastes.

The era of complacency by brands is gone and gone for good. The 21st century consumer is sophisticated, savvy, demanding, trendy and adventurous. Brands that will win the pockets and loyalty of these consumers must be creative, innovative and have the capacity to design products and services that suit their taste.

I will take a look at two technology brands as case studies to highlight few key lessons.

Zoom

Last year, in the thick of the lockdown occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, I read a news report that fascinated me. The news report's was on Zoom, a video conferencing app, which was an unpopular brand prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, despite being in existence for close to a decade before then.

Zoom Video Communications, the owner of the app, is an American communications technology company headquartered in San Jose, California. It provides videotelephony and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform and is used for teleconferencing, telecommuting, distance education, and social relations.

Despite its low brand equity at the onset of the pandemic, the "new normal" experience has pushed the relevance and popularity of the app beyond the wildest imaginations of the brand owners.

Excerpts from the aforementioned news report:

"Zoom topped the charts worldwide in February and March, 2021, and continues to see high numbers of downloads in the U.S., U.K. and elsewhere in Europe.

"During the record week of downloads, Zoom was downloaded 14 times more than the weekly average during the fourth quarter of 2019 in the U.S. It was also downloaded more than 20 times Q4's weekly average in the U.K., 22 times more in France, 17 times more in Germany, 27 times more in Spain and an even larger 55 times more in Italy."

Messengers Room

Seeing the soar-away success recorded by Zoom, it wasn't long before the smart guy,



By Muiyiwa Akande

Mark Zuckerberg responded with a video-conference offering. Zuckerberg doesn't give any room to be rendered redundant in the battle for consumers' mindshare and wallets.

In the midst of the pandemic, he launched the Messengers Room, which is a tool for virtual hangouts with up to 50 people and allowing friends to drop in on you whenever they like.

He also increased his video offerings across other platforms like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp.

These two case studies got me thinking.

Foresight is critical for relevance and business survival. Ability to study emerging trends, accurately predict future consumers' preferences and build products and services to meet these needs would be a game changer. Understand that your customers' needs are

dynamic and are open to changes due to various reasons, including socio-economic status, age, trend, environment and peers, among others.

Consumer insights distilled from research will be key in this regard. Research should be an integral part of any serious brand.

While time and chance can combine to put a great opportunity on the laps of a brand, lack of preparation and foresight will hurt it deeply. If zoom had not envisioned and developed a video-conferencing product ahead of the pandemic, it would have become an ordinary spectator when the opportunity arrived. It would have lost the relevance and huge financial windfall that accompanied the pandemic.

The key lesson here is: Don't create a product for today alone, ensure you have your eyes on the future.

Understand how the environment (political, social, economic, natural occurrences etc) can affect your business - negatively and positively.

Develop the capacity to respond to these changing needs as quickly as possible. When there is a shift in preferences by consumer or there is a gap in the market to be filled by a service or product, don't take forever to respond. The messenger room app was launched in the midst of the pandemic.

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The next generation of print

By Duygu Sanac Keçeci

The print industry is unique and has developed over many years, transitioning from analogue to digital technologies, but there's still so much more to come

Now is an important time for the print industry. It's a time of change and where new and emerging technologies are influencing its future. The print industry is unique and has developed over many years, transitioning

from analogue to digital technologies, but there's still so much more to come. For it to continue to grow and transform, we need fresh ideas and out-of-the-box thinking. And one way that we can support this growth is to attract the next generation.

Print to you and me is a range of innovative applications that we interact with in our daily lives. However, print to someone who doesn't know print's full capabilities or creative potential could be seen as just a book or a

poster you put up on your wall. Those outside of our industry don't realise all that 'print' encompasses - everything from a calendar to instruction manuals, or wallpaper to window graphics.

In fact, everything you read that is not on a screen (besides a handwritten letter) is printed. But if this is the perception of print, then how do we attract new and young talent to fuel future innovation?

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