

Oracle: 15 Years of 'Uncommon Wins',
our triumphs, our trials,
our strengths – Dr. Felix King



The Industry

...in support of business

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AFFILIATIONS:

Bitter pill for advertising,
bait for public relations



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(M) +234 8055511371, (L) +234 9032511606
office@oracleagency.com ▪ www.oracleagency.com
YOUTUBE CHANNEL: OracleExperience TV

OUR TEAM

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...in Support of business
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EDITOR

Goddie Ofose

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Kola Bola

CORRESPONDENTS

Bidemi Bakare
Kate Oboho

GRAPHICS

Kikelomo Oyenuga

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Daniel Obi
Akin Adewakun
Raheem Akingbolu
A. Lukman Ishau
Godwin Anyebe
Ralph Tathargata

EDITORIAL ADVISERS

Dr. Felix King- Chairman
Dr. Onyekachi Onubogu
Mr. Tolu Ogunkoya
Mr. Mojeed Jamiu
Mr. Akin Fadeyi
Mr. Richard Akinola II
Nkechi Ali Balogun

CONTACTS

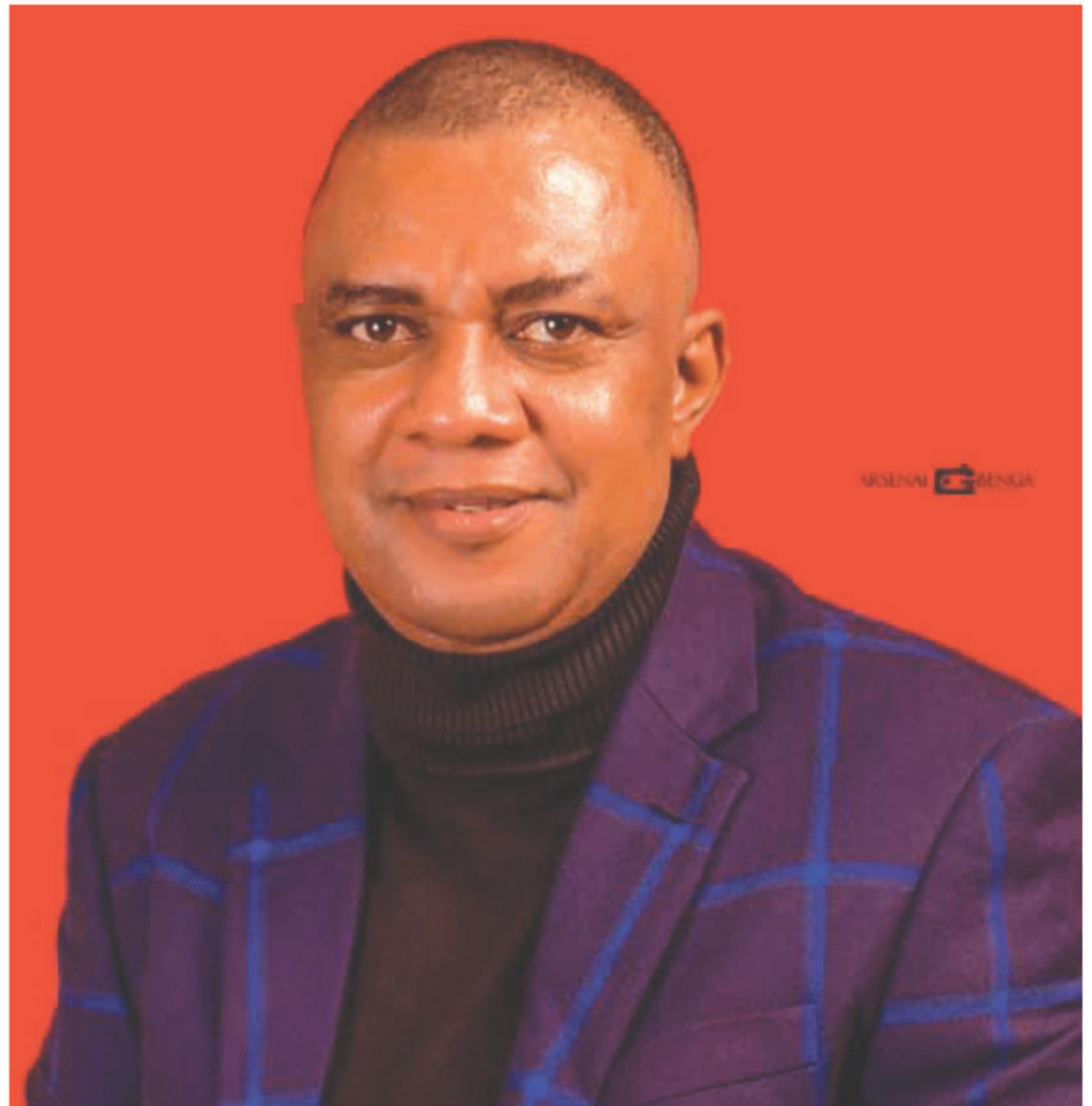
ADDRESS:
48, Ladipo Kasumu Street,
Off Allen Avenue, By First Bank Bus-Stop,
Ikeja, Lagos.

TEL:
08028424987, 08099400139, 08116759746

EMAIL:
goddie2fose@gmail.com
www.789marketing.ng

WEBSITE:
theindustry.ng
789marketing.ng

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Time to end owner/manager syndrome in IMC

The integrated marketing communication industry is made up of public relations, creative advertising, experiential marketing, outdoor advertising, digital marketing, brand management, media buying and selling and mostly, the voiceover talent.

Majorly, the creative advertising has been in the forefront of advancing the industry before others were birthed. As at last count, the creative advertising industry has 86 registered agencies with the sectoral body, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria.

More than that number is unregistered with AAAN. Findings show that over 80per cent of these agencies, both AAAN registered and unregistered, are managed by their founders.

The trend is replicated in the public relations sub-sector of the IMC. In fact, personal observation reveals that owner/Manager shops in the PR industry come close to 99percent. Brand activation industry has borrowed many leaves from their predecessors.

For the experiential marketing industry, apart from EXP that is a South African owned business in Nigeria; other companies within the sector are managed by their founders. In media buying and selling, the big creative advertising agencies that created these shops have appointed competent hands to handle them.

Therefore, owner/manager issue in media buying is not considered a big deal compared to creative advertising, public relations and experiential marketing.

The reason or rather one of the reasons that has caused the idea of owner/manager syndrome to flourish is ego tripping. In Africa, entrepreneurs prefer to be addressed as chief executive officers or managing directors even to an ailing firm rather than becoming a general manager in a buoyant company.

Another factor that continues to encourage the owner/manager mentality within the IMC is the 'family business'

syndrome. Reports concerning the lack of succession plans among the IMC companies in the country are worrisome. Several owners believe in keeping the family heritage. Rosabel, MC&A and few others have suffered catastrophic ends as several professionals who do not have bloodline with owners have failed to lift the agencies.

Consequently, the owner/manager pattern in the IMC industry has distorted a number of things. One of which, is the agencies' inability to expand farther than the founder's vision. In most circumstances, founders are not likely to give in to new ideas, hence, the stunted growth experience by several agencies within this space.

Research has shown that the owner/manager trend does not encourage partnership among agencies in Nigeria. In other climes, agencies come together to execute briefs. Other markets actually support merger among agencies or outright acquisition. However, Nigeria's IMC industry loathes these expansion tools or strategies.

In *The Industry*, we believe that a lot can be achieved if the industry eschew this solo- run strategy and embrace partnership, merger and/or acquisition to help grow the market equity and give better value to clients' briefs.

For instance, what is an economy with less than 1 percent advertising spend to Gross Domestic Product doing with 86 registered AAAN agencies, over 100 PR agencies, 60 experiential marketing agencies and several quacks and/or unregistered agencies?

South Africa with a population of about 53 million has 7 percent advertising spend to its GDP and far less agencies. What, therefore, is Nigeria doing with over 200 agencies with a far less contribution to its GDP?

Stakeholders MUST come together to address this malaise ravaging the industry mainly as result of egoism and selfishness to save operators, participants and all from the low earnings and stagnation fast becoming the hallmark of the industry.

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The 2021 annual Top brand evaluation in Nigeria, which has now become like a report card from which major top corporate brands in the country have a feel of their brand positioning from the consumer's points of view has taken a new dimension this year.

A key component of this annual evaluation is the Top of the Mind survey. This is a test of consumer's cognitive ability of major brands in Nigeria, which from observations are

CMOs, HoCs to select 'Most Popular Brands' in Nigeria 2021

influenced by relationship and affinity. According to TOP 50 BRANDS NIGERIA®, the firm that evaluates and rates top corporate

brands in Nigeria, the most popular brand selection for the year, which is done with the TOM survey, will now be conducted among

Chief Marketing Officers and Heads of Corporate Communications (Affairs) of top corporate brands in the country.

To this end, Chief Communication Officers/Heads of Corporate Communication and Chief Marketing Officers are required to mention 10 corporate brands they could easily recall, aside from their own brands.

The outcome will determine the Most Popular Brands in the country for the year. The TOM is also the first component of the 7 variables in Brand Strength Measure (BSM Index), the model used in evaluating the 50 Most Valuable Brands in the country for the year, TOP 50 BRANDS NIGERIA®.

Taiwo Oluboyede, CEO at TOP 50 BRANDS NIGERIA®, while explaining this in a virtual chat with journalists said, "brand evaluation, that is, measuring the value or perception of corporate brands has become a vital component of every living brand. It is now a necessity to know how your brand is doing and how it is standing in the market place. As we all know, branding has gone beyond just one of the marketing activities, it has become a vital stakeholder's metrics for measuring success".

Heritage Bank promotes creative industry

Heritage Bank Plc has further reiterated its commitment to the growth and development of the creative and entertainment sector by supporting the "Rita Dominic Acting Challenge."

Heritage Bank in collaboration with a foremost Nigerian actress and co-founder of the Audrey Silva Company, Rita Dominic, launched an acting challenge for aspiring actors to recreate a scene in a new film "La Femme Anjola", produced by the latter.

The winners carted away cash prizes. The first

prize winner, Jasmine Howson-Wright, received N1million, Chioma Okafor, 1st runner-up got N300,000, whilst the 2nd runner-up grabbed N100,000 consolation prizes for recreating a scene from La Femme Anjola in the acting challenge.

Speaking at the presentation of the cheque to the winners, the Divisional Head, Corporate Communications of the bank, Fela Ibidapo, explained that as the institution's name implies, Heritage Bank has continued to make efforts in supporting creativity, ideologies and talents like these, where arts are used as a tool to promote cultural awareness and to help younger Nigerians form a strong sense of national identity.

"As a bank, we look for creativity, ideas and talents

to support. We are called Heritage Bank for reasons, which involves putting our money where our mouth is, being that art and entertainment space are platforms where we consider leveraging our support.

"It is a privilege that we are here today to celebrate the movie and the success achieved, thus far", he stated.

He assured that the bank would always be driven by cultural heritage in delivering distinctive financial services to create, preserve and transfer wealth.

According to him, the bank is proud of the entertainment industry and will continue to stand by operators in it by supporting them and watch them grow.



Get-Reports unveils for the Nigerian PR industry

P+ Measurement Services, Nigeria's leading Independent Public Relations (PR) measurement and evaluation agency, has introduced "Get-Reports", a product that allows the purchase of PR performance audit reports. It is the first of its kind in the Nigerian public relations industry.

The product spans across 22 Commercial Nigerian Banks PR Performance Audit Report; Top Nigerian Insurance PR Performance Audit Report; Top Nigerian Digital Banks PR Performance Audit Report and the 22 commercial Nigerian Bank CEOs PR Performance Audit Report.

Others are the Top Nigerian Insurance CEOs PR Performance Audit Report and Top Nigerian Digital Bank CEOs PR Performance Audit Report.

In the area of the Nigerian Digital Bank CEOs Media Performance Audit Report, a total of four Digital Bank CEOs in the country were sampled, while the number of sample will be increased as the demand increases.

On it, the PR Performance Audit Report will deliver deep insights of CEOs for four Digital Banks in Nigeria, using the P+ Measurement Media Content Analysis (P+MCA) methodology in accordance with the Barcelona Principles 3.0; highlights Nigerian Digital Bank CEOs with the most favourable and unfavourable media reputation; and analyses the overall competitive share exposure of the four Digital Bank CEOs sampled.



Odiakose

It will also explore top four CEOs in the Nigerian Digital Banking industry with most interviews, as well as partnership/sponsorship, CSR/CSI, product launch, promotion and fintech media activities.

Commenting, the company's Chief Insights Officer, Philip Odiakose, pointed out that the product is with 5 per cent error margin and 95 per cent confidence level, and has passed through high-quality checks and audit processes, by well-trained media and data analysts, with exceptional skills in media monitoring, media research, data gathering, analysis as well as evaluation.

Rite Foods bags brand of the year award

Rite Foods Limited, a world-class and proudly Nigerian food and beverage company, producers of Bigi Carbonated Soft Drinks (CSD), Fearless Energy Drinks, and variants of sausage brands, has been awarded brand of the year.

The awards, organized by Champion News Media, Publishers of Champion Newspapers, was conceived to honour the best of human resources and institutions in Nigeria.

Rite Foods was adjudged the best from a crowd of multinational organizations in the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) category.

According to Ugo Amadi, Editor, Champion Newspapers the awards is also targeted at acknowledging the contributions of some of the outstanding individuals, organizations, agencies and institutions of both states and federal governments to the development of Nigeria in particular and humanity in general in the areas of business, politics, culture, social and infrastructural developments.

Other organizations honoured at the Champion Media Awards included First Bank of Nigeria Limited, African Alliance Insurance, Innoson Motors, Access Bank, NSIA Insurance, Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG), and Dangote Foundation.

Rite Foods, the fastest-growing foods and beverages company in West Africa, with the vision of becoming the industry's foremost conglomerate by 2030, has become the most innovative and number one sausage roll producer in Nigeria with its Rite Spicy Sausage and a variety of sausage rolls in the markets.

Also, it introduced the Bigi Carbonated Soft Drinks (CSD) and Fearless Energy Drinks in 2017. Since then, the brands have set the pace for others to follow, as the most preferred products by families nationwide, as well as addressing the

market need of young pupils in schools.

The CSD has twelve variants, with the Bigi Premium Table Water produced with global best practices in purification for hydration, freshness and healthy living. The company's inventiveness has earned high recognition in the energy drinks market with the first-ever packaged polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottle brands for the Fearless Red Berry and Fearless Classic. For a Nigerian-based refreshment organization with humble beginnings, Rite Foods has positioned itself to take advantage of the chances offered in an industry choked by products from multinational and international brands.



Ken Egbas

The organizers of Africa's foremost gold-standard Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability awards, The SERAS CSR Awards

Africa, have called for entries for the 2021 edition of the awards. The awards, which have grown in popularity across Africa, have become the signature award ceremony that annually celebrates the roles organizations across Africa play in ensuring that the continent meets the Sustainable Development Goals target of the United Nations.

The 2021 edition marks a milestone in history as the awards attain the 15th year. In line with this, the organizers have announced some new awards categories. "This is a significant year for Africa and us as well when it comes to CSR and sustainability. When The SERAS began, it was a big task to message why it was important

for organizations to invest in CSR, sustainability and communities across Africa. Adoption may have been painstakingly slow, but today we are happy that this awards platform has helped accentuate the importance of excellence and provide the guardrails that have helped sustainability grow into a veritable industry in Africa. To mark the anniversary, we are introducing five new award categories and informing the public that because the sustainability industry is nearly two decades old, we shall also be inaugurating the Africa Sustainability Hall of Fame, beginning with the announcement of four Lifetime Achievement award winners from the

four regions of the continent. We are also putting together a show-piece ceremony that celebrates impact, excellence, and professionals who power the industry", said Mrs. Mary Ephraim-Egbas, vice-chairperson of the local organizing committee and executive director of TruCSR Nigeria.

The SERAS theme for 2021 is 'Driving Sustainability through Circularity: Localizing the SDGs for Greater Impact'. The new award categories include -Circular Economy, Environmental Stewardship, Financial Inclusion and Rural Population Integration

SERAS CSR Awards Africa calls for 2021 Entries

Heirs Holdings enters insurance market with two offerings

Heirs Holdings (HH) recently announced the group's transformative insurance industry play, with the launch of Heirs Insurance Limited (HIL) and Heirs Life Assurance

(HLA), at the companies' Victoria Island headquarters in Lagos.

Holdings will bring a dynamic, digitally driven offering to the general and life insurance sectors,

providing clients with a real choice of products, pricing, channel and claims handling.

Heirs Insurance Limited (HIL) provides general insurance, offering policies covering vehicles, homes, SMEs, business risks and other properties. Heirs Life Assurance (HLA) offers insurance-backed savings plans and life insurance security for individuals, families, children's education, debtors, creditors, entrepreneurs and employees. All plans offer customers comprehensive protection, creating financial certainty for loved ones, cherished assets and properties.

Both companies leverage the business track record of Heirs Holdings, the pan-African investment group, chaired by leading investor and philanthropist, Tony O. Elumelu, CON. Heirs Holdings' portfolio includes companies transforming financial services, power, oil and gas, real estate, hospitality, healthcare, and technology.

At the launch, the companies announced a series of product innovations, including a web portal enabling customers to get an insurance quote in minutes and receive claims settlement in less than 24 hours, from their mobile devices. The highly intuitive and easy to use portal assists the total customer journey, from comparing products to finding the right cover. They also unveiled a suite of customer friendly, affordable products that are simple to understand, featuring flat pricing and tailored directly to the Nigerian market and the needs of Nigerians.

Heirs Insurance, the general insurer, with its mandate to enable Nigerians to protect their valuables and property, unveiled flexible low-cost comprehensive motor insurance and new insurance products targeting users including bikers, tenants and SMEs. Heirs Life unveiled affordable savings, term life and inheritance plans, that provide financial security throughout customers' life journey.



Caroline Anyanwu

UBA Group appoints Caroline Anyanwu into its board

United Bank for Africa (UBA), the leading pan-African financial services institution, recently announced the appointment of Mrs. Caroline Anyanwu to its Board of Directors, effective May 19, 2021.

Caroline Anyanwu holds a First-Class degree in Statistics from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, and has worked extensively in the fields of accounting, taxation, credit risk and banking throughout her career for about four decades. She worked at UBA from 1996-2006, where she held the position of Head, Credit Risk Management. Mrs. Anyanwu also served as the Deputy Managing Director of Diamond Bank with supervisory responsibility for risk management, until her retirement in 2019.

Speaking on the new appointment, UBA Group Chairman, Mr. Tony O. Elumelu, said, "We welcome Caroline back to the UBA Group after fifteen years. She helped develop our credit and risk management, and her track record leaves me in no doubt that she will be able to harness her considerable experience across the African continent to bring valuable contributions to the Group Board of UBA. Corporate governance and risk management are central to what we do at UBA and Caroline Anyanwu aligns perfectly with our vision."

UBA is one of the largest employers in the financial sector on the African continent, with more than twenty thousand employees group wide and serving over twenty five million customers. Operating in 20 African countries and in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and with presence in France, UBA provides innovative retail; commercial and corporate banking; cross border payments and remittances; trade finance and ancillary banking services. UBA is leading financial inclusion and implementing cutting edge products in Africa.

Wema Bank deepens financial literacy for SMEs

Wema Bank Plc has again demonstrated its commitment to deepening financial literacy and optimisation among its customers, particularly SMEs, with a webinar themed 'Unbundling Tax, Legal and Compliance - Issues for SMEs' held on Thursday, May 20, 2021. It featured facilitators who shared insights on how SMEs can upscale their businesses and Wema products/services they can use.

The webinar, one of the avenues the bank is using to deepen financial literacy and business optimisation across its stockholder universe, featured Head, Legal Services, Wema Bank, Hilary Ajodo; Fiscal Policy Partner & Africa Tax Leader, Pricewater Coopers (PwC), Taiwo Oyedele; Head, Online Sales & Digital Platforms, Business Day, Linda Ochugbua and Head, Corporate Strategy & Planning, Wema Bank, Olufemi Akinfolarin.

Speaking on 'Legal Challenges Faced by SMEs', Ajodo said that business education and registration was essential for any serious-minded entrepreneur to avoid floundering. He said that to thrive, "one of the first steps an entrepreneur who



intends to run a business should take is to gain adequate knowledge of the business and decide on the nature of corporate entry to register."

Ajodo said that entrepreneurs must endeavour to start small by registering their businesses as an enterprise before migrating to a Limited Liability Company and finding ways of minimising expenses to maximise profit.

He advised SMEs owners not to venture into businesses they are not sure of, sign any contract without adequate information, and avoid litigation as the first step in a dispute but explore alternative settlement means.

FirstBank bags hat-trick of awards at banking and finance awards 2021

First Bank of Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's premier and leading financial services provider, has been awarded the 2021 "Retail Banking CEO of the Year Nigeria", "Most innovative Retail Banking App Nigeria" and "Best CSR Bank Nigeria" awards by Global Banking and Finance magazine.

The respective awards conferred on the Bank are in recognition of the indelible roles it plays in deepening financial inclusion in the country; advancing the digital banking ecosystem as well as impacting people in its host communities with technology to make learning available to individuals of all ages, amongst many others.

The Global Banking and Finance Awards reflect the innovation, achievement, strategy,

progressive and inspirational changes taking place within the global financial community. The awards were created to recognize companies of all sizes, which have prominent areas of expertise and excellence within the financial world.

Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, the CEO of FirstBank, commenting on the awards said "we are proud to be recognized with these awards, which speak to the investments we have made over the past years in bolstering our electronic platforms for our customers; enhancing financial inclusion through agent banking as well as empowering our communities in the education space, especially by bridging the digital divide through e-learning initiative.

Sterling Bank honoured with special recognition award for tourism support

Sterling Bank Plc has been honoured with the Special Recognition Award for Tourism Support at the 2021 edition of the Nigeria Tourism Awards, also known as The Balearica Awards.

The Nigeria Tourism Awards recognises and celebrates exemplary and outstanding individuals and organisations in the country's tourism sector.

Presenting the award to the bank, Efetobo Awhana, CEO of the Balearica Awards, acknowledged Sterling Bank's deliberate intervention in the tourism industry in 2020. He said that the bank's announcement of a dedicated fund for the tourism sector was timely and similar to stimulus packages of countries like Switzerland, Japan and Mexico.

"The Balearica, named and designed after the Crowned Crane - once voted the national bird of Nigeria, has become the icon of excellence for the Nigerian tourism industry. The Special Recognition Award for Tourism Support honours

the non-tourism brand that has had the most deliberate impact on the growth of tourism in Nigeria in 2020," Awhana stated.

Last year, immediately after the COVID-19 induced lockdown was lifted, Sterling Bank pledged N10 billion as an intervention fund for the domestic tourism sector. The Bank's CEO, Abubakar Suleiman, committed the funds while addressing players in the tourism value chain at a session organised by the Nigerian Tourism Corporation (NTDC) on reimagining tourism. Months after, the Osun State Government honoured the bank with the Institution Award of Excellence for its role in the accelerated delivery of the Osun Sterling Tourism vision 30-30 and masterplan. Receiving the special recognition award, Shina



Heritage Bank partners Silverbird to empower young creative Nigerians

Heritage Bank Plc, Nigeria's most innovative banking service provider, has joined forces with Silverbird Group to empower and deepen its support to young entrepreneurs in the Nigeria creative and entertainment industry.

This, the bank said, is in line with its culture as timeless wealth partners to impact positively on the nation's socio-economic development, as the graduates are empowered with job and mentorship opportunities at the Silverbird Group.

During the first batch of the Ynspre Project, Heritage Bank and Silverbird graduated five young talented minds in a three months rigorously internship training programme to equip them with the necessary skills for their future engagements.

Over 3000 people sent their entries but only five were picked and trained in their different field of choice. Amongst the lucky interns are Derrick Ugwugbu-Reporter/Anchor; Deborah Johnson-Radio Presenter; Oluwasegun Emmanuel Ikoya-Disk Jockey (DJ); Ayomide Solaja-News Presenter and Abayomi Bello-Cinematographer.

Speaking during the handover of certificate of completion, Fela Ibadapo, Divisional Head, Corporate Communications of Heritage Bank, said as a forward looking financial institution its strength is in the ability to spot and mold talents into great professionals.

He noted that the Ynspre Project was established to train, nurture and arm young employees with the right skills needed to fast-track development and enable talents to flourish.



Atilola, Divisional Head, Retail and Consumer Banking, expressed delight that the sector immediately recognises, rewards, and celebrates the bank's commitment to tourism development.

Oracle: 15 Years of 'uncommon wins', our triumphs, our trials, our strengths

— Dr. Felix King

In this exclusive interview, Dr. Felix King Eiremiokhae, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Oracle Experience, reveals how he started the firm with zero kobo, sold his wedding ring N30, 000 to execute his first brief, and how a Nigerian artiste almost disrupted a big activation for him. He also speaks on the iconic campaigns that have changed the narratives in the industry like the 70-foot Star bottle, The Three Wise Men, Eyo among other creative masterstrokes that set the theme for Oracle's 15th anniversary - 'uncommon wins'. Excerpts...

How did you come into experiential marketing?

This is how it all started, will I say by accident or by divine direction. I actually was not going to the space of experiential, I took my younger brother to a company, and there was a company that came into Nigeria then from South Africa called DMC (Direct Marketing Communication). That was 1998. And my brother had a contact, because they were recruiting.

I think that day I was free, so I took my brother there and we met this white South African guy, Collin Smith. During that conversation he had with my brother and from the way I was just contributing to the entire conversation on human engagement, the South African said good, you are the person I have been looking for. I have been here for the past one month I've not seen one single person who really understands what I am trying to do. So why don't you come and join me'.

I said 'I cannot join you' because at that time I was quite active in the entertainment industry. He had confidence in my ability to make things work for him and we started. So I recruited every single person into that company, and helped him to set up the company. This is a company that came into Nigeria with just \$10000. And we started and we were able to make success out of DMC and DMC, of course, metamorphosed into a company we all know as EXP.

And EXP at that particular time was the biggest experiential agency in Nigeria. And like they say in every good thing there is always a time to pause and say it was really nice being together. Then, we have to move on; so, that gave birth to Oracle Experience.

At what point did you think of starting an agency as an entrepreneur, knowing very well that the environment was not that clement, and what gave birth to the name, Oracle?

I think I will take it more as what life taught me and the lesson that I got starting Oracle Experience. So, while working at EXP and also as a Manager in EXP, I was just like an everyday guy. You can see me carrying cartons on my head or pushing the truck or even cleaning the premises. We did it dedicatedly and put everything into it. But with all the commitment to make the company work, I didn't forget the company was not even a



Nigerian company, but a South African company. One day in 2000, we went to one of our clients; his name is Julius Agenmonmen, Unilever, Nigeria, to do a report and other stuff. We had a meeting too.

That day there were some things we were supposed to call the company driver to come and pick = cartons, products and all that stuff. I and my colleague then, Rufus, just started carrying all the cartons. The man called us aside and asked, "Are you guys shareholders in this company?" And I said, "No, we are just workers". He said, "Good; and you guys are so committed and dedicated?" I answered, "Yes". The man said, "Not now, but just have it at the back of your mind that one day you are going to do this for yourselves. I'm sure when you do this for yourselves you are going to be very successful".

I said alright. So, somebody from a distance saw what we were doing. That is why when I see the way some people work and their attitude, I just laugh. Whatever you do today you are doing it for yourself. Sometimes

people do not have that kind of mindset; tomorrow is always very important. So, that was how the idea of Oracle Experience berthed. So, we left there with that kind of mindset. We started the Oracle Experience dream. The company was registered in 2004, but we didn't start operations until 2006.

. That takes us to the traditional oracle, when people go to the oracle they want to see the future, what the future holds. The oracle and the palmist will look and say this is what we see. Because they have seen it, they provide the solution. We are a solution provider to the clients. So we decided to create that oracle. When we provide the solution to the question you seek, then, we take it and create experience out of it. So that was how we came about the name Oracle.

As an entrepreneur, what are the things that you wanted to achieve when you started but could not be achieved?

Well, I think when I take my mind back to the year 2016 all these come with a lot of mixed feelings. A situation whereby you look at things and you look back and look at what is happening now it shows me just one thing that 'there's God somewhere'. That if you believe in him and walk in his light and direction that things will always be okay. Starting business in Nigeria has not been easy. People look at your successes, but they do not know that before the successes there were lots of losses, there were lots of

failures and there were lots of tribulations and lots of hope-losing moments.

We started with nothing, with absolutely nothing, zero. I can still remember the day I left EXP back then. I had just 80,000 naira in my account, a little boy just born and unpaid house rent of almost 250,000 naira. And you have just 80k and you decided because you want to be very principled to take a walk.

Because you want to be principled you take a walk. Sometimes, you will need all the craze in the world to do that kind of a thing. But again God doesn't make a mistake because I strongly believe that there is God. God talks to us in different ways. God allows these things to happen to us because he is the only one that understands when the end is coming. That's why sometimes when people ask why should this happen, I tell them that there is a reason for everything that happens. For you to move to the next phase of your life, you must undergo quite a lot of things. It is natural. Jesus Christ underwent quite a

I sold my wedding ring 30k to execute Oracle's first brief



lot of things.

At the time Jesus was baptised if he had wanted to start to perform miracles he would have done that. But God is God; He didn't do that. He went into the wilderness where he really suffered and endured the pains; after that came his breakthrough. Those are the things that happened. It was very tough. We started with Nestle. I just started pushing proposals and was able to do some presentations at Nestle. You know there are people who would want to destabilise you and all that. But there was this one lady who in the course of the presentation saw something or God just touched her. She said there was something in what these guys are doing. This very lovely lady somehow decided to give us an opportunity.

At that stage the 'bosses' didn't want that to happen. But the lady was somebody of integrity; integrity in the sense that she told the board that if Oracle can't do the work, then, she was not going to do it because that would mean she has taken our ideas to somebody else to use. She said her conscience would not allow that. So, they gave me the opportunity, a 4million naira job.

To us that 4million naira was like the world to us. We were very excited to start that job. There was a very big crisis for us because it was unusual in the industry; nobody gives you money to do the job, you have to finance the job first. So raising money to do the job was a very big issue. And of course, when you are struggling nobody gives you money, that's the reality. We ended up selling some few things we could sell and we still could not have enough money. Thank God my brother just came back then. So we went to the mallams that normally buy jewelry and all that. To cut a long story short, I was able to raise 30,000 naira to balance operation money. I had a wedding ring worth N150, 000, but the mallam could offer 30k. I sold it. I was very happy because I have the money to do what I was supposed to do. Till today, I take that as the sacrifice we had to make then and we did it. It was great, the company loved it, and everybody wanted to work with us. From Nestle we went to Procter & Gamble, then to Nigeria Brewery and from there to Friesland to Samsung, DSTV and then to Coca-Cola.

Your most challenging campaign in the last 15 years
I will rather look at the campaign that I believe is the

most challenging and with a sense of fulfillment - the campaign that gives us a second chance. You know having a second chance is always very difficult; nobody would want to give you a second chance. We had a big launch we were doing for Nestle Maggi and we were still just catching up and somebody gave us a second chance to do that and we were going to work with Wande Coal. So, we agreed on a fee which we were going to pay. The idea was that we would pay 70percent and the balance of 30per cent would be paid when the performance is concluded. We raised the 70percent and we paid him, while I was still making plans to raise the balance of 30per cent. When the show came up and it was time for Wande Coal to perform, he refused to perform, insisting that I must pay him his balance before he would perform. But we never had this conversation. All I know is that I will pay the balance after the show. The MD and all directors of Nestle were already seated, and that guy refused to perform. You know how bad that would be. I was just there and didn't even have the money. You know God would always show up at such times. So, I started making series of calls. To the glory of God, one woman sent cash of 300k. Somebody took 'okada' to the woman and came back to the Water Parks venue of the event with the money. He ran to the backstage and handed the cash of N300.000 to Wande Coal before he started to perform. At that stage, I was already destabilized; I didn't have a large structure and because I was destabilized, coordinating other aspects to ensure the MC and the microphones were in place was difficult. It was a big mess. And for once failure stared at me in the face. Later, I went to meet the client with the mind of apologising for whatever happened. We were thankful because we were given me the opportunity. It was not the client's fault that things went the way they went. But again, I still have to thank her. To my surprise, she gave me another chance. So, for me, that is one of the programmes I can never really forget.

How did you arrive at the theme of the 15th anniversary?

Yes, it has been 15 years of uncommon wins. We started from nowhere, with zero kobo, and at the end of the day, we were able to push ourselves to be the biggest agency

with Nigeria Brewery, the biggest agency with P&G, the biggest agency with Nestle, the biggest agency with Friesland, the biggest agency with Coca-Cola, the biggest agency with DSTV, the biggest agency with Visa. It's not ordinary, right! These are very uncommon. People will now sit back and ask what and how possible. We have worked with P&G for the past 15 years and that's very uncommon. We have worked with Nigeria Brewery for the past 13 years, that's very uncommon. So people can't really understand. What some people try to do was to say no, no, no. We must bring down this guy. They wrote petitions to Atlanta that we must do this, we must do that. Is it because they cannot last two or three years with a client, but somebody has lasted 15 years, then, jealousy must come in?

Behind every success comes jealousy. The time people are spending in the industry to know who is doing what, just use that time to focus on your own company. What are you doing right, what are you not doing right? That's the problem they always have. So, once they can't match you in terms of delivery, then, the next thing is we must destroy him at all cost. We must write petitions, we must kidnap him, we must do this, and we must do that. It's an uncommon win.

The kind of crazy things we have done is unbelievable. We have to appeal to all the sensory organs and build a process that people can go through, it's very uncommon. When we were going to build the Tiger Wall, people said 20 feet or 40feet is going to be very difficult to achieve. But we did 70feet which was really unbelievable. If you go to Amsterdam today and look at the Heineken Magazine, most of the pictures that come from Nigeria are all the great works we have done. The Club Ultimate, we built an amazing ship at the ocean arena for people to do a big party. These are very uncommon things, not what you see every day. When we brought the Hot balloon flying across the campuses, it was uncommon, very uncommon things.

When you have 1,500,000 people spread across the country working simultaneously day-in-day out, it is not common. When you have an operation which you have to spend an average of 100million naira every week, it is very uncommon. People can't really understand; who is this guy that left his village with a Ghana-Must-Go bag and came to Lagos. But when God is in action 'He shows the foolish people that their thinking will always be along their foolish ways'. That's why sometimes you see that a little baby is wiser than an adult in some cases.

What would you say the Oracle is all about, what is your biggest strength in terms of creating experience?

Basically, what we do is creating experiences. If you ask how we create the experience? That is another thing. People look at us as an ad agency, experiential and integrated marketing. Yes, that is what we do. Right now, with what has happened we have introduced a little bit virtual and hybrid operations into what we do. Basically, that's who we are. We are not a distant agency; so, I do anything that creates experience for people. We do more with sponsorship, events and integrated marketing. Integrated marketing, as it were, is where you do your marketing, retails and all that.

In terms of what you have today, what is your greatest strength, is it staff or technology?

Our greatest asset in Oracle is the people. That's our greatest asset. We have one of the best people in the industry, that's what people can't really understand. There are people who have been with us for the past 15 years, and we are all here together. So, that's our biggest asset. If you don't have the right people you can never have the right strategy, the right ideas, right creative and all those things.

'Oracle is not just an agency, but a family'

In the run up to Oracle Experience's 15th anniversary, the members of staff, who started with the company from inception, have described the company as a 'family'. They said that Oracle is not an agency as being touted but a company that is qualified to be called a family.

Andrew Eiremiokhae, Executive Director, Operations at Oracle Experience, while narrating his experiences disclosed that the company has invested heavily in equipment and human resources to stay afloat in the business in the last 15 years.

According to Andrew Eiremiokhae, a pioneer staffer with the Oracle, people could be very terrible to handle in the industry. "We invested heavily in equipment because we realised that doing business with the third party can be very challenging".

"We are not just oracle for the namesake. In this business, we have the biggest LED screen with modern lightings. We also have the biggest and best projectors. "We don't go out to rent anything. We don't work for clients. We work with them as partners," adding that "Where other companies may charge some N50 we can charge N30, because we are partners.

"The beauty of it is that we don't have to rent our equipment out, so anytime we go to any event we still remain top-notch", he said.

He also noted that to avoid unwarranted gridlocks that people often create in the course of doing business, Oracle's penchant for proficient planning coupled with the help of God have paid off over the years.

Though he sees managing people as the most difficult thing in the industry, he says with good planning and the help of God in their operational activities, they are proactive rather than reactive.

The head of finance, Olusegun Matthew, who had spent 15 years with the company, stated that Oracle Experience really knows its 'onions' to remain not just in the trade for 15 years but also to be at the top of the business in a highly competitive industry.

Matthew described Oracle as an exceptional experiential agency saying, "Oracle is a company that really knows its onions. What I mean is that we know the objective of every client and we always work towards that. God has blessed us with the right people".

He added that God has also blessed Oracle with someone that has the vision and works towards the vision. "Our MD, in the person of Dr. Felix, is somebody that doesn't sit down as MD. He works with everyone. This has affected every member of staff positively because he is not behaving like MD sitting down somewhere while staff members are left to do the job".

For Bukola Akinola, Senior Account Manager at Oracle Experience, the company does not sack. The outbreak of Coronavirus pandemic has put so much pressure on



Eiremiokhae, Executive Director



George Paul Osondu, Operations/ Business Dev. Director



Mathew, Finance Director



Kehinde Agboola, HOD/Snr. Client Manager, Client Service



Bukola Akinola, Snr. Accounts Manager



Amaka Eiremiokhae, Business Unit Manager

organisations globally to downsize. Several businesses have either sacked more than half of their workforce, while others have completely closed shops.

She said at Oracle Experience as bad as the Covid-19 pandemic affected the economy of the whole world in 2020, which forced many organisations to either downsize or embrace the strange 'culture' of half-salary payment, in Oracle, no worker was laid off.

Akinola, who manages Friesland's Peak Milk account for the agency, noted that "last year was really horrible for our country and the entire world. But none of us here has to think of where to get his or her next meal. I know many companies that either downsized or paid half-salary to their workers, but nobody was sacked here or given below the agreed monthly take home pay".

"In Oracle everybody works together as a family. I remember the first time I came here. I had challenges getting some of my colleagues to work with me. So, I went to the MD to express my frustration to him. You know I didn't expect him to react

immediately. He told them, "You have to work with this person". So, that was like a push for me to give in my best. It speaks a lot. Here we all work like a family. We are from different tribes and different religions, yet we work together as if we are one family. It has been so amazing working here. And that is the honest truth".

She said staff members do not have to think of whether their salaries would be paid at the end of the month. "I know how hard it could be at times, but the MD will never make excuses why you shouldn't be paid at the end of the month. If you do your work, you get your pay. The atmosphere here allows people to grow.

"I used to say that if people are not growing, especially financially, you begin to have problems with them. But when you see people buying cars and living well, even in a small place like ours, it shows that the people are growing and are happy." She said in Oracle it is a tradition to always celebrate those who buy new cars, build new houses, among others. "Here we celebrate our success, we celebrate one another. It

is quite amazing. Yes, we have our challenges, but if you weigh the pros and the cons, if you weigh the weaknesses and the strengths, it is a beautiful experience".

Kehinde Agboola, Head, Nigerian Breweries portfolio for Oracle Experience, said "We create our people and our process to be the best".

Agboola said despite some ups and downs, it has been a wonderful experience working with the agency. "The nature of business here is that we are consistently building ourselves daily. We daily innovate; we create ourselves, our minds, our business, our process and our people. We crave to be the best because in this industry innovation is key".

The Head, NB portfolio for Oracle Experience, who has been with the agency for eight years, said when asked by *The Industry* to describe how innovative Oracle is said, "We daily, routinely, consistently come out with different innovative, creative ideas; and apply all those innovative ideas into our field of study, which is marketing communication."

He added that to sustain partnership with big brands, the agency always strives to execute briefs with the eye-on-the-goal, executing to win. "Like one of the payoffs we have in the Nigeria brewery unit here we say 'execute to win'. It is all about executing to win. In the course of executing to win, there will be ups and downs. A tough ride, people don't get to see these ups and downs because it is part of the process. And because people don't see the process, what people see is the output. It started with building products, ideas, and also building yourselves along the line".

Speaking on the theme of Oracle's 15th anniversary, 'Uncommon Wins', Agboola said, "15 years is a feat, a milestone. I say this because we are talking of a business in Nigeria, not in England or America. I'm not talking about the economy; I'm talking about the business environment, talking about the socio-politics of developing and managing a business in black Africa. It is a fact that most businesses in Africa, in Nigeria, are so much in the enclave of family and relatives, as a

Generational brand loyalty is key to modern marketing operations - Lanre Oyegbola

Enlisting generational brand loyalty among brand consumers is very crucial to modern marketing business, ad experts have said overtime. By this, advert agencies, are enjoined to focus more on making the brand so essentially familiar that subsequent generations can inherit the brand loyalty and keep it alive for ages.

M. Lanre Oyegbola, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Havas Africa and Boomerang, told *The Industry* that ad firms should endeavour to register a brand in the heart of consumers and help the brand to be more meaningful to them, adding that brand marketing has migrated from the old client-agency focus to brand-solution in recent years.

According to him, the degree of loyalty a brand enjoys from core consumers, ability to take the consumers generationally such that they can pass on the tradition from one person to another, is the new dimension in brand marketing.

In a research recently conducted, he said, "The question was how 'do you think that brands can increase and get you more engaged such that the consumer will be more and more committed with the brand?' In his view, the brands must show that they have a purpose and that they have meaning. So it is not just about what the brand decides to say; the consumer is saying that this brand must be relevant in my life. There must be a purpose beyond the fact that you are just a brand. What is your purpose? What are you doing? What exactly have you brought to bear that makes you relevant to me? And that is what we call meaningfulness".

Oyegbola said "Our focus is to help brands become more meaningful to consumers. And at the same time before you can do that, you need to know what is meaningful to people, because if you don't understand what is meaningful to people, you will just be in the dark and probably making assumptions that are very far from reality".

He noted that a body of researchers has showed that "a plethora of brands just come and go, and you wonder where they have gone. They just come in and they just fizzle away".

He added that perception, as immaterial as it is, is very deep in marketing business, as he said that ad agency is all about how you are perceived. "We were doing well in 2015 and then by 2018 we want to do much better. And part of building that perception is for you to have a global brand that is associated with you.

"Now, it is a two-way street. For some people, you build the perception around yourself as a brand and it works for you. To some other people, you build the perception through your association or affiliations that you have or partnerships. There is a perception around the personality that is driving the agency and ultimately it robs off on the agency and helps to improve the quality of work that they do".

He stated that the perception could be built around the fact that you won an award. "So, if you are a creative agency and you always win all the awards, you are top on the list. That is a perception. The perception is that you are creative that is why you are winning the award".

He said marketing business is the business of perception - the way you are perceived. "If you are perceived to be creative, people will

relate to you that you are creative. If you are perceived to be strong, people will relate to you that you are strong. It is about building the right perception about your brand, because the agencies, we are also brands".

He, however, noted that building all the perceptions around a brand in the Nigerian perspective is a bit difficult, "because we are very cluster-focused in the marketing/IMC industry in Nigeria.

"So, you find people who say, we are a media agency, we are an experiential agency, we are a creative agency and we are a PR agency. So, you can't build all of the perceptions at once. People, then, will perceive you as good in all; it might be a bit of a challenge. But it depends on who your buyer is per time. If the person who is buying your service per time is buying just your media service, the way the person relates to you is that you are the best in media. You build that and enforce that perception".

He also corroborated other marketing experts that the business has shifted base from client-agency relation to solution-agency. "When I was in Verdant, we don't wait for briefs from clients, we sell solutions. I saw this as far back as 2007. That is what everybody is trying to say now. What is going to a profile is not the agency

as it is or as a structure, it is the approach of agency business that is going to fade. Clients will no longer be looking for somebody who can produce a TV commercial that wins an award. They will be looking for somebody who will be able to deliver a solution that impacts their bottom line. So, it is going to be a more solution driven approach, which is where the strength for through the line will begin to come through. Because if you are thinking through the line, you are not just thinking about the fact that I want this commercial to win an award, but also you are thinking through the line.

"Will it impact the bottom line? Will it help to galvanise consumer behaviour in a way that it is positive for the brand. Not just beautiful creative and all of that. It is going to be you are looking at what is going to be the



Lanre Oyegbola, Chief Executive Officer, Havas Africa

contribution? So, clients are probably going to be putting the works of agency almost like an item of their balance sheet. In essence, it is a reality that is going to come. It might come in 2021, it might come in 2022, but I have been an advocate of this for the last 10 years", he said.

Consumers' interests inspire our brand marketing crafts - Uduak J. Peters



Uduak J. Peters, MD & CIO, G2M Creatives

Brand marketing has evolved over the years. No doubt, it has grown far beyond come and buy this durable product, at cheap price and all that. What is in vogue is more of craftily courting consumers' interest to patronise a brand, new or old; wooing them to see the brand as serving their purpose.

Mr. Uduak J. Peters, Managing Director and Chief Innovation Officer, G2M Creatives, said "We grew up with different brands. What we actually do on our own is to look at the brand from the point of view of consumption. We think

of someone who we want to reach out to and would consume this brand. And from that point of view, we start creating".

Uduak said he leveraged largely on his background as a media practitioner before veering into marketing and branding, "I think one of the reasons is the background. Okay, we came from the end point, we came from where all the materials land, we came from radio and TV. So, all the creative contents always come there. We heard all the adverts over the years, we heard the successful ones, we heard the hit songs and we heard the elements that made people talk about

creative and successful materials. So, it became part of us to understand brands from that end point use".

Uduak Peters said 2020 was a really tough year with untold tolls on the world's economy, "The advantage we had then was that some of the ATL contents we worked on that go across the country on different radio stations were contents that we could produce remotely and put together. So, that helped us during the pandemic and then sometimes we had the challenge of the quality of the material. So, we had to ensure that whatever material was being sent still

had the minimum best quality".

He added that, "One of the challenges we also faced was even convincing clients on why they had to still do campaigns during the pandemic. And then we were able to prove to them that look, 'if you keep quiet during this period, then, you disconnect with your consumers. When you return, you are like the guy who abandoned his lover during a crisis. And, then, you need to start building that relationship all over again'.

"So, we had to give clients data to show that what needs to change is not running the campaigns but the message. You need to come from a point of empathy, you need to come from a point of togetherness, and you need to come from a point of how we can all pull out of this. And it worked for our clients, in terms of the value they got even during the pandemic".

Uduak, who started out as very young presenter on radio, averred that mentoring can be very helpful, and advised young agents not to undermine the power of learning continuously. "I think that young people need proper mentors in the industry. But there were times when growing up, you find out that some people could not teach you the skill in what they do to excel. Nobody teaches anybody, everybody is afraid. So, some of us had to learn through serious observation, through reading and through a lot of watching people.

AFFILIATION

Bitter pill for advertising

Goddie Ofose and Bidemi Bakare x-ray the affiliation bandwagon among the Nigerian advertising agencies in the 1990s and early 2000 and the reasons behind the sudden backtrack by the agencies, while public relations agencies have adopted the business relationship the former have discarded.

Between the late 1990 and 2010, the advertising industry witnessed a preponderance of affiliations of indigenous agencies with their foreign counterparts. However, few years after this remarkable development, the story became different as some of the affiliations have now surprisingly gone under.

Prior to the enactment of the Indigenization Decree in 1974, advertising had been the exclusive preserve of the foreign agencies as exemplified by the incorporation in London of West Africa Publicity Limited, the first ever advertising agency in Nigeria, which later metamorphosed into Lintas Lowe offering marketing support for the growing products line of its parent company, United Africa Company (UAC).

But by the time the act took its root and had firm grip, indigenous participation had grown tremendously offering advertising services to a wide range of clients that cut across manufacturing, construction, banking and telecommunications. At the last count, there were over 130 ad agencies registered with the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

While the upsurge in local participation was rife, there was, however, an interesting development as some of these indigenous players welcomed partnerships with foreign agencies to further boost their credibility, capability and potential in advertising.

The development in the late 1990s, therefore, saw local agencies including Insight Communications, Center Spread, Rosabel, Cosse, DDB, SO&U and Prima Garnet getting affiliated to Grey International, FCB, Leo Burnett, Bate, Saatchi & Saatchi and Ogilvy respectively.

For these local players, the motivating factor for this romance was the need to acquire considerable capacity through knowledge transfer as well as the immense clout to pitch for the accounts of big multinational companies in the country.

But, while this honeymoon lasted, some of these affiliations few years after started suffering bad pitches and eventually closed shop fuelling suspicion that the interests of these local players were not well protected.

Besides the second generation agencies' fortress on affiliation, some new generation advertising businesses such as Noah's Ark, Novelpotta Y&R and others also pondered over the idea. Noah's Ark tested the waters with Dentsu, but failed.

Dr. Celey Okogun's Novelpotta may have dropped the Y&R name since much has not been heard about it in recent times. It was also gathered that Steve Babaeko had travelled to the United States to seal an affiliation deal for X3M Ideas, but the attempt reportedly did not fall through.

For instance, Rosabel has not recorded since its affiliation with Leo Burnett crashed. Rosabel's misfortune happened when Publicis, at the global level, acquired Leo Burnett and decided to buy stake in Insight Communications. That relationship was automatically transferred to Insight



Redefini.

Others operating are, however, now doing so on their own having severed relationships with their foreign partners who have since then relocated and returned to their former bases. Meanwhile, investigations by The Industry revealed that a lot of unresolved issues, chief among which is the limit of 25 percent stake in ownership of a local agency by a foreign partner as contained in the review of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) Act 2005, may actually have been responsible for the fate which these local agencies suffered.

Speaking to our correspondent on the issue, Mr. Kayode Oluwasona, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, 1201 Brandsway, a fully integrated marketing communication company, said a lot of issues could have happened to affect those affiliations that went awry. Oluwasona, a former AAAN's president, said the issue at hand can be better situated if one considers the objective for which the affiliation took place in the first place.

"A lot of issues could have happened and a lot of issues are still happening that are affecting affiliations. The first thing to consider is the objective for which the affiliation took place. One needs to know what the reason for the affiliation was. If there is a reason for the affiliation, then, the question is, has the reason been achieved or is being achieved? If the answer is yes, that is fine. If it had failed to do so, then, one can now begin to ask what went wrong. The truth is, at the very beginning the foreign guys were not particularly interested in affiliation for commercial reasons. They were comfortable with just having their names on the signage. It was just to show they were present and that they had affiliates in these places.

But later in some cases, you had a case of some foreign guys who wanted to be involved in the business and be part of the operations to make it profitable to be able to make something out of it. So, in the event of the failure of these businesses to achieve this objective for which they went into affiliation, there was the possibility of going for

AFFILIATIONS: A double-edged sword, bait for public relations



will breakdown. If, for example, an agency is making money but fails to tell the partner the financial returns or fails to give correct information about operations, there is bound to be problem. Of course, the foreign guys would be wondering what is happening. Don't forget that you may not be the only affiliated outpost they have. They may have in Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. If the other ones are putting up a particular level of performance with transparency, but you are not forthcoming, they would be discouraged and dissatisfied and may want to change or remove you as an affiliate".

On his part, an advertising expert, Dr. Taiwo Akindele, said the breakdown of the affiliations may not be connected with the review of the APCON Act as being speculated or insinuated in some quarters which is said not to have gone down well with the foreign agencies. The review stipulates that foreign agencies can only own 25 per cent stake in local agencies.

He said, "I don't think the review of the APCON Act has anything to do with this. Firstly, I think the Nigerian business environment is very attractive to them. It is attractive enough for them to want to comply with whatever regulation that our authority stipulates. There is nowhere in the world they will go to that they will not meet one form of regulation or the other. The question to ask is, since after this APCON's reform have they pulled out? Can you tell me which foreign agency has pulled out just because of that? I don't think so, as I can't think of any".

Akindele, a lecturer at the Lagos State University, Ojo, said most of the foreign agencies that disengaged from one local agency may have subsequently engaged another, adding that the attractiveness of affiliation for them far outweighs the challenges.

"One fact we must admit is that most of these foreign agencies that disengage from a local agency may not be out of the country entirely. They leave one agency and go somewhere else. They do not leave Nigeria on the account of any policy. And then again, I want to believe that whatever the issue is, policies are always evolving. Before the reform, there was no 25 per cent and for whatever reason, the government felt 25 per cent was appropriate. We must realize that over time, things can also happen to cause a change and that was what happened. And even if they don't like it or is it of concern to them, the attractiveness is higher than the challenge that they will suffer. So, I don't think that the review of the APCON Act was the problem. Most of them never had a stake before, not even 5 per cent. They were only comfortable with just being around the country's advertising space.

And mind you, affiliation does not necessarily mean you must own equity. I can be affiliated to you and the terms of engagement may not involve that you own any part of my business. It could just be administrative, it could also just be technical", he said

Akindele noted that affiliations have done more to help advertising in Nigeria grow beyond expectation, stressing that the development of the sector could have been slower without it.

"To be sincere, affiliation has been a huge benefit to the Nigerian advertising industry. First and foremost, this is a practice that originated from the western world or the more advanced world and they are coming to partner with us in such an arrangement. These affiliations have exposed us and made us see what it is. They made us learn the ropes. They actually developed us. So, technically, they brought knowledge, awareness and exposure. And, then, the affiliated businesses are the lucky ones as they were provided with the opportunity to attract world class global multinational

businesses and clients. For example, one hears that a particular international brand has a particular network as his agency. If you are affiliated, it opens you up and you can be the agency that would work on the business. That helps to develop your capacity. It also helps our people in training. It helps our people in tools including creative evaluation tools and proprietary tools that have already been developed in those advanced countries which were brought on the account of the affiliation. Without affiliation, we wouldn't have had it. Even the management skills too, including the structure and the organization and the way advertising agencies are managed. The truth is, we lean on these foreign agencies to make sure that we learn a lot from them. Now we can confidently say we are better off because we have been exposed and can possibly go the whole hog by doing it alone. But from the very beginning without affiliation things could have been slower", he concluded.

Advertising industry reform that changes everything: Governing Council of APCON at its 132nd session held on September 26, 2012 approved the new advertising industry reform proclamation. The new APCON proclamation, which redefines the practice and business of advertising, took effect from January 1, 2013.

License Regime: All categories of advertising organizations as listed in the APCON Code that engage in the business and practice of advertising for the purpose of gains/project shall be licensed by APCON (with the exclusion of Advertisers). All agencies will have to apply for and obtain practice license from APCON to legalise the operations of the advertising agency/organization. Without the license, the business of the agency will become illegal. The license shall be renewable every three years.

Each agency/organisation shall have its area of specialization defined, which shall be the basis and scope of license granted to such agency/organization. Media independence agencies will be granted license for media planning and buying only. Outdoor agency will be granted license to own and manage outdoor sites, while full fledge agencies will be granted license for media planning and buying, creative and brand management. Licensed agency must operate within the scope of license granted to such organization.

Where a firm decides to operate outside its licensed area of specialization, the concerned organization shall be required to set up a new firm and register the new firm that is intended to operate and offer the new designated, i.e. if an advertising agency intends to conduct the business of outdoor agency, such advertising agency must set up a new outdoor agency and obtain an outdoor business license from APCON to legally practice the outdoor business. If client/advertiser XYZ Limited intends to buy media or own an in-house agency, such advertiser must set up an independent organization for the specialized business either, Media planning & buying, full fledge agency/or outdoor business and obtain license for the operation of the newly set up organization. Operating advertising services functions without corporate license will become illegal with effect from January 1, 2013.

Advertising organizations are now classified as follows:

- (i) National Agency
- (ii) Foreign Agency

Any shareholding of 74.9% and above (up to 100%) by Nigerians qualify an agency as a National Agency, while 25.1% and above (up to 100%) by foreigners qualify an agency as a Foreign Agency. Foreign Agency shall practise advertising business targeted at a market outside the shores of Nigeria.

The advertising reform of 2012 championed by the then APCON's chairman, Lolu Akinwunmi, may have given credence to why affiliation with the creative advertising industry in Nigeria is less attractive today.

Industry watchers believe that the public relations industry in the country, that is largely unstructured, may continue with the trend since there are no stated rules and regulations that guide their operations and foreign incursion in the industry.

somebody else that can get them what they want. Before then, not many affiliations were based on profitability because I know that not many people cared about what was in the affiliation for them", he said".

The advertising guru said another reason why an affiliation could breakdown is the change of vision of the local business, adding that insincerity on the part of the local agency could also sound a death knell to affiliation.

He said, "If, for instance, the local business at the beginning was satisfied with just being an appendage by looking at affiliation as a means of getting business. If after being affiliated to this foreign agency to have an opportunity to have businesses and clients locally and internationally and those businesses are not forthcoming, the local agency may say, "let me re-strategise by dropping this affiliation and go for the one that can pay me better" There is also the issue of greed; for example, there is insincerity on the part of the local agency as it fails to declare business information openly and transparently. By the time this is discovered, the affiliation

African institutions must embrace public relation – Yomi Badejo-Okusanya

The president, African Public Relations Association, Yomi Badejo-Okusanya, has reiterated the need for institutions in Africa to embrace public relations so as to help drive positive narratives and dispel the negative stereotypes about the continent to create better opportunities for the people.

Mr. Okusanya made this statement during his opening remarks at the 2021 APRA Conference themed 'One Africa: March to Economic Integration and the Role of Public Relations in Covid-19 Era', which held on the 25th of May and was attended by several esteemed speakers and guests across various industries, including the president of African Development Bank, Akinwunmi Adesina; Secretary General, Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), H.E Wamkele Mene; Executive Head of Marketing & Communications, Africa Region, Standard Bank, Nkiru Olumide-Ojo, among others. The conference facilitated the discourse on how public relations can catalyze the growth of the African Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which is projected by experts to be the world's largest single market, once fully operational.

Mr. Okusanya spoke on the consequence of Africans taking charge of their narrative, rather than leaving it to foreigners to tell the stories, stating that in light of Africa's current situation and its trajectory toward socio-economic development, there couldn't be a better time to begin doing this. "For far too long, our story has been told by outsiders in traditional media or through today's digital media. Retaking the control of this narrative will help us counter negative stereotypes that often impede our development. Africa is a force in the world and there is no better way to leverage this force than to tell its own story in diverse ways across boundaries. It is true that we are not where we want to be, but Africa is definitely on the rise and will continue to be.

"However, if we truly want to change Africa's narrative, African institutions must embrace more of public relations. Public relations must move higher in your pecking order from a 'can have' to a 'must-have'", he stated.

He further spoke on the purpose of public relations as a tool to galvanize better



Yomi Badejo-Okusanya
President, African Public Relations Association

engagement and long-term development for Africa, elucidating the rudiments of the practice whilst emphasizing the need for AfCFTA to support APRA so as to adopt and integrate PR tools for long-term success. "Public Relations is not just about looking, sounding or feeling good. It goes far beyond that. Rather, it is a strategic management tool designed to deliberately and consistently analyze and predict trends, as well as stakeholders and through that, foster better understanding and engagement.

"I call on the African Development Bank to support APRA in its quest to sell 'positive Africa' through partnership of some of our initiatives. To roll out effectively, you need strategic communications and APRA is once again reiterating our offer to assist you in designing an effective strategy across the continent, leveraging on the skills and force of our members in every country and beyond", he added.

President, African Development Bank, Akinwunmi Adesina, in his keynote address also emphasized the need to curate positive narratives for Africa, citing this as an intrinsic avenue to actualize Agenda 2063 of the Africa Union.

"There are great stories to be told about

Africa, our beloved continent. We need you as partners in public relations and the media to help curate and disseminate Africa's success stories. This is the path towards the actualization of the Africa we want as set out in agenda 2063 of the African Union.

"Your role is critical, and I'm proud to say the African Development Bank itself produces news stories and press releases about Africa's progresses in creating better opportunities for its people", he stated.

Akinwunmi went on to announce plans of the African Development Bank to partner with the African Public Relations Association (APRA) in promulgating positive African stories of progress, resilience and steadfastness as a people to propel the continent to the forefront of global competitiveness.

"The African Development Bank will initiate a new strategic partnership with the African Public Relations

Association so that you can help to weave stories of resilience of a continent, progressing against all odds, together, determined, resolute, undeterred and spurred on by the sound of our progress. Let us create narratives that inspire and propel Africa. Africa's future is bright. Let's spread the good news", he concluded.

The APRA Conference 2021 marked the very first virtual edition of the association's annual conference and it held from May 25th – 27th. The event was initially scheduled to hold physically in Tanzania but had to be cancelled and held virtually, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other notable speakers at this year's edition included Kerry Sheehan, Senior Communication Advisor, United Kingdom Government Communication Service; Philippe Borremans, President International Public Relations Association (IPRA); Paul Holmes, Founder PRovoke Media; Wynne Musabayana, Head of Communication, African Union Commission (AUC); Carol Watson, Chief Inclusion Officer, BCW; Kamal Taibi, Founder Strateus Group and Jordan Rittenberry, Chairman, Middle East and Africa Edelman, among others.



Dr. Onyekachi Onubogu

Experts task marketing leaders on corporate social investment

The CEO of Frutta Juice and Services, Dr. Onyekachi Onubogu, has tasked marketing leaders on the need to give priority to corporate social investment.

Onubogu who made this known while presenting a paper titled: "Addressing the Balance Question in the Management of Corporate Social Investment Portfolio During Crisis", argued that, nearly every CEO or marketing leader is being forced to consider three key questions in the last 12 months.

Other panelists at the event, who lent their voices to the issue included Mrs. Ini Abimbola, vice president, Association of Sustainability Professionals, Mr. Ken Egbas, MD TruCSR/Founder, The SERAS Africa, Mr. Tony Okwoju, Lead Consultant, Reinhart Consulting, Ms. Caroline Oghuma, Executive Head, Corporate Communications, Multichoice, Nigeria, Mrs. Victoria Uwadoka, Manager, Communication & Corporate Affairs, Nestle, Nigeria, Mr. Uduak Peters, MD, G2M Creatives and Ms. Chinezee Amanfo, Lead, Public Relations, 9mobile.

According to Onubogu, "the first is what do I cut in this lockdown period and often the answer the CEO will get will be 'cut the marketing spend and any non-essential spend'. The non-essential spend often includes Corporate Social Investments."

He said, "The second question is how will I remain relevant to my customers and ensure they believe we are giving them great value during this crisis, while the third is how do I even know what portion of my marketing investment we get returns from?"

While arguing that those questions typify the challenges marketing and business leaders face during crisis, Onubogu, however, stressed the importance of CSR/Marketing investments and the delicate balancing act that must be made to ensure organizations and people remain true to who they are and showcase what they stand for in good or tough times.

According to him, the real question should not be around balancing CS investment in a crisis, but on how to increase CS investment.

"The challenge isn't that we should cut CSI or marketing costs to improve profitability in times of crisis, but for organizations and business leaders to ensure that the Corporate Social Investment becomes a part of their business continuity and sustainability plans, especially during a crisis", he noted.

He noted that customers and stakeholders would always remember brands that stood by them at tough times.

"A man with a vehicle that runs out of fuel in the middle of the night will remember you for stopping to give him 2 liters of fuel at night than giving him the same two liters of fuel the next day at the petrol station", he added.

While giving the definition of corporate social investment, he stated that, CSR and CS Investments come in two-fold; implicit and explicit CSR.

He pointed out, implicit CSR is not undertaken as part of a calculated corporate strategy, explicit CSR, he argued, refers to voluntary corporate strategies and policies that 'assume and articulate responsibility for some societal interests.'

Welcoming guests to the event, the convener of the event, Goddie Ofose, explained that the theme of the hybrid event was a fall-out of Covid-19, a public health crisis that has continued to ravage economies around the globe.

"In line with our theme, companies have a major role to play in social investment. By looking for social investment opportunities aligned with the business and its operations, companies can create value for society, reinforce business objectives and create value for shareholders.

"In today's gathering, I would like to restate that Covid-19 pandemic has offered a great opportunity for businesses to shift towards more genuine and authentic CSI/CSR and contribute to address urgent global social and environmental challenges", he added.

The highlight of the event was the lifetime achievement awards given to the quartet of Mr. Jimi Awosika (Baale), Executive Vice Chairman, Troyka Holdings; Mr. Tolu Ogunkoya, Regional Chief Executive Officer, Omnicom Media Group; Felix King, Group Managing Director, Oracle Experience and Yomi Badejo Okusanya, CMC Connect BWC, while Mr. John Ugbe, MD/CEO MultiChoice was honoured with the CEO of The Year, among others.

Speaking on the awards, the chairman of the awards committee, Akin Adewakun, expressed delight that the five-member jury was able to deliver on its mandate of picking 27 highly accomplished marketing professionals for the different categories of the awards.

He described the mandate of the committee as 'daunting'; since it was difficult to pick such a negligible few from the huge array of highly accomplished practitioners the industry parades.

"When we were saddled with this responsibility, we knew the task would be herculean, not because of paucity of qualified professionals, but for the simple fact that the industry is replete with seasoned and highly accomplished practitioners that sieving a paltry number from such pool, could be daunting", he stated.

He described the awardees as individuals, whose contributions could not really be measured in monetary terms, in the industry.

"Apart from being role models, they remain part of those factors that have continued to make the industry thick. They are individuals, extremely diligent in their works, and have, as a result, continued to dine with kings", he added.

LAGOS NIPR unveils 2021 PR week programmes, AGM

The Lagos State chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) has unveiled programmes to mark this year's edition of the Lagos Public Relations Week themed: Managing Public Communication, Building Trust, scheduled to hold from Friday, June 25 – Thursday, July 1, 2021.

The Lagos Public Relations Week is the flagship event for communications practitioners, setting agenda and deepening the relationship with key stakeholders in exciting ways. More than 3,000 participants, volunteers and audiences are expected to take part in the week-long

programme, which is supported by reputable corporate bodies, public relations consultancies and the media.

The Lagos PR Week will start with a special Cocktails and Networking Mixer designed to fraternize and strengthen relationships between Public Relations practitioners and the most influential stakeholders and sponsors on Friday, June 25, 2021.

On Tuesday, June 29, 2021, there will be the Acts of Kindness Roadshow and Tours. The members of the chapter and stakeholders will embark on a special visit to an autistic home including touring select government establishment,

media organisations and corporate bodies that have supported the institute over the years.

There will be a special workshop for the Public Affairs Managers in Local Government Development Authorities in Lagos State, tagged: Public Affairs Manager of the Future, in partnership with the Ministry of Information and Strategy and Local Government Service Commission, Lagos State on Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

The Annual General Meeting and election of new executives who will handle the affairs of the chapter is also billed to hold at the same venue after the discourse.



Olusegun McMedal
Chairman, NIPR, Lagos branch

Airtel reaffirms commitment to reliable data experience in 'Rainmaker' TVC



For those who follow Airtel's television commercials closely, know that the entire telecommunication giant's creative advertising contents are laced with storytelling elements. From *Lost*, *The In-laws*, *Trust* and several others, the creative agency, Noah's Ark and client- Airtel Nigeria, have been able to marry all the elements that make up a TVC.

Recently, Airtel Nigeria, unveiled a thrilling Television Commercial (TVC) dubbed 'The Rainmaker', which vividly depicts the frustration of having an unreliable network, whilst emphasizing the importance of superior mobile internet/data experience with an incredibly humorous story.

The two-minute TV commercial has sparked excitement among audiences, with many lauding the telco for the captivating storytelling narrative, a quality which it has come to be identified with over the years.

Starring veteran Nollywood actor, Jide Kosoko, the story is set in a village, where a King (Kosoko), was set to host a high profile and significant traditional ceremony but needed an accomplished and revered rainmaker to ensure that rainstorm did

not mar the proceedings of the event, which was to hold in an open venue with no shelter.

Jude Chukwuka, popular actor, who starred as the rainmaker in the commercial, tried to deliver on his mandate and was able to stop the rain, causing jubilation; however, this was short-lived as the rain began pouring again, causing the crowd to disperse as everyone ran for shelter.

In a subsequent scene, the King gave the rainmaker a second chance and asked him to perform his ritual to avert another downpour. Eagerly and excitedly, the rainmaker swung his charm vigorously in a circular motion. This, however, failed again, as it began raining almost immediately, leaving the King in a rage with guests and delegates in hot flight for shelter.

The scene cut to another ceremony, and this time, the King sternly warned the rainmaker beforehand not to fail. Having failed yet again, with heavy lightning and thunderstorm striking, the King ordered him to be seized by his guardsmen. In the final act, the rainmaker is seen building a huge shelter as punishment for his incompetence, while the satisfied King smiled on.

Speaking during a media session to reveal the TVC

to select journalists in Lagos, recently, Emeka Oparah, Director, Corporate Communications & CSR, Airtel Nigeria, said, "At Airtel Nigeria, we are inspired by people and their stories and we love to tell compelling stories that connect with emotions and the heart. Airtel is also inspired by the beautiful Nigerian culture and we will continue to celebrate our different cultures just as we have done with the rainmaker TVC."

"However, the difference is that whatever story we tell at Airtel, we back it up with evidence. I will give just one example to illustrate this point. In 2018, we started rolling out 4G in Nigeria and today Speed Test Intelligence, a global platform for measuring mobile Internet speed, has rated Airtel the best Mobile Internet Operation in Q1 2021 in Nigeria."

Viewers can draw a parallel between the more practical and reliable shelter to Airtel's superior data, which is not only dependable but enriches life by keeping people connected.

Explaining the rationale behind the TVC, Vice President, Corporate Brands and Advertising, Airtel Nigeria, Tokunbo Adodo, stated that the commercial is hinged on Nigeria's cultural diversity, with the aim to celebrate the country's rich cultural heritage, while communicating the essence of staying connected as a people.

"Airtel is an incredibly consumer-centric brand and this commercial is about what drives our customers. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our lives as humans and essentially impacted our ability to connect with one another physically. However, the internet gave us an avenue to connect, which is why Airtel, more than ever is committed to making life easier for our consumers through innovation."

"This commercial also accentuates our drive to provide innovative products and services. We came up with an extremely bold statement saying data is life; hence, our unconventional approaches when it comes to innovation. The services we offer our customers, as well as the stories we tell are all driven by innovation and all our offerings bear eloquent testimony to this", he added.



On the move with
Goddie Ofose

Long road to Stanbic IBTC pension manager's office

Have you seen the new Stanbic IBTC Pension Manager's television commercial or the jingle on radio? Well, if you haven't seen or heard, which I sincerely doubt, you would have seen and heard creativity in motion.

This commercial is a clear reminder to a typical Lagos or city bystander, who would like to help a stranger get to his or her destination. However, the 'grammar' used by the gentleman could actually send a stranded fellow back to where he or she may be coming from.

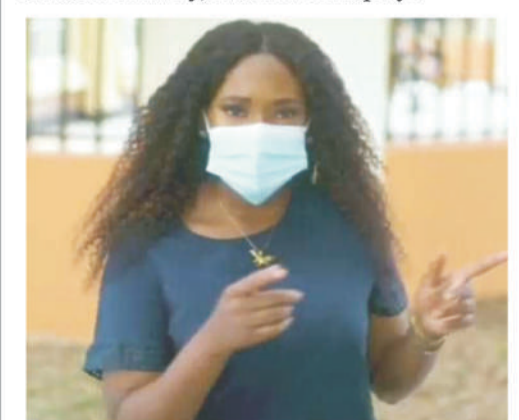
In this TVC that has been viewed by 821,000 people, 363 thumb-up for and 86 thumb-down against on YouTube would take you back in time to the old Lagos lifestyle that clearly states, "This Is Lagos".

A conversation ensued between a stranded lady, who was looking for 2, Johnson Street. Suddenly, a gentleman, who was walking-out, appeared and the lady sought for assistant to locate her destination.

Masked up in the video, the lady asked, "Wait, excuse me, please I am looking for 2 Johnson Street". In response, the young man began, "This is quite simple. You just go straight to Longitude 155" and take a 360 degree turn and turn left, then, turn right on Latitude 379. Are you following me", he asked. "Face the south and transverse the trajectory, at the point you will notice a newly old turning; take the sharp turn and at that turn, turn angle 90 and boom you are in Johnson Street. You can't miss it", he ended.

Now, if this is how to get to Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers, I sincerely think that no one will locate it. However, the commercial is telling the audience that locating Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers is far easy and simple.

In conclusion, the TVC said, "We believe that the journey ahead should be simple, let our experience manager support you." Classic creativity, nuisance in display!



Volkswagen produces first-ever TV and digital ads in isiZulu

Volkswagen has produced its first-ever television and digital advertisements in isiZulu for the upcoming launch of the new Tiguan SUV.

By creating locally-produced advertising material that tells uniquely South African stories and reflects local characters, the local marketing team has made it a priority to celebrate the country's diverse cultures and languages and to connect authentically with local customers.

"In 2021, Volkswagen will be celebrating 70 years in South Africa and we will continue to tell our local brand stories, through the eyes of local storytellers and in our own languages," said Meredith Kelly, head of Marketing at Volkswagen.

In addition to Volkswagen's motivation to reflect local stories, the brand will continue to champion the local creative and advertising industry which is in line with Volkswagen's 'Drive Local' campaign launched in 2020. Creating work locally not only enhances Volkswagen's relevance and celebrates the South African consumer, but it also provides the opportunity to collaborate with South African talent to bring home-grown stories to life.

"The local film industry has been severely impacted by Covid-19 so it became even more important to create own content, as Volkswagen we are committed to crafting relevant brand stories that reflect our country, its people and resonate with our fans," explained Kelly.

"While our first objective of locally-produced content is authenticity and relevance, we are also passionate about supporting the local creative industry by utilising the brilliant skills and talent we have here in South Africa," concluded Kelly.

The upcoming launch of the new Tiguan, which completes Volkswagen's T-SUV model range, provided the brand and their creative partners with a new opportunity to tell a uniquely South African story, once again, through the eyes of local creatives. With the new Tiguan being the a family SUV and following the context of a very tough period for all families due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Volkswagen wanted to celebrate that in retrospect, 'Family has Never Looked this Good'. The new Tiguan creative campaign highlights that while all families have those bothersome habits as well as challenges which sometimes drive people apart, it is spending quality time with family that matters most - bad habits and all.

The new television creative, which is produced in isiZulu, showcases a South African family gathering for a birthday party and highlights that, although family is never perfect, it is the only thing that matters at the end of the day. The new Tiguan television commercial brings together a family after more than a year of various lockdown restrictions to celebrate that family has never



looked this good.

To produce the new advertisement Volkswagen partnered with local filmmakers, Egg Films and director Zwelethu Radebe. On directing the advert Radebe said, "As a black South African filmmaker, I am incredibly proud to have worked on Volkswagen's first isiZulu television commercial."

"What was integral in directing this story was seeing South African people, my own people, reflected in the best possible light and in the most realistic way. It was important to me to showcase a non-stereotypical version of a black South African family, yet one that spoke to local truths. I hope when people view the creative, it brings back fond memories of moments in their own family interactions," concluded Radebe.

APCON inaugurates committees



Owodunni

The Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria, APCON, recently inaugurated three committees in a not too elaborate ceremony held at the Sheraton Lagos Hotel, Ikeja. The committees inaugurated were the Advertising Standards Panel (ASP), the Advertising Code Review Committee and the Advertising Industry Standard of Practice (AISoP) Committee.

At the inaugurating of the committees, the Registrar/Chief Executive of APCON, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, charged the committees to develop appropriate strategies as well as deploy "out of the box" ideas/frameworks that will ensure that the council fundamentally improves its regulatory mandates and service delivery.

"I am convinced that the teams we have selected here today will approach this assignment with all sense of responsibility and commitment, and serve as enablers for the achievement of the council's success. I, therefore, charge all heads of the committees to ensure that they leave no stone unturned in carrying out their respective assignments."

The APCON's boss explained that in executing the assignment, the committees are expected to deliver well on their various tasks and within scheduled time, as according to him, time is very essential.

He emphasized that the task before the committees include identifying peculiar sectorial challenges, suggest immediate and long term implementation policies, recommend action plans that will galvanize the industry and will improve service delivery and benefit stakeholders.

The Code Review Committee and AISoP are expected to conclude their tasks within three months. He called on the entire industry to put all hands on deck to work together to make the advertising industry an enviable entity.

On strategizing and realigning its operations, the council announced the appointment of Mrs. Omowunmi Owodunni as the new chairperson of the Advertising Standards Panel (ASP), the statutory panel charged with the duty of ensuring that advertisements conform to the prevailing laws of the federation as well as the code of advertising ethics of the advertising profession.



Surendran

Airtel Networks Limited (Nigeria), a subsidiary of Airtel Africa Plc, has announced the appointment of C. Surendran as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD and CEO) of Airtel Nigeria with effect from August 1, 2021.

In addition, Mr. Surendran will be appointed to the Executive Committee (ExCo) as Regional Operating Director, reporting to the CEO of Airtel Africa Plc., and also serve on the Board of Airtel Networks (Nigeria) Limited.

Mr. Surendran replaces Mr. Olusegun (Segun) Ogunsanya. Mr. Olusegun (Segun) Ogunsanya

Airtel Nigeria gets new CEO

will become Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Airtel Africa Plc with effect from October 1, 2021, with a transition period from August 1, 2021.

Mr. Surendran has been with Bharti Airtel since 2003 and has contributed immensely in various capacities across customer experience, sales and business operations. In his most recent role as CEO at Karnataka, which is the largest circle in Airtel India with over \$1bn in revenue, Mr. Surendran delivered exceptional performance with significant movement in Revenue Market Share (RMS) over the last few years, currently at 54%. He has over 30 years of business experience, including 15 years at Xerox.

Mr. Surendran will transit into his new role from June 1, 2021 and spend the time onboarding into the business until July 31, 2021.

Odeghe, Nasir, Okoroafor, 24 others conferred with NIMN fellowship


 Mr. Ramon Nasir
 Group Head, Media & External Relations, UBA

Twenty-seven leading marketing professionals were recently awarded the highest professional title of fellows by the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN).

The distinguished marketing practitioners were awarded with the highest membership grade of the

institute during the institute's Annual Marketing Conference and Dinner held at Radisson Blu, Ikeja, Lagos.

Among the practitioners awarded at the elaborate event were Dr. Obaro Odeghe, Executive Director, Corporate Bank Directorate, Fidelity Bank Plc; Mr. Ramon Olanrewaju Nasir, Group Head, Media and External Relations of United Bank for Africa; Mr. Babatunde Olufowora, CEO, Red Ribbon Limited; Mrs. Ogochukwu Ekezie-Ekaidem, Chief Brand Marketing Officer at Union Bank; Isaac Okoroafor, former Director of Corporate Communication, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN); Michelle Nwoga, Head Customer Experience, UBA and Adedayo Aderugbo, Head of Corporate Affairs, Standard Chartered Bank. Other recipients were Ngozichukwu Akinyele, Head Strategic Brand Management, Union Bank; Rahman Mustapha, Senior Lecturer, Department of Business, Kwara State University; Goke Iyiola, Chief Marketing Officer, &Edge; Hadiza Abubakar, Senior Lecturer; Kaduna State University and Samson Opaleye; Experienced Market Intelligence Analyst.

The institute also conferred honorary fellowship award on Nnaemeka Ejeh, Group Executive, Retail Banking Group South, First Bank of

Nigeria Limited.

The outgoing President and Chairman of the council, Mr. Tony Agenmonmen, who spoke at the event, encouraged the new fellows to promote professionalism and propagate the Institute's mission of creating an enduring, distinctive value for all stakeholders through the development, promotion and application of world-class marketing professionalism, and offer valuable advice and initiatives that will further build its equity.

He explained that those conferred with this membership grade belong to the elite cadre of the Institute's membership structure and therefore, have the responsibility to reflect what the Institute stands for at their various workplaces and in the marketing eco-system.

Agemonmen said, "I want to congratulate all of you here today; indeed, it is a very exciting one for us to celebrate these professionals who continue to make us proud."

Continuing, he said, "Within the very challenging environment, we have continued and will continue to drive the institute's plans and programmes by ensuring that we continue to develop well-targeted strategies towards building and supporting young marketing professionals."

Ogunsanya climbs the ladder at Airtel Africa

Olusegun Ogunsanya, the CEO of Airtel Nigeria, has made giant stride at the Airtel Africa Plc, as the company has found him worthy to lead Africa's operation comprising 14 countries in the continent.

The announcement, which was made in early May by the leading provider of telecommunications and mobile money services, with a presence in 14 countries across Africa, said Olusegun "Segun" Ogunsanya, Managing Director and CEO Nigeria is to succeed Raghunath "Raghu" Mandava, as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer following Raghu Mandava's information to the board of his intention to retire. Segun Ogunsanya will join the Board of Airtel Africa Plc with effect from October 1, 2021.

Segun Ogunsanya joined Airtel Africa in 2012 as Managing Director and CEO Nigeria and has been responsible for the overall management of operations in Nigeria, the largest market in Africa. Segun has more than 25 years' business management experience in banking, consumer goods and telecoms. Before joining Airtel in 2012,



Ogunsanya

Segun held leadership roles at Coca-Cola in Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya (as MD and CEO). He has also been the Managing Director of Nigerian Bottling Company Ltd (Coca-Cola Hellenic owned) and Group Head of retail banking operations at Ecobank Transnational Inc, covering 28 countries in Africa. He is an electronics engineer and also a chartered accountant.

Raghu Mandava will be retiring as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, as a Director of Airtel Africa Plc and as a member of the Market Disclosure Committee on September 30, 2021. Arrangements have been made to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities. Following his cessation of employment at Airtel Africa, Mr. Mandava will be available to advise the Chairman, the Airtel Africa Board and the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for a 9-month period. Segun Ogunsanya's successor as Managing Director and CEO Nigeria was subsequently announced in the person of C. Surendran.

Cherry Eromosele makes top 100 Global B2B marketing leaders' list

Cherry Eromosele, Group Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Interswitch Group, has been recognized as one of the Global Top 100 B2B Marketing Leaders in Technology in 2021 in the latest annual list released by the global business leadership community, HotTopics.HT.

HotTopics.HT rewards individuals who are trailblazers in the use of new technologies to drive innovation within the marketing function. It also recognises ambassadors for the B2B marketing community inside and outside of their own organizations, as well as those who have demonstrated empathy and transformational leadership during these extraordinary times.

Announcing its list of Global Top 100 B2B Marketing Leaders in Technology 2021, the international platform recognized leading marketing professionals across global markets practicing in the technology space based on selections of an international jury of marketing leaders that included Lisa Gilbert, Chief Marketing Officer and GM of IBM Marketing Services, Mehul Kapadia, Global Head of Marketing at Vodafone Business and Matt Preschern, Chief Marketing, Global CMO at Forcepoint. Interestingly, only two females of African origin

made the global list. They are Interswitch Group's Cherry Eromosele from Nigeria and South Africa's Bernice Samuels, Group Executive and Chief Marketing Officer at MTN.

Speaking on the nomination, Cherry expressed her delight and gratitude to the organizers for the special recognition, stating that it will further spur her to continue delivering excellent marketing leadership and to the quest to continue to break new grounds in the exciting space of fintech marketing, further building on the work she's done at Interswitch over the last seven years.

The Interswitch Group Chief Marketing and Communications Officer also expressed appreciation to her team for their support and commitment to delivering innovative marketing solutions. She said: "Whilst my career trajectory and quest for continuous learning and improvement may have played defining roles in the journey to this point, I have also been fortunate to have worked with brilliant and supportive marketing professionals from the inception of my career; and their impact has contributed to my growth trajectory. I am indeed grateful to them all, including my unique marketing team here at Interswitch and the organizers for this special recognition."

Uncertainty over N400 million LASACO, Media Views LED billboard

Goddie Ofose



Front view



Rear view

On March 1, 2015, the Oworonshoki area of Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos State was agog as both public and private sector players besieged the location of the first biggest LED billboard in Africa. The LED hoarding replaced a 48-sheet that had occupied the hilltop sea shore for a decade.

After six years and two months, Africa's 'biggest' LED billboard is standing alone without light, without advertisements, unlike Optimum Exposure's concave billboard at Ilubirin on Lagos Island.

The Media View's billboard was financed by LASACO Assurance. As at the time the billboard was launched, the CEO of Media Views, Babatunde Idowu Adedoyin, was the president of Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, (OAAN).

Just like New York's Time Square caught global attention with its biggest billboards in the world in 2014, Media View intended to take its outdoor advertising business to a higher level with this transcending innovation. The firm planned to run a high definition 24-hours advert service on the platform. However, the plan and the company's aspiration seemed to have been aborted as the LED billboard remained without light and advertising for over 2 years.

The billboard, measuring 740 square meters long and 11 meters high, is strategically located for human and

vehicular traffics inbound mainland. It was predicted that the LED will attract several brands and services due to its capacity catch high eyeballs and footfalls.

Prior to the hoarding of the 'biggest' LED billboard, the 48 sheet was never vacant. The telecommunication giant, Airtel Nigeria, ensured that no brand or product was exposed on the 48 sheet. From Econet to VMobile to Zain and now Airtel, the telco occupied the 48 sheet like a colossus until 2015 when the 48 sheet was replaced with LED billboard.

Citing the LED billboard along this location is strategic, said the investor, LASACO Assurance. The Third Mainland Bridge is believed to be one of the busiest bridges in the country. The longest bridge in Nigeria connects Lagos Island areas with the mainland areas. This advantage prompted LASACO to invest N400 million in the project.

Findings show that the multimillion naira light-emitting diode (LED) billboard located on the vantage hilltop at Iyana Oworo area, popularly called 'Okole' of Lagos, overlooking Third Mainland Bridge, did not secure long term business since it was commissioned.

According to sources, the investment was driven by LASACO Properties Limited's passion for outdoor advertising. LASACO believed that the

out-of-home sub-sector is a cash-cow, hence, its decision to commit a whopping N400 million in installing the first 740 square meter advertising LED billboard in Nigeria.

This investment was hit by the massive downward review of marketing and advertising budgets by multinationals due to recession and the Coronavirus pandemic. It was when this board was commissioned that Glo

announced a nationwide revocation of its outdoor advertising contract.

The pandemic also affected ad budget of Airtel, MTN, Guinness, Unilever Nigeria, Guinness Nigeria, big banks and others.

Another issue confronting the operators is the regulator's insistence on payment on vacant board. This has put so much pressure on Media View and LASACO. Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency's (LASAA), is bent on collecting levies on vacant hoardings across Lagos, but LASAA has denied shutting down the billboard. It was gathered that Media View is indebted to the regulatory agency to the tune of N28million, a debt accumulated over the period when the board remained vacant.

LASAA has already taken steps to shut down outdoor advertising companies that have refused to clear their debts, and findings indicate that the Iyana Oworo billboard is one of them.

Commenting on the issue, Temitope Akande, the Public Relations Manager of LASAA, said "there are some hoardings the agency has taken some minimal enforcement on. But this is not one of them".

LASAA is very strict with non-compliance in payment for vacant boards. This position has consistently kept both LASAA and Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria's members at loggerhead.

Speaking at the inauguration of the board, the Group Managing Director, LASACO Assurance Plc., Mr. Olusola Ladipo-Ajayi, explained that LASACO Group is always ready to partner with any organization on viable projects and businesses that can add value to the nation's economy, describing the project as a landmark in the outdoor industry.

He stated that LASACO Group through its property arm, LASACO Properties Ltd, invested in the project because of its viability and its uniqueness in redefining the concept of advertising in the country.

Explaining further on the motivation to invest in the project, Mr. Ladipo-Ajayi said that the unique and strategic location of the site as well as the track record of the site's owner, particularly based on previous and similar dealing, which proved fruitful for both parties, boosted the confidence to be committed to the project.

Mr. Ladipo-Ajayi stated that "LASACO Group is proud to be part of this project, and we are sure that it will be well received by the advertising world including OAAN (Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria) because it is an achievement for them. This partnership will also give a boost to our line of business which is insurance".

Adedoyin, who commended LASACO Properties for its boldness in identifying with the dream of delivering the largest outdoor advertising electronic billboard in West Africa, is said to be battling to secure business that would kick off the renaissance of the investment.

He, however, affirms that the board was shut down because of unbearable operational cost without a client on it. But expressed confidence that it is likely to resume by September when a prospective client is willing to break a campaign.

Ability to measure brand campaigns, our greatest asset —Mustapha, CEO Maxxconnection

•Kola Bola

In the upwardly mobile world, tech-based brand campaigns and deft innovations are indispensable in ensuring that consumers have undiluted understanding of the goods and products offered them for consumption.

Mastering the ability to understand the consumers, the market and the competition offers a clear edge in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). One key factor in brand is the creative ingenuity marketing firms to go beyond mere branding and embrace business solution. Innovative marketing experts have moved from messaging or road show to a level where you have deep understanding of the brand you are working on - the insights and the competition.

Mr. Owolabi Mustapha, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Max Connection, said as brand expert good understanding of the consumer and the market stands a firm out in understanding the competition. To him, such understanding makes it easier to know the kind of solution to proffer.

In Max Connection, Owolabi said "we look at the bottom-line across all the activities we do because we measure. After our campaigns on brands, the number has grown by double digit because we measure our campaigns using different metrics and pushing the brand into the next level. One of our greatest assets is the ability to measure our campaign on brands before and after activation. This is the best way to track the growth numbers".

He noted that experience is very essential in successful brand marketing. "We think of what kind of experience we want to create for consumer because the brand now sits at the heart of the consumer. Gone are the days when an agency could push anything to the consumer. Now, agency's communication, messaging and activity sit at the heart of the consumer."

Owolabi said the erection of a giant Trophy beer bottle mounted at the Ikeja City Mall is a creative concept locally made. "The idea was fully conceptualised by Max Connection and I am quite happy that Nigeria is getting into that space of realising ourselves.

"Before now, we say that Nigeria will not be able to host Big Brother because of infrastructural challenges, but Nigeria has hosted about two editions of it. We have partnered with foreign agencies and companies to execute events in Nigeria because of the belief of the client.

"But gradually when clients started seeing capacity locally, they started having a change of mindset. With support of government in terms of policies and facilities, all these campaigns can be done here".

He stated that most of the partners his firm, Max Connection, started working with about a decade ago are still on board till date because of their belief in the delivery acumen of his firm.

"This is because we are partners. We are more or less an extension of our partner's office. While they are thinking of growing their market and brand, we are also thinking in our office. If brands believe in the local content they have, they can get more. Nigerian agencies have the potential and capacity to do better campaigns", he said.

The firm, which has worked for several



Mustapha and his team

multi-national and local brands, had in a recent campaign underscored the peak status of Trophy Lager beer enjoying large volume sales across Nigeria, especially in the South West, after deep thinking came up with a giant fibre 14-meter-high-bottle of Trophy mounted at Ikeja City Mall to showcase the beer as a foremost local-to-national brand in Nigeria.

Max Connection started as experiential agency, though it also saw opportunity in other areas. "We see that innovation and technology are taking the centre stage in business; therefore, we had to change the model which we run. Now we are more of a business solution agency where we proffer solutions across all the degrees of marketing and communication business".

Max Connection, which prides itself as an agency that innovates and believes so much in technology, since inception has had its creative touch on major brands in Nigeria, such as Coca Cola, ABinBev, Campari, BAT, Reckitt Benkiser and Dangote, among others.

He added that "In terms of consumer experience, we pride ourselves as one of the

leading business relations agencies due to the major landmark campaigns that we have conceptualised, designed and executed. Many clients like working with us because we make life very easy for them over and above the conventional way of just passing a brief for execution. We conceptualise, design and execute. Internally, we look at the challenge a brand has and proffer the solution".

To him, the huge Trophy bottle at Ikeja City Mall was in celebration of Trophy Lager being the number one beer brand in Lagos aside other campaigns conceptualised, designed and executed by Max Connection. "Another social campaign we debut in this agency is 'Raise a Trophy to Honour' in which mobile bar was deployed across South Western states. That bar had no attendant and no security. It allowed customers to ordinarily pay when they take a beer from the chiller to test how honourable people are. About 70% of the customers paid for the beer they took. This shows that most Nigerians are really honourable.

Owolabi also said there is hardly any

environment where business operates that is devoid of socio-economic challenges, but the ability to be solution oriented is key.

"Nobody expected Covid-19, but interestingly, Max Connection changed its operational model about three years ago from waiting for clients to send brief. We have been creating our briefs ourselves knowing fully well some of the challenges our client partners had. For instance, when Covid -19 came, it was very easy for us to adapt and we were able to work despite there was Covid as we were able to share great ideas that do not require so much physical interaction.

"This was enabled as we have taken some of our activities into the digital space. For inspiration, we also pre-empt competition and the market."

He added that government can assist the marketing communication industry through engaging multinationals to reduce payment duration, as he cited South Africa as an example where government sat with the multinationals to reduce payment duration terms for their partners to allow them to still be in business. "We are looking towards this kind of support", he said.

Owolabi said Max Connection has changed its model of operation by not waiting for brief because there is a dedicated unit that is proactive. "When we think about our brands and look at the milestones they have achieved and their projections, we then come up with strategic and tactical activity that will add value to them.

"In the course of building the Trophy bottle, we evaluated the brand which we have been working on for some time. We know where the equity of the brand is and we feel that there is a need for the brand which has stepped up from being a local to national brand to have some level of international recognition."

He said the giant Trophy bottle being the largest beer bottle ever should not elicit argument as the Guinness Book of Records, the benchmark today for history, is there to settle the controversy. "We have done our research, and there was no bottle created in terms of size of that magnitude of 14 meter high and 3.8 meters in diameter. This speaks about the innovation about the brand. Trophy brand is about innovation, it is about seeking new opportunities and ensuring that it listens to the consumers and attends to their needs. In coming up with this ingenious innovation, we looked at different records and we wanted something that is different. We want to stand out."

Owolabi said the brand Nigeria is a project that can't be conceptualised and executed and get result in one day. To him, Nigeria is work in progress. "Though we are not in a position where we should be, we are moving in that direction. Some years back, Nigeria relied on foreigners for most things, but things are changing. Without local practitioners in different sectors achieving some levels of height, it will be difficult for project Nigeria to achieve some milestones.

"For instance, Okonjo Iweala has said that people are making inquiries on her cloth and she is, therefore, challenging the fashion sector to come forward. We have great people in fashion, music, media, etc.; but what they need is some forms of backing to make necessary impact", he said.

How campaign, brand, CEO perform in May 2021

While GAUGE does not intend to judge or assume the utopian thought of being an all-knowing being or a body of beings acting God in the life of brands, services and the brains powering the box-halls in Nigeria, it strives to present a veritable platform for

reviewing industry activities.

So, in our editorial proactive proposition we decide to create a platform where we can regularly appraise, applause and possibly reprimand brands, services and Chief Executive Officers in their day to day activities dispassionately with a

view to growing the industry.

Our judgment, though very flexible yet highly empirical of the happenings in the industry in the period reviewed prior to the monthly draw. With this, The Industry drives at its core goal to be socially and corporately responsible.

CAMPAIGN OF THE MONTH



Airtel demystifies 'Rainmaker' in new TVC

The art of storytelling is a classic art any day, anytime. More often than not, it amplifies a narrative that is better told than concealed. Interestingly, when the art is again exploited as a metaphor, it further drives home the message to a level it gets a utopian feel.

That exactly is what Nigeria's foremost telecommunication giant, Airtel, is doing with its current Television Commercial (TVC) tagged Rainmaker, which was recently launched and has been running on the screens for more than two weeks. With casts that included veteran actor, Jide Kosoko as king and Jude Chukwuka as the rainmaker, the TVC made a vivid allusion to the aged long practice of halting rain in contemporary West Africa to allow for an uninterrupted celebration in the open and how the art has now become unreliable in modern times.

The import of the TVC is not lost on the audience as it reinforces the undeniable fact that no man can stop or prevent the natural acts of God, which include rainfall.

The TVC gets an A rating for the plot and setting that explores the richness of our culture and tradition as the three major tribes Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa were duly represented in the story telling.

On the strength of all these, the rainmaker deservedly gets The Industry's Campaign of the Month for the month of May.

BRAND OF THE MONTH

Safeguard touches lives in a special way

Safeguard, an antiseptic soap, from the stable of Procter&Gamble (P&G), has emerged The Industry's Brand of the Month for the month of May, 2021.

The brand came top in an editorial judgment arrived at by the team of editors that served as panelists for shortlisting, picking and announcing the eventual winner of the draw put together by The Industry to encourage brands to be more socially responsible in their corporate focus.

The panelists said the corporate decision of P&G to stay glued to the COVID-19 safety precautions, despite the fact that the pandemic has been eased off considerably in the country and the rest of the world, won Safeguard the award.

Fronting through its anti-bacteria medicated soap idolized for being very tough on germs, P&G deployed a team of staff to strategic location across the city of Lagos to keep alive the culture of hand sanitizing and washing, as practised globally during harsh period of the pandemic.

While the economy of the world is bouncing back slowly though, medical experts warn of a more deadly variant of the terminal disease – COVID-19, and so all the precautions advised by health officials are expected to continue in schools, eateries, hotels, pubs and all public offices and places where more than ten people are expected to gather.

It is on this note that the judgment of the team of panelists found P&G's Safeguard a timely corporate social intervention worth emulating.



CEO OF THE MONTH

Adeduntan fights and wins back his seat

Few weeks ago when a leadership crisis erupted in First Bank and the Managing Director, Shola Adeduntan, was axed, not a few must have felt it was the end of the road to the career of a man who still had six months left in his tenure as the helmsman.

But they were wrong, as the MD was surprisingly reinstated by the CBN and returned to his duty post until the expiration of his tenure. It was indeed unprecedented because never in the history of the banking industry has a Managing Director been sacked and in less than 24 hours later returned to his seat.

Check out the list of casualties of similar board room politics in the past; Erastus Akingbade of Intercontinental Bank, now Access Bank, Cecilia Ibru of Oceanic Bank, now EcoBank, and others who were all indicted for one form of infraction or the other. These affected bank executives after getting the boot never had the opportunity of getting another bite at the cherry at the top hierarchy.

That Adeduntan also suffered similar fate, but luckily came out unscathed tells a lot about the kind of grace, providence and favour he enjoys in the face of a conflagrating crisis.

The situation can be better appreciated if one considers the fact that those who hatched the plot to unseat him eventually ended being consumed by the



Shola Adeduntan

fire which they had stoked, as they were shown the exit door instead by the apex bank, the CBN.

And now that Adeduntan is back, he now has the rare opportunity to prove his cynics wrong that his ouster was actually carried out in bad manner and not necessarily as a result of any wrongdoing.

The Industry's newspaper, on this ground, therefore, considers Adeduntan, a good pick for the CEO of the Month of May.

First rumble in the board

■ Bidemi Bakare

It's no longer news that Nigeria's financial apex body, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), some weeks ago wielded the big stick as it waded into the crisis that erupted in First Bank, the country's oldest and largest money deposit bank.

The regulator sacked the board of First Bank for what it considered as abuse of power and gross violation of ethical rules in the sacking of the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the bank, Mr. Shola Adedutan, by the board.

As if on cue, the Managing Director, who had been shown the exit door and replaced by the Deputy Managing Director/Chief Financier Officer of the bank, Mr. Gbenga Shobo, was instantaneously recalled from forced retirement and reinstated by the CBN.

In a statement, the CBN said that the decision to dissolve the board became necessary to restore the confidence of the bank's depositors, investors and shareholders alike.

New appointments were subsequently made by the CBN for the constitution of a new board, which is expected to pilot the affairs of the bank along the line of best global practices in corporate governance.

As for the executive management team of the bank, it's back to the status quo where Adedutan returns to his seat at the helm and Shobo goes back to his position as second in command.

But to most industry watchers, the concern here is, will the relationship between Adedutan and Shobo still remain cordial and not strained? This exactly is the crux of the matter and, of course, a million dollar question that many would want to be answered. This perception is hinged on the fact that it is likely Adedutan would see Shobo as an accomplice in the whole convoluted attempt to oust him going by his perfunctory acceptance to take over from him albeit prematurely.

The thinking in some quarters is that it is possible that the Awosika-led board could have seen Shobo as a

This obviously may not go down well with Adedutan, who may continue to see Shobo as the proverbial devil that must be dined with using a long spoon.

To most keen observers, the recent development, therefore, requires high level of maturity and decorum from the personae dramatis in the unfolding crisis to prevent it from snowballing into a blowout.

Speaking to The Industry on the likelihood of a purported disaffection between the duo, arising as a fall-out of the crisis, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Shepherds,

Mr. Doreen Enang, said there is need to tread on the path of caution as regards the issue.

He said, "For me, I see potential animosity between them in the realm of speculation, although I also know there is no smoke without fire. However, everybody needs to tread on the path of caution. I have been on the board of many companies and so I know many things happen. There is a lot of boardroom politics. Some people can make their own assumptions or say this is what transpired and others can learn from it. So, as it is, I am not in a position to wade in into all these conversations because it is mere speculation and I don't speculate"

He, however, argued that the reinstated MD would more than ever before need to provide leadership by driving more effectively the management process that would put the company on the path of more productivity and growth.

Enang noted that the MD for this reason needs not harbour any distractions as his tenure comes to an end soon, adding that all he must do is to finish on a high note, and not to be preoccupied with such

On the effect of the bank's crisis on the financial system, Enang opined that the problem comes from the lack of discipline which has remained the bane of our system in the country.

mundane things at the expense of quality leadership.

On the effect of the bank's crisis on the financial system, Enang opined that the problem comes from the lack of discipline which has remained the bane of our system in the country.

"So whether you slice or dice it here, if a man is disciplined it would show in his thinking, it would show in his actions and it would show in the things that he does. When we try to understand that we are running away from the core issue, then we would get the clarity in the whole situation.

"Let me bring this home. For instance, I will not as a father start to molest my own child without the knowledge of the family,



Shola Adedutan, MD/CEO

as doing so would mean doing ill to the family and also to myself. So what that means is that I am not a disciplined father.

"As far as this issue is concerned, anybody can start agonizing or looking at things from different angles. But, for me, I think it is about consequence management. There are choices and consequences that we need to live with and abide by. We are humans and whatever choices or decisions we make, we abide by the consequences thereof. That's my approach to this kind of issue", he said.

With few months left in Adedutan's tenure before retirement, the question of who succeeds him is what is on the lips of many stakeholders. This is because there are unfounded suspicions in some quarters that he may not be well disposed to Shobo taking over from him and so could possibly work against his emergence in clear departure from the past when the Deputy Managing Director had always taken over from the Managing Director after the expiration of his tenure.

It would be recalled that the incumbent MD was once in the past a Deputy Managing Director when Bisi Onasanya was the Managing Director, who also incidentally was at a time a second in command to Lamido Sanusi Lamido, who later left the 123 years old bank to become governor of CBN.

A reference case in politics:

Obviously, this is not the first time such ugly development is happening as similar scenario had also played out in the political arena in the past.

In 2006, former Governor of Oyo State, Rasheed Adewolu Ladoja, had a running battle with his estranged late godfather, Chief Lamidi Adedibu, and later fell out with him leading to his ouster by the state assembly in a contrived impeachment.

The governor was replaced by his deputy, Chief Christopher Alao-Akala, who had now become the anointed son of the then strongman of Ibadan politics and the originator of the Amala brand of politics.

Six months later, the Supreme Court rose in defence of democracy by upturning the impeachment and reinstated the impeached governor to his duty post.

But throughout the less than six months left in his tenure, Ladoja tried fruitlessly to settle the score with his deputy, who had the backing of the majority of the state legislature that had been rubber stamped by the late godfather.

This cat and mouse relationship between them continued till the administration bowed out in May 2007 and ushered in Christopher Alao-Akala as the new governor after roundly defeating his boss, Ladoja, in an election that was characterized by widespread violence and brigandage.

That mistrust that was created about 15 years ago still exists between them till date and has caused their relationship a great deal as it has made it become even very frosty.

Conclusion

Whether there is seemingly a discord between Adedutan and Shobo or not, it is inconceivable that the bank had to throw up such possibility in the first place.

And so, as stakeholders look forward to a smooth transition of power in First Bank when Adedutan bows out at the expiration of his tenure, the banking industry would do better to enthrone more transparency and fair play in its internal processes and operations to prevent a repeat of what befell First Bank as a result of the acrimony and bad blood that pervaded the top hierarchy.

The Industry Evening Summit 2.0 & Unveiling of THE INDUSTRY Newspaper.

On April 2, 2021, the organisers of The Industry Evening Summit hosted the second edition of the annual summit at Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, where The Industry Newspaper made its debut.



Buhari: Beyond banning Twitter operations in Nigeria

When Twitter announced earlier this year that it would be siting its African headquarters in Ghana little did the social media platform know it would soon have an axe to grind with the government of Nigeria, the largest market on the continent. President Muhammadu Buhari's tweet on the Nigerian civil war on May 30, a day designed by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Nnamdi Kanu to commemorate the 3-year bloodletting that left thousands of people dead, many wounded and displaced, was considered anti-social by Twitter's rule and so took it down.

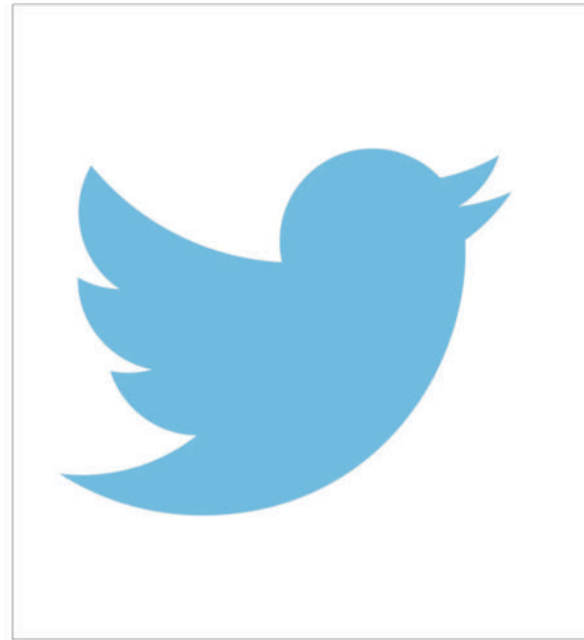
Twitter had noted that the tweet by President Buhari violated its community rules and as well as capable of leading to blood-shedding in the country, and so pulled down the information.

However, the action by the management of Twitter angered the Federal Government of Nigeria, which saw the action as an insult on the person of Mr. President and an affront on the country as a whole, and so decided to ban its operations from the most populous black nation in the world.

The government announced last week it was suspending Twitter's operations in the country. Mobile phone networks blocked access after being ordered to do so, but some users are getting around the ban.

The move comes after Twitter deleted a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari for breaching the site's rules. Some users saw his post, which referred to Nigeria's civil war, four decades ago, as a veiled threat towards a secessionist movement in the South-East of the country.

The government said the tweet's removal was "disappointing", as it added that it was not the only reason for the "temporary" suspension. "There has been a litany of problems with the social media platform in Nigeria, where misinformation and fake news spread through it



have had real world violent consequences," the government said.

Twitter said the announcement of a ban on its operations in Nigeria by the Information Minister, Lai Mohammed, was "deeply concerning".

The move also brought widespread condemnation from human rights groups and international powers, who say it will limit free speech in Nigeria.

In a statement, Justice Minister Abubakar Malami, said he had "directed for immediate prosecution of offenders of the Federal Government ban on Twitter operations in Nigeria", telling the public prosecutor to "swing into action".

The message was targeted at both corporations and individuals, the minister's spokesperson, Umar Gwandu, said.

The government of Nigeria alleges that Twitter

was being used to undermine "Nigeria's corporate existence".

The platform was allowing "the spread of religious, racist, xenophobic and false messages" that "could tear some countries apart", a spokesperson said.

The national broadcasting regulator, Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), had been told to begin "licensing all internet streaming services and social media operations in Nigeria", a government statement said.

Earlier, the professional body of Nigerian mobile phone operators - known as Alton - confirmed they had been told to stop people getting on to Twitter.

The group said its members had complied with the government's order due to "national interest provisions" in Nigerian telecoms law and licensing terms.

But Alton also said that it backed the UN's position

that the right to communicate both offline and online should be protected.

The Nigerian government has toyed with the idea of regulating social media in the country, and this administration has been obsessed with the idea since it came into office in 2015. Deleting the president's tweet, however, was seen as the final straw.

Watchers of the unfolding scenario said, however, it was the role Twitter played in the #EndSars anti-police brutality protests which shook Nigeria last year that truly sealed its fate.

The demonstrations were mostly organised on the platform and the company's CEO, Jack Dorsey, encouraged donations to one of the leading groups of organisers. A special emoji was also created for the protests.

Twitter helped give Nigeria's many youths a voice. But in the eyes of the government, the company's role in galvanising the country's young population was a line crossed.

Yet the government appears not to have reckoned with the ingenuity of #EndSars protesters. People are already downloading VPNs to bypass the block when it happens.

As at Saturday, BBC reporters in Lagos and Abuja said they were unable to connect to Twitter through two of the country's largest phone networks: MTN and Airtel.

Access was still possible through some wi-fi providers, but this is not the most common way to connect to the internet in Nigeria.

Osai Ojigbo, Director, Amnesty International, Nigeria, condemned the announcement, saying "This action is clearly inconsistent and incompatible with Nigeria's international obligations. We are calling on the Nigerian authorities to immediately reverse the unlawful suspension and other plans to gag the media, repress civic space, and undermine Nigerians' human rights."

BRAND LENS with BEE BEE

The menace of viral content on social media

You may not have forgotten the story of Mary Daniel as it was indeed a touching and sympathetic one. It is a story that is bound to melt any stony heart. That it gained traction immediately it broke on the social media is not in any way surprising, as it is the type that makes an interesting and compelling read.

According to report, Daniel, an amputee had defied all odds to hawk sachet water in traffic, meandering through the labyrinth of the busy road with her crutches.

In few seconds, the content had gone viral eliciting empathy and compassion from the audiences, who, thereafter, responded with their generous donations.

Before anybody could say Jack, she had realized over #1 million from a fund raiser. But the excitement generated over, the generous donations was short-lived as cold water was poured on the whole situation by the Lagos State government, which withheld the funds citing discrepancy and foul play in the ensuing narrative.

Her claim that she is an orphan was found to be untrue after her aunt blew the lid on the claim.

By this recent development, stakeholders in the marketing communications space are worried that the concept of content

marketing is being compromised and hijacked by profiteers for altruistic purposes.

While these unscrupulous elements must have exploited the key elements of digital marketing including novelty, curiosity and emotion, which are necessary for a viral content, it is regrettable that this is being done on the altar of falsehood and half-truths.

There are unfounded stories that a ring is usually formed around most viral content shared in form of videos, messages and info graphics on the social media.

The ring network operates by first going on the look-out for content material or agent they can cash in on and when this is done, the next action is to capture a scene that is capable of evoking either a positive or negative emotion and in some cases a combination of both.

After the job is done, funds raised by swindling the unsuspecting public are then shared on a pro rata by all the parties involved in the shameful act.

Daniel's story is just one out of the numerous tales that the social media over the years has been bombarded with, even as the platform continues to be a veritable tool that swindlers and conmen exploit to ply their illicit trade using the soft

elements of digital marketing.

Some months before the Daniel story trended, there was a visual content on the social media about a young boy and her mother, who attempted scolding him for a misdemeanor.

The boy was seen telling the mother to calm down as if to indicate that she was too hasty in the reprimand of the boy. Before the content could be allowed to sink in, the social media buff had taken it and attracted huge traffic to it to a point the young chap became the boy of the 'Mom be calming down' fame.

But as a digital marketing enthusiast, what exactly was the message being conveyed with a content wherein a young boy refuses to be scolded for a wrong doing and such content is now being released to the consuming public. What exactly is the morality in the content? What is the lesson?

As beneficial as content marketing is, the bottom line is that any viral content must not just elicit emotions and curiosity as components of digital marketing, but it must do so on the plank of forthrightness and morality.

That way, the goal of digital or content marketing would have been adequately achieved.



MONEY LINE with KOLA BOLA

Let's talk about Kobo

The ancient English proverb says that 'penny wise, pound foolish' while appreciating the marketing proficiency of the coins as against that of the paper currency.

In Nigeria, ours is an economy that prides itself as not only cashless but painfully coinless. While every economy, no matter how big it may appear still parades products and services where the coins play prominent roles in the purchasing power, coins have been stifled out of our economy.

In the United States of America (USA), for instance, the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin, the Sacagawea dollar coin, and Helen Keller's Alabama special-issue quarter, among other coins in the USA are still accorded economic purchasing power that makes the general outlook of the economy very vibrant aside the presence of the almighty dollar notes.

Also, in the United Kingdom (UK), the penny and the shilling are not existing on papers in the banking halls only as it is with the kobos in Nigeria, but have the powers of

shopping and reasonably do so.

While big paper money like the US Dollar, UK Pound, European Union's Euro or even the Canadian Dollar are bestriding the global economy like colossus that they are, their home economies though largely cashless but are never coinless.

Looking at the poor state of naira and kobo in Nigerian economy, a joke broke online recently comparing major currencies across the globe. The joke noted that \$100 equals N47,000; 100 pounds equals N68,000; N100 equals two wraps of fufu. A rude joke though, but very apt of the state of the nation's economy which makes 1kobo, 5kobo or 10kobo worthless and cannot buy a wrap of fufu.

The market value of naira that swallows that of the coins may be an underlying factor in the economic space of Nigeria that crawls from one fiscal year to another. To buy common cookies, sorry biscuits, one needs N10 or N20, even sweets like tomtom go for N10 a piece, a sachet of 'pure' water dramatically dangles between N10 and N20.

That's too bad.