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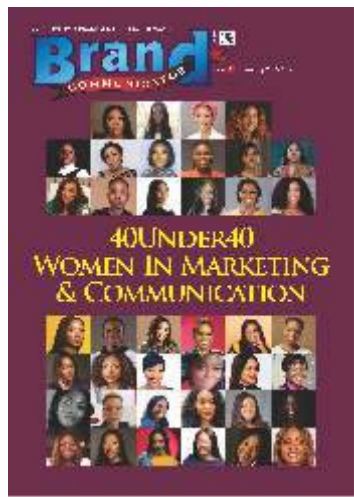
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Issue 71

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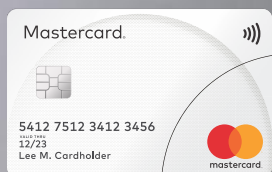
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Achieving Equal Future In Post Covid-19 World

March 8 is a special day for the celebration of International Women's Day. It is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women - while also marking a call to action for accelerating gender balance.

For every year, a theme is usually picked with the hopes of bringing awareness to a certain gender based issue. In the past, these themes have included 'Better The Balance, Better The World,' 'Be Bold For Change,' among others.

Earlier in the year, the UN Women announced the theme for International Women's Day, 8 March 2021 (IWD 2021) as, "Women in leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World." The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also aligned with the priority theme of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women: "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls," and the flagship Generation Equality campaign, which calls for women's right to decision-making in all areas of life, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end all forms of violence against women and girls, and health-care services that respond to their needs.

It is the belief of a well meaning people around the world that collective action is required with shared responsibility for driving a gender-balanced world. Interestingly, given that gender balance is essential for economies and communities to thrive, the race is on to end all forms of discrimination against women. There is also consistent clamour for the gender-balanced boardroom, a gender-balanced government, gender-balanced media coverage, a gender-balance of employees and more gender-balance in wealth among others.

Impressively, in Nigeria, organisations, brands and agencies are not left out of this commendable race as quite a few of them have distinguished themselves in women empowerment. That is why Brand Communicator Intelligence Unit in this special edition (issue 72) beamed the searchlight on some of these organisations empowering women with their lofty initiatives (within and without). There are special concise profiles on some of the leading women in some of these organisations.

Special attention is paid to First Bank Nigeria for its exemplary contributions to women empowerment through many of the bank's initiatives.

Others organisations whose efforts have brought meaningful progress to women empowerment are Stanbic IBTC, Wema Bank, Access Bank, Mastercard, MultiChoice, Three Crowns, Coca-Cola, Cadbury, Nigerian Breweries and Unilever, among others.

Our regular pages like Brand News, Industry News, CSR Reports, as well as other articles, are specially packaged for your entertainment in this special edition of your Brand Communicator.

We also have celebrity profile, featuring Debo Adebayo, also known as Mr. Macaroni. The Nigerian comedian, social media influencer, actor, content developer and entrepreneur has become a delight to many who have been watching his series of comedy skits on social media. His popularity has made his 'ooin you're doing well' an everyday's phrase for his admirers.

Also packaged for your reading delight is our Brandtainment page where you get to read about your favourite celebrities.

Happy reading!

Joshua Ajayi
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief



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MCG WOMEN'S FORUM



MTN Nigeria Launches Robust Customer Engagement Platform

MTN Nigeria has launched a new unified customer engagement platform, EnGauge, designed to enable small-to-medium enterprise business owners to seamlessly administer transactions with customers, potentially increasing their productivity significantly.

Developed in partnership with Ajua™, a leading African start-up, MTN EnGauge is an agile application that offers innovative customer management solutions, including digital payments using a unique USSD code, CRM tools, customer feedback channels, debt management and tracking, business and product promotions through mobile and social media channels.

The solution is downloadable on the Google Play store and only available on the MTN network (for now) with a monthly subscription of N500 and a yearly subscription of N5,500.



Following installation and registration, businesses are automatically provided with a unique USSD code that allows their customers to interact, transact and communicate with them in real-time.

With MTN Engauge, entrepreneurs can securely receive payment, track transactions with each of their customers and glean valuable insights to serve them better based on their preferences and buying behaviour. "MTN EnGauge is the ideal platform for business owners and entrepreneurs to thrive in the 'new normal.' Entrepreneurs have had to re-organise their core business models through backward and forward integration to maintain relevance. The EnGauge mobile application helps make this possible and seamless," said Lynda Saint-Nwafor, Chief Enterprise Business Officer, MTN Nigeria.

To showcase the platform, MTN held a live demonstration session via Zoom, where business

owners were presented with the benefits of adopting the solution.

"The fundamental engine of business growth is customers. By design, MTN EnGauge solves most of the challenges SMEs experience, from digitally engaging their customers to cash management," said Kenfield Griffith, the Founder and CEO of Ajua. "With MTN as a partner and their reach across the continent, we believe MTN EnGauge will have a positive and impactful trajectory, driving transformational business growth for SMEs," he added.

MTN EnGauge was launched to the Y'ello 200 in February, beneficiaries of MTN's Revv Programme, thus fulfilling the telco giant's promise that the SMEs will be first to enjoy solutions from her stable.

Access Bank Pledges 5 Times Refund In Fees For Failed Transactions



Driven by its commitment to deliver best-in-class service to all its customers, Africa's largest retail bank, Access Bank Plc, has upgraded its service platforms to allow for resolution of failed transactions within one business day.

Access Bank has guaranteed that all failed transactions will be reversed within one business day. It has also affirmed that in the event that reversal time exceeds one business day, customers will be entitled to a refund of up to five times the bank transfer fees for that transaction.

Speaking on this development, Ogor Chukudebelu, Access Bank's Chief Customer

Experience Officer, said that Access Bank is committed to "offering more banking convenience for all customers."

"Access Bank understands the financial and economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While we have put various social impact projects in place, we have also upgraded our banking platforms to ensure that customers can transact without experiencing delays.

"To reiterate our commitment to providing an excellent service, Access Bank will be refunding customers up to five times the bank transfer fees when a failed transaction is not reversed within one business day.

"As we continue to make great strides as a financial institution, we will not relent in delivering superior value and bespoke financial services that suit the banking needs of our customers" Chukudebelu said.

Without compromising on its promise to deliver services with speed and maximum security, through the implementation of sustainable banking practices, Access Bank continues to lead the revolution for financial institutions around the globe; effectively merging technology and people to deliver stellar client service to customers across all its countries of operation.

Reckitt Benckiser Rebrands To Reckitt

Reckitt Benckiser, the makers of Dettol, Durex, Harpic, Lysol and Mortein among many other brands, has announced that it has rebranded as Reckitt.

The brand stated that the new brand identity and iconography is more recognizable and is built on the company's purpose: to protect, heal and nurture in the relentless pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world.

The rebrand, including a new visual identity, was created and overseen by Havas' branding agency Conran Design Group.

British consumer good company Reckitt Benckiser recently announced that it has rebranded as Reckitt.

The company said that the redevelopment of the corporate identity is a key milestone in the organization's ongoing journey of transformation towards sustainable growth. It stated that the new brand identity and iconography is more recognizable and is built on the company's purpose: to protect, heal and nurture in the relentless pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world.

Speaking about the rebranding Miguel Veiga-Pestana, SVP Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, said, "The brand is a visible symbol of our corporate purpose and the change that has

been taking place across the business on our journey of transformation. The name reflects the existing widespread usage of Reckitt and is clearer, simpler and more memorable, while retaining positive associations with the company's heritage."

Commenting on the new identity, Jo Osborn, VP Internal Communications and Corporate Brand, added, "From Dettol to Lysol, Nurofen to Durex and Finish to Vanish, we sell more than 20 million of our trusted products to people every day, yet there is less recognition of the company behind those brands. Our new Reckitt identity will better enable us to communicate our corporate purpose to the world, and to do so in a way that is powerful, consistent and impactful."

The comprehensive rebrand, including a new visual identity, was created and overseen by Havas' branding agency Conran Design Group. Rolling out across all of Reckitt's touchpoints and platforms – internal and external, physical and digital – from today, it comprises:

A new name and logo – the R at the heart of the symbol stands for our unity, strength and relentless pursuit, inspired by Reckitt's purpose to protect, heal and nurture. It denotes Reckitt's role in the world as a partner and a catalyst for positive



transformation. The shell-like quality of the symbol evokes a sense of protection and a reference to the natural world.

An evolved colour palette – the highly distinctive and recognisable 'Energy Pink' is Reckitt's primary brand colour, signifying its perpetual energy – while secondary colours reflect its portfolio of products and connection to a cleaner, healthier world.

Bespoke typography – a new, bespoke typeface 'Energy' is distinctive, accessible and unique to the Reckitt brand.

Photography – new photography principles and categories illustrate how everything Reckitt

does is connected and has an impact on the world. Authentic, accessible and active imagery will show how change starts with an individual, the tangible impact Reckitt has on people's lives, the strength of its partnerships and its understanding of a changing world.

Commenting on the brand redesign, Thom Newton, CEO, Conran Design Group said: "Reckitt has a compelling story to tell. The new Reckitt brand both reflects its 200-year history and provides an active expression of its purpose and ambition. The opportunity to work with the company to redevelop and launch the new brand was an opportunity we relished."

Facebook Rolls Out Instagram Lite To Sub-Saharan Africa, Other Emerging Markets

Facebook recently announced the launch of Instagram Lite to Sub-Saharan Africa, a new, lightweight version of the Instagram app for Android that uses less data and works well across all network conditions.

The new version of Instagram Lite for Android is less than 2MB in size, making it fast to install and quick to load. It also has improved speed, performance, and responsiveness. Instagram Lite not only works similarly to the Instagram app for Android, but it allows the Instagram experience to remain fast and reliable for more people, no matter what device, platform and network they use.

Commenting on the rationale for

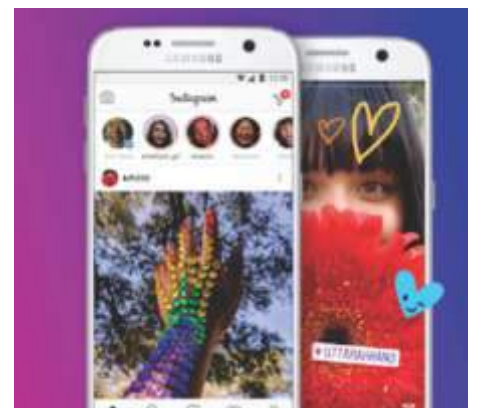
introducing the app to Sub-Saharan Africa, Engineering Manager for Instagram Lite, Peter Shin said, "Connectivity in the region can be unstable, slow and expensive, making it challenging for people to have a high-quality Instagram experience. Many people were already familiar with the concept of a Lite app after the successful roll-out of Facebook Lite some years ago. We started testing the new version of Instagram Lite when people across the continent started asking for a Lite app for Android. The feedback was very positive and we are excited to launch it across the continent today."

"Our team aims to leave no one behind, so today we are very excited to bring Instagram Lite

to people in over 170 countries, including the entire Sub-Saharan Africa region," he added.

Instagram Lite is similar to the core Instagram app experience, though some features are not currently supported, such as Reels creation, Shopping, and IGTV. Instagram Lite is likely to gain appeal to users in locations with limited bandwidth or high data costs, especially in the developing world.

Instagram Lite is currently rolling out in over 170 countries, and Facebook remains committed to building and improving the app to help everyone in the world connect to the people and things they love.



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9mobile Upgrades Offerings On MiFi And Router Devices

In yet another affirmation of its resolve to continue enabling its customers with more affordable and superfast data, innovative telecommunications company, 9mobile, has upgraded its MiFi and Router offerings.

Customers can now get up to 380GB for N60, 000, plus a free router device valid for 1 year, and up to 200GB at N36, 000, plus a free MiFi device also valid for 1 year.

MiFi devices can be connected to a cellular network to provide internet services for up to ten devices, while routers can be connected to a cellular network to provide internet services for up to 30 devices.

Commenting on the offers, Chief Commercial Officer, 9mobile, Stjepan Udovicic, disclosed that it demonstrated 9mobile's commitment to boosting individuals and businesses with affordable data connectivity.

"We are committed to providing affordable offerings, especially as COVID-19 has altered the world of work. Nowadays, more people are working remotely as they need affordable data to deliver their tasks and stay connected online with



colleagues and business associates. Our refreshed MiFi and Router offers will see our customers enjoying more for less. For instance, a customer gets 20GB instant sign-up data bonus, and additional 15GB data every month for 12 months, plus a free MiFi device at N36, 000". Also,

customers will get 30GB instant sign-up data bonus, and additional 20GB every month for 12 months, plus a free Router device.

Udovicic added that the MiFi and Router devices also come with other variant data offers. For MiFi's, there are three more variants where

customers can get sign-up data bonus and additional data starting from N16,000.

Since entering the Nigerian market, 9mobile continues to transform lives with its consistent innovation, rolling out solutions that enable Nigerians to achieve their full potential.

Introducing JuiceUp Emergency Charger From the Stables of Elev8Media

What is JuiceUp Emergency Charger? Emergency situations really bring it home: remember the #EndSARS protests at the Lekki Toll Gate? DJ Switch had an Instagram live coverage which thousands of Nigerians were following. Things got bad when connection was lost with everyone because both her phone battery and power bank were drained. We have situations that just when you need your phone the most, it could run out of power. A Power bank or spare external battery can help extend your phone's battery life, but those devices eventually run out of power too. Enter JuiceUp Emergency Chargers that don't rely on working electricity, generators, or a car to recharge your phone!

JuiceUp, Africa's first pre-charged emergency phone charger with a biodegradable Shell which entered the Nigerian market in March 2021 is aimed at solving the problem of low battery anxiety that millions of Nigerian phone users have to face at one time or the other.



JuiceUp comes to the Nigerian market from the stables of Elev8media, one of the biggest digital OOH giants in Nigeria and a dynamic marketing service agency offering seamless top grade and innovative marketing communications solutions in the area of BTL that focus on solving clients marketing and sales challenges across West Africa and beyond.

Speaking on the unique value proposition of the product, Funmilade Alalade, CEO,

ELEV8MEDIA said, "As a business, we have to constantly evolve to elevate. There is no boxing evolution, so, there is no boxing Elev8. JuiceUp is a product of this business philosophy. The product is a lifesaver that offers the advantage of charging your device on the go in Emergencies without needing electricity. The product is Pre-charged and ready to use at any time. No extra Cables are needed, making it very light to carry around. It provides upto 50% charge for your device."

Being the first of its kind within this market, the product has no direct competition. The closest to a competition to the innovative product is the power bank. Speaking to this and the uniqueness of the product, Alalade asserted that the product is a result of original thinking, hence its uniqueness. "JuiceUp Emergency Charger is a unique product, the first of its kind in the country. We are not in direct competition with any brand, but we share similarities with power bank manufacturers, except, JuiceUp does not need to be charged to

charge your phone.

With the understanding of the place of environmental sustainability in coming up with a product like this, Alalade avers: "JuiceUp has a recycle plan; we give batteries new life. Every JuiceUp Charger purchased has an impact. Each time a JuiceUp Charger is sold, a battery is diverted from its needless journey to a landfill. All our batteries are obtained, tested, certified, and reposed as Emergency chargers. We also provide incentives for recycling used JuiceUp chargers."

To avail every Nigerian the opportunity to end the problem, worries and anxieties that come with flat phone batteries, Alalade said the product will be effectively marketed throughout the country. He assured that since the product fits into any lifestyle, anytime and anywhere including the beach, a dinner, or in traffic, everyone should be able to access this unique product and so awareness will be created via major distributors, retail outlets, the company's website, and social media, to name a few.

Mouka Flags Off 'Mums In Business Challenge', Calls For Entry

To celebrate this year's Mother's Day in May, Mouka has rolled out the 'Mums in Business Challenge' to reward female entrepreneurs with cash grants for their ventures. The initiative is in line with the brand's mission of adding comfort to life and falls under its CSR pillar of "skills for life".

In May of 2019, Mouka ran a similar online competition, organised in partnership with AGS

Tribe, a firm that provides entrepreneurs opportunities across Africa. Maryam Adebola-Salami, the founder of Mobaby Care Nigeria, emerged the winner and was presented with a cheque of US\$1,000.

This year, Mouka is taking this initiative further by supporting three mum entrepreneurs. The first prize winner will go home with a cash grant of N500,000, the second prize winner with

N300,000 and the third with N200,000. All winners will also go home with Mouka mattresses and pillows.

The 2021 'Mums in Business Challenge' is also being organised in conjunction with the AGS Tribe. Consumers are encouraged to visit Mouka's social media handles for information on how to participate as well as terms and conditions.



Burger King To Enter Nigeria Q4, Set To Provide Employment For 6,000 Nigerians

Burger King, an American multinational hamburger fast food chain, has formally announced its intentions to commence operations in the Nigerian market by the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2021.

This announcement was made recently concurrently in Nigeria and the US. According to the executives of Restaurant Brands International (RBI), the parent company of Burger King and Allied Confectionary Services (AlliedFCS) Nigeria Limited, Franchisee of Burger King in Nigeria, the first outlet will open in Lagos between Q3 and Q4, this year, to be followed with other stores across the country.

Though this is not the first time Burger King has made a move for the Nigerian market, industry observers are of the opinion that with Antoine Zammariah in the picture, the brand is definitely sure to stay. Recall in 2018, Daniel Schwartz, Chief Executive Officer of RBI made a similar statement of penetrating the market.

Antoine Zammariah who makes a return to the Nigerian market after his stint at Eat 'N' Go as the Chief Operating Officer of the QSR Company is the Managing Director, for AlliedFCS Nigeria. He specifically explained that Burger King will start operations between



L-R: Prof. Mustapha Akinkunmi, EVC, Fetswollet; Mr. Antoine Zammariah, GMD AlliedFCS; Joyce Ibukun, Marketing Coordinator, Burger King, Nigeria and Emma Esinna, Director, Africa Franchise Center.

September and November 2021. "We have set up the Quality Control unit and have met some of our local suppliers to seal the deal. Also, we have

sent some of the ingredients to America to test quality.

"As a company, we are delighted to enter this

new market being the largest country in Africa and are looking forward to serving our future guests with our world-famous Burger King meals," he said.

Relatedly, the global QSR giant is set to create jobs for Nigeria's teeming youthful population with the entrance of Burger King to the market. Zammariah explained further, "Most importantly, our goal is to positively contribute to the economy by creating more jobs and employment opportunities. In five years, we hope to directly or indirectly employ between 5,000 and 6,000 people in Nigeria."

He explained that the development agreement of the chain in Nigeria, which was recently signed, would give more confidence to the Nigerian market and consumers in general, especially during these hard times.

The first outlet of the hamburger chain in Nigeria is expected to be launched in Lagos. The Florida-based restaurant chain is set to join other established brands for a share of the Nigerian food industry, estimated at over a trillion naira, with the Fast-Food segment gulping over N250 billion, according to the Association of Fast Food and Confectioners of Nigerian (AFFCON).

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Godrej



Saving Lives, Curbing Further Spread Of Malaria In Nigeria



L-R: Chitwan Singh, Business Head West Africa; Ayodele Otujinrin, Head of Marketing West Africa; Kayode Oladapo, Category Head Africa; Nigerian Medical Association Representative and Chukwuemeka Okeke, Head of Sales Godrej at the Product Unveiling of Good Knight Power Shot Insecticide.

By Azeez Disu

Since time immemorial, insects like bed bugs, mosquitoes, cockroaches, tsetse flies, lice, and others have been feeding on humans and other animals and leaving behind annoying and itchy bites. But the marks and itchiness are not the only things they leave behind. They also inject deadly germs-parasites into the bloodstream that can cause serious disease and even death.

Malaria is one of the life-threatening diseases caused by parasites transmitted to people through the bites of an insect, the female Anopheles mosquitoes. According to the latest World Malaria Report, released on 30 November 2020, there were 229 million cases of malaria in 2019 compared to 228 million cases in 2018. The estimated number of malaria deaths stood at 409 000 in 2019, compared with 411 000 deaths in 2018.

According to the World Health Organisation, the African Region continues to carry a disproportionately high share of the global malaria burden. In 2019, the region was home to 94% of all malaria cases and deaths. Also In 2019, six countries accounted for approximately half of all malaria deaths worldwide: Nigeria (23%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (11%), United Republic of Tanzania (5%), Burkina Faso (4%), Mozambique (4%) and Niger (4% each).

Unfortunately, the gloomy figures and statistics does not show any sign of abating. A message from the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, on World Malaria Day recently reflects this pathetic situation when he said, "It is World Malaria Day 2021 and we grieve over the 384,000 preventable

malaria deaths in the WHO African Region in 2020."

Preventing avoidable deaths by attaining a malaria-free status will not only help Africa attain healthy living and development but it will enable it actualise the Goal 3 of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063: A healthy, prosperous Africa and at the same time it would help achieve the Sustainable Development Goal three which is Good health and well-being.

Rising to the onerous challenge of helping prevent malaria related deaths as well as helping in the fight against the deadly malaria parasite, Godrej, a multinational conglomerate company, introduced Goodknight Power Shots, an insecticide that is unlike any in the Nigerian market.

Offering A Reliable Solution

Goodknight Power Shots has an Advanced Concentrated Formula which instantly acts against mosquitoes, flies, cockroaches and ants, making it both effective and safe insecticide. This is important at a time when concerns about insecticide resistance-the ability of an insect to withstand the effects of an insecticide by becoming resistant to its toxic effects by means of natural selection and mutations-is high and many brands in the market are appearing less effective in combating the rising insect menace in the environment.

GoodKnight is very different from other insecticides in the market based on the fact that it is very safe for human beings. The insecticide brand is gentle on humans but harsh on insects. It does not require you to leave the room after spraying this. This is despite the fact that many insecticides can cause poisoning after being

swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin, with symptoms that may include eye tearing, coughing, heart problems, and breathing difficulties. In fact, some insecticides are odorless, thus the person is unaware of being exposed to them. Some insecticides make certain nerves "fire" erratically, causing many organs to become overactive and eventually to stop functioning.

Interestingly, in Nigeria, Godrej is associated with premium quality hair products. Its foray into the insecticide market is therefore surprising but the company, in a statement explained that helping to preserve the family unit is one of the reasons for its entrance into the insecticide market in Nigeria. "At Goodknight we believe that the family is precious and every moment that they spend together needs to be celebrated and preserved."

So it will be nice to state it helps to say 'Goodnight and the end' to insects, giving families peace of mind and healthy lifestyle.

Throwing more light, Chitwan Singh, Godrej's Business Head West Africa said Godrej is working to stamp out the deadly disease and improve the health and livelihoods of the world's population. In the same vein, Ayodele Otujinrin Head of Marketing West Africa Godrej corroborated: "Goodknight is one of the global leaders in the household insecticides category. Goodknight Power Shots has an advanced concentrated formula which instantly acts against mosquitoes, flies, cockroaches and ants. Goodknight Power Shots is both effective and safe insecticide. It does not require you to leave the room after spraying and causes no Irritation/Catarrh."

She added, "Ordinary aerosols have more than 90% gas (LPG and Kerosene) which is completely useless; Goodknight Power Shots has a concentrated formula with no gas and no kerosene. One Power Shots bottle lasts as much as two 300ml aerosol cans. At Goodknight we believe that the family is precious and every moment that they spend together needs to be celebrated and preserved."

Commemorating World Malaria Day

Beyond providing a better option to the Nigerian Consumer in combating malaria, Godrej joined in the commemoration of the World Malaria, observed every year on 25th of April. It is the day for the recognition of global efforts to control malaria. It is observed by all member states of the World Health Organization.

The company, under the auspices of the premium quality Good Knight Nigeria brand flagged off the day with a press conference designed to sensitise, educate, and lend a voice to the global drive to roll back malaria. It was also an avenue to announce the lineup of events of the celebration.

"This year, World Malaria Day 2021 theme 'Reaching the Zero Malaria Target' is the perfect sequel capturing the vision and direction of global governing body, World Health Organization (WHO), which already plans to celebrate the achievements of countries that are approaching – and achieving – malaria elimination; the rationale being that such countries provide inspiration for all nations that are working to stamp out this deadly disease and improve the health and livelihoods of their population," Chitwan had explained.

To also commemorate the day, Ayodele disclosed that the brand leveraged social media and explored innovative channels to cater for and contribute to reaching the zero-malaria target in certain regions of the country. The drive which is a combination of both online and offline engagements featured Community Clean up, Social Media Challenge, Influencer engagements and activations to effectively drive awareness for the campaign and sensitise citizens of their own role in indeed reaching the zero-malaria target.

The community cleanup is in line with the axiom that says 'Cleanness they say is next to Godliness' and in agreement with the fact that a clean environment prevents people and communities from sick bed and diseases. The community clean up was held at the Otto Community, Oyingbo, Lagos recently. It also featured a courtesy visit to the local rulers of the community, activations, sanitation of environment and sensitising the locals on the absolute need for a clean environment towards 'Reaching the Zero Malaria Target,' which is the theme for this year's World Malaria Day.

GoodKnight Power Shots insecticide is produced by Godrej Nigeria. As part of the Godrej Consumer Products Ltd, an emerging markets FMCG leader with a growing presence in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Its legacy is strongly built on values that reflect trust, integrity, and respect.

In 2008, GCPL acquired the Kinky Group, as part of its foray into the hair extension business in Africa. Later, in 2015, Frika Hair (Pty) Limited, a leading premium hair extensions company in South Africa was acquired. In 2011, it delved deeper into the African market with a partnership with Darling Group, a number one player in hair extensions in 14 African countries and counting. Currently, it is leading brand in hair extensions category across Africa. Godrej Nigeria manufactures a broad range of products from leading brands as Darling, Tura, MegaGrowth and Goodknight insecticide.



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HASG Urges FG To Engage Industry In Response To Foreign Media Ad Placement Fine

The Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups (HASG), a coalition of sectoral group heads in the integrated marketing communications industry has urged the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed to engage the industry players and practitioners more and explore collaboration on issues critical to the industry before making pronouncements.

The body made the remark following federal government announcement that advertisers will pay fine for advertisements placed on CNN and other foreign owned media channels and production of content abroad.

Recall, news platforms reported that the Minister made the comment during a discussions on the NTA Good Morning Nigeria show recently, stating that brands that produce their advertising materials abroad will pay a fine of N100, 000 each time such adverts are run, adding that advertising materials promoting Nigerian brands must be directed and authored by Nigerians inside the country.

He also said that Nigerian brands who run adverts during foreign matches must compulsorily advertise during Nigerian Premier Football League games.

In a joint statement issued by AAAN, ADVAN, MIPAN, OAAN, BON and EXMAN; HASG stated that the world is a global village and no one can work in isolation today as Nigerians do



not just live within the physical boundaries, stating that advertisers put their money where eyeballs of Nigerians are. It explained further that more Nigerians watch the foreign channels, adding that the country's music and entertainment industry for example did not emerge and become global by forced legislative fiat, but via organic growth and creativity of the practitioners.

"First it is important that the Minister should

understand that advertisers put their advertising investment where the eyeballs of Nigerians are. The media decisions are driven by the consumers' interest, passion, inspiration and aspirations. CNN and other international news channels are watched by Nigerians locally and internationally, the world is now a global village and Nigerians do not only live within our physical boundaries. Nigeria based news channels and contents developed locally are also consumed across many

countries beyond our borders, with no special fines and levies imposed on companies who place adverts within them.

"While there are some merits in the bid to encourage and support local production of contents in a bid to support the local industries, the Minister must understand that these have to be allowed to develop organically. Also, many leading

"Advertisers are multinational companies who rationally seek to explore economies of scale in the production of materials, negotiation costs and broadcast of their contents which run across many countries. Even with this said, empirical information and trended data shows clearly that investment on local broadcast stations still outweighs that of foreign channels."

HASG explained further that there are many others ways the government can support the advertising industry, "There are many areas where the government can support the industry to grow, this includes funding in the areas of technical infrastructure, content development grants, and investment in tools of measurement of advertising effectiveness & efficiency etc. With the right support for the marketing communication industry, content development. Local media investment and media infrastructural development will grow and improve organically," the statement reads.

LASAA Begins Campaign On Regulation Of Outdoor Advertising



The Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) has commenced a campaign on regulation of outdoor advertising in the state. The agency began the first phase of its awareness campaign to sensitise members of the public on the need for compliance with regulations guiding outdoor advertisement.

Speaking during one of the agency's awareness campaign in Lagos, Managing Director of LASAA, Prince Adedamola Docemo, said it was important to sensitise members of the public on the need to comply with the LASAA law before the agency begins enforcement.

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

He urged Lagosians to cooperate with LASAA so that the state government can successfully deliver the dividends of democracy to them through its revenue optimisation effort.

Similarly, the Deputy General Manager, Corporate Communication and Strategy of LASAA, Mr. Temitope Akande, noted that the agency has a tradition of embarking on an awareness campaign to clients and the public in general in February and March every year.

The campaign will focus on the need for clients to be on the side of the law as enforcement would commence afterwards, he said.

"Our plan is to utilise all available medium of communication to sensitise the public on the need to register their advertising business signboards, temporary campaigns, road shows and billboards as well as branded vehicles to avoid falling foul of

the enforcement drive that will follow this awareness exercise. We plan to engage our clients across all platforms to achieve our objective," Akande said.

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

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

Explaining that branded vehicles without valid permits are usually grounded or impounded and made to pay the amount due before the vehicle is released.

Pace Sports Remains Rightful Owner Of HiFL Trademark



Pace Sports and Entertainment Marketing Limited, PACE, recently debunked the acquisition claim of HiFL Trademark by Green White Green Limited.

In a press statement made available to Brand Communicator, the management of Pace Sports Entertainment Marketing Limited said,

"Our attention has been drawn to a press statement published in the Leadership newspaper dated Wednesday, 24th of March 2021, and on other national dailies and online platforms, announcing the acquisition of the HiFL

Trademark and other spurious reports by Green White Green Centre Limited.

"Pace Sports and Entertainment Marketing Limited (PACE) the creators, developers and the organisers of the Higher Institution Football League (HiFL) affirms that the Trademark including the device and logo of HiFL is rightfully owned by PACE as we had the appropriate application made to register the said trademark prior to the commencement of the first HiFL season in 2018 and same was accepted in writing by the Registrar for Trademarks, Patents and

Designs, Abuja in April of the same year."

Pace Sports added, "further clarification be sought from the rightful owners i.e. PACE prior to any further publications on this matter," saying that its legal team is also taking the necessary actions to address this matter.

However, all activities, engagements and commitments scheduled for the HiFL 2021 season remain unchanged and will continue as planned.

Loeries Calls For Entries For 2021 Edition

Loeries has called for entries for the 2021 edition of its award, with a call on the brand communication industry to create work that changes things and makes a difference. Similarly, it announced that entry submission closes 3 May.

This year award is tagged "#Fightthegoodfight". The Loeries has been rewarding creativity for more than four decades. It is the most prestigious brand and communication awards in Africa and the Middle East. The award recognises, rewards, inspires and fosters creative excellence in the advertising and brand communication industry.

According to the statement from the company, "Loeries 2021 entries are now open take advantage of the early bird discount – entries are

locked at 2019 rates until 3 May."

The Loeries, a non-profit company, is Africa and the Middle East's premiere initiative that recognises, rewards, inspires and fosters creative excellence in the brand communication industry. As the highest accolade for creativity and innovation across our region, the Loeries promotes and supports creativity by helping marketers, agencies and consumers appreciate the value of ideas and fresh thinking.

Culminating in the biggest creative gathering across the region, Loeries Creative Week brings together the best innovative minds from our industry for a festival of networking, inspiring minds and recognising great work.

The Loeries is the only award across Africa and the Middle East that informs the global



WARC Creative 100, a showcase for the best creative work in the world. Successor to the prestigious Gunn Report, WARC collates the

most important advertising awards from around the world to produce a global list that ranks the most creative companies and campaigns.

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OAAN, ICL Collaborate On Audience Measurement For OOH Sector

In pursuance of the aim of providing solution to the age-long marketing industry need for offline measurement, the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) and Interaction Channel Limited (ICL), an advertising technology company have embarked on a strategic collaboration to provide a currency of measurement for the OOH sector in Nigeria using the innovative ‘Moving Audiences’ platform.

The collaboration was announced at the press briefing in Lagos held on Thursday 22nd April where the two parties disclosed that they will leverage best in class global technology, data and tools to drive strategy, planning and buying of Out-of-Home Advertising for advertisers and brands.

To bring the technological innovation to the Nigerian market, ICL had partnered Moving Walls, having signed a deal with the international agency to provide upscale location intelligence for media and marketing services.

The President of OAAN, Emmanuel Ajufo disclosed that the innovation is timely considering the challenges of providing adequate data on audience engagement with its boards and others. He stated that it is a new dawn for OOH advertising in the country and it will further help practitioners and its members to offer unique and



L-R: President, Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), Femi Adelusi; Director, Regulation, Monitoring and Enforcement, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), Ijedi Iyoha; Managing Director, Interaction Channel Limited (ICL), Tosan Omagbemi and President, Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), Emmanuel Ajufo at the press briefing to announce the OAAN and ICL collaboration on Data Standards for Out-of-home advertising held in Lagos recently.

measurable services to clients.

Adding that the association is strongly in support of the initiative, he stated that it will transform the sector as practitioners will offer more value to clients. “The association is behind this whole initiative, we want everybody to know that the collaboration is for the good of the industry. For us our interest is value for our client

and we are set to deliver much more with credible audience measurement in place.”

Similarly, the Managing Director of ICL, Tosan Omagbemi stated that now the OOH advertising industry can boast of having standards of measurement in line with global best practices which will further help it grow remarkably.

“It is evident that OOH Advertising delivers

results. This is what the OAAN/ICL collaboration intends to amplify through global best standards of measurement. OOH now has measurement in Nigeria!

“At Interaction Channel Limited, we believe that we are engaging an ever-dynamic audience. Brands that intend to get the right space per time within the consumer/media ecosystem must employ dynamic solutions which our advertising technology company is all about – dynamic solutions for a dynamic audience. This is the next phase for brand custodians that would not only deliver their numbers, but be part of the consumers’ play,” he explained.

He added that its upscale location intelligence platform leverages 5th Generation cutting edge technology to offer a marketing lifestyle solution for OOH strategy, planning and buying, Mobile Advertising, Retail Analytics and Events Measurement. “Using these tools, brands will be able to deploy their consumer initiatives with an unprecedented higher level of precision. A robust synergy is now also possible across media types, for example OOH Media + Mobile. Furthermore, advertisers will be able to customize audience segments and leverage day-part understanding to reach specific audiences especially on DOOH.”

EXMAN Empowers Members On Tax, Pension Compliance



L-R: Former President, Kayode Olageshin; Financial Secretary, Bola Oyebade; President, Tade Adekunle; all from EXMAN; Team Lead, Business Development at ARM Pension Manager, Lanre Oyeneke and Vice president of EXMAN, Abiodun Oshinibosi at EXMAN Training 2021 held at Hibrid Studio in Lagos recently.

In a bid to ensure compliance and work within the ambit of the law, Experiential Marketers’ Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) empowered its members on taxation and pension scheme and how they can also take advantage of the opportunities inherent.

The hybrid event tagged: “EXMAN Training 2021” was held at the Hibrid Studio in Lagos recently. The event had Oluseye Arowolo, Partner, Tax and Regulatory Services, Deloitte and Touche on the topic “Nigeria’s Changing Tax Landscape” and Lanre Oyeneke, Team Lead, Business Development at ARM Pension Manager; spoke on “Relevance of Pension in The Changing World”

EXMAN President, Tade Adekunle earlier in his welcome address, said the training was organised to help members better understand the

tax and pension scheme and how they can overcome some of the challenges they are facing in that aspect of doing business.

“The area of tax is where we have been having challenges. With government going about it in a very brutal way, going after virtually all the companies under marketing communications and other companies in Nigeria, we are of the opinion that we need a better understanding of what is expected of us. This is to really have a good understanding of the system and avoid falling foul of the law. That is why we asked the top management and finance management experts to become part of our training today,” he said.

He added that after the training its members would be able to manage their tax process on time not to wait for when there are issues.

NIMN Announces Change In Venue Of Annual Marketing Confab/AGM

The National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) has announced that its 2021 Annual Marketing Conference/Annual General Meeting (AGM) will no longer take place in Benin City as earlier planned, but will now take place in Lagos.

This was announced by the institutes’ President, Tony Agenmonmen, in a statement to its members across the country. Tony explained that the change in venue for this year’s conference themed ‘SMEs in the Post Covid World,’ is necessary to ensure more members attend the conference. The decision was reached after a

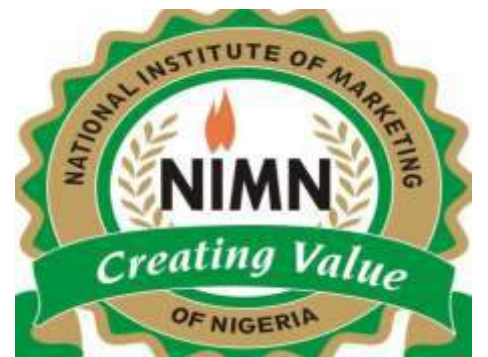
council meeting held recently to review all circumstances of the successful outcome of the conference and AGM.

“This conclusion was largely informed by the realization that we might not have enough attendance to justify the hosting of the programme in Benin City. The dates remain 27 May 2021 for the Annual Marketing Conference and 28 May 2021 for the Annual General Meeting (AGM). In full observance of COVID-19 protocols, only a maximum of 100 participants will be allowed at each of the programmes,” he said.

According to the professional body, admittance will be on a first come first served basis. Members have been advised to contact the Institute’s Registrar, Mr. Sidney Ogbodo for early reservation. NIMN also apologized for all inconveniences the changes may have caused.

The event was earlier scheduled to take place at Benin City but was later changed to Radisson Blue Hotel in Lagos state.

Nominations for elections into the positions in the Governing Council of the NIMN have also been opened. The contestable positions include the Presidential position, and the council



Bharat Thakrar, CEO, WPP Scangroup Resigns Over Allegations Of Financial Malfeasance

Bharat Thakrar, the Chief Executive Officer of WPP Scangroup, the African arm of the world’s biggest advertising agency group, has finally resigned from the company following grave allegations of financial impropriety by the board of the company.

WPP Scangroup had earlier in a statement dated February 19, 2021, announced the suspension of Bharat Thakrar and the Chief Finance Officer of the company, Satyabrata Das, over allegations of gross misconduct and other “offences in their capacity as executives and employees of the company.”

The company had immediately appointed one Graham Alec as the interim Chief Operating Officer for the continued smooth running of the business, advising shareholders to exercise caution in the trading of the company’s securities on the stock market.

In spite of his resignation from the company and by extension, his membership of all its subsidiaries, WPP insisted in the statement that it would not discontinue with investigations of the allegations of financial impropriety allegations

leveled against the Indian that naturalized in Kenya.

Details of the exact offences committed by Bharat and Mr. Das were not revealed, but Scangroup became a familiar name in the Nigerian advertising landscape from 2011 to 2016, during a protracted disagreement between the group and Ogilvy’s former affiliate in Nigeria, Prima Garnet Africa over plans by WPP/Ogilvy Africa using Bharat Thakrar, to buy majority shares in Prima Garnet Africa, the Nigerian business.

Prior to then, WPP had sold its shares in Ogilvy Africa to Bharat’s Scanad Advertising, giving rise to a new company, WPP Scangroup, on the understanding that the new African outfit would fast-track the dominance of WPP and its sub brands like Ogilvy in the African market with Nigeria as the launchpad.

Although Bharat couldn’t come into the Nigerian market the way he had planned, he was much later able to launch operations in Nigeria a few years ago working with Seni Adetu to open the Ogilvy Nigeria business, after a consent

judgement against Ogilvy and WPP ended its court case with Prima Garnet that literally embargoed its operations for many years in Nigeria.

Sources have now suggested Nigeria to be Bharat Thakrar’s next destination following the sad end of his relationship with WPP Scangroup in Kenya and the East African region that cost him years and millions of dollars to midwife its emergence.

WPP Scangroup already controlled 80 per cent of the Kenyan PR, Advertising and Marketing business and was committed to replicating the same dominance across Africa, although many Nigerian businesses managed by the group at the global level had of recent, opted for more nimble agencies to handle their briefs.

Airtel Nigeria is one clear example. At the peak of industry competition in the data category, Airtel had hired an indigenous Nigerian agency, Noah’s Ark to manage its creative briefs while another Nigerian agency, CMC Connect was put in charge of the company’s public relations management. Prima Garnet Africa manages part



Bharat Thakrar, CEO, WPP

of the local Unilever business in Nigeria without any link to Ogilvy or WPP.

Many watchers are of the opinion that Bharat may want to take advantage of its relationship with the current Ogilvy Nigeria and its Group CEO to make a foray into Nigeria.

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Bigi

Youth Market Target Sponsorship, A Compelling Approach To Marketing



Mr. Seleem Adegunwa, Managing Director of Rite Foods Limited, on stage with the microphones depicting the 12 variants of Bigi soft drinks, used at the maiden edition of Bigi Media Idol, organised by the Bigi Brand of Rite Foods Limited, in Lagos, recently

The ability to explore and deepen brand affinity, most often, sponsorship of big platforms hardly get value for their investments due to their inability to get out of name association, the usual “this programme/product was sponsored by XYZ”.

In time past we have seen a rapid emergence of storytelling across various brands, where marketing teams are reporting the same elsewhere. By highlighting the values and actions of a company, marketers have the ability to drive purchases, loyalty and advocacy while creating alignment between brands and consumers. This is especially true when a brand’s processes and products represent important consumer values, motivations and aspirations.

Brands can elevate their stories through a 360-degree communication plan that pushes messaging across several channels. Using different mediums to tell your story can enable you attract a wide audience, capture attention through multiple touch points and also strengthen customer relationships.

Moreover, many food and beverage companies are making straightforward and honest efforts to rebuild trust in the industry via improvements in sustainability practices and the treatment of people, among others.

However, because more consumers are checking the facts themselves, if any of this is not communicated in an honest, transparent and dynamic way, may have little impact—or build distrust. One way to get ahead of this is to be proactive with such changes.

Brands that improve formulas, clean up labels, reduce nutrition negatives and make sustainability improvements without waiting for government regulation or public pressure to demonstrate an elevated care for the consumer. When this is communicated properly, the will overshadow competitors.

Companies and Brand Custodians can leverage visuals to tell their stories in memorable and vivid ways that may deliver more impact and emotion than words alone. Artful, custom and unique photography can transcend the mundane observable facts of a scenario.

It is for this reason that Rite Foods’ Bigi carbonated drinks, sponsors of the current Nigeria Idol Season 6, has revealed by its innovative brand tactics, its way ahead competitors in the industry.

Many brand enthusiasts and critics have commended the aggressive and creative approach the brand has adopted in leveraging the idol global music platform. For a brand that is

targeted at consumers’ satisfaction, analysts believe that the adoption of the platform in the first place is a coup well plotted and delivered against competitors, as the talent in music continues to grow.

Against this backdrop, the recent Grammy won by Burna Boy is a major step to the validation and growth of the music industry in the country. Therefore, Bigi’s inclusion into this act of the youth is not only considered a well thought out decision, its exploitation of the platform is driven through innovation and unusual brand activation against the pedestrian approach that other brands would have applied into having a conservative brand briefing with press release handed out to journalists.

Bigi opted for a recreation of the sponsorship platform to enable content drivers, journalists, music critics, reporters and entertainment enthusiasts to participate in what they christened as Bigi Media Idol, where all components of the Bigi’s sponsorship assets was demonstrated by the journalists, content drivers and audience invited to this bespoke event initiated for their understanding.

The response of the Bigi Media Idol event trended and rivalled The Champions League games played same day, with twitter conversation which slightly edged it when the game



started.

With the novel idea of transforming microphones used at the event to the 12 Bigi Drinks Variants, observers believe, is a clear case of impact recognition and disruptive marketing.

Brand Enthusiasts never thought this vibrant brand will ever go into this direction, going by the exploits of rival brands like Pepsi, exploiting with Nigeria’s pop stars and Coca-Cola which had done activities in Music, using 2Baba for their commercial.

However, taking ownership of the microphone and transforming it was never contemplated or perhaps, never crossed their thought process. To consider the ownership of the most important instrument in singing which is what enhances the voice and transmits to music lovers, also, sound cannot be enjoyed without the use of microphone.

It is in the opinion of analyst that Bigi brand incursion into music and sponsorship of Nigerian idol would have been taken as one of the musical acquisition but its exploration of the platform is now deepening conversation in the music industry as well as connecting with consumers in the hugely populated youth demography which is very key to the brand.

Moreover, the aggressive marketing approach of the brand as attracted to it some agencies known as game changers given their pedigree in the industry over the years.

For example, Thisday Newspapers learnt that an agency known for its innovation and creativity in perception management may have been engaged to give conversation direction for the ambitious brand, for it was discovered that the Microphone stunt of recent is being spearheaded by the Agency. Furthermore, this reporter gathered from the Bigi Media Idol event that Rite Foods communication handlers also stunned news hounds and enthusiasts at the Rite Brand Academy organised at the Multi-Million Dollar Factory, Ososa, Ogun State recently. Where News Correspondents were introduced to Artificial Intelligence (AI) working in a factory via robots, with No-Human-Interference.

The highlight of the event was what a journalist at the event referred to as the taking over of microphones which in a way was depicted by having the 12 microphones used by contestants recreated by each variants of the Bigi Carbonated Soft Drinks.

This brilliant idea is already receiving positive review as it as gone viral, it is one of the most creative way of using visual to illustrate commitment to sponsorship.

Marketing is all about putting your message in the heart of consumers, not only sticking to it, but, by repeat purchase. Analysts are of the opinion that from what Bigi is doing, the Brand is already causing serious upset against some age long foreign brands.

Also recently, the brand supported the Nigerian Movie Industry (Nollywood) through the sponsorship of Prophetess, a movie that recently Premiere for a select audience of movie lovers in Nigeria. The movie with the theme, Celestial, Angelic, Heavenly, was shown in Ibadan, Oyo State, on March 26, this year and two days in Lekki, Lagos.

That Rite Food has come with strong will, technology and innovation is no longer news. What is however exciting about the company is its disruptive innovation being strategically and consistently employed to cause marketing disruption for competitors, while giving consumers value for their naira.

“Taking ownership of the microphone and transforming it was never contemplated or perhaps, never crossed their thought process. To consider the ownership of the most important instrument in singing which is what enhances the voice and transmits to music lovers, also, sound cannot be enjoyed without the use of microphone.”



Boluwatife Adedugbe, Brand Manager, Rite Foods Limited, presenting a dummy cheque to Rotimi Ige, Entertainment Editor of Tribune Newspapers, winner of the Bigi Media Idol, with the cash prize of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira; at the maiden edition of Bigi Media Idol, organised by the Bigi Brand of Rite Foods Limited, in Lagos, recently.



Boluwatife Adedugbe, Brand Manager, Rite Foods Limited, presenting a dummy cheque to Funsho Arogundade, Publisher of PM Express, second runner-up and winner of the cash prize of One Hundred Thousand Naira; at the maiden edition of Bigi Media Idol, organised by the Bigi Brand of Rite Foods Limited, in Lagos, recently.



Boluwatife Adedugbe, Brand Manager, Rite Foods Limited; with Obi Asika, Bigi Media Idol Judge; Osigbe Blessing, a Content Driver of High Society Magazine, an online platform, First Runner-up and winner of the cash prize of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira, and DJ Sose, Bigi Media Idol Judge; at the maiden edition of Bigi Media Idol, organised by the Bigi Brand of Rite Foods Limited, in Lagos, recently.



L-R: Funsho Arogundade, Publisher of PM Express, Second Runner-up and winner of the cash prize of One Hundred Thousand Naira; with Obi Asika, Bigi Media Idol Judge; Rotimi Ige, Entertainment Editor of Nigerian Tribune Newspapers, and winner of the grand prize of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira; DJ Sose, Bigi Media Idol Judge; Osigbe Blessing, a Content Driver of High Society Magazine, an online platform, First Runner-up and winner of the cash prize of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira, and Boluwatife Adedugbe, Brand Manager, Rite Foods Limited; at the maiden edition of Bigi Media Idol, organised by the Bigi Brand of Rite Foods Limited, in Lagos, recently.



L-R: Obi Asika, Bigi Media Idol Judge; with Rotimi Ige, Entertainment Editor of Nigerian Tribune Newspapers, and winner of the grand prize of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira; DJ Sose, Bigi Media Idol Judge; and Boluwatife Adedugbe, Brand Manager, Rite Foods Limited; at the maiden edition of Bigi Media Idol, organised by the Bigi Brand of Rite Foods Limited, in Lagos, recently.



Rotimi Ige, Entertainment Editor of Tribune Newspapers, winner of the Bigi Media Idol, with the cash prize of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira, flanked by friends at the maiden edition of Bigi Media Idol, organised by the Bigi Brand of Rite Foods Limited, in Lagos, recently.



BRANDS EMPOWERING WOMEN

By Jeremiah Agada

March has always remained a very special month in the year as it is the month for the commemoration of the International Women's Day (IWD) worldwide. The IWD, celebrated every 8th of March is dedicated to the celebration of women's achievements- from business, politics to social endeavours, while at the same time reminding the world that more still needs to be done for gender equality.

Its roots can be traced to the 20th-century when over 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding voting rights, better pay, and shorter working hours. In 1910, Clara Zetkin suggested the idea of an international women's day during an International Conference for Working Women in Copenhagen. The idea was unanimously accepted by the over 100 women who attended the conference from 17 countries. This day has been observed since the 1900s but was made official in 1975 when the United Nations (UN) started celebrating the day with an annual theme. The theme 'Celebrating the Past, Planning for the Future' was the first annual theme and was used in 1996.

Not coincidentally, the call for gender equality is also contained in the Global Goal 5. It is the fifth of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in 2015. The official wording of SDG 5 is "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." SDG 5 has nine targets and 14 indicators. Six of the targets are "outcome-oriented" ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; ending violence and exploitation of women and girls; eliminating harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; increasing value of unpaid care and promoting shared domestic responsibilities; ensuring full participation of women in leadership and decision-making; and ensuring access to universal reproductive rights and health.

Interestingly, this year's theme is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world," with the hashtag #ChooseToChallenge. The theme rode on the COVID-19 pandemic to shine a light on the effective leadership of women, particularly in times of crisis – as Heads of State, as senior officials, experts and innovators, as business leaders, as 70% of the frontline health workforce (exposed to a heightened risk of infection), and as stewards of families and communities.

Undaunted however, women have stepped-up to this challenge with courage and honesty, learning and adapting in a rapidly evolving situation, pulling their weights in their spaces and on the international scene, crashing down glass ceilings with complete 'reckless' abandon. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala became the first woman and African to head the World Trade Organization (WTO) as Director-General. Amanda Gorman, a young 22-year-old became the first poet to speak at a US Presidential inauguration, using her beautiful words to inspire people around the world. Whitney Wolfe Herd became the youngest self-made billionaire and youngest female CEO to ever take a company public. And Dr. Özlem Türeci, together with her husband, is the brains behind the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine.

The few examples above show that the opportunity presented by women's empowerment is exactly why there has been an upsurge in the number of companies investing in it. Of course, "women's empowerment" is a broad topic and varies greatly from culture to culture and from organisation to organisation. Leveraging partnerships, story-telling, provision of female-centric (bespoke) initiatives, financial inclusion, empowerment initiatives among others, these organisations, especially in the Nigerian markets together form a strong vanguard of empowerment, emancipation and inclusion for the Nigerian woman.

An organisation like FirstBank Nigeria for instance, beyond the creation of a bouquet of female-centric products and the creation of online and offline platforms for women like Firstgem and FirstBank Women Network, has initiatives aimed at promoting gender inclusion and women empowerment. One of such initiative is the bank's partnership with the Women in Successful Career (WISCAR) platform. The partnership with WISCAR is focused on empowering and developing professional women to contribute to development and growth in Africa.

Addressing women's inequality across the value chain and across the globe is incredibly complex, and the most successful initiatives rely on extensive strategic partner networks. Stanbic IBTC's extensive partnership network reflect this sort of differentiated approach. Earlier this year, the Bank entered a strategic partnership with the UN Women Regional Office for West and Central Africa on a five-year \$40m women empowerment in Nigeria to give support to female farmers. The project is currently supporting 2,300 women beneficiary agri-business groups and cooperatives to increase the productivity and profitability of their operations within the rice and shea Nut value chains. It will ultimately deliver assistance to 12,500 rural women in the country. The project is supporting 17 women farmers' organisations and agri-business groups and cooperatives in the states of Ebonyi and Niger.

Beyond partnerships, some other organisations like Access Bank, have provided platforms internally and externally through which women are empowered. Access Bank is empowering women in the workplace through the Access Women Network (AWN) which is one of the three-pronged approaches it is using to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment. AWN was formed to support, develop, promote and retain female employees in the bank. The bank is also empowering women in the marketplace through the "W Initiative". Basically, the W Initiative is the bank's women's market program and has inspired, connected, and empowered women in Africa for over fourteen years. The initiative was launched in new African markets in 2020 which include Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Mozambique, and Gambia.

Like Access Bank's AWN Initiative, Multichoice Nigeria, foremost pay TV brand in the African network also has a group-wide women's forum called the MultiChoice Group Women's Forum (MGWF). Launched on the 30th of August 2019. The forum aims to build an inclusive environment that advances

women across MultiChoice by providing personal growth, leadership and career development programmes thereby creating unique opportunities for business continuity improvement, collaborations, ideation and building dynamic networks. The MGWF is centered around six pillars that include sponsorship, mentorship, learning, among others.

Leveraging story-telling and combining data points with anecdotes from individual women, brands like premium malt brand, Malta Guinness and Cadbury Nigeria's Bournvita, have a powerful story to tell. In celebration of International Women's Day, Amstel Malta followed the lives of three phenomenal women; Sandra Uso Prince-Ekueme, a mechanic; Uju Udoka, a painter and Cynthia Egbunam, a barber - who are certainly not "leaving it to the boys." These extraordinary women shared their compelling true stories of how they came about their line of work, how they are able to navigate male dominated spaces and how far they've come. They also answered interesting questions about their challenges, aspirations and shared some practical tips for young girls and women.

Cadbury Nigeria carried out an emotional campaign called #StrengthOfAMother in celebration of Mothers' day. For the campaign, the company got mothers from different generations, religions, ethnic groups and spheres of life into one room to distill 'Motherhood.' Most of the women selected are celebrities and known figures who are mothers. They include veteran actresses Patience Ozokwo, Mansurah Isah and Iyabo Ojo; Interior Designer, Inyene Brendan; Baker, Tobi Famuyiwa; Blogger, Chinyere Abang and Bolatito Bez-Idakulah. According to Cadbury, the campaign started out as a discussion within the team. "We wanted to make our consumers know we 'GET' them and understand their life experiences and so we tapped into something that mattered to them- Motherhood. Bournvita celebrates women, motherhood and all that comes with it."

Like FirstBank and Access Bank, organisations as MasterCard In Sub-Saharan Africa, Mastercard, are championing women empowerment through the promotion of women-led businesses equal pay and gender equality. By leveraging its network, partnerships and technology, MasterCard powers an inclusive, digital economy that benefits everyone, everywhere by making transactions safe, simple, smart, and accessible with connections across more than 210 countries. Last year, for instance, in a continuation of its support to small businesses and women entrepreneurs, the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth awarded a grant to The Omaness Skinfood Company in Nigeria.

Like MasterCard, Sterling Alternative Finance has an MSME Finance initiative in line with which in line with its commitment to empowering the Nigerian woman, awarded a cash prize of N500,000.00 and access to a single digit facility to one woman-owned business and extended the access to a single digit facility to nine additional women-owned businesses in special celebration and commemoration of this year's International Women's Day (IWD). In all, ten lucky women-owned businesses were impacted with N500,000.00 cash.

In ensuring a better world, others are promoting workplace diversity aimed at creating an inclusive environment that accepts each individual's differences, embrace their strengths and provide equal opportunities for all employees irrespective of their gender to achieve their full potential. FrieslandCampina WAMCO is one such company. According to it, "We have an agenda that helps us build an organisation and culture that is attractive and compelling for talents. Every year, we come up with objectives that help to improve gender diversity particularly in leadership positions across our business using intentional initiatives," the company disclosed. Nigeria's two foremost creative powerhouses, Noah's Ark and X3m Ideas also exemplify this. Today, Amazons like Nike Odutola who heads X3m Ideas operations in Southern Africa and Judith Ezeali who is a Group Head at Noah's Ark, are some women pulling their weight in the creative industry from these two agencies.

This edition of Brand Communicator therefore, beams the spotlight on all of these leading brands and agencies in Nigeria that are taking the International Women's Day beyond just creating messages or sloganeering, to empowering women, creating awareness and giving them platform to break the glass ceiling in their professional careers. Kindly flip the through the pages to read about these brands and agencies arranged alphabetically.

"The opportunity presented by women empowerment is exactly why there has been an upsurge in the number of companies investing in it. Of course, 'women empowerment' is a broad topic and varies greatly from culture to culture and from organisation to organisation."



EMPOWERING WOMEN BEYOND BOUNDARIES



By Jeremiah Agada

Despite global efforts, gender inequality is an issue that persists. This is because, certain institutional, religious and cultural factors continue to play a negative role in the growth and progress of women and girls. This has led to limited opportunities for women and girls to build the skills and confidence needed to reach their full potential, or to influence decisions that affect their lives. This is despite the unarguable fact that women play an important role in the economic growth and development of any nation.

What is worse? Women are more susceptible to economic slowdowns which not only disproportionately affect them but triggers gender equality topics to slip down governmental and corporate agendas. Women represent 39% of the global workforce but accounted for 54% of job losses as of May 2020. Furthermore, women are over-represented in sectors which are most heavily hit by the pandemic, such as hospitality or the food services industries, further exacerbating inequalities. These inequalities also disproportionately affect certain groups of women, depending on the intersections of gender with race, ethnicity, religion, class, ability, sexuality and other identity markers.

Empowering women and girls and achieving gender equality, however, are central to creating inclusive, open and prosperous societies. Gender equality can make important contributions to poverty eradication and inclusive growth. Fortunately, there have been considerable progress in recent years in this direction as certain organisations like First Bank of Nigeria Limited are supporting and investing in women as well as promoting equality, inclusion and fairness in wages, provision of opportunities, etc. They have spent years putting gender inclusion at the forefront of their missions.

In commemoration of the International Women's Day, held annually on March 8, Brand Communicator has compiled a list of

structured way along three key areas. These are: Education, Health & Welfare; Financial Inclusion; Responsible Lending & Procurement.

Inclusivity ties in with the bank's people empowerment goal which includes improving the lives of stakeholders through the Bank's agenda of nation building by empowering women and girls to access the opportunities and societal benefits to grow and advance societal and economic benefits. Through the years, the Bank has proven its commitment to promoting diversity, inclusion through its products, services and programmes. The bank has also demonstrated its abhorrence for every form of discrimination such as religious intolerance, gender inequality and disabilities.

Today, that FirstBank occupies a vanguard position among organisations championing women empowerment and inclusion in Africa is due to its policy and demonstrated commitment to promoting gender equality. That is why the bank prides itself as being an equal opportunity employer that has integrated diversity and inclusion policies and awareness into its practices. Its efforts at engendering diversity in the workplace include having in place a diversity policy that encourages inclusion. The Group's diversity and inclusion objective is to be a recognised industry leader in workforce diversity and leverage diversity for the growth of the Group and the success of the customers and communities it serves.

This has led the bank to invest in its women as well as champion women empowerment programmes beyond its internal stakeholders. The business case for investing in women is particularly strong when companies focus on their own value chains, from executives to suppliers to distributors to retailers and beyond. Impressively, the Bank has a male: female ratio of 61:39 across the workforce, cutting across all cadres. It comes as no coincidence that the Bank's Leadership is led by the vivacious Ibukun Awosika as Board Chairman and boasts strong Amazons as

Olusola Owuro and Dr. (Mrs.) Ijeoma Jidenna as Independent Non-Executive Directors and Oluwande Muoyo as Non-Executive Director. The Bank also boast Amazons at top positions like Bashirat Odunewu, Group Executive, Energy and Infrastructure; Folake Ani-Mumuney, Group Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications; Rosie Ebe-Arthur, Group Head, Human Capital Management & Development among others.

This is fitting, considering that this year's International Women's Day 2021 theme is "Women in leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World." The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also aligned with the priority theme of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls", and the flagship Generation Equality campaign, which calls for women's right to decision-making in all areas of life, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, whilst striving to end all forms of violence against women and girls, and promoting health-care services that respond to their needs.

FirstBank Women Online Platforms

First Bank of Nigeria Limited created First Women Network and FirstGem Online Community as online platforms that provide information on a wide range of issues affecting women from self-discovery lifestyle, politics, business ideas, skills acquisition, career development etc. They feature blogs and posts videos of high-profile women of influence providing mentorship nuggets and providing answers to a variety of life, career and business/social issues as guides for women. As at date, thousands of women have subscribed and liked the platforms with a lot more

women showing interest on the value offerings of the platform. Both platforms are elucidated below:

FirstBank Women Network

FirstBank Women Network is one of the initiatives created by FirstBank aimed at addressing the gender gap at the senior levels of the bank and tap the opportunities presented by enabling its women contribute even more if given the necessary strategic support and an intentionally enabling environment. This includes providing a platform that enables women to become more engaged in their workplace, set and achieve goals, have greater influence in their lives and achieve more of their potential.

The initiative was launched with the International Women's Day (IWD) celebration that held on the 8th of March 2018 with the theme #PressforProgress. The structure put in place to support this is the First Women Network was launched in March 2019. The network has a steering committee led by the CEO who is responsible and accountable for implementation of the Women Economic Empowerment agenda. The Steering Committee is chaired by Bashirat Odunewu, Group Executive, Energy & Infrastructure, Corporate Banking.

Explaining what inspired the launch of the initiative at its inception, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, the Chief Executive Officer of the financial institution, had said, "FirstBank recognises the fact that gender parity is an essential factor for influencing the advancement of institutions, economies and societies hence its commitment to promoting same and equipping women for senior and executive management positions.

"We launched this Network on the International Women's Day. This was so because the activities of the network are at par with the essence of the International Women's Day celebration. In different regions around the world, the focus of the celebration includes equality, total respect, appreciation and love towards women for their achievements and invaluable contributions to human growth and development."

On the same note, Mrs. Bashirat Odunewu, Group Executive, Energy & Infrastructure, Corporate Banking and Ms. Rosie Ebe-Arthur, Group Head, Human Capital Management Development said "the FirstBank Women Network was created to empower ourselves to be able to achieve more."

The FirstBank Women Network is made up of 6 pillars namely which include Career management; program, events and networking opportunities; personal branding; mentoring, coaching & sponsorship; support & welfare; and financial planning & empowerment.

The Career Management which is part of the pillars of FirstBank Women Network was created to influence and develop women; through several technical and personal development programs and equip and encourage women to continue their pursuit of a career in core banking.

Also, the network is responsible for creating intentional plans for exposing more women to networking opportunities through seminars, conferences, and events which will build their confidence to take on higher responsibilities and seeking opportunities for public speaking. The network is equally responsible for impression management, improving communication and presentation skills to ensure women are well equipped to compete internally and externally in addition to epitomising the FirstBank Woman.

The network offers opportunities for mentoring, coaching and sponsorship opportunities; aligning with existing mentoring programs, for increased women specific focus and intentional growth and advancement. To ensure welfare of women and support system, it offers counselling, support and welfare where necessary; to provide the emotional support needed to advance and attain leadership positions. To ensure financial security for women, it creates financial education programmes targeted to help women have the right mindset towards achieving financial independence and security in retirement.

FirstGem Online Community

Much like the FirstBank Women Network, FirstBank created the FirstGem Online Community with the aim to increase its engagement and reach a wider audience. The community is an online repository for the bank's FirstGem product. It was created and designed to provide a virtual online community where like-minded women irrespective of where they are in Nigeria and abroad, gather to connect, grow and share knowledge on everything about lifestyle, parenting, career development, entrepreneurship, health, work and family. Financial empowerment and wealth creation ideas are shared to encourage women to play their part in providing financial support for their families.

The all-female online community <https://firstgem.com.ng/community> offers mentoring, support and capacity building opportunities for all to create a new generation of financially literate women. The portal provides varied contents ranging from Blog stories to Vlogs, Newsletters, Chat rooms which are built on 6 pillars – Health, Wealth and Finance, Food and Recipes, Events, Entrepreneurship, Lifestyle and Beauty. The FirstGem online community presently has over 61,634 members drawn from all walks of life sharing ideas, insights and experiences.

According to Chuma Ezirim, Group Executive, e-Business & Retail Products, First Bank of Nigeria Limited, FirstGem is suited for the Nigerian woman. "We are using this online



Dr. Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan (FCA), MD/CEO, First Bank

community as the ideal opportunity to position the Bank's gender initiatives to meet the required needs on a wide range of issues affecting women from lifestyle, skills acquisition, finances, wealth acquisition and management, business support, etc."

As at two years ago, the FirstGem Community membership stood at 61,293. Today the number has grown significantly. Essentially, these women are drawn from all walks of life sharing ideas, insights and experiences from one another on the platform. The community currently has an average page visit of 8,400 and remains a buzzing nest for tips on Lifestyle and Beauty, Wealth and Finance, Health, Events, Food and Recipes, Career and Motivation.

Female/Women-Centric Products

Taking the special needs of women into cognizance, the bank has also been at the forefront of creating female-centric products that meet women at the very point of their needs. One of these foremost products is the FirstGem.

FirstGem is a retail bespoke product with both variants of savings and current account designed for women of all classes and demography. It is a product that is ideal for all women aged 18 years and above, whether working professionals or as entrepreneurs. Launched five years ago, the programme also allows Nigeria women to get business loans for investment purposes. A woman with business ideas and in need of financial support does not need to look further. The initiative is meant to help women with ideas turn their ideas into a reality.

According to FirstBank, the product was birthed in recognition of the importance of women in driving socio-economic growth, and the product is driven at the very top level by the Chairman of the bank, Mrs. Ibukun Awosika. As part of

"Since the launch of FirstGem in October 2016, a series of female empowerment initiatives, trainings and seminars have been organized across the country and in the United Kingdom to harness and financially mobilize the growing percentage of women in the country whilst empowering them through the nuggets of financial independence."

benefits for women on the product among other benefits are access to select leadership programs/workshops/training on women empowerment; access to business development advisory services for accessing CBN/BOI intervention funds at single digit interest rates as well as being exposed to business skills on wealth management and investment plans.

Since the launch of FirstGem, growth in product performance is at a geometric rate with an average of 2,190 new accounts monthly and an annual average savings impact of over N205million. Demographically, FirstGem, being a product suite that cuts across women of all generations irrespective of age, location and social status, is to encourage its customers to save and invest more. In order to encourage more women participation, awards were given during the 2nd-anniversary celebration to the consistent saver and highest saver.

The financial impact of FirstGem on women has been so massive. It has provided opportunities for women to create a savings plan and culture that guarantees them financial freedom and safety for the future; enabling them to save towards specific targets. It has also enabled them to create wealth for themselves and their families from various investment platforms offered through the product – a variety of trust products, short-term financial derivatives, money market funds, etc. FirstGem has also created an avenue for women to have access to soft loans to support their aspirations and economic development in their different fields of endeavour. Simultaneously, it has offered opportunities for women and girls to have access to financial tools and resources they require to achieve security and prosperity. It has enhanced women's lifestyle needs by allowing FirstGem account holders to enjoy tremendous discounts from retail stores and lifestyle improvement outfits in strategic partnership with FirstBank.

Since the launch of FirstGem in October 2016, a series of female empowerment initiatives, trainings and seminars have been organized across the country and in the United Kingdom to harness and financially mobilize the growing percentage of women in the country whilst empowering them through the nuggets of financial independence. An exciting feature of the platform is that a member gets to interact with celebrity champions who share informative and enlightening content in their various groups. The groups are food and recipes, career and motivation, wealth and finance, health, fashion and beauty.

Another bespoke product for women by FirstBank is the First Trader Solution, a short-term overdraft facility offered to women traders pre-approved market locations who deal in fast moving consumer goods with a maximum facility limit of N5million. It comes in two variants; the Main FTS (180-day variant) and the Exceptional FTS (90-day variant).

FirstEdu Loan is another bespoke product for women. It is a short-term loan for School Proprietresses to meet urgent school needs such as payment of staff salaries, classroom renovations etc. The bank is further in a strategic partnership with sister organization, FBNQuest within the FBNHoldings Group to offer Financial Advisory Services on Estate Planning.

Beyond Products & Platforms

Beyond the creation of a bouquet of female-centric products and the creation of online platforms for women, FirstBank also has other initiatives aimed at promoting gender inclusion and women empowerment. One of such initiative is the bank's partnership with the Women in Successful Career (WISCAR) platform. The partnership with WISCAR is focused on empowering and developing professional women to contribute to development and growth in Africa. The bank organizes a career coaching session with WISCAR for members of the FWN Working Groups.

Another initiative is the SPARK 125 Widows: With this initiative, the Bank empowered 125 widows-as identified by the International Women Society (IWS) vis-à-vis their initiative for widows – Widows Trust Fund - with funding to grow their micro-medium scale businesses. This is as part of the activities that marked the 2019 Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Week (CR&S) However, the desire of the Bank is to scale up the empowerment to 500 widows before the end of that year.

The Bank created an avenue for women to have access to soft loans at a single-digit interest rates to support their aspirations and economic development in different fields of endeavor through partnership with Bank of Industry (BOI) and through this collaboration had secured a N9Billion funding support for women-owned businesses without any form of collaterization required as at December 2019.

Women-Led Businesses Supported by FirstBank

Today, many businesses owned and operated by women have become beneficiaries from different platforms and initiatives by FirstBank as well as some of the products highlighted above. Below are just a few of these businesses:

Crown Jibson Nigeria LTD., owned by Alhaja Baruwa Ajibola is a beneficiary of the Bank's Deposit, Remittances/Payments and credit facilities, having received financial support leading to growth in customer business and profitability.

In her testimonial, she said, "First Trader Solution has contributed immensely to the growth and profitably of Crown Jibson Nigeria LTD. As a distributor of a major brand of Insecticide in Oke Arin market amongst other commodities, meeting our suppliers' expectation and the demands of our



numerous customers have been made possible with the financial support of FirstBank over the years.”

Sagab College, owned by Dr. Mrs. Beauty Obodo through the FirstBank Edu Loan support was able to undertake structural development of her school and bridge financial needs especially in terms of pre-resumption purchases and preparations resulting in a more befitting ambience etc.

In fact, Obodo said that the FirstEdu Loan offered the school termly, helps immensely in easing the financial pressure and stress experienced by the school and the school owner whenever school is about to resume. “It has helped the school in solving the problem of no ready handy fund for immediate use before the fees starts coming in. Most times, when fees come in, especially in January, it is always in trickles as most parents often find it difficult to raise enough money at this period of the year.

“The FirstEdu Loan comes in at this period very handy to run the school till the school becomes buoyant again. With the assurance that FirstEdu Loan would come in, the school is able with confidence to request for items like uniforms, additional furniture, painting and beautification of the compound etc. before the resumption for the first term in September. FirstEdu Loan has benefited the organization immensely and we do appreciate the bank for her consistency. The school has been enjoying FirstEdu Loan for more than 10 years now,” she added.

Mabos-Ayok Investment Company Ltd, an indigenous company involved in the Sales and Distribution of Cement and one of the major Key distributors of Lafarge Africa Plc. is another female-led business that has benefitted from one of the many female-centric products available. Mrs. Ipadeola Bernice Ayoka who is the Prime Mover of the company started her banking relationship with FirstBank in early 2000 where she was granted a Cement Distributorship Finance Facility of N100 Million naira. This assisted her in expanding and growing her business and made Lafarge expand her coverage to include some locations in Lagos, Ogun and Ibadan axis.

The support from FirstBank started with N100 million and gradually increased to the present value of N250 Million Overdraft Line. She later became one of the distributors for Lafarge where she covers only a small area based on her capacity. Speaking on her relationship with FirstBank, she said, “FirstBank has always been there for me since inception.

“I was nobody but today FirstBank has assisted me to become someone that can be reckoned with in the society despite my low level of Education. My children are well educated now and some of them are presently abroad, doing well in their various fields. With the support of FirstBank, I won an award for the best Key Distributor for Lafarge Africa Six times. The turnover of my business has grown from a million to billions. I am indeed very grateful to FirstBank. Hundred percent of my loyalty goes to them,” she enthused.

Yet another business that has benefitted from FirstBank is Vicmond Ade Nigeria Enterprises Limited Ltd, an indigenous Company involved in the business of wholesale/distribution of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. The Firm is managed by High Chief Mrs. Oluwole Victoria Modupe who also doubles as the Chairman. The Firm, in partnership with FirstBank, has grown into a major Distributor with Guinness Plc and Nigerian Breweries Plc. The turnover of the Firm is in excess of N1 Billion per annum. The Firm has its presence at Ikeja, Shomolu and Iddo in Lagos; and Ore in Ondo State. The Firm has a large number of sub-distributors, Vehicle Sales Managers and over 30 employees.

The company enjoys a Key Distributorship Facility of N60M and a Bank Guarantee of N220M with FirstBank. The support from FirstBank started with a N40M facility and gradually increased to its present values in tandem with the growth of the Firm. The Firm’s sales coverage was recently expanded by Guinness to include areas like Surulere, Ojuelegba and Iddo. This was made possible by the Bank Guarantee of 220M issued by FirstBank on behalf of the customer to Guinness Nigeria Plc.

According to Mrs.Oluwole, FirstBank has always been a backbone over the years. “FirstBank has always been helping me with the expansion of my business. The most recent was the

expansion of my sales coverage area with Guinness Plc. It was a tough one because the expansion of sales area also came with the reduction of the number of major key distributors of the Guinness Plc from over 84 to 24.

“The game changer was the provision of Bank Guarantee which is commensurate with the new coverage area earmarked by Guinness Plc. By the Grace of God and against all odds, FirstBank was able to provide the Bank Guarantee required by my Firm to take possession of one of the new coverage areas. The new coverage area starts from Palmgroove and extends all the way to Iddo (inclusive of Ojuelegba and Surulere). This landmark achievement made me to concentrate 100% of my Business with FirstBank,” she revealed.

Chief Mrs. O. Yomi-Sholoye one woman that has benefitted from FirstBank’s financial product targeted at women. A woman who dares traverse in the sphere of men like a colossus, Yomi-Sholoye pilots the affairs of A & A Global Leasing Services Limited, a prominent Haulage, Transportation and Fleet Management Services company. FirstBank availed her an asset finance of N631.125M and N2.091B to boost her business.

The loan availed her, helped expand her business, increase the number of her fleet and give her company the ability to execute their transport agreement with multinational companies. Yomi-Sholoye’s story is no different from that of Mrs. Okoli Onye ijema Emmanuella’s. Okoli who runs Vicroyem Merchandise Limited got access to a N69,445,300.00 facility which has led to increased business volume and profitability for her.

For Mrs. Maria Amahaotu, the Proprietress of Ladybird Nursery and Primary School, life couldn’t have been much better following the growth and expansion of her school. This is after she got access to a FirstEdu loan in the tune of N92.3m!

Fashion entrepreneur and businesswoman, Mrs. Adetokunbo Kupoluyi got a life changing opportunity to upgrade her business and get better access to market when she emerged winner of the N1m grant of the AYE reality show (4th edition) sponsored by FirstBank. The life of her business, Purple Pebbles Enterprise, never remained the same afterwards.

Like Kupoluyi, Mrs. Gbemisola Basirat Okunola’s life also underwent a positive change as she was one of the five beneficiaries that were featured on the AYE show (4TH edition). Her business enjoyed exposure and she has benefited from various loan products from the bank. She has also benefited from our offerings on SMEConnect- Legal services, accounting services and productivity tools. Unlike Kupoluyi, Okunola holds sway in the travels and tours industry

For many of these initiatives, FirstBank has been awarded and recognised by different platforms for its contribution to gender inclusion, women empowerment and championing the



Jimi Ogbogbine, Head August Consulting speaking on the ‘Current State of the Global Economy & How it Impacts on Business Decisions’ at the FirstGem Annual Conference.

growth of female-led businesses. Among others, the bank is the winner of the Women Empowerment Category of the CBN led Sustainable Banking Awards at the Bankers Committee in 2019.

First Bank of Nigeria Limited (FirstBank) is the premier Bank in West Africa and the leading financial inclusion services provider in Nigeria for over 127 years. With over 750 business locations and over 86,000 Banking Agents spread across 99% of the 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria, FirstBank provides a comprehensive range of retail and corporate financial services to serve its over 15 million customers. The Bank has international presence through its subsidiaries, FBN Bank (UK) Limited in London and Paris, FBN Bank in the Republic of Congo, Ghana, The Gambia, Guinea, Sierra-Leone and Senegal, as well as a Representative Office in Beijing.

The Bank has been nimble at promoting digital payment in the country and has issued over 11 million cards, the first bank to achieve such milestone in the country. FirstBank’s cashless transaction drive extends to having more than 9million people on its USSD Quick Banking service through the nationally renowned *894# Banking code and over 4 million people on FirstMobile platform.

Since its establishment in 1894, FirstBank has consistently built relationships with customers focusing on the fundamentals of good corporate governance, strong liquidity, optimised risk management and leadership. Over the years, the Bank has led the financing of private investment in infrastructure development in the Nigerian economy by playing key roles in the Federal Government’s privatisation and commercialisation schemes. With its global reach, FirstBank provides prospective investors wishing to explore the vast business opportunities that are available in Nigeria, an internationally competitive world-class brand and a credible financial partner.

FirstBank has been named “Most Valuable Bank Brand in Nigeria” six times in a row (2011 – 2016) by the globally renowned “The Banker Magazine” of the Financial Times Group; “Best Retail Bank in Nigeria” for seven consecutive years (2011 – 2017) by the Asian Banker International Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards and “Best Bank in Nigeria” by Global Finance for 15 years.

Its brand purpose is to always put customers, partners and stakeholders at the heart of its business, even as it standardises customer experience and excellence in financial solutions across sub-Saharan Africa, in consonance with its brand vision “To be the partner of first choice in building your future”. The bank’s brand promise is to always deliver the ultimate “gold standard” of value and excellence. This commitment is anchored on its inherent values of passion, partnership and people, to position “You First” in every respect.



“I challenge you to be liberated to learn the things you do not know, the trends within your market to define where you belong and own your space” - Ibukun Awosika, Chairman Board of Directors, FirstBank at the FirstGem Annual Conference.

FirstBank's continual exploits locally, continentally and globally is not unconnected to the hardworking women who swell its ranks across board, managerial and executive functions. Kindly flip through the following pages to meet these women, the "Amazing Amazons" that keep the wheels of the behemoth called FirstBank, turning.

Female Board Of Directors, FBNHoldings



Debola Osibogun

'Debola Osibogun was appointed to the Board of FBN Holdings Plc in 2015. She is a financial services expert with over 33 years' working experience across multiple levels, ranging from real estate financing and trusteeship to retail savings and loans. She earned an MSc in Banking and Finance and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the

prestigious University of Ibadan.

'Debola has considerable Board experience at Executive and Non-Executive levels. She was appointed to the Board of Odu'a Investment Company Ltd. as an Independent Non-Executive Director in 2020. She is currently the Managing Director of Davidfinn Global Concept Ltd and President of the Consumer Awareness and Financial Enlightenment Initiative (CAFEi), a not-for-profit organisation. Before retirement, 'Debola served as the Managing Director of Coop Savings and Loans Ltd and Skye Trustees Ltd. She also served as a Non-Executive Director of FBN Mortgages Ltd and was the National President of the Mortgage Banking Association of Nigeria.

She is a Fellow and Past President of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, the Nigerian Institute of Management, the Association of Enterprise Risk Management Professionals and the Institute of Directors.

As an astute researcher and writer, 'Debola has published several articles and papers on primary mortgage institutions, the creation of mortgages and financial literacy. At the national level, she served as a member of the Presidential Committee on Urban Development and Housing and the Presidential Committee on Mortgage Finance, and an Executive Member of the Nigerian Real Estate Developers Association.

She has attended several executive programmes at prestigious local and international institutions, including INSEAD, Kellogg School of Management, London Business School and Euromoney Learning. 'Debola is married with children and grandchildren and enjoys playing basketball, polo and golf.



Cecilia Akintomide

Independent Non-Executive Director

Cecilia Akintomide, OON, joined the Board of FBN Holdings Plc in 2016 as an Independent Non-Executive Director. She is also an Independent Non-Executive Director on the Board of Ondo State Development and Investment Promotion Agency (ONDIPA), a state government

agency focused on promoting development and investments as well as CcHUB Growth Capital, Nigeria's first social innovation fund supporting high-potential early-stage businesses. She is also a member of the Board of Regents of Covenant University and a member of the Institute of Directors, Nigeria. She is a seasoned executive with expertise in Development Finance, Corporate

Governance, Law, and General Management.

Cecilia was Vice President Secretary-General of the African Development Bank (AfDB) where she provided leadership for the dynamic relationship of the AfDB and its then 80 member states, and served as Secretary to the Boards of Directors and the Ministerial Boards of Governors. She was a member of the Presidential Council, as well as the Operations and the Senior Management Coordination Committees. She was also Vice Chairperson of the Operations Crisis Management Committee and Chairperson of the Annual Meetings Committee and the Committees for the Elections of the President and Executive Directors. Cecilia also served as the Head of Private and Public Sector Projects and Policy in the General Counsel & Legal Department of the AfDB, working on the legal aspects of projects, programmes and development policies.

Prior to the AfDB, Cecilia practiced law in Lagos, Washington D.C., and New York, at the law firms of O. Thomas & Co and Weil, Gotshal & Manges, with a focus on Business Reorganisations, Corporate and Commercial Law. Cecilia holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Ife (now OAU); Master of Laws from the University of Miami Law School; Master of Laws from the University of Pennsylvania Law School; and an Executive MBA from TRIUM (a combined programme by LSE, NYU and HEC). She was also admitted to the Nigerian Bar and the New York State.

Bar. Cecilia is an ardent champion of girls and women's economic empowerment. She is passionate about corporate governance, the accelerated and sustainable development of African countries, and innovation and entrepreneurship. She is a member of Women in Management, Business & Public Service (WIMBIZ) and serves on the WIMBoard Committee and the WIMBIZ Endowment Fund Committee. She mentors and is a deacon and a member of her church choir. She enjoys swimming which resulted in receiving the gold and bronze medals in the [event] competition. She was accorded the National Award of the Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON) by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in recognition of her contribution to sustainable development. In addition, in 2019, Cecilia received the African Business Law Icon of the Year Award.

Female Board of Director, FirstBank



Ibukun Awosika

*Chairman, Appointed Non-Executive Director 28 October 2010
Appointed Chairman 1 January 2016*

Ibukun Awosika is the Chairman, First Bank of Nigeria Limited. She is also the founder and CEO of The Chair Centre Group- an organisation involved in manufacturing, retail and bank-way security systems services.

Ibukun chairs a number of corporate and not-for-profit boards amongst which are: d.light Design Inc., Convention on Business Integrity (CBI), Digital Jewel Limited, House of Tara International and Afterschool Graduate Development Centre (AGDC)-a facility which she promotes to help address youth employability and enterprise issues in Nigeria. She sits on the boards of Cadbury Nigeria PLC, Imperial Gate School and Peniel Apartments Limited. She was Chairman, GEMS Africa Limited; EMS Africa Limited, FBN Life Assurance Limited, FBN Capital Limited and Kakawa Discount House Limited. She also served on the board of the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA).

Ibukun is a graduate of Chemistry from University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Nigeria; an alumna of the Chief Executive Programme of Lagos Business School; the Global Executive MBA of IESE Business School, Barcelona-Spain; the Global CEO Programme of Wharton, IESE and China European International Business School (CEIBS).

With high interest in social issues, especially women, Ibukun is a Co-Founder and past Chairperson of Women in Business, Management and Public Service (WIMBIZ). She is the President of International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge Foundation (IWEC). An ordained Pastor and Founder of the Christian Missionary Fund, Ibukun, through this faith-based organisation, works with hundreds of missionaries across Nigeria to change lives with the provision of medical, educational and other supplies.

As a fellow of the African Leadership Initiative, Aspen Global Leadership Network, Institute of Directors and Society for Corporate Governance Nigeria, Ibukun, through her projects, aspires to use her opportunities in life to further the greatness of her dear country by raising entrepreneurs to create

jobs for the large unemployed youthful population. She is a member of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), served on the National Job Creation Committee (NJCC), and sits on the International Advisory Board of IESE Business School, Barcelona-Spain and the Governing Council of Pan-Atlantic University.

Ibukun is a multiple award-winning entrepreneur and the 2020 recipient of the Forbes Woman Africa Chairperson Award. She was also the first Nigerian recipient of the prestigious International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWEC) Award as a nominee of the US Department of State in 2008.



Olusola Oworu

Independent Non-Executive Director

Olusola Oworu is an Independent Non-Executive Director. She joined the Board of FirstBank in 2016. Prior joining the bank, she served as Commissioner for Commerce and Industry in Lagos State from 2011 to 2015 and before then, as a Special Adviser on Commerce & Industry to the former

Governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Fashola SAN, from 2007 to 2011.

An Accounting graduate, Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria and an Associate of Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIMBIZ), she has had an enviable career in consulting and banking spanning over 22 years.

She began her career at Coopers and Lybrand (now PricewaterhouseCoopers) in 1982 and subsequently in 1986, joined NAL Merchant Bank (now Sterling Bank Plc). She later joined Citibank Nigeria, where she rose through the ranks to the level of Vice President, with a strong flair for credit risk management and marketing. She brings her banking and financial services, as well as public sector experience to impact her Board contributions. She has had an enviable career in consulting, banking and public service spanning over 30 years.



Dr Ijeoma Jidenma

Independent Non-Executive Director

Dr Ijeoma Jidenma is an accomplished Management Consultant and Professional. Her areas of specialisation within her over 30 years' post-graduation career span across Human Resources Management, Organisational Development Psychometrics, Learning and Development,

Corporate Governance and Leadership. She is the Chairman of the Board, Governance Committee of First Bank of Nigeria Limited.

Dr Jidenma is also a Director and the First Vice-President of the Institute of Directors, the Chairman of its Finance and General-Purpose Committee, and a member of the Nomination and Governance Committee. She also serves as a Director of the Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Governing Council of the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce. Ijeoma had successfully served as a Director on the Board of First Pension Custodian from 2011 to 2014.

Her executive management involvement is contemporary. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Leading-Edge Consulting, a leading Human Resources and Organisational Development firm, which she founded about 20 years ago. She also serves as the Managing Partner of IRC Nigeria, a member firm of the IRC global Executive Search Partnership. In furtherance of these roles, as well as in her non-executive roles, she has attended several Executive Development Programmes and Board Level programmes in some of the world's centres of excellence like the Lagos Business School, IESE Business School, Harvard Business School, Cranfield School of Management and Kellogg School of Management.

Earlier on in her career, Ijeoma had worked in other private and public organisations such as the Industrial Training Fund, PwC and Merchant Bank of Africa where she rose through the ranks to the Executive Management level. She served as the Head of Human Resources (including local and offshore training) and as the Head of Strategic Planning for the Bank. She was appointed Senior Lecturer at the ESUT Business School and taught Organisational Behaviour and Strategic Human



Resources Management to MBA students on a part-time basis.

Ijeoma has won several awards such as the Deloitte International Women Award (2013), the Centre for Values in Leadership Role Model Award (2013), the Most Respected HR Personality in Africa Award (2015) and the Global Female Leadership Impact Award (2018). She is an Honorary Senior Member (HCIB) of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN).

She holds a PhD in Psychology with specialisation in Psychometrics from the University of Lagos. She is an IFC Certified Board Assessor. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Directors, Nigerian Institute of Management, Chartered Institute of Personnel Management and Institute of Management Consultants, Nigeria.

A past President of Soroptimist International of Surulere and a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International, she is the Founder and Executive Secretary of Goddy Jidenma Foundation.



Oluwande Muoyo
Non-Executive Director
Appointed 15 April 2020

Oluwande Muoyo was appointed to the Board of First Bank of Nigeria Limited in 2020. She brings to the Board well over three decades of post-professional qualification experience in the private and public sectors, with key strengths in policy formulation, relationship management and business development. She is a Chartered Accountant and banker, and a former Honourable Commissioner for Budget and Planning in Ogun State.

Prior to being appointed an Honourable Commissioner, Oluwande worked with Stanbic IBTC Bank for over 22 years in various departments of the bank, which included Financial Control, Treasury and Financial Services, Trade Finance and Corporate Banking. She holds a BSc degree in Accounting from the University of Lagos. She started her professional career with the international firm Price Waterhouse (now PricewaterhouseCoopers). A Fellow of both the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria and the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, Oluwande has over the years acquired competencies and skills in public financial management, banking, budgeting, planning, auditing, and taxation.

Her past directorships include the Governing Board of the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics and FBN Holdings Plc. Oluwande has attended many training programmes including Strategic Marketing Management at Harvard Business School, Advanced Strategy at INSEAD and the Advanced Management Programme at the Lagos Business School.

Female Board of Director, FBNQuest



Dr. Omobola Johnson

Omobola Johnson is a Non-Executive Director for FBNQuest Merchant Bank. She is Nigeria's former Honourable Minister of Communication Technology. She joined Accenture, an international management consulting firm in 1985 and served for 25 years – five of these as Country Managing Director.

Omobola has over 25 years consulting experience and has worked with a cross-section of companies in a variety of industries, successfully transforming them into more competitive and dynamic organisations.

Omobola is also the founding Chairperson and member of

Board of Trustees of Women in Management and Business (WIMBIZ) a non-governmental organisation that seeks to improve the success rate of female entrepreneurs and increase the proportion of women in senior positions in corporate organisations. She is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Africa, and UNDP's closed high-level Broadband Commission Working Group on Gender whose main objective is to promote the empowerment and digital inclusion of women.

She is also an appointed member of the International Telecommunication Union's m-Powering Development Advisory Board charged with extending the benefits of mobile technology to all strata of society, in order to build a truly inclusive information society, with special focus on remote rural and underserved areas.

She has a B.Sc., Electrical and Electronic Engineering (University of Manchester), M.Sc., Digital Electronics (King's College, London) and a PhD. Business Administration (School of Management, Cranfield University).



Oyinkansade Adewale

Oyinkansade Adewale is a Non-Executive/Independent Director of FBNQuest Merchant Bank. She began her banking career with Citibank, where she rose to the position of Executive Director and CFO for West Africa. She went on to co-found SIAO, a leading indigenous accounting firm, and later became the pioneer

Managing Director/Chief Operating Officer for Renaissance Capital in Nigeria.

She also held other senior management roles including Central Bank of Nigeria appointed Executive Director/CFO at Oceanic Bank and Group Head of MIS at Ecobank Transnational Incorporated. She joined Union Bank Plc in 2012 where she was an Executive Director/Chief Finance Director, retiring in September, 2018.

She has a B.A French (University of Ibadan), Fellow, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Fellow, Association of Chartered Accountants.

Female Board of Director, FBNInsurance Brokers



Folake Ani-Mumuney

The infectiously amiable Folake Ani-Mumuney, a consummate professional, leads the Marketing and Corporate Communications function globally for the FirstBank Group, with oversight for same function for FBN Holdings Plc and all its subsidiaries spanning Asset Management, Investment Banking, Private Equity, Insurance and Pension Fund

Custodian services.

Folake currently serves as the Chairman Board of Directors of FBN Insurance Brokers, Vice Chairman Junior Achievement Nigeria and sits on the Executive Council of the World Federation of Advertisers headquartered in Brussels.

With a career spanning over 25 years across diverse sectors such as banking, aviation, manufacturing, oil & gas, amongst others, Folake has held varied roles leading strategy and corporate planning, business analysis and process re-engineering, innovation, marketing and communications.

Managing global portfolios, she has held responsibility for Europe & Africa region, Asia Pacific, Middle East and the United Kingdom at various points in her accomplished career.

Folake started her career with British Airways in the UK where she contributed to driving strategy and business solutions across the CASAMEA region. Folake then served based in Johannesburg as Marketing Services Manager Africa from where she moved back to the UK taking on the role of Manager Brands, Policies and Communication responsible for the Europe and Africa region.

With a burning passion for development of the Africa Continent, Folake moved to Nigeria to take on the pioneer role of Chief Marketing & Corporate Communications Officer for the Dangote Group, an executive role that saw her introduce many innovations to the largest diversified conglomerate in Africa.

From there, Folake joined the FirstBank Group, where she serves as the Chief Image Maker, with oversight responsibility for all operating companies under the FBNHoldings banner globally. In addition, she is leading the turnaround of one of the strategic subsidiaries, FBN Insurance Brokers as the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

A past President of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Folake serves on many boards and is particularly proud to contribute on not-for-profit boards such as Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN) where she is currently the Vice

Chairman. With a keen interest in mentorship, diversity and inclusion, Folake is an Advisory Board Member of WISCAR (Women in Successful Careers) and served on the WIMBoard Advocacy committee of WIMBIZ.

An Honorary Member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, Folake is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing UK, a Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing Nigeria and a member of the Institute of Directors Nigeria. An alumna of the prestigious Harvard Business School, Folake holds a first degree in Philosophy from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, a second degree in Law from the University of Buckingham, England and a Diploma in Business Computing Systems Analysis and Design.

Female members of Management Committee (MANCO), FirstBank



Bashirat Odunewu

Bashirat Odunewu is a Banking and financial expert with over 29 years' experience. She is currently the Group Executive, Corporate Banking (Energy & Infrastructure) for First Bank. Prior to this, she was the Line Executive for the International Banking Group and Institutional Banking at First Bank of Nigeria Ltd.

Bashirat is actively involved in providing mentorship and is a leading voice in the efforts to ensure the Bank continues its move towards gender balance. She Chairs the First Women Network, and her charitable personality has seen her get actively involved in the Bank's SPARK Initiative which encourages employees to participate in worthy charitable causes.

She holds a first degree in Chemistry from the University of Manchester and a master's in Chemical technology and Development from the Imperial College, University of London. In addition, she holds a certificate in Business Excellence from the Columbia Business School, New York.

Basirat is also a member of various reputable professional associations including the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK), Institute of Directors (IoD). Bashirat serves on Several Boards of African Subsidiaries Banks of First Bank Nigeria, a member of the Board of Directors for the Franco-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce and Industry where she serves as the Treasurer.



Irene E. Netimah

Irene Netimah is the Company Secretary of First Bank of Nigeria Limited, a position she has held since May 2016. Until her appointment to that position in May 2016, Irene was the General Counsel/Company Secretary of the FBN Capital Group of companies (now FBNQuest Merchant Bank). In that capacity, she served as a member of the Management Committee and as Secretary to the various Board Committees.

Prior to joining FBNCapital in 2011, Irene served as the Corporate Counsel and Head, Corporate Services of First Funds Limited (now FBNQuest Funds) from September 2006 to October 2011. In this capacity she was responsible for drafting and reviewing the shareholder agreements governing the Company's private equity investments, reviewing due diligence reports on potential investments, and liaising with outside counsel.

Irene holds an LL.B from the University of East Anglia in the UK and an LL.M, Queen Mary (University of London). She was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1995, and as a practicing lawyer before joining the Bank, worked in three of the top 10 Nigerian law firms, including Olaniwun Ajayi & Co., Aluko & Oyebo and ACAS Law, where she specialised in Company and Commercial Law, with particular specialisation in mergers and acquisitions.

Irene has attended several seminars and workshops on Corporate Governance and Compliance, including a mini-MBA for Corporate Counsel organised by the Association of Corporate Counsel at the prestigious Boston University School of Management. She is a member of the Nigerian Bar Association, a member of the Institute of Directors (IoD) and Member, Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria (ICSAN).



Female Staff, FirstBank

**Abimbola Ibikunle-Aina**

Abimbola Ibikunle-Aina heads the Branch Experience Management Department under the Branch Operations and Services Group of FirstBank of Nigeria Limited. In her position, Abimbola's goal is to drive service delivery across the Branch network through Improved staff productivity, operational efficiency and process Improvement/automation

She brings to her position a well-established background in Branch Marketing and Operations. Prior to taking up the role in October 2019, she was a Business Manager for three and half years and her responsibility was to deliver on the branch marketing target while ensuring excellent service delivery. Prior that too, she had worked in the operations team of the Bank for two years as an Area Services Manager, ensuring Service delivery in sixteen (16) Branches; where her Area office ranked the best in Service delivery for the two years.

Abimbola holds a degree in Agricultural Engineering from the Federal University of Technology Akure. She is also an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN), The Institute of Chartered Economists of Nigeria (ICEN) and a Fellow of the Institute of Credit Administration (ICA).

**Abimbola Meshinoye**

Abimbola Meshinoye is currently the Head, Sponsorships, Partnerships, Events & Collaborations for First Bank of Nigeria Ltd. She has over 23 years' professional experience of which over 21 years is in Investment and Retail Banking - managing teams and delivering to multi-faceted projects, sponsorships, partnerships, marketing campaigns, events,

stakeholders, talent and processes, for the actualization of marketing and brand management objectives. She has implemented standard communication and marketing tactics to drive business growth, with keen focus on strategy, innovation in communication, path to purchase strategies, brand positioning and transferring best practice.

Most of her work experience were achieved in the City of London, working for top Tier investment banks including, Deutsche Bank, JP Morgan, EBRD and UBS to name a few - always delivering to one project or the other.

Before joining FirstBank, Abimbola was Head, Retail Product Promotions before moving to Corporate & External Affairs at Guaranty Trust. Within the portfolio that she managed, she had the responsibility for the achievement of marketing and communications business goals and objectives. Abimbola also had a brief stint at the defunct Diamond Bank Plc (now Access Bank) as the Head, Youth and Mass Market Propositions, an experience which continues to drive her interest in product/proposition development.

Abimbola has attended extensive management and leadership programs ranging from Communications, Negotiation & Decision Making for Leaders, Strategic Thinking & Influencing to Project Management. She is a member of the Association for Project Management (APM) and the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN).

Abimbola holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering Management from the University of Hertfordshire and a Masters' Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from Imperial College, London, UK.

**Adeyemi Ogunmoyela**

Adeyemi Ogunmoyela is banking professional with over 30 years' experience spanning Sales, Operations, Audit and Risk Management in leading financial Institutions. She currently serves as the Group Chief Compliance Officer for First Bank.

Bringing her passion to bear in all aspects of her career has brought her recognitions including the award for the "Most

Valuable Player" in the 2013 First Bank Annual Merit Awards (FAMA) in the Strategic Function category as the then Chief Internal Auditor. She also led the Compliance Department to win the "Most Collaborative Department" award in the 2020 FAMA.

An alumna of the University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), University of Liverpool and the Lagos Business School, Adeyemi is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria and a Certified Anti-Money Laundering specialist (CAMS).

**Adigun Oludolapo**

Oludolapo Adigun joined First Bank as Head, Retail Marketing in 2006 and was later appointed a Branch Manager in 2007. In 2010, she was made the Business Development Manager in the Bank's new structure. Her sterling performance facilitated this appointment and in 2016, she was appointed the Group Head, Lagos Mainland, a role she presently occupies till date.

She started her working career with National Population Commission in 1991 where she worked as a Vital Registration Officer and participated in the successful conduct of the National Census in 1991.

Her foray into the banking sector started with the defunct Fountain Trust Bank (now Heritage Bank) in 1993 where she held several roles, rising through the ranks before she left to join FirstBank.

In a bid to impact lives, she also set up a Not-for-profit-foundation called Future Minds Generation Empowerment Initiatives. This foundation is in its 8th year and among its objectives are skills empowerment for youths towards equipping them for entrepreneurship as well as equipping primary and secondary students on career development.

Oludolapo Adigun attended the University of Ibadan, Ibadan where she obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Economics in 1989. She also holds a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho and she is an Alumna of Lagos Business School (Executive Programmes - SMP & AMP).

Dolapo is also an Honorary Senior Member of Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (HCIB) and a member of National Institute of Marketing (MNIM). She also has a certification in Retail Banking Program accredited by CIBN. She has attended various courses such as Strategic Management & Best Practices in Banking by Euromoney Learning, London, Certificate in Personal Coaching by Coaching Academy, London and Positive Leadership by Michigan Ross School of Business amongst others.

**Akanimoh Ojo**

Akanimoh Ojo is a MSME Banking specialist with 13 years' experience covering marketing, sales, product development and management. Within this time, she has developed flagship products and value-added services for top financial institutions in Nigeria contributing significantly to the growth of their SME portfolio. At FirstBank Nigeria, she is the

pioneer Team Lead for the SME Desk, a team responsible for ensuring that products and services targeted at SMEs are developed and designed with the customer (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) as its epicentre.

She achieves this via engagement of the Bank's MSMEs, leading to the development and facilitation of MSME programs (financial and non-financial) targeted at smart banking, capacity building, business growth, and access to finance. One of such outputs is the SMEConnect.

Akanimoh is also passionate about advocacy. She pursues this passion for advocacy as a co-anchor of Prime-Time TV Show-WAYS, a platform she leverages to discuss pertinent issues that affect, Youth, Women, Small businesses, and Economic growth. She the past Vice President Membership Eagle Toastmasters Club, a serial award winner and Winner of the International Speech Contest Division F 2019.

An Associate member of the International Retail Banking Academy, Akanimoh holds an MBA from the University of South Wales.

**Anita Jah, Business Manager, FBNbank**

Anita Jah obtained a Certificate in London Chamber and Commerce in 2001, Diploma Certificate in Banking and Financial Services in 2004, Diploma Certificate in Financial Services in 2007 and later obtained her B.Sc. degree in Financial Services from the Institute of Public Administration and

Management, University of Sierra Leone in 2010. She has over fifteen years of working experience and she is exceptionally skilled and versed in various aspects of Operations, Internal Audit & Controls, Compliance, Customer Service, Marketing Activities and Administration.

She started working for the International Commercial Bank from 2004 until it was bought over by First Bank of Nigeria now FBNBank (SL) Ltd. All through her stay in the Bank she has worked

in various capacities for the Bank.

She is currently the Business Manager, Corporate Banking of FBNBank (SL) Ltd.

**Bamidele Kutemi**

Bamidele Kutemi currently heads the Youth & Women Banking Team in FirstBank, overseeing the development and implementation of segment specific strategies and portfolio initiatives. She had previously served as Head, Web Acquiring business where she led her team to develop and implement innovative solutions for the bank in e-commerce payments. Her

over 18 years banking experience spans across Domestic Operations, E-Banking and Products Development. She has led several initiatives within the bank aimed at driving enhanced customer experience and lately women inclusion and empowerment in a bid to yield sustainable growth for the bank.

A certified Prince2 Project Management Practitioner and an Associate Member of The Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPMN), Bamidele is an alumnus of the University of Ibadan, where she earned a Master's Degree in Communication Arts as well as a Bachelor's Degree in Linguistics. She has attended several strategic courses in electronic payments and product management within and outside the country.

Bamidele started her career with the then FBN Merchant Bankers Ltd in 2002 and joined FirstBank in 2006 following the CBN induced banking sector consolidation at the time.

**Bubaram Aisha Umaru**

Aisha Umaru Bubaram is a consummate professional with over 22 years' banking experience cutting across several aspects of banking and not limited to Personal Banking, Public Sector, Retail and Commercial Banking. She is proficient in understanding business models and has been an award-winning staff both in operations and marketing which cuts across her Banking career in

United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA), Standard Trust Bank Limited (STB) and First Bank of Nigeria Limited.

A versatile financial mediator, she joined the service of First Bank of Nigeria Limited in 2009 as a Senior Manager under the Public Sector Group. She is currently a Deputy General Manager and oversees the Bank's Commercial Business in the North in the capacity of a Group Head.

A purposeful leader and great achiever, Aisha has made a remarkable imprint in a male dominated industry. She is one of the few Top Female Bankers from the North that you will find in the industry today, as she remains a source of inspiration to the female folk that "everything is achievable" with hard work and determination.

An MBA graduate from the University of Maiduguri and a master's graduate of Investment Finance from Brunel University, London, Aisha is a Certified National Accountant of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN). In 2019, in recognition of her outstanding feats in the Banking Industry, Aisha was conferred with the Honorary Senior Member (HCIB) by the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN). She is also an Associate Member of notable professional bodies like the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria and Institute of Capital Market Registrars.

**Chinwe Bode-Akinwande**

Chinwe Bode-Akinwande is a self-driven, focused marketing communications expert with over twenty years professional experience spanning across public and private sectors. She currently works as Head, Digital Marketing for First Bank of Nigeria and has been responsible for impactful and award-winning campaigns that have consistently distinguished and strategically

positioned the Bank at the forefront of reputable, world-class organisations in the digital marketing field.

Prior to joining FirstBank, Chinwe worked with United Nations (UNICEF) as the Head, Product Line & Marketing division. Among other achievements, she successfully built partnerships with corporations engaged in Corporate Social Responsibility projects, provided sales and marketing support to UNICEF African member countries and regions. She grew the UNICEF cards & gift business by over 200% in 2003 from \$280,000p.a to over \$1.1million annually as well as played a key role in the receipt of the "Crossing the million dollar mark" award in 2008 from UNICEF Headquarter Geneva.

Chinwe holds a B.Sc. Banking and Finance as well as master's

degree in Business Administration from the University of Nigeria with specialization in Marketing. Chinwe has also attended trainings at Austin University Texas on Strategic Brand Management; Edu Pristine, USA on Digital Marketing and Harvard School of Continued Education, Boston USA. She is a member of the Institute of Strategic Management Nigeria (ISMN), Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM) and Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (APCON); and a fellow of the Nigeria Institute of Marketing. She is also a certified professional in Social Marketing by Hootsuite Academy.



Damilola Adisa

Currently heading Procurement Department in FirstBank Group, Damilola Adisa started her career with Arthur Andersen (now KPMG). She was the pioneer Head, Control Techniques and Standards Team and until her current role, she was Head of Subsidiaries Risk Management covering all FBN subsidiaries in Sub Saharan Africa and the UK. With over 20 years of working experience in the energy, transportation, insurance and banking sectors in both the United States and Nigeria, she brings her broad range of experience to bear in different roles in the Bank.

She studied Accounting and Economics at the University of Reading, UK and holds an MBA from the INSEAD Business School in France where she graduated as the class valedictorian. She also a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in the United States as well as a chartered accountant in Nigeria. She is an active member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)



Ekeoma Daniel Chikadibia

Ekeoma Daniel Chikadibia is an astute banking professional with over 15 years in banking, spanning several roles including banking operations, relationship management and development of Businesses. She began her career at FirstBank of Nigeria Limited immediately she left school a Banking Assistant, rising through the ranks to become the Business Manager of one of leading branches of the Bank in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Ekeoma has shown over the years her tenacity in building bridges across various divides in her quest for excellence. She has a knack for identifying opportunities, which has seen her deliver value to the Bank over the years. For instance, despite the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, she was able to consummate a loan transaction of over N300million, which led to an increase in her Branch's revenue by over 40%. This led to the Branch turning from a loss position to profitability.

A graduate of the University of Calabar, Ekeoma is a Fellow, Chartered Institute of Finance and Control of Nigeria (CIFCON); Fellow, Institute of Strategic Public Negotiation (FISPN); Member, Chartered Institute of Bankers (CIBN); Member, Association of Corporate Governance Professionals of Nigeria (ACGPN) and an Associate of Women in Management, Business and Public Services (WIMBIZ).



Eziaku Obidegwu

Eziaku Obidegwu ventured into the banking sector in 1992 and has risen through the ranks to become an Assistant General Manager at First Bank. Currently working as a Group Head in charge of Retail Banking in Lagos Island 2 of FirstBank, she manages all Retail business in 30 branches of the Bank.

In her banking career spanning 29 years, Eziaku has worked at various times and institution as a Legal Officer, Head of international Banking Operations, Domestic Treasury, Commercial Banking and Retail Banking-where she has spent over twenty years.

Aside from being an outstanding banker, Eziaku Obidegwu also served on the Board of Directors at Consolidated Hallmark Insurance Plc from 2016-2019.

Called to the Nigerian Bar in 1988 and in line with her continual quest for knowledge she obtained an MBA from ESUT Business School (2001) and She is also an Alumni of the prestigious Lagos Business School.

Folake Ani-Mumuney

The infectiously amiable Folake Ani-Mumuney, a consummate professional, leads the Marketing and Corporate Communications function globally for the FirstBank Group, with oversight for same function for FBN Holdings Plc and all its subsidiaries spanning Asset Management, Investment Banking, Private Equity, Insurance and Pension Fund Custodian services.



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With a burning passion for development of the Africa Continent, Folake moved to Nigeria to take on the pioneer role of Chief Marketing & Corporate Communications Officer for the Dangote Group, an executive role that saw her introduce many innovations to the largest diversified conglomerate in Africa.

From there, Folake joined the FirstBank Group, where she serves as the Chief Image Maker, with oversight responsibility for all operating companies under the FBNHoldings banner globally. In addition, she is leading the turnaround of one of the strategic subsidiaries, FBN Insurance Brokers as the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

A past President of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Folake serves on many boards and is particularly proud to contribute on not-for-profit boards such as Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN) where she is currently the Vice Chairman. With a keen interest in mentorship, diversity and inclusion, Folake is an Advisory Board Member of WISCAR (Women in Successful Careers) and served on the WIMBoard Advocacy committee of WIMBIZ.

An Honorary Member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, Folake is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing UK, a Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing Nigeria and a member of the Institute of Directors Nigeria. An alumna of the prestigious Harvard Business School, Folake holds a first degree in Philosophy from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, a second degree in Law from the University of Buckingham, England and a Diploma in Business Computing Systems Analysis and Design.



Folasade Femi-Lawal

Folasade Femi-Lawal is a digital payment expert that is currently the Head of Card and Messaging Business for FirstBank Nigeria Ltd. She is also the Pioneer Head of Digital Banking for the Bank. She has to her credit the achievement of 10m Card Base milestone by FirstBank in 2017 as the 1st in Nigeria and 2nd in West Africa, as well as the recent launch of Virtual Payment Card (2021) in

response to Covid-19 Digital Payment opportunity. She is also credited with the successful launch of the first integrated lifestyle mobile banking App, FirstMobile that won both Global Finance award for 'The best Digital Bank of Distinction for 2016 & 2017 and Asian Banker Award for the Best Mobile Payments & Best Digital Bank Awards during the West Africa International Banking Convention (2016 & 2017).

She has over Twenty-five years cognate working experience, of which twenty were spent in Senior Management capacities and five in operations. She cut her Professional teeth at the Global Consulting Firm, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) as a trained Accountant where she passed her ICAN exams in flying colours. She then had a 3-year stint at Standard Trust Bank (now UBA) as the only female staff in the Inspections Department before she joined Econet Wireless (Airtel Network). At Econet Wireless, she spent nearly 10 years before joining FirstBank, as a Pioneer Head of Credit Control and later the Principal Analyst in charge of Commercial Directorate.

She is a sought-after Conference Speaker and Panellist as well as Chairperson at Global and National events such as 'Annual FinanceTech in South Africa, Annual Global Finance Conference in UK, Finnovex Digital Summit, and Women of West Africa Entrepreneurs (WoWe). She is a Council Member for Gershom Lehman Consulting in USA and sits on the Executive Committee of eBusiness Industry Heads in Nigeria, as Secretary for Emerging Payments.

Folashade is a fellow of the Institutes of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Chartered Institute of Taxation and Enterprise Risk Professionals. She is also an alumnus of Obafemi Awolowo's University and Harvard Business School, Executive Education.



Frances Odogwu

Frances is currently the Head, Organization Change Management for First Bank Nigeria Ltd. She joined the Bank in 2018 as Head, Customer Experience and Complaints Management and her role was to formulate and execute the Bank's customer experience strategy, manage interactions between the customer and the bank across all touch points, while optimizing

interactions from the customer's perspective to foster loyalty.

She has 20 years working experience that spans consulting, the private and public sector, project management, brand expansion, and strategy. She has also garnered extensive experience across various industries in Africa, the Middle East, the UK, Europe and its environs.

Before her relocation to Nigeria in 2018, she had worked as the Project / Service Quality & Business Partnerships Director for AM&F Consulting LLC in the Middle East where she provided various value adding services which included business solutions around customer experience and project management services to clients in the UAE, UK, USA, Europe and Africa. She was also the Director, Project Quality & Business Partnerships in support of programs/projects with the Wales Government, Dubai World Trade Centre, Messr Frankfurt, among others.

She has a Bachelors' degree in Philosophy from the University of Lagos and a Masters' degree in Quality Management from the University of Wollongong in Australia.



Grace Isaac-Aryee, Treasurer FBN Bank Ghana Ltd

Grace is a resourceful, hardworking and enthusiastic professional with a wealth of experience in the field of Customer Service, Trade Finance and Treasury, with over 13 years banking experience in Trade Operations and Correspondent bank Management and Treasury

She has a big heart for little children and has a way of touching positively everyone she encounters. Her ever listening ears and embracing warmth endears her to the people around her. Her uniqueness is seen in her ability to work with people at various levels and backgrounds.

She has a way of calming down the "boiling waters" making lighter "serious" issues. She loves to have a good laugh and has a good taste for exotic foods.



Helen Uju Ogboh

Helen Uju Ogbo is a corporate communications professional with many years of experience spanning different sectors. She joined First Bank of Nigeria Plc from The Quadrant Company in May 2007 as Head of Brands which later became M&CC. She managed the Corporate Communications activities of the entire bank and subsidiaries. Shortly after joining FirstBank

she worked on the project that celebrated the 25th year anniversary of the Bank's presence in the United Kingdom in October 2007 in the UK; this was shortly followed by the opening of FBN Bank (UK) Paris Office in 2008.

In July 2010, she led the team that unveiled the bank's presence in Beijing, China. Not long after, she joined the Human Capital Management and Development department of the bank where she was part of the creation of the "Employee Transformation & Culture." Employee Branding, Employee Engagement, Internal Customer Service, Internal Communication and Change Management were under her purview.

In 2014, she assumed the position of Business Manager within FirstBank in the Institutional Banking Group overseeing top Bluechip multinationals within the manufacturing sector.

Her professional career began in the early nineties where she worked in the Credit & Marketing Unit of M & M Securities Limited. In 1998, she joined PMI Direct- an Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) agency owned by Prof. Chris Ogbegie where she rose to the position of an Ag. AGM. In 2003, she joined The Quadrant Company to specialize in Public Relations. At The Quadrant Company, she was the relationship manager /consultant for prestigious accounts including Celtel Nigeria Limited (now Airtel), Emirates Airline, Emzor Pharmaceutical and FirstBank amongst others.

Helen is an alumna of the prestigious University of Ibadan where she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Philosophy in 1987. After a brief career hiatus, she went back to school in 1996, this time to the University of Lagos where she obtained an MBA in 1999, specializing in marketing and advertising.

**Kehinde Tinuade Obemeata**

Kehinde is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) with a first degree in Mathematics from University of Lagos. Kehinde has attended various courses within and outside the Bank including the Senior Management Program of the Prestigious Lagos Business School and in addition, is currently an Executive student of MBA at the Business School

Netherlands.

She started her working career after graduation as a marketing executive in the early nineties with a finance house where her interest in accounting was kindled, and thereafter, joined a firm of Chartered Accountants -D.O. Dafinone & Co as an audit trainee transiting into an audit senior within two years after qualifying as a Chartered Accountant.

She joined FirstBank after the acquisition of her former Bank, MBC International bank in 2006 and was made a Branch Manager the same year. While she was Branch Manager of FirstBank's Portharcourt Shell branch, the branch won the Bank's First Bank Annual Merit Awards (FAMA) as the Best Branch and in the following two successive years. The branch under her leadership also won the first and second runner up FAMA awards.

Kehinde has worked as an external auditor, resident internal control officer, Head of Operations, retail marketing officer, Branch Manager and is currently a Business Manager with the Energy Upstream and Midstream group of the Corporate Banking Division in FirstBank. Her meteoric rise to the position of Assistant General Manager attests to her work ethics/ expertise and constant quest for innovation and excellence in delivering assigned tasks.

Her wealth of knowledge and expertise has led to the Bank retaining and growing its portfolio as the major Banker to The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria.

**Kelechi Dibia**

Kelechi Dibia has over 15 years' experience of banking which cuts across different departments like Cash, funds transfer, foreign operations, customer service, accounts and clearing and retail marketing. She currently works as a Relationship Manager in the Rumuola branch of FirstBank in Port Harcourt.

As one of the brand champions of the Bank, she promotes the Banks' brand and encourages brand loyalty among employees

in the various branches assigned to her.

With a passion for volunteering, Kelechi has facilitated entrepreneurial coaching sessions for secondary school students under the Youth Development Training Program (YDTP), a program facilitated by LEAP Africa, and the Junior achievement Nigeria, JAN.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from Abia State University, Uturu and an M.sc from the European Global School Paris, France. She is an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management, CIPM and the Institute of Chartered Economists, ICEN.

**Larai Binta Hassan**

Larai Binta Hassan began her working career as a pioneer staff of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency where she served as a Counsellor in the Drug Demand Reduction Unit. She also worked on the inter-ministerial committee on drug demand Reduction in Nigeria between 1991 and 1994. She has 25 years' experience in banking which cuts across pension administration, central records

administration and retail banking.

She joined FirstBank in 1995 and had worked in various roles as Records Officer, Pensions Officer, Branch Manager, Business Development Manager and Group Head. She led a number of marketing initiatives that helped to establish the bank in sound footing in the National Assembly as the pioneer Manager of the National Assembly Branch which broke even in the first year. She also turned around the fortunes of Asokoro BDO as soon as she joined the company in 2017.

She also served as the Team Manager of the Elephant Girls Basketball team between 1999 and 2001 and within the period the team won various laurels in various engagements within the country and West African countries like Togo, Senegal and Guinea Conakry.

She holds B.Sc (HONS) Sociology and a Masters' Degree in the same field. She is an associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers and a certified Retail Banker. She has attended various Advanced Leadership and strategy courses and serves as a mentor to various staff in the Northern Region and outside the Bank. Larai is currently the Group Head of North Central 2 which comprise of three states; Plateau, Benue and Kwara.

**Lohbyen S. Ari**

Lohbyen S. Ari earned a degree in law back in 2000 and worked as a law intern for a period of two years after she graduated before commencing her banking career with FirstBank. Lohbyen s. Ari is currently the Business Development Manager (BDM) of the Central Area overseeing eight branches.

She has worked hard over the years starting her banking career as a customer service officer in 2003 and later moved to relationship management, Business Manager roles. Her performances on these roles led to her appointment as a BDM a role which she has been able to sustain in the last 3 years.

As BDM, she managed deals worth billions of Naira while also ensuring the viability of financial portfolios long-term. She has been responsible for taking unhealthy portfolios and transforming them into healthy and thriving ones. She also successfully nourished her insatiable passion for excellence and was able to achieve this by conducting research about investments of emerging markets, identifying the right skill set for particular job functions and nurturing and mentoring her teams towards achieving set goals and objectives

Additionally, she created several tools to help her team evaluate operational requirements more accurately and improve the forecasting of finances. She also monitors and assesses the performance of sales groups, evaluates market conditions weekly, and examines revenue trends.

She caters to major companies, non-profit organizations, hospitals and other SME relationships. She works well with senior corporate executives and can provide consultations for international corporations.

**Mojisola Majasan**

Mojisola Majasan has versatile working experience which involves control, treasury, clearing, international banking, operations, branch management, retail banking and corporate banking. She has over 25 years of banking experience where she started from Merchant Banking Corporation (MBC) in 1990's which later became Universal Bank in the year 2000. While in

MBC International Bank, she set up the clearing department at the point in which the bank converted from Merchant bank to Universal Bank and then Commercial Bank before its merger with FirstBank. She was the first Head of Clearing Department prior to the merger with FirstBank in 2006.

In 2008, she transited from Operations (Branch operations) which was a major career step for her after spending over 15 years in back-office units (Operations) to Retail Banking. In Retail Banking, she served as a Branch Manager in various locations and these were great experience in building her cutting-edge expertise in Banking and Marketing.

In 2011, she was part of pioneer staff of the then Institutional Banking which today is now known as Corporate Banking Group. At some point she was a Relationship Manager, then a Business Manager, overseeing Blue-chip companies and multinationals like Nigerian Breweries, Flour Mills group among others. She had the privilege to be the Team Lead and was involved in some of the major Industries syndications such as 2012 Golden Sugar \$145m in which the Bank made Revenues in excess of N300m, 2014 UNICEM \$655m Revenues N500m, 2015 Lafarge N20B Revenue N300m, just to mention a few.

In 2019 she won a new customer account, Flex Films in which the bank supported their Project Finance for plant set-up and made revenue in excess of N380m in first year of banking relationship.

Mojisola graduated from the Yaba College of Technology where she studied Food Technology. She also has an MBA from Federal University of Technology Akure and she is an alumna of the Lagos Business School SMP program. She is a member of Chartered Institute of Management (CNIM).

**Olaitan Martins**

Olaitan Martins is currently the Group Head, Transaction Banking for FirstBank of Nigeria Ltd. Prior to FirstBank, she has worked in various capacities with Stanbic IBTC bank. Olaitan has over 20 years banking experience in Investment banking, Business Development, Relationship Management, Portfolio Management and Credit Structuring.

Olaitan is a leader per excellence. She has led and motivated different teams to inspirational success at various stages of her career as she currently does and she proficient at bringing out gems and talents.

She holds a B.Sc. in Accounting from the University of Lagos, an MBA from Manchester Business school and currently, she is

finalizing a DBA program from University of Durham. She is a Chartered accountant, a fellow of Institute of Chartered Accountant of Nigeria (ICAN) and also a member of the Institute of Directors.

**Olayemi Agogbua**

Olayemi Agogbua is currently the Head, Brand Strategy, Budget and Planning for First Bank of Nigeria Limited. In her position, she has the oversight responsibility of aligning brand strategy with business strategy, performance tracking and measurements and the planning, allocation and disbursement of marketing budgets to optimize costs. She has over 15 years of

experience in integrated marketing communications and possesses strong in-depth analytical and creative thinking skills with the ability to multi-function across various roles that require strategic thinking & implementation.

Her professional experience spans strategy development & implementation, brand management, channel strategy and marketing, internal communications, copywriting, advertising and public relations across several financial, oil & gas, technology, FMCG and hospitality brands.

Before assuming her current position, Olayemi was the Head of Internal Communications, Merchandising and Warehousing for FirstBank where she managed all communications deployed to the bank's over 17,000 employees; employee engagement initiatives across several stakeholder groups, internal communications activities across the bank's sub-Saharan Africa subsidiaries and the holding company as well as the procurement and management of the Bank's BrandShop inventory.

Olayemi holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Ibadan and a Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing & Advertising from the Red and Yellow School of Advertising in South Africa. She is a Fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) and a member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and the Nigeria Leadership Institute (NLI).

**Olufunke Smith**

Olufunke Smith is the Group Head, Retail Banking Lagos Island 1 Group, Lagos & West Region for First Bank. She is also a member of the First Bank Women Network where she is the Pillar Lead for Personal Branding.

She has over 28 years banking experience, having started her banking career in 1990 when she joined Citi Trust Merchant Bank (now Union

Bank of Nigeria Plc) as a Supervisor in the Domestic Operations Department. She left there as the Head Financial Control in the year 2000. She has worked in various capacities in other Banks; she was the Head of Private Banking, EcoBank Nigeria Limited before joining First Bank of Nigeria in 2007.

At First Bank, she became the Head, Consumer Banking Products Department where she was given the responsibility of developing Consumer & Retail Banking Products in conjunction with Risk Management and other Strategic Business Units to increase the Bank's share of the consumer and retail businesses. In 2014, she became the Group Head Retail Banking, Lagos Mainland Group, before moving to Lagos Island Group in 2016. In retail banking, she has year on year grown her portfolios.

Funke holds a degree in Economics and she is an Alumni of the prestigious Lagos Business School. She is also a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (FCA), Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (Honorary Senior Member) and Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (Associate Member).

**Oluwatoyin Aina**

Oluwatoyin Aina is the Group Head, Energy - Corporate Banking Directorate for First Bank of Nigeria Limited. She is an astute finance professional with over 20 years' banking experience; adept at deal origination and execution across the Energy/Hydrocarbon value chain. She has worked through complex legal, commercial and financial agreements with

transaction parties across multi-cultural jurisdictions.

Her current role mostly covers the Energy Downstream/Int'l Oil Trading business with concurrent oversight for same within the Commercial/Retail Banking SBUs in Nigeria, African subsidiaries and United Kingdom under the Global Account Management structure.

Prior to this, she was Business Manager; Energy covering most of the bank's Upstream Portfolio and consummated transactions worth billions of US Dollars via bilateral and syndicated loans for the acquisition of on shore/off-shore Oil assets.

She also worked at 3 other Banks in Nigeria and Camelot Group in the UK.

Also, she currently leads the ‘Financial Planning & Empowerment Pillar’ for the FirstBank Women Network. The pillar has organised various events and webinars on financial education, investment opportunities and wealth management with very positive testimonials of the impact made.

Oluwatoyin holds a B.Sc in Agric. Economics from the University of Ibadan and MBA (Finance) from Manchester Business School UK. She is a Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) and also a member of the Energy Institute UK and the Nigerian Gas Association (NGA). She has also attended several courses in Oil & Gas International Trade/Refining at The Oxford Princeton Programme UK, Treasury/Risk Management and Corporate Finance.

Noteworthy, she was awarded the prize of ‘Outstanding MBA citizen’ for organizing the ‘first-ever’ Manchester Business Summit for Manchester Business School, UK. The event attracted close to 200 business professionals and MBA students within and outside the UK.



Oluyinka Johnson

Oluyinka Johnson is the Group Head of First Shared Services, where she oversees a diverse operations group, driving transformation of customer experience and efficiency through automation and process improvement. Prior to her current role she headed Corporate Transformation where she led implementation of numerous strategic projects for

the bank.

A graduate of Kellogg Graduate School of Business at Northwestern University where she obtained an MBA with a focus on Strategy & Finance, Oluyinka has over thirty years of professional experience with major international and Nigerian companies. She has worked as a Management Consultant advising Executives on Strategy, and worked as a Chemical Engineer at Abbott Laboratories in the UK and U.S.A. This broad work experience enriches her perspective as a Banker providing services to a diverse customer base.

Oluyinka is an effective leader with a focus on delivering results while inspiring her team with clarity of focus and empathy. She is a mentor and an interview coach.



Omolade Olawore

Omolade Olawore is currently the Group Head, Internal Control and Enhancement for First Bank Nigeria Limited and its subsidiaries (FirstBank Group), a position she has held for six years. In the role, she has responsibility for developing and driving best-in-class control strategy through development of internal control framework and policies for all operations of the FirstBank

Group, ensuring implementation, adoption, and enforcement of approved standards.

She has garnered vast experience in banking strategy, governance, operations/services, credit, risk management, compliance, project management, change management, information and cyber security management which is reflective in the optimal discharge of her responsibilities within FirstBank group.

Prior to assuming her current role, she was the Head, Credit Risk Management in FirstBank, where she had overall responsibility for the development and implementation of credit risk management strategies and policies in the Bank, including risk appetite policy, portfolio planning and reporting, identification, measurement and control of key risk indicators in the portfolio. She was the pioneer Project Manager for the digitalization of FirstBank’s credit process which led to the transformational growth of the bank’s consumer and retail credit portfolio.

Omolade has previously held key management positions in other banks in Nigeria. Her career has spanned various functions including legal practice, banking operations, risk, control and compliance functions.

Omolade holds a first degree in Law from University of Ife and a master’s degree in Law from University of Lagos, specializing in corporate and commercial law. In addition, she holds an MBA from Warwick Business School, United Kingdom, and an ICA Certificate in Compliance. She is a Certified Risk Manager, Chartered Banker and Chartered Secretary and Administrator. She is a member of Global Association of Risk Professionals and Institute of Internal Auditors (Nigeria). She represented the Bank on the Board of CRC – Credit Bureau Limited while she was in the credit risk management role.

A recipient of the 2010 FirstBank annual merit award for Best Head of Department and 2011 CEO’s Annual Merit Award for Staff of The Year, Omolade serves on several committees in FirstBank including the Product Program Review Committee, Electronic Product Fraud Risk Committee, Disciplinary Committee and chairs the Asset Disposal Committee.



Omolola Fehintola

Omolola graduated with First class degree in Accounting from Babcock University. She is a Fellow of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA) UK, Member of Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Currently on CFA Level 2 program and has Masters in Risk management from University of Southampton, UK.

Prior to joining FirstBank, she trained as a seasoned Auditor with KPMG (one of the Big 4 Audit Firms globally) where she commenced her professional career and led audit engagements for Banks, Insurance companies, Private equity, Pension etc.

At Firstbank, she worked as Technical assistant to ED/CFO (the current MD/CEO) and she was involved in Basel and Capital adequacy reforms for the Bank, financial statement analysis, cost reviews and various initiatives across the Finance Directorate before she moved to Corporate banking where she worked with the Executive Director, Corporate banking.

In Corporate banking, she pioneered and set up the Business Planning Team that oversees strategy implementation, operational and credit risk monitoring, business reviews for Corporate Banking Directorate. She later worked in the new corporate finance desk which involves opportunities spotting, alternative capital for mid-tier/large corporates and promote cross-sell of investment banking products across the Bank which helps to promote synergy across the larger FBN Holdings and the Firstbank Group.

Omolola is a graduate of maiden edition of Leadership Acceleration Program (LAP), member of the Internal Faculty team at First Academy, alternate lead for Programs, Events and Networking Pillar of the FirstWomen Network. She has attended trainings in KPMG South Africa, FBNUK as Trusted Advisor and renowned international institution including the prestigious INSEAD.



Oumy Bar, Head, Retail Banking, FBN Bank Senegal

She is an Economic Expert with 22 years of professional experience. She was previously Head, Retail Banking and Commercial Director of UBA from 2016 to 2019.

She has also worked in large companies such as ECOBANK, Alliance Technologies Informatiques, CCBM, SAMSUNG from 1998 to 2009.

She joined FBNBANK in 2019. She has held different positions at FBN Bank Senegal where she started in March 2020, thus enabling her to acquire a good knowledge of the Banking Sector.

She obtained a master’s degree in economics and is currently the Head, Retail Banking at the Bank.



Oyinlola Adeyemo

Oyinlola is a strategy and business transformation enthusiast with circa 16 years of extensive experience in project management, business process optimisation and business development. Oyinlola currently heads the Agent Network Development Team in FirstBank. Her team pioneered and currently leads the Bank’s Agent Banking effort across Nigeria.

She is a self-starter and inspirational leader, passionate about people, excellence, results, and creativity. She started her banking career with First Bank of Nigeria Limited in 2005 and has worked in different capacities across Retail Banking, Corporate Transformation and the erstwhile Banking Services Group; where she was selected by the Executive Management team to provide stability during executive transitions in the leadership of the Group, based on demonstrated leadership.

Her very strong skills in coordination and strategy also made her a unique fit to design and lead a two-day showcase of the Bank’s transformation journey for a joint delegation of Regional Banking Executives and a global consultancy looking to learn from the Bank’s corporate transformation success.

Asides from her career, she is keen on people development, mentoring and volunteering. She serves on the Mentorship sub-committee of the Association of Professional Women Bankers (APWB) – the Female arm of the prestigious Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN).

Her formal education includes an MBA (Strategic Planning) from Edinburgh Business School, Scotland and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Rosie Ebe-Arthur

Rosie is a C-Suite HR professional with expertise and deep knowledge of human capital management and development. She is



the Group Head, Human Capital & Development for First Bank Nigeria Ltd. And its Subsidiaries where she has responsibility for managing employees across Nigeria, United Kingdom, Ghana, D.R. Congo, Guinea, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Senegal.

Prior to FirstBank, she was Head of Human Resources, Nigeria and West Africa for Standard Chartered Bank covering Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Gambia. She has over 25 years of business and HR experience in the global and Pan-African context including her time with Ecobank Transnational Inc. as HR Business Partner for the Domestic Bank business with oversight of over 30 countries and Ernst & Young, South Africa as Director for People Effectiveness with a reach of 19 countries.

She is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, UK. She holds a Postgraduate Degree from the University of Westminster in Personnel Management and a Bachelor’s Degree in Education with a Diploma in English. She has attended programs on leadership with INSEAD and the Said Business School, University of Oxford. She also earned a Professional Certificate in Project Management from Btec. and she has participated in the PRINCE 2 methodology from ISEB Project Management.

Rosie is a member of the Capacity Building and Certification Committee of the Chartered Institute of Bankers, Nigeria. Working to raise awareness of the 4th Industrial Revolution, Rosie works closely with Oracle and Mercer, two global organizations to challenge the status quo. With Rosie’s partnership with Oracle, First Bank of Nigeria Limited is leading in the Banking Industry in West Africa.

Rosie is the alternate Chair of FirstBank Women Network where her major role is to create opportunities for women of excellence in FirstBank to grow and attain leadership positions thereby contributing better to the overall productivity and profitability of the Bank. In her role, she also mentors’ women on their career journey in the bank. Under her leadership, FirstBank emerged the first in the Women Empowerment category of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) led Sustainable Banking Awards in 2019. At the 2019 Great Place to Work Award ceremony, she was recognized and awarded the “Exceptional Woman Leader of the Year” in First Bank of Nigeria Ltd. She is a member of the Executive Women Network in Ghana and continues to add value in the area of developing and mentoring women.



Sadiat Adebambo

Sadiat Adebambo Famuyiwa is a highly driven and result oriented professional with over twenty years’ experience in banking. She is the first substantive Head of Retail Banking Department that caters for the banking operations of the bank.

She joined FirstBank in April 2000 and has continued to distinguish herself in her chosen career. She has held various leadership positions at the front office, middle office and back office which include serving as Branch Manager, Business Manager, Head of operations and customer service. As a result of her robust operations and retail banking experience, she pioneered the establishment of the Middle office department that metamorphosed into the Corporate Loan Processing Department where she successfully put in place effective operational structures that led to significant improvement of the bank’s asset quality. In fact, she emerged the best facilitator in the Leadership Series training program recently instituted by the bank.

Prior to joining FirstBank, she had worked in the aviation and service industry.

Sadiat is an alumna of the Senior Management Development Program (SMDP 01) and she has a first degree in Science Technology (Chemistry option) and MBA (General Management Option) from the Ogun State University, now Olabisi Onabanjo University.

In her continuous quest for Knowledge, she is currently enrolled as a student at the SOAS, University of London where she is studying Financial Sector Management. She is also a fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM).

Saffiatou Sanneh, Head Risk, FBN Bank Gambia



Joined the Bank in August 2013, Saffiatou Sanneh is an experienced Risk Management Professional and a graduate in Economics and Finance from the University of the Gambia (UTG).

Prior to her appointment as the Head, Risk Management, Saffiatou has worked in different Risk Management Functions and was very instrumental to the implementation of the Bank’s

integration project policy. She spearheaded the Risk Management Function in the development of policies, launching of new lending products, establishment of risk controls and structuring of the Risk Management Function in line with best practice dictates.

As a self-challenger and a mentor, she has demonstrated strong leadership skills and built a team which demonstrates quality work, facilitates cooperation and increases productivity, efficiency and fulfillment of task requirements.

As an enthusiast of the Bank, she shows interest in the attitudes, views and motives of her colleagues and customers. She is an in-house coach on risk management matters and strives to continuously improve the Bank's risk management culture.



Safiya Stephanie Musa

Safiya Stephanie Musa is a banking professional and an Impactpreneur with excellent track record in various spheres of endeavour. She has held various positions at First Bank of Nigeria Ltd, and her philosophy of an unwavering commitment to the pursuit of excellence ensured that she consistently surpassed expectations. Safiya also has International banking experience

in her former role as Chief Representative Officer for FirstBank in Abu Dhabi. In this role, Safiya managed the bank's relationships with a broad range of stakeholders and financial regulators in the UAE.

She co-founded EduShine Foundation to assist students of public schools to maximise their educational potentials by providing extramural classes, free Jamb registration, payment of school fees, mentoring program and online-based educational resources. The Foundation also provides funding to small-scale business owners. This initiative is called the 'Power OfN50k'.

She is also the National Vice President of the Institute of Chartered Economists of Nigeria. Similarly, Safiya is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Economists of Nigeria (ICEN), a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants (IMC), Member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), Member of the Project Management Institute (PMI), Fellow of the Nigerian Leadership Initiative (NLI), a Member of the Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI) Network.

She is a graduate of Economics from the Bayero University Kano and has also attended several world class institutions such as the Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Business School, INSEAD Business School, and the African Centre for International Criminal Justice (ACICJ).



Shohotyep Nidi Pamela

Shohotyep Nidi Pamela is a Young Nigerian Banker, Philanthropist and Business oriented Woman. She is currently the Business Manager at Aminu Kano Way Branch, Wuse 2, Abuja, having joined First Bank of Nigeria in 2012, where she works till date.

Nidi has had a wonderful career moving and excelling in both the media and banking industries. She was once a Television Presenter and the Founder of a weekly aired programme of the Plateau Radio Television Cooperation titled 'This Generation.' Between 2008 and 2012, she worked at Intercontinental Bank as a Relationship officer before she joined FirstBank.

Nidi has continued to be a phenomenal young woman with distinctions in service and leadership. This is seen in various strides and awards she has gained like her recent appointment to serve on the planning committee for First Bank Annual Merits awards (FAMA) 2021. She has received letters of commendation from the office of the Group executive retail banking for her exceptional performance and exceptional customer relationship as recognized by the bank. Nidi recently came top 5 in the 2020 Retail Banking Certification Program in the bank in April 2021.

Ndidi obtained her Degree in Mass Communication from the Prestigious University of Jos and also obtained an MBA in Human Resource Management from the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. With a natural passion for leadership and activism, she was once the Vice President of the National Association of Plateau Students (NAPSS).

She is a member of several prestigious groups and institutions - the Institute of Business Diplomacy and Financial Management (where she is a Senior Member), the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) where she serves as a member and in the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM).

Taiwo Shonekan

Taiwo Shonekan is a transformation leader with a wealth of knowledge from 19 years banking experience covering services, project management, transformation, business process optimization and business development. She is currently the Head, Customer Experience and Value Management for FirstBank.

She started her banking career in 2002 as a relationship and business officer at Trust Bank Limited (now a part of Sterling Bank).



She joined FirstBank in 2006 and has worked in different capacities in Corporate Banking, Corporate Transformation and Services where she successfully led the design and roll out of several strategic initiatives and projects for the bank. Taiwo served as the Head, Branch Services Coordination between 2016 and 2018. She demonstrated her superior coordinating and project management skills during her time on this role as she initiated

several projects to improve operational efficiency and cost savings in Branch Services.

As a part of putting the customer at the heart of the business, Taiwo established the Experience Management Committee which oversees the transformation and improvement of customer experience in FirstBank. Passionate about innovation and interested in the Fintech space, she has successfully driven the FirstBank Fintech Summit for four years in a row.

Taiwo has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. She holds an MBA from Warwick Business School; UK and she is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and certified Prosci Change Manager. Taiwo is also a graduate of the premier stream of Senior Management Development Program (SMDP) at FirstBank.



Temitope Sodipo

Temitope Sodipo is a multi-skilled professional with over twelve years post qualification experience in Banking and a broad perspective on company secretarial practice, corporate governance and customer relationship management.

She is currently the Special Assistant to the Chairman, First Bank of Nigeria Limited. A role which she assumed in 2016. In

this capacity, she provides a full range of strategic and administrative support to the Chairman, as well as carrying out research and special projects as may be required.

Temitope joined First Bank of Nigeria Limited in 2010 and has served the institution in various capacities in the Retail Banking Group and the Company Secretariat before assuming her current role.

She is deeply passionate and committed to causes that supports women, children and young people. In 2019, she joined the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Nigeria (UNOCHA) as a delegate on a Mission to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camps in Maiduguri, Borno State to review the humanitarian situation and to support the campaign for crowdfunding of the Nigerian Humanitarian Fund Private Sector Initiative (NHF PSI).

Temitope is a Graduate of Law from Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria and an alumna of the prestigious Lagos Business School, Nigeria. She has attended various Conferences across the globe, such as The Africa 2017 Forum in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt; The 24th Edition of the Economic Conference of Montreal in Montreal, Canada; The 9th Annual World Strategic Forum in Miami, Florida, USA; The International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWECC) Foundation Annual Conferences in Seattle, Shanghai and New Delhi; The 2020 FORBES Woman Africa Leading Women Summit in Durban, South Africa; amongst others.

She is a member of the Nigerian Bar Association, the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria and the Society for Corporate Governance of Nigeria.



Titilayo Omotola Balogun

Titilayo Omotola Balogun is the Head of Corporate Control at First Bank of Nigeria Limited. As a thought leader, she is responsible for the control oversight of all strategic resource functions within the bank. In this role, she brings to bear her wealth of experience spanning operations, financial accounting, regulatory reporting, risk and strategic management ensuring

effectiveness of control activities and processes to minimize losses in the bank.

Since joining First Bank of Nigeria Limited as a graduate trainee in 1995, Titi has worked in several functions including branch operations, leaving excellent trails and commendations in the various roles and gaining vast institutional knowledge of the bank. Prior to her current role, she was the Head of General Ledger Review and Revenue Assurance in the Financial Control Department with added responsibility of managing the Regulatory Affairs function of the bank. In these roles, she provided leadership, implemented strategies, best practice financial controls, improved the accuracy of revenue management for the entire FirstBank Group resulting in reduction of significant losses, and ensuring the

integrity of the bank's General Ledger and Financial Statements. She also worked in Credit Risk Management, with responsibilities for Credit Risk Policies and Portfolio Management. In this role, she sanitised and revamped the Credit Reporting of the bank.

She is the alternate lead for the First Women Network Personal Branding Pillar helping to build the FirstBank woman.

Titi holds a Master's in Business Administration from Herriot Watt University Scotland and a Higher National Diploma in Accounting from Yaba College of Technology Lagos. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria. She is also an alumna of the inaugural Senior Management Development Program of FirstBank.



Uloma Kings-Olikagu

Uloma Kings-Olikagu is the Group Head, Commercial Banking – Lagos Island for First Bank. She joined First Bank of Nigeria Limited in February 2011. Her career in banking spans 22 years with extensive experience across several core banking disciplines which started in 1999 with Fortune International Bank Plc in-consumer banking and Fidelity Bank Plc-in private

banking, 2004.

In 2014, she assumed the position of the Executive Director for FBNBank Gambia, a subsidiary of First Bank of Nigeria Limited. Her four years' journey in that position saw her smash the glass ceiling as the first female CEO of a Bank in The Gambia. She also transformed FBNBank Gambia into a formidable brand in the Gambian banking and economic landscape. On completion of her tenure in Gambia, she returned to First Bank of Nigeria Limited to joined the Corporate Banking in September 2018 as Business Manager overseeing the Aviation and Shipping desk-a role she held until February 2020 when she joined Commercial Banking.

She was a member of the team that set-up FirstBank Private Banking. Deploying her years of private wealth management and advisory experience to the new outfit was great, which translated to the introduction of seamless process flow and clients' easy journey to exceptional banking and wealth management service.

Uloma has a Bachelor's Degree in Geography from the Abia State University and an MBA in Management from the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. She is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Public Managers of Nigeria (FCMP) as well as a Fellow of the Institute of Professional Managers and Administrators of Nigeria (FIPMA). She has attended several courses in leadership, corporate governance, enterprise risk management, communication & media management, AML-CFT etc.



Uwaila Hilda Omoigui

Uwaila is a result oriented professional with core values of integrity, excellence, diligence, giving and service. A well-rounded individual who assiduously challenges herself to be the very best in her multifaceted roles of wife, mother, daughter, loyal friend, consummate professional and patriotic citizen.

She has over 14 years' broad experience in the banking sector spanning branch and head office operations, credit and marketing within retail, commercial public sector and more recently digital and E-business services. She gathered these experiences working in renowned commercial banks in Nigeria including Oceanic Bank, Ecobank and First Bank of Nigeria where she still is, in positions that include Head, Marketing and Team Lead and Business Manager across branches in the South Western region.

She currently Heads the E-Business Team of the Retail Processing Centre under the Retail Banking Operations at the Head Office of First Bank, providing business solutions/services on digital banking and card management services across over 750 branches nationwide and a few countries in West Africa.

She is the Founder of an NGO "StyldbyUwa" focused on providing personal branding and personal financial literacy knowledge, a platform targeted at actively communicating my goal to create fashion sense and financial freedom based on individual personality and lifestyle. She serves as an executive committee member in several groups (NGOs).

Uwaila is a certified project management professional, certified business analyst, certified chartered marketer with the Nigerian Institute of Marketing (NIM) and has attended several trainings locally and internationally. She holds a Bsc. degree in Accounting finishing with an Upper Class from Benson Idahosa University, Edo State, MBA with Lagos State University, Nigeria.

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By Azeez Disu

Equality begins with economic empowerment," George H. W. Bush once said. Similarly, Andrea Jung said, "I think the economic empowerment of women that has been growing over the past decade is at the 'inflection point' with this global recession. Women are, we believe, the solution for their families in their ability to go out and increase household income."

UN Women assertion aligns with the above quotes, that investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth.

Asides government's empowerment initiatives for women, brands remain the indomitable force championing the course of women.

In Africa, Access Bank depicts the essential characteristics of a women-friendly institution operating in line with international best practices. It is noteworthy that the bank since inception has been expanding its footprints across the continent offering bespoke financial services and at the same time, ensuring the economic development of the continent through its numerous initiatives which include women empowerment.

The bank has consistently positioned its offerings towards women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to influence their communities and provide stability in their career, business and lifestyle.

Its commitment is also rooted in the understanding that targeting gender equality is not only beneficial to women, but it would undoubtedly, positively shape the nation. It transcends to both genders having equal opportunities for and access to financial independence, education, and personal development. The bank's three-pronged approach promotes gender equality and women's economic empowerment focusing on women in the workplace, Women in the marketplace, and Women in the community.

As a gender-focused institution, it is resolved to continue to forge new, innovative and visionary strategies to ensure that women are recognised at the fore front of their careers, businesses and in their communities.

Empowering Women in the Workplace

Access Bank is empowering women in the workplace through the Access Women Network (AWN) as part of the three-pronged approaches it is using to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Excitingly, AWN was formed to support, develop, promote and retain female employees in the bank. It understands that gender equality can only be achieved with a focus on all genders. AWN provides a support network especially to all female employees, ensuring gender equality through policies such as the Human Rights Policy –harassment, paternity leave, 6 months' maternity leave as well as mentoring and leadership program.

In the past years, AWN increased its efforts to ensure that women across the Group were impacted in one way or the other, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown in most areas of its operations. Over 15 virtual webinars have been held. Some other programs include: AWN Toastmasters which continued at various times throughout the year, Project "Make a Family Happy" to raise funds to feed 500 families, Free Breast Cancer Screening for AWN Members in the month of October at selected locations, Zaron Virtual Experience with AWN, a free online makeup training, and The annual Orange Lecture which held on November 25, 2020 themed 'Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!.'

Women in the Marketplace (W Initiative)

The bank is also empowering women in the marketplace through the "W Initiative". Basically, the W Initiative is the bank's women's market program and has inspired, connected, and empowered women in Africa for over fourteen years. The initiative was launched in new African markets in 2020 which



Herbert Wigwe, CEO, Access Bank

include Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Mozambique, and Gambia. The brand has strong presence in Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, and Zambia with an array of offerings tailored to meet the diverse career, business and lifestyle needs of over 16 million female customers of all life and economic stages.

Interestingly, Access Bank through its W Initiative has empowered millions of women in Africa by availing the following offerings which include the W Power Loan, Maternal Health Service Support, LSETF/ W Initiative loan and W Branded Debit Card.

Remarkably, the W Power Loan is a financing scheme introduced in 2018 to bridge the financing gaps for women-in-business. The W Power loan's interest rate at 15% per annum is open for businesses that need loans for expansion, working capital or purchase of equipment. With at least 50% ownership, female business owners can access loans up to N100million to support their business.

Similarly, its Maternal Health Service Support (MHSS) was introduced to provide discounted financing for medical procedures peculiar to women. The MHSS, which is present in Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda and Zambia, is positioned to help women and families overcome barriers to good health and wellbeing. It is a social impact product and a key component of the 'W' Initiative. It is a premier product in Africa.

Also in its bid to provide discounted financing for Women SMEs operating in Lagos State, it teamed up with Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) to provide a matching fund scheme. Basically, the aim is to reach out to Women SMEs who require funds between N50, 000 and N5m including startups at an interest rate of 10% p.a.

Another laudable initiative is the "W Branded Debit Card". The initiative came up as part of its 2020 digital transformation strategy, with the intent to provide exclusive and convenient banking for female customers. This led to a 65% increase in debit card adoption by female customers and contributed to generating over N102Billion (\$255M) in deposit mobilization.

Meanwhile, a statement released by the bank, stated that "To help facilitate women's access to discounted finance, we stimulated economic expansion by partnering with ESG (Enterprise Sustainability Group) to simplify loan application process and tracking for women-in-business. This resulted in over N8Billion (\$20M) debt financing investment in 1,700+ women-owned enterprises and N18.8Billion (\$47M) growth in lending to 750,000 female individuals."

In the wake of the COVID -19 pandemic, a virtual desk (W

Cares) was introduced to manage gender-focused complaints and inquiries. Through its eco-system management unit, it also created a USSD option to automate collections for Faith Based Organizations during the nationwide lockdown.

Women in the Community

As part of its ways of giving back to society, Access Bank launched various women-centric initiatives impacting communities. Some of them are: Sustainable skills training, entrepreneurship, sensitization and empowerment; end female genital mutilation program; and commemoration of international women's day.

One of the ways it is empowering women in community is through its partnership with Xploit Consult to implement skill acquisition program for men, women and young girls in Niger and Kano states in Nigeria. About 100 persons (women, men and young girls) were trained in bead making, gele tying, computer & phone repairs and liquid soap production; and 400 persons were counselled, mentored and provided guidance on psychosocial and economic issues.

In another vein, in a bid to end female genital mutilation program, Access Bank partnered with HACEY Health Initiative to organise an awareness program. The program was held across schools, religious centres and communities in Osun, Ebonyi, Oyo and Ekiti states, benefitting about 2,548 individuals.

Another laudable initiative in partnership with Hacey is "Project Agbebi". Project Agbebi is a community health project aimed at contributing to the global reduction of deaths resulting from pregnancy and childbirth. It strengthen and support strategic alliances with Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) leading to the implementation of newborn health programs at scale.

Recently, in commemoration of the 2021 International Women's Day (IWD), it partnered with HACEY Health Initiative. Activities such as Women's mental health and well-being digital campaign, webinar, vocational skills training and community health education program on women's health and COVID-19 were carried out in Lagos, Imo and Kwara states. Over 1,500 women benefitted directly from the programs.

Other CSR Programs

The bank continues to be one of the leading financial institutions contributing to the growth of gender equality and women empowerment.

According to the bank, "Over the years, Access Bank has made deliberate efforts to support the growth, development and prosperity of the communities and societies within which we operate. We have invested over N10.25 billion in various corporate social responsibility efforts which has impacted 1,316 communities and reached 30,075,356 lives and 793 NGOs. These projects have been in our CSR priority areas which are: Health, Education, Sport, Arts, Environment, Women Empowerment and Social Welfare."

Some of its notable community investment programs are as follows: Family clean cooking program for underprivileged households, Support for Vulnerable Individuals/Groups, Access 9ija Kids, and Maternal Health Program among others.

Awards

For its remarkable initiatives, Access Bank has received numerous recognitions which include: Highest Engagement award 2017 - Global Banking Alliance (GBA); Excellence in Women Economic Empowerment award 2017 & 2018- Central Bank of Nigeria; Dedication to Women Entrepreneurship award 2018 - National Council for Women Society of Nigeria.

Others are: Sustainable Development Growth Gender Support award 2018- National Council of Women Society (NCWS); Gender Leader of the Year award 2019- Africa CEO forum; Award of Excellence 2019- National Council of Women Society (NCWS); and Outstanding Female friendly Bank of the Year award 2018, 2019 & 2020- WIMCA.





Amstel Malta Spotlights Extraordinary Women In Male-Dominated Fields

What picture comes to mind when you think of a nurse, a hairdresser or a cook? If you instantly thought of a woman, you're not alone. Gender stereotypes have a way of making us categorise some job roles as "men only" or "women only". These days, however, many women are breaking the glass ceiling and excelling in male-dominated fields.

In celebration of International Women's Day, Nigeria's premium malt brand - Amstel Malta followed the lives of three phenomenal women; Sandra Uso Prince-Ekwueme, a mechanic, Uju Udoka, a painter and Cynthia Egbunam, a barber - who are certainly not "leaving it to the boys." These extraordinary women shared their compelling true stories of how they came about their line of work, how they are able to navigate male-dominated spaces and how far they've come. They also answered interesting questions about their challenges, aspirations and shared some practical tips for young girls and women.

Sharing her experiences on the difficulties of starting out in a male-dominated industry, Uju Udoka revealed that her biggest challenge was sexist stereotypes and having to prove herself when bidding for jobs with male competitors. Sandra Uso Prince-Ekwueme also stated that she worried that clients would not want to entrust her with jobs because of the societal roadblocks that paint women as weak. However, she is proud of her progress and hopes to see more women coming into a complete realisation of their full potential.

When asked about her biggest challenge as an upcoming barber, Cynthia said, "People don't always take you seriously. You have to prove yourself over and over again. A lot of people look down on me and don't think I am capable of doing my job and sometimes people will say 'women are not allowed to touch my hair'".

One striking thing that stood out from each of the conversations with these women was the desire to see more women in political positions handling the affairs of the nation.

"I would love to see more women in government", Cynthia said.

These are the people who make the laws that determine the quality of our lives. I want more women there so that they can push for more favourable conditions for women", she concluded.

Despite the many hurdles these women have had to climb, they are determined to keep advancing and are set on challenging gender stereotypes as they continue to inspire women all over the world.

Join Amstel Malta as they uncover the stories and experiences of these phenomenal women who have excelled in male-dominated spaces #AmstelMaltaIWD2021

"People don't always take you seriously. You have to prove yourself over and over again. A lot of people look down on me and don't think I am capable of doing my job and sometimes people will say 'women are not allowed to touch my hair'"



Cadbury Promoting Gender Inclusion And Equality

By Jeremiah Agada

Earlier in the year, the UN Women announced the theme for International Women's Day, 8 March 2021 (IWD 2021) as, "Women in leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World." The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also aligned with the priority theme of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls," and the flagship Generation Equality campaign, which calls for women's right to decision-making in all areas of life, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end all forms of violence against women and girls, and health-care services that respond to their needs.

In what can be described as a feat as far as gender inclusion in the Nigerian space is concerned, and in line with the theme of the 65th Commission on the status of women, in 2019, Mrs. Oyeyimika Adebayo became the first woman to be appointed by Cadbury Nigeria Plc as its Managing Director in 50 years. Her milestone appointment as the MD attests to the Company's commitment to promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Today, Adebayo is widely recognised as one of the most respected female executives in Africa and her efforts in the past years have been pivoted towards putting the Company on a path of profitable growth, as well as implementing initiatives focused on supporting female employees and female leaders within the organization.

It therefore comes as no surprise that Cadbury Nigeria makes the exclusive list of Brand Communicator's special project, which beams the light on brands and organisations that promote women empowerment in the Nigerian market.

In an interview she granted a continental media platform, she explained that her emergence and the career trajectory of female employees at the Company, follow a gender-inclusive policy from Mondelez International (the parent company) to the local markets. She said, "At Mondelez International, which is the parent company of Cadbury Nigeria Plc, we have a deliberate policy of ensuring that competent women are given the opportunity and support required to excel. The unwavering support of our global leadership team was quite critical as no multinational will appoint a country lead (irrespective of gender) if they are not confident that the individual in question can do the job."

Further explaining how Cadbury Nigeria demonstrates its commitment to the professional development of female employees, she revealed, "At Cadbury Nigeria, we have numerous initiatives in place to support employees' development generally and programmes focused on female employees and female leaders. Today, we have several functional teams led by women who have demonstrated expertise in what they do and I am proud of our female leaders. Our goal is to have 40% of our senior roles led by women, and we are very close to achieving this goal, despite legal limitations that does not allow women take on some roles in the factory. We will continue to train, mentor and support our female colleagues."

Consequently, the Company does not take the commemoration of the IWD lightly. The 2021 International Women's Day was celebrated in Cadbury Nigeria in style on 8th March, with colleagues attending a virtual panel session tagged: "Breakfast with Yimika and Fola." It was an opportunity for Oyeyimika Adebayo and Fola Akande, Chief Counsel for the Company, who were panelists at the event, to share the global, Sub-Saharan Africa Business Unit, and West Africa's diversity and inclusion agenda.

During the highly engaging session spent deliberating on key focus of the IWD and this year's hashtag, "#Choose to Challenge," participants learnt a lot about career success and personal development. The panelists stressed the need for women to see themselves as capable of achieving anything. They also advised leaders to be purposeful in gender conversations and ensuring that women are given equal opportunity during recruitment. They finally charged women to learn to celebrate



Oyeyimika Adebayo, MD, Cadbury Nigeria

their own achievements. All female colleagues in West Africa were presented with a book: "Balance in Stilettos," by Amaka Chibuzo-Obi. The book explores the need for women to seek work-life balance.

Earlier in the year, Cadbury Nigeria carried out an emotionally reeling campaign called Strength of a Mother (#Strengthofamother) in celebration of Mothers' day. For the campaign, the company got mothers from different generations, religions, ethnic groups and spheres of life into one room to distill 'Motherhood.' Most of the women selected are celebrities and known figures who are mothers. They include veteran actresses Patience Ozokwo, Mansurah Isah and Iyabo Ojo; Interior Designer, Inyene Brendan; Baker, Tobi Famuyiwa; Blogger, Chinyere Abang and Bolatito Bez-Idakulah.

"I don't think mothers should die".....I felt that!! "I can't stop crying. I can relate to almost everything. I lost my mum when I was younger to child birth. Made me really scared of labour. But now I'm a mum too...and I'm always scared of death cause I don't want to ever leave my kid...." and "This was too emotional for me. I cried cos I could relate with this postpartum depression and confusion," are some expressions from the campaign that convey the depth at which the campaign hit home.

According to Cadbury, the campaign started out as a discussion within the team. "We wanted to make our consumers know we 'GET' them and understand their life experiences and so we tapped into something that mattered to them- Motherhood. Bournvita celebrates women, motherhood and all that comes with it."

Beyond the internal policies aimed at promoting gender parity at Cadbury Nigeria, the Company also embarks on several initiatives aimed at empowering women generally. One of them is the Cadbury Bournvita Free Breast Cancer Awareness Mobile Clinic Initiative for women. The programme was the first of its kind in Nigeria when it was launched several years ago. The clinic which provided education on how to perform Breast Self-Examination, free ultra-sound scan service and counselling service to women among others, was taken to neighbourhoods for easy access to mothers. Over the years, the clinic has provided free breast cancer screening for thousands of women.

For many years, the Company has been impacting the lives of women as well as empowering them in line with its Mission Statement, which addresses the needs of internal (board, management and staff) and external stakeholders (customers, consumers, investors, media, government, regulators etc.). This is also hinged on its corporate social responsibility (CSR) philosophy where its corporate giving is targeted at areas of the greatest need, with a clear orientation towards children, the youth and women.

In the past, the specific areas addressed by the company's CSR policy included Health, Welfare and Charity, Education and

Enterprise, Sports, Arts, Environment, Community and Entertainment. Today, it has a signature CSR project specifically tailored towards pupils in public primary schools within its host communities in Lagos State. The project is called Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle (NHL).

In 2019, Cadbury Nigeria launched a Technology Boot Camp for children, as part of its CSR and one of the components of Bourn Factor School Talent Hunt Competition, which revolves around supporting charity. In collaboration with Edusko Africa and Techeduhub, Cadbury Nigeria organised a free five-day Bootcamp for 50 children between the ages of eight and 16, in Lagos that year.

However, due to the pandemic, in 2020, the Company took advantage of technology and the virtual space and expanded the programme to impact 250 children across Nigeria, with Google joining the partnership. The sessions were spread over a period of five weeks, with 50 children making up each five-day session. The programme ran from 4 August to 4 September. The training empowered children with technological skills and knowledge in areas such as Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Coding, Gaming, and Life Skills. At the end of each session, the participants received a certificate confirming completion of the course.

It also launched the Bourn Factor Competition, a reality talent hunt competition for secondary school students across Nigeria. In the maiden edition it organized in 2019/2020, three schools emerged winners. It also organised the second edition which is the 2020/2021 season, which seeks to empower students, their schools and society, recently.

At the height of COVID-19, which affected people globally, Cadbury Nigeria was not left out of organisations that supported the government in ameliorating the effects of the pandemic and lockdown on people. It donated to various food banks set up by State governments as part of its CSR intervention in the COVID-19 pandemic; as well as supported its host community, Agidingbi, with products and face masks.

In 2018, Mondelez International Foundation/Cadbury Nigeria and Helen Keller International (HKI), an American Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), launched the Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle flagship programme in Nigeria. This is the first-ever Mondelez Foundation-funded initiative in Nigeria. The programme was earlier launched in other countries where Mondelez operates in.

Since the project was launched, Mondelez International Foundation/Cadbury Nigeria has been partnering with HKI to support schools and communities to reach underserved children in Nigeria, in collaboration with the Lagos State Government. The project seeks to reduce undernutrition and overweight among primary school pupils aged 6-11 years in the target nine public primary schools in Ikeja LGA, Lagos State. It is also targeting three Local Community Development Areas (LCDAs) for this project in Lagos namely Ikeja, Onigbingo and Ojodu.

Cadbury Nigeria has had several programmes designed to impact positively on the educational sector. They include: Cadbury Bournvita Teachers' Awards, an Initiative that was exclusively designed for the promotion and celebration of excellence amongst teachers and the teaching profession; Cadbury Bournvita Children's Magic Flight, a programme that sought to celebrate children in a fun and educative manner by exposing them to new climes and building their leadership potential for future challenges; and Cadbury Nigeria/Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Poetry Prize, an annual prize to encourage the literary arts in the country.

These are just few among other CSR initiatives undertaken by Cadbury Nigeria whose origin dates back to the 1950s when the business was founded as an operation to source cocoa beans from Nigeria and as a precursor to enable the Company's founders to tap opportunities for serving the local consumer-market with world-famous, Cadbury-branded products.

In the early 1960s, an initial operation was established to re-pack imported bulk products. This packing operation grew rapidly into a fully-fledged manufacturing operation and resulted in the incorporation of Cadbury Nigeria Limited in January 1965. In 1976, the Company became a publicly listed company with shares traded locally on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). Cadbury Nigeria has grown to become a household name providing consumers with much-loved iconic brands.





Empowering Women, Empowering The Nation

By Azeez Disu

What can the world do without women, mums or mothers? From keeping the family together, raising the children, to their multitasking duties; women play major role in the development of the society. The reasons many songs are now dedicated to the gender and the world yearly celebrate them.

The days such as International Women's Day (IWD) and Mother's Day have come to stay as days to celebrate and re-emphasis the importance of the gender. In spite of the enormous importance of women or mothers to the society, gender equality is still a major issue across the world.

According to The Global Goals for Sustainable Development, "Gender bias is undermining our social fabric and devalues all of us. It is not just a human rights issue; it is a tremendous waste of the world's human potential. By denying women equal rights, we deny half the population a chance to live life at its fullest. Political, economic and social equality for women will benefit all the world's citizens. Together we can eradicate prejudice and work for equal rights and respect for all."

In the quest to eradicate gender bias which women are the most affected, global leaders are striving to implement the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 5 (Gender Equality) and to consolidate on the effort, brands are in no small measure ensuring that gender equality at the workplace is a norm and its result is showing in the numbers of women rising to the top in their careers. In the same vein, brands are unveiling series of laudable initiatives to empower more women in their various societies.

Nigerian brands are also not left behind as they are playing their own part like other notable brands across the globe in women empowerment and gender equality. One of such examples is in the dairy segment led by the industry leader, Three Crowns Milk, a brand from the stable of FrieslandCampina WAMCO.

Over the years, the brand recognised the important roles mothers play in the family and the fact that when they are taken care of, it positively impacts the care they give to their families. It is in recognition of this that, Three Crowns Milk has continued to elevate care for mothers and the society with the right portfolio mix at attractive price points. According to the company, "Three Crowns Milk is the only Nigerian dairy brand endorsed by the Nigerian Heart Foundation as the low cholesterol and heart-friendly milk."

Three Crowns Milk was launched in 1988 as a filled evaporated milk with low cholesterol and in 2015 extended to powdered milk.

Gender Equality At FrieslandCampina WAMCO

Re-echoing the popular saying, "Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world."

In ensuring a better world, FrieslandCampina WAMCO, manufacturer of Three Crowns Milk is promoting a workplace diversity which is aimed at creating an inclusive environment that accepts each individual's differences, embraces their strengths and provides equal opportunities for all employees irrespective of their gender to achieve their full potential.

"At FrieslandCampina WAMCO, we have an agenda that helps us build an organisation and culture that is attractive and compelling for talents. Every year, we come up with objectives that help to improve gender diversity particularly in leadership positions across our business using intentional initiatives," the company disclosed.

Campaigns

The Three Crowns Milk through campaigns such as 30-day Fitness Challenge and the annual 'Mum of the Year' endears the love of mums and her family to its brand.

"We pride ourselves as the only milk brand that show cares to mum physically and emotionally wellbeing. We know that when the mum is healthy and happy she can fully radiate love to keep the rhythm of the family going. Every year, Three Crowns holds a list of heart-friendly activities that keeps the rhythm of mum's heart going, such as the 30-day Fitness Challenge and the annual 'Mum of the Year' campaign," the company disclosed.

One of the campaigns is the Three Crowns Fitness campaign, it is an initiative established in 2016 and targeted at Nigerian mums who want to prioritise the overall wellness of herself and her families. The campaign was conceived to help every Nigerian, especially mothers to live a healthy lifestyle through healthy habits. Three Crowns provide mums with healthy dairy nutrition needed to stay healthy and constantly creates an engagement platform for them to keep fit in the comfort of their homes. This year's theme is "Everybody is welcome" and participants will work with fitness coaches across all social media platforms @ThreeCrownsMilk, Whatsapp and on Telegram to help consumers achieve their fitness goals.

The fitness campaign which runs twice a year is aimed at encouraging women to make fitness a lifestyle for their overall well being. "We have had encouraging testimonials from consumers on



how the campaign has helped their weight management and dietary changes," the company stated.

Another laudable campaign is the Three Crowns Milk Mum of the Year campaign. It has come to be recognised as the leading campaign dedicated to celebrating Nigerian mothers. The competition is aimed at recognising and rewarding mums for their unique role in the family.

Three Crowns Mum of the Year campaign debuted in 2015 when Olamide Olaleye emerged winner, followed by Nkechi Brayila who won in 2016, while Oluwakemi Longe was crowned Mum of the Year in 2017.

In 2018 and in commemoration of its 30 years anniversary, Three Crowns raised the stake of the competition by awarding the grand prize to three winners; Jennifer OtoGod, Pauline Pambolo Daniel and Adaobi Okonkwo. They were each rewarded with an all-expense paid vacation to Dubai with 2 members of their families and a year's supply of Three Crowns Milk. Ever since, the event continues to be bigger and better every year.

Additionally, in the last three years, Three Crowns has taken the fore front in sponsoring several online and offline fitness initiatives that share the same purpose with the brand; one of which is "The Fastest Shedder", Nigeria's first weight loss reality TV show. The 3-months fitness programme is targeted at helping overly obese women achieve a healthier weight and BMI and over the years, we have recorded testimonials with the participants.

In the last season, Yetunde Bajomo who emerged winner had the highest weight loss of 31kg. Yetunde started the show weighing 118.8kg and ended weighing 87.2kg. In 2019, Ada Onwubuya emerged as Season 2 winner shedding off 23.1kg. This year, the 4th edition will commence in May and Three Crowns remains the lead sponsor.

Other Innovative CSR Initiatives

Three Crowns Milk is regarded as the only dairy brand in Nigeria that cares for mothers and women generally with its women -



centric initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives which are contributing to the development of the society.

For example, in August its throw its weight behind the annual event tagged, 'August Meeting'. Noteworthy, the August Meeting is a women gathering recognised amidst the Igbo community as the annual homecoming congress held by the Igbo women in the month of August. It is a massive homecoming whereby Igbo women in Diaspora and the cities travel back to their matrimonial villages to meet with their local counterpart to discuss matters pertaining to the community development, conflict management, human development, and other socio-economic and cultural initiatives.

"Thus, activities such as 'August Meeting' have been identified as one of many engagement platforms to reach our targets. The month of August every year witnesses a massive homecoming from different towns and cities across the world of 'Igbo women' where they unite for what is now popularly known as the 'August Meeting' These mothers' congresses, as they truly are, were originally often geared towards self-help rural community development, but have in recent times delved into conflict management, peace-building and human development in rural societies. Three Crowns milk partners with churches, groups and organisations with selected Women Fora in the East and West to drive engagement activities with consumers through Product talk, health and wellness nutrition tips, fit and active lifestyle, Three Crowns milk usage applications, sampling and sales," the company revealed.

In another vein, through its Dairy Development Programme (DDP) initiated in 2010 to drive local sourcing of fresh milk in Nigeria, it empowered over 10,000 local dairy farmers (including 1,500 rural women), thereby strengthening sustainable dairy farming in Nigeria.

Remarkably, the brand has won series of notable awards for consistently bringing its purpose to live through its several initiatives targeted at reducing incidences of cardiovascular related diseases and catering for diverse consumers across the different socio-economic class with its affordable dairy nutrition.



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Healthy mums, happy families



Winning With Women, Promoting Gender Parity



By Jeremiah Agada

Gender parity or equality, a statistical measure that provides a numerical value of female-to-male ratios for indicators such as income or education is gaining more and more momentum over the last decades. Significant gains have been made when it comes to achieving economic gender parity.

Despite these gains and in spite of increased publicity and discussions surrounding the inequalities women face in the workplace, there remains a tremendous amount of work to be done to close the gender gap. Women in the workplace are still not treated equally compared to their male counterparts and most companies still have a long way to go when it comes to reaching true gender equality.

But while achieving workplace gender equality is obviously the 'fair' and 'right' thing to do, it really is not just a 'feel-good' exercise. According to the World Economic Forum, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also an economic imperative. With equality being linked to improved productivity and performance, increased innovation and enhanced reputation, fully engaging women's talents in the workplace is the obvious choice from an economic point of view. According to research (2016) by the McKinsey Global Institute, women could add as much as \$28 trillion or 26 percent to annual global GDP in 2025 – if they were to participate in the economy identically to men. To put this into perspective, that is roughly the size of the European and Chinese economies combined.

Fortunately, there are organizations whose operational philosophies and core values are centered on inclusiveness, gender parity and multiculturalism. Hazon Holdings, a continually growing and leading diversified business domiciled in Africa and focused on Market Access, Healthcare, Energy and Technology, is one such organizations. It makes the exclusive Brand Communicator Brands Empowering Women's list for this and other reasons below.

Hazon Holdings is a core believer in driving people, processes and businesses to attain peak productivity in given fields through steadfastness and ultimate disciplines. The organization also focuses on promoting the core values of leadership, excellence, discipline and passion, ensures there is no iota of gender bias in its decision-making processes. From recruitment, to appraisals, to commendations and promotions; excellence, required skills/experience and performance on the job, Hazon Holdings has always upheld these tenets of equal opportunity and inclusiveness in its processes. It is no surprise therefore that the dynamic team at the organization is composed of humans from different social and professional background who work together to drive innovation and achieve a common goal.

In ensuring its attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) goal which concerns gender equality and is fifth of the 17 SDGs established by the United Nations in 2015 which reads, "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," the organization has an outstanding ration when it comes to gender ratios especially at its top level. In fact, the organization is one of the negligible few ones that have attained what can best be described as full gender parity as it currently boasts a whopping gender ratio of 1:1 at its top-level management; proof to the fact that women have an equal chance and opportunity to succeed.

To further show how important female members of its workforce are, the organization has set aside the 10th of March annually for the commemoration of the International Women's Day within its organisation and to also appreciate the women who make up a very important part of its family. For this year's event, women



Adetutu Afolabi, Co-Founder, Hazon Holdings

around the various business units gathered under one umbrella to discuss how they #ChooseToChallenge. The event chaired by the Executive Director, Hazon Holdings, Mrs. Adetutu Afolabi, and MD, GDM Group, Mrs. Omolabake Yussuff who led the women on discourse on weighty global matters. ED, Hazon Holdings, Mrs. Afolabi explained that the theme for this year's IWD is strategic because it is a call to women worldwide to begin to take their place in global affairs.

Over the years, Hazon Holdings led by the indefatigable Victor 'Gbenga Afolabi as Founder and powered by a workforce that has in more times boasted more females, risen to take its spot among the top performing and fastest growing organizations in Africa. Today, Hazon Holdings has over 16 companies including BTL powerhouse, GDM; Wellness Healthcare Group, Eko Innovation Centre, Retailer, Grey Media, RetailScope, VGA Investments and Activa Foods. The organization has also grown to have a valuation of over \$478M! This, in part is because of the calibre of Amazons within the Hazon Holdings rank, making these a possibility. The light is beamed on some of these women in the organization's top management, they are below:

Adetutu Afolabi, Co-Founder - Hazon Holdings, CEO - Wellness Healthcare Group

Besides the above positions she holds in Hazon Holdings, Adetutu is a wellness coach, a mother and a wife. A champion for gender inclusion, through several on-and-off-the-job coaching, mentorship and training programs, she advocates for equality and empowerment of women, both in business and in the community. Adetutu's earnest desire is for everyone to deliberately make lifestyle choices that would improve their wellbeing. She is a Pharmacist and a seasoned Serial Entrepreneur, who thrives on expanding horizons and testing limits to create new avenues for

maximum productivity.

Coach Adetutu started Wellness as a Community Pharmacy Practice in 2007, borne out of her keen interest in affordable and accessible health care for community members. The organization has recently evolved not just to a health insurance company but also to a platform for Wellness advocacy and education. An avid proponent of value creation for all stakeholders driven by excellent service delivery, Adetutu enjoys building sustainable processes that improves organizational effectiveness and efficiencies.



Omolabake Yussuff - MD, GDM Group

When speed, attention to detail and flawless execution matters, Omolabake is the one name that comes to the mind of several marketing directors in the FMCG sector and other multinational companies across Africa. Labake is revered for her innovative and brilliant strategies, with well thought out marketing

tactics that have helped several businesses win exceptionally in the market place.

A business leader and a force to reckon with in the Nigerian Experiential Marketing scene, Labake has garnered over a decade of experience working with several companies in the FMCG sector, finance, manufacturing, agriculture, and government. She has earned all the feathers in her cap by climbing up the ranks through hard work, resourcefulness, dedication, diligence to flawless execution and quality delivery at all times. She rose from being a Marketing operations personnel to becoming the Managing Director of the leading Marketing innovation company in Nigeria (GDM Group).

Her impact in the company is reflected by her numerous accomplishments and several awards the company has won, and her experience working on over 185 brands cuts across planning and analytics, activations, project management, human relations, and people management, which informs the stellar performance she brings to the table at all times. Labake is passionate about learning new things, creating memorable and exceptional consumer experience and driving brand growth.



Linda I.A. Obi - CEO/Co-Founder, Retailer

Linda builds and operates ventures. She has successfully designed, built, and scaled tech-driven platform companies in emerging markets delivering businesses across SSA. She served as Business Leader Nigeria for Farmcrowdy, the leading Agtech platform in West Africa focused on providing the necessary tools

and technology for farmers and agribusinesses to boost food production with better yields, lower costs, and smarter marketing.

Prior to that, she was the Director of Franchise Acquisition for Tolaram Group and also a brand Consultant who transitioned into helping technology startups scale in Sub-Saharan Africa. She did this in leadership positions at Divergent Group and Farmgate Africa

as the Chief Operations officer and in her most recent position as Business leader, West Africa at Farmcrowdy.

With over 20 combined years of experience in the FMCG, Retail, Agri-tech and E-commerce sector she embraces the core values of integrity, innovation, and growth.



Nkemdirim Arukwe- Chief Technology Officer, Hazon Technologies

Nkemdirim Arukwe is a seasoned Information Technology professional with five years' experience in building and managing software aimed at driving disruption and optimizing businesses. She holds a certificate in Management Essentials from Harvard

Business School, and formerly co-founded and ran Playfloor Technologies, a company aimed at disrupting technology-driven entertainment.

She currently serves as Chief Technology Officer at Hazon Holdings, a diversified holding company in Africa focused on Market Access, Healthcare, Energy and Technology. She builds teams focused on building and commercializing technology driven initiatives across the group.

Majolie Obaje-Head of Marketing Operations, GDM Group

Majolie Obaje is a seasoned brand marketing expert experienced in Below-The-Line marketing, trade marketing, brand strategy, route to market and NPD. With over eight years' experience in managing marketing campaigns for top brands of leading Multinationals



within the Nigerian FMCG industry, she is driven by the passion to see focus brands bloom in the minds of their consumers; creating exciting and memorable brand to consumer ties and exceptional consumer experience while driving brand growth and ROI for clients.

She has also garnered several Certifications in a bid to ensuring a progressive career, personal growth and value adding

to the Marketing eco system. These include Certificate in Professional Marketing (CIM UK), Certificate in Marketing Management (LBS Pan Atlantic University), Certificate in Project Management (IPMP Nigeria) and most recently Diploma in Digital Marketing (SHAW ACADEMY) amongst others.

Majolie who currently serves as the Marketing Operations Manager for the GDM Group holds a Bachelor's degree from Madonna University Nigeria where she studied Mass Communication. She is an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Marketing UK.

Omotayo Inobeme-Group Head, Marketing & Planning



If attention was a bill, Omotayo has always paid in full, a unique skill that has made her a revered mind and hand in experiential marketing. She began her ascent in Marketing communication nine years ago as an Events Specialist and with dedicated learning and consistent delivery she has evolved through several roles.

From being a Project Lead for GDM, one of the flagship companies of the organization, she has risen through the ranks to become Head of Marketing for a leading business conglomerate in Nigeria. In the time spanning over nine years as an experiential marketing professional, Omotayo has helped grow several home-bred and cosmopolitan brands in such sectors as FMCG, healthcare, banking, telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and fintech.

With several awards and accolades to her name, she has judiciously managed global brands, successfully launched numerous products in the Nigerian market place, developed and executed marketing campaigns that helped these brands win significantly in the market place; bringing record-breaking ROIs for the brand and an exponential increase in revenue for her employers.

Adejoke Samson-Egbekunle-Business Head, Grey Media Limited



Adejoke Samson-Egbekunle is a graduate of Accountancy with many years of practice as both an Accountant and a Business Administrator, most of which were in the Printing & Publishing Sector. This was where she developed interest and passion for printing technology over 16 years ago.

A member of the Chartered

Institute of Professional Printers of Nigeria (CIPPON), Adejoke is a goal getter who is passionately committed to her dream of building and leading the foremost print & publishing firm in Nigeria. She takes interest in human capital development of her team members and always builds them up to be self-reliant and more rounded in their day-to-day job.



Bolatito Oladunmoye-Community and Digital Media Manager

Bolatito is the Community and Digital Media Manager for Eko Innovation Centre, a diversified business that commercializes and accelerate innovation that is anchored on technology.

She is an expert in community building and wears another hat as Head of Partnerships. She has a track record of pioneering, designing and executing successful tech events like Art of Technology Lagos, Smart Meter Hackathon, Lagos Legislative Parley.

Driven, motivated, focused and passionate about empowering young people with technology, she is the Program Manager for Eko Innovation School which creates an employability ecosystem for Nigerian Youths.

Bolatito is also an expert at content creation and immensely contributed in the areas of WhiteBoard Animation, Screen Annotations, and After-Effect Animations for both PharmAccess and EDC Entrepreneurship Programmes. She is also part of the content development team that executed the Federal Government's YOUWin programme.



Esther Mwana-Customer Experience Manager, A4&T Power Solutions

Esther is a customer champion, success driver, service delivery and retention enthusiast. She is a result focused, service operations management professional with a six-year proven track record in service excellence and customer experience management in the telecoms and renewable energy

sectors. She is an administrative professional with experience supervising staff, planning communication systems, updating procedures, supporting management staff, and implementing key measures.

She meets deadlines and works with a high level of efficiency. She is also highly organized and meticulous. Some of her core competencies include; service operations management, customer service / contact center management, quality assurance and process

improvement using database methodology.

Beyond Gender Inclusion

In addition to its various internal policies aimed at promoting gender inclusiveness and parity, Hazon Holdings has several products and initiatives in place, aimed at supporting, empowering and enlightening women within and without the organization.

One of such is the Wellness for Life initiative. The organization brought this to life as part of its commitment to providing accessible healthcare to women. The initiative is channeled through one of its companies, a leading Nigerian health insurance provider, Wellness HMO. The initiative touches the lives of the people, where selected women are adopted by the organization and given access to quality health care for the rest of their lives. It is a Lifetime-Gift Wellness offer in collaboration with the Hadassah Healing Foundation.

Over 20,000 women have been screened by Wellness HMO for blood sugar level and high blood pressure since 2015 and provided with the right medications and referral to hospitals. Wellness for Life initiative is a way of giving back to the society.

While commenting on the initiative, Adetutu who pilots the affairs of the HMO explained that women are like the nexus in most homes. "They are the caregivers who many times ignore their own health needs. For this reason, Wellness plays the role of ensuring that women remain a priority where health needs are concerned, helping them focus on their families and contribute positively to society. Wellness Healthcare also offers free medical care to the children at Heritage Homes (an orphanage) in Anthony, Lagos," she said.

Another initiative is the Women Health Webinar Series, a Wellness Healthcare Group initiative which provides in-depth learning on a broad range of women's health topics. The webinars encourage women to recognize and explore aspects of women's health that exist in all specialties of medicine. Interactive formats are emphasized, giving women opportunities to engage with each other and the webinar speakers.

In these monthly Webinar Series, women's health issues are examined with the hope of breaking taboos surrounding illnesses that women are too embarrassed to talk about. The most recent episode addressed the topic - Fibroid: The Facts & The Myths, with Dr Olajuwon Alabi – MD, South Shore Women and Children Hospital, as Speaker and Pharma Adetutu Afolabi as Host. The initiative is based on Hazon Holdings' recognition of the fact that conquering health challenges and silencing stigmas surrounding them is a huge step towards empowering women.

Yet another initiative is the "Speak Up" campaign, a Hazon Women Harassment Program. The campaign is based on the fact that Hazon Holdings abhors and kicks against all forms of violence and harassment against women in the organization. As part of its policies, it aims to provide employees with a work environment that does not discriminate, and is free of harassment. The organization also takes deliberate steps to prevent and deal with occurrences in the workplace. The "Speak Up" program encourages women to report any issues anonymously.





Supporting Women Entrepreneurs In Nigeria

By Azeez Disu

Research has shown that societies where opportunities for women are on par with men have fewer child deaths, fewer conflicts, and better public services and health. This pinpoints the importance of women in nation building.

Also, a country's GDP grows and the global economy benefits when women-owned businesses thrive. In places where women's entrepreneurship is restricted or limited, the opposite happens — individuals, communities, countries and the global economy miss out on unrealized economic gains.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Mastercard, a global technology company in the payments industry is one of the leading brands championing women, equal pay and gender equality. By leveraging its network, partnerships and technology, the company powers an inclusive, digital economy that benefits everyone, everywhere by making transactions safe, simple, smart, and accessible with connections across more than 210 countries and territories.

Female-Focused Initiatives

Last year, in a continuation of its support to small businesses and women entrepreneurs, the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth awarded a grant to The Omaness Skinfood Company in Nigeria.

The West African skincare company is a social impact enterprise which aims to foster economic prosperity for women and communities in Nigeria. It produces a line of high-quality, skin-enriching body care products using natural ingredients that are primarily sourced from Nigeria. By scaling its Skinfood Merchant Program through a seed funding grant from the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, Omaness hopes to empower 10,000 women entrepreneurs to run their own skinfood merchant business by 2025.

Mastercard's support is providing skinfood merchants with micro-inventory credits, marketing support and business development training, enabling them to start a profitable business, alongside opportunities to sell more, earn more, scale faster and ultimately benefit from a sustainable income.

"Unlocking the world's opportunities for women is an important part of creating a more inclusive environment in which everyone benefits, everyone can follow their passions, and everyone believes in the power of their potential. Mastercard is a longstanding supporter of small businesses and women entrepreneurs, and through various initiatives we aim to connect women to the tools and technology to succeed, ensuring prosperity for the wider ecosystem," said Ebehijie Momoh, Country Manager & Area Business Head, West Africa, Mastercard.

Women-owned and led businesses are catalysts for economic growth, improving the lives of everyone, everywhere. According to the benchmark indication of the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2020, women business owners as a percentage of total business owners is 23.3% in Nigeria.

"Omaness proudly engages women to distribute natural indigenous produce – adding value to the wellbeing of end-consumers and unlocking opportunities for women to prosper through their networks. We are honoured to partner with Mastercard, an innovator that cares deeply about enabling women to build communities where everyone can flourish," said Ifeoma Adibe-Chukwuka, CEO and Founder of The Omaness Skinfood Company.

While operating a one-of-its-kind social business model which controls the value chain from sourcing down to the last mile of distribution, Omaness focuses on creating and connecting women to income-generating opportunities across its value chain including supply, production and distribution of skinfood products.

The Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth works with grantees around the world to help address the challenges facing micro and small businesses, including providing access to capacity building and capital.

Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs

The 2020 Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE) has once again ranked Uganda (39.6%), Botswana (38.5%) and Ghana (36.5%) as the world's three leading economies having the most women business owners. The Index's benchmark indicator is calculated as a percentage of total businesses owners, and all three countries have grown their percentages compared to the previous year.

Now in its fourth year, the MIWE highlights the vast socio-



economic contribution of women entrepreneurs around the world and provides insights on the factors driving and inhibiting their advancement. Through a unique methodology – drawing on publicly available data from leading international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and International Labour Organization – MIWE 2020 includes a global ranking of the advancement of women in business in pre-pandemic conditions across 58 economies representing almost 80% of the global female labour force. This includes eight countries across Sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda).

All but one (Botswana) of the Sub-Saharan African countries captured in the report showed improved MIWE scores since the last edition. South Africa displayed the biggest growth with a 7% increase from [60.2 score to 64.4]. Botswana however has also grown the number of women entrepreneurs since last year (36% in 2019 to 38.5% in 2020), earning the country the second spot globally and displacing Ghana who now comes third.

The results also point to a strong representation of women business owners in Malawi, Angola and Nigeria, despite the economic and social challenges facing their entrepreneurial ecosystems. According to the report, the high scores are spurred by a low fear of business failure, an absence of alternative income sources, and an eager commitment to contribute to their communities. The report demonstrates that a high regard for risk taking, innovativeness, individuality and creativeness in entrepreneurship is prevalent in Uganda, Nigeria and Angola.

The report also notes the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women entrepreneurs around the world, with 87% saying they have been adversely affected. Over representation in sectors hardest hit by the economic downturn, the pronounced digital gender gap in an increasingly virtual world, and the mounting pressures of childcare responsibilities are only a few factors that have left women particularly vulnerable.

In Ghana, for instance, a sectoral breakdown reveals that a large proportion of women-owned businesses (85.1%) operate in highly impacted sectors compared to 50.5% for men. In Uganda, 61% of women-led small businesses failed to generate income even as lockdown measures were eased.

"Our findings beckon us to consider the cost of untapped potential in women as contributors, not just in business and society, but on the national and global scale, as we chart the path of post Covid-19 recovery across Africa. This is especially important as more women owned businesses will likely be impacted by the pandemic making the support through incentives, necessary tools, mentorship, and digital inclusion platforms even more urgent. At Mastercard, we continue to partner with leading organizations across Africa and around the world to create safe and accessible digitized payment solutions for female owned small businesses across Africa," said Ifeoma Dozie, Director, Marketing and Communications, Sub-Saharan Africa, Mastercard.

Opportunities Ahead

Despite the obvious challenges, the report highlights a number of opportunities for women in the COVID-19 era, particularly in online shopping and digital commerce. These have been supported by Mastercard research. A recent Mastercard study revealed the exponential growth of e-commerce in Africa – with 81% of people surveyed in Nigeria, 72% in Tanzania, 68% in Ivory Coast, and 79% in both Kenya and Ghana saying they have been shopping more online since the pandemic began.

As the pandemic presents new business opportunities for women, especially in terms of online shopping and services, ensuring access to technology or digital solutions, affordable data and modern trade resources will empower more women to succeed in business.

In 2020, soon after the pandemic was declared, Mastercard expanded its worldwide financial inclusion commitment, pledging to bring a total of one billion people and 50 million micro and small businesses into the digital economy by 2025. As part of this effort, Mastercard is championing a direct focus on providing 25 million women entrepreneurs with solutions that can help them grow their businesses, through a range of initiatives crossing funding, mentoring and the development of inclusive technologies.

“Women-owned and led businesses are catalysts for economic growth, improving the lives of everyone, everywhere. According to the benchmark indication of the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2020, women business owners as a percentage of total business owners is 23.3% in Nigeria.”



Empowering Women To Create Happier Families And Societies

By Jeremiah Agada

For three successive years, the Brand Communicator Intelligence Unit has consistently featured Hayat Kimya's flagship brand, Molfix- premium baby diapers- in its special project beaming the spotlights on brands, organisations and agencies empowering women. This is not unconnected to the fact that since the company set sail into the Nigerian market, it has consistently empowered the Nigerian woman and the Nigerian mother with the provision of bespoke products that have ensured that they are 'Happy Today' and 'Happy Tomorrow' in line with its objectives of empowering the Nigerian woman.

As always and in line with this year's International women's Day campaign theme, 'Choose to Challenge,' the brand has consistently engaged women on its platforms, one of which is through its 'Happy Today, Happy Tomorrow' initiative. Leveraging digital, the company created a very robust platform of an online community of women on social media known as Mo'mums (Molfix mothers), some years ago. The platform caters for expectant mothers, those that have just given birth (0-6 months), those with growing babies (6-12 months), those with toddlers (12-23 months) and for mothers that have grown babies.

Today, the platform boasts a community of more than one million women who are daily and constantly 'choosing to challenge' the status quo, right before they enter the very important stage of life where they intend to carry out procreation to when they become mothers and more. Expectant women are empowered with such knowledge as weekly development of pregnancy, nutrition in pregnancy, pregnancy exercises, delivery, needs of a new-born baby, breastfeeding, pre-pregnancy, baby shower and motherhood/for parents. New mothers get to know more about baby care, nutrition, sleep, breastfeeding, motherhood/ for parents and putting on a diaper among others. For mothers with Babies that are between six and twelve months, they get monthly progress chart, nutrition, breastfeeding tips as well as games and fun activities for them. All these and much more are lined up for mothers.

Over the years the Molfix brand has impacted the lives of women beyond the Mo'mums platform. It has empowered women with initiatives like the 'Happy Mums, Happy Families,' with the insight that when women are empowered, the family and indeed, the society is better for it. This is as healthy, educated and empowered women can foster the changes needed to create empowered communities and, consequently, a more sustainable and peaceful future for all, as envisioned by the fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goal which challenges the world to: "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls." Evidence shows that investing in women and girls creates a ripple effect that yields multiple benefits which extend to their families, communities and countries. The Molfix brand, in this regard, has over the years, invested in mothers, setting them up with products to attain financial independence and create happiness for their families.

Creating happy families from a brand as Molfix is not unexpected as the parent company, Hayat Kimya is a vanguard for women empowerment and creating work environment for women and men alike to attain the heights of their careers. Roseline Abaraonye is an Amazon in the Nigerian marketing communications market and she leads the marketing function of Hayat Kimya in Nigeria in the capacity of Marketing Director.

In a chat she has had with Brand Communicator, Roseline had explained that Hayat Kimya's focus on empowering women with initiatives like 'Happy Today, Happy Tomorrow,' 'Happy Mums, Happy Families' among others, which are part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility. "Hayat Kimya as a global organisation is a firm believer in giving back to the society. Hence, in Nigeria, we identified the fact that unemployment is a key issue. In addition to the fact that a lot of women have become the bread winners of their families, the brand thought it wise to empower our mums and enable them earn a living through the brand. As a result, the brand launched the "Happy Mums, Happy Families" CSR campaign.

"You will realise that once you have a home where the mother is not happy, you will find that the family will seldom be happy. We asked ourselves how best we can really touch the lives of these women to have happier families. This led us back to come up with the 'Happy Today, Happy Tomorrow' campaign too. Everything we have tried to build revolves around happiness, to ensure that there is happiness in the home from the father, mother and to the children so that happiness is all-round to make sure there is happiness in every home. This way



Molfix delivered satisfaction to its consumers while living out the brand promise of keeping our Mums and babies happy today and happy tomorrow," she explained.

Beyond the Sustainable Development Goals, Hayat Kimya has over the years, apparently, keenly followed the Women's Empowerment Principles created in a collaboration between the UN Global Compact and UN Women and used to empower women in the marketplace, workplace and community. These principles, seven in total, include creating high-level corporate leadership for gender equality; treating all people fairly at work, respecting and supporting non-discrimination and human rights and ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety of all workers, whether male or female.

Others are promoting education, training and professional development for women; implementing supply chain, marketing practices and enterprise development that empower women; championing equality through community initiatives and advocacy and measuring and report publicly on progress to create gender equality.

Of all these principles, Hayat Kimya has done impressively well in a clime and market like Nigeria. Roseline revealed that through partnerships and collaborations, the company work according to some of these principles. "We have worked together with some government agencies on poverty alleviation and the ministry of health generally to help in identifying mothers who need assistance and then we offered them some goods at a particular amount for capital. After that, we gave them a kiosk and a position where they will stay and sell them."

For these efforts and for its premium quality brands, Hayat Kimya has earned serial recognitions and awards locally, continentally and globally including making the prestigious "Female-Executive-Friendly Top 100 Companies" list by Capital Magazine, occupying the 37th position globally, years ago. This is reflected in its local market here in Nigeria where it has the resourceful Roseline Abaraonye, Marketing Director of Hayat Kimya and the award winning Chioma Mgbaramuko, the Brand Manager of its flagship brand, Molfix among other ladies, in its ranks.

Although Hayat Kimya came into the Nigerian market in 2015, the company actually commenced operations in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry as far back as 1987 as manufacturer of goods in hygiene, tissue and home care categories offering well established brands such as Bingo (detergents and home cleaning), Molped (feminine care), Papia, Familia, Focus & Teno (cleansing tissues) as well as Joly and

Evony (adult diaper). The company's brands are favourites of consumers in more than 100 countries across five continents.

Since it entered Nigeria, with each succeeding year, the company has consistently delighted customers and consumers alike of its brand with new innovative products, variants or SKUs. In 2015 when it first appeared on the Nigerian scene, it came on-board with the award winning Molfix brand, a brand that has continued to rev up positive reviews from industry stakeholders, acceptance by customers and ultimate satisfaction from its growing consumer base.

Today, Molfix is the most preferred baby diaper brand Nigeria with the lion share of the diaper market. Additionally, it has been rewarded with the most prestigious awards since 2016. Together with the baby diaper brand- Babam, Hayat Kimya controls more than half of the diaper market in Nigeria. The company also has a complimentary product called Molfix wipes. The Institute for Government Research Leadership Technology also awarded the brand with "Best Baby Diaper of the Year" at the African Product Awards 2016. The brand has gone ahead to garner other awards in the same regards, over the years.

Having consolidated its hold on the diaper market, the company boosted its brand portfolio with the introduction of Familia and Papia tissue brands. In 2019, it introduced two more products: the Molped Sanitary Pad and Molfix Pant. Hayat bKimya has also gone ahead to make some other introductions in recent times.

The company also boosted its geographical presence in Nigeria with the inauguration of its \$100m diaper and tissue plant in Agbara, Nigeria, two years later. The factory based on 200,000sqm land, is for diaper production as well as its Familia and Papia brands of tissues papers. While the plant has a diaper production capacity of 1.3bn tons per year, tpy, it also has a tissue capacity of 1300bn tpy.

Reputed to currently rank as the most modern Hayat plant in the world, the Nigerian diaper and tissue factory generates its own energy, a total of 14.2 megawatt. Hayat Kimya has 14 production sites around the world but its first major investment in Sub-Saharan Africa is in Nigeria. Products from the factory serves the West and Central African market and augment company's North African factories where necessary

Headquartered in Turkey, Hayat Kimya's has subsidiaries in Iran, Egypt, Bulgaria, Algeria, Morocco, Russia and Nigeria and employs nearly 8,000 people today around the world. Hayat Kimya manufactures its products in 14 plants and continues its international investments at full speed.



Challenging Norms, Supporting Women Through MGWF

By Jeremiah Agada

In today's world of business, gender equality has become a dominant point of discourse. Gender equality is the equal treatment and access of female and male employees to opportunities and company resources. This includes employers providing equal opportunities and consideration for promotions, pay raises, preferred jobs, advancement and inclusion in decision-making processes.

With so much attention paid to the issue of gender equality in recent years, one might expect progress to have ensued. However, according to research by Payscale.com, the "uncontrolled gender pay gap, which takes the ratio of the median earnings of women to men without accounting for various compensable factors, has only decreased by \$0.07 (N28 approx) since 2015. In 2020, women made only \$0.81 (N333 approx.) for every dollar (N411 approx) men made.

"The controlled gender pay gap, which accounts for job title, years of experience, industry, location, and other compensable factors, has also decreased by only \$0.01 since 2015. Women in the controlled group make \$0.98 for every \$1 a man makes," the research noted.

According to PwC's The Diversity Project report, organizations with greater gender diversity are 1.4 times more likely to have sustained, profitable growth. Additionally, the report states that firms who have diversity and inclusion as a business priority improve their reputation and brand. There is an abundance of research that suggests that there is a link between gender equality and better overall organizational performance and gender diversity should be seen as a solution and not a problem to solve.

Fortunately, gender equality is one of the diversity and inclusion strategies that forward thinking organizations like MultiChoice continue to deliver on. It comes as no surprise therefore that its employees represent more than 70 nationalities across the group, with majority from the African continent. Also, the company's employee profile comprises an unprecedented 47% women and 53% men.

John Ugbe, Chief Executive Officer of MultiChoice Nigeria, notes that these strategies give the company an edge in the competitive market. "We believe diversity gives us a competitive advantage, aids in decision-making, problem-solving and helps provide the best solutions for our customers. It promotes an inclusive, bias-free culture and delivers on our commitment to transformation and inclusiveness.

"We actively drive inclusivity and support a network of female leaders across all levels of the organisation to champion impactful work for the benefit of talent across our markets. We are expanding these programmes through multiple initiatives including women associate programmes to provide top female technology talent with shadowing, coaching and partnering opportunities that accelerate their career growth. We have also created a groupwide women's forum that facilitates knowledge sharing and opportunities to network and actively raise the visibility of women in the business," he reveals.

From a corporate perspective, MultiChoice drives its business with the understanding that the future of business is characterized by purposeful gender-balanced workforce and age, race/culture and ability inclusiveness among other factors. "At MultiChoice, we know why we want women leaders. We know that women bring an element that men will never bring to the boardroom, they bring a different angle to contributions, conversations and strategies which are very important to lead a successful organization."

Ugbe notes that these strategies go beyond the operational philosophy of the pay TV giant to include storytelling and content creation: "As Nigeria's most loved storytellers, we understand that life imitates art. Therefore, even in our productions, we infuse the gender equality strategy by casting strong women roles. Imagine a young girl watches one of our productions and decides to become one of those strong women, that singular story would have positively changed her and her sphere of influence."

The group wide women's forum Ugbe had revealed in previous paragraphs is the MultiChoice Group Women's Forum (MGWF) launched on the 30th of August 2019. The forum aims to build an inclusive environment that advances women across MultiChoice by providing personal growth, leadership and career development programmes thereby creating unique opportunities for business continuity improvement, collaborations, ideation and building dynamic networks. The MGWF is centered around six pillars that include sponsorship, mentorship, learning, among others.

On sponsorship, each EXCO member of the forum chooses a senior manager who shows high potential and has ambition. For mentorship, leading women are paired with mentees who build their capacity to lead in the immediate future. Each EXCO member mentors two high performing individuals for an hour per month.

Learning, Development and Coaching represents yet another pillar within the six pillars MGWF is built around. This pillar provides access to executive coaching, equipping women to seat at the table and take over leadership positions. Another pillar is the Women's Network where women are encouraged to explore collaborations and share experiences freely while building each other up through monthly "Lunch and Learn" sessions co-hosted



John Ugbe, CEO, MultiChoice Nigeria

by female and male leaders on different topics

The fifth pillar is centered around the Profiling of women. This is to ensure strategic visibility of the great work women within the group are doing both internally and externally by sponsoring and participating in strategic women conferences e.g. Women in Tech, Women in IT, Women in Media and showcasing senior women as role models. Finally but definitely not the least, is Secondment and job scheduling. This creates an opportunities for women to closely understudy key leadership roles.

In just a year of its existence, the forum has recorded key wins notable of mention. It launched the:

- Technology HOD Associate Program for females in Technology where five high potential females are part of a structured skills transfer program as associates to a Head of Division
- Advancing Women Mentorship Program where 22 mid-career employees from across the business are paired with Senior leaders, as part of a structured mentoring program
- Women in Tech Mentorship Program where ten women in the Tech division have been paired with mentors to accelerate their

development

- Women in Tech Academy which has a suite of development opportunities specifically designed for its women in the tech space
- Male Ally Network to build a network of male allies who help create an inclusive environment for women
- Reached over 2,000 employees across the group in monthly learning workshops since January 2020
- Hosted Miss Universe, Zozibini Tunzi, as part of a drive to showcase exemplary females in various domains
- Profiled role model women across the business to showcase females as competent professionals in Network News, Irdeto Insider Magazine, MAH Newsletter and EBS Newsletter

Beyond the women-centric initiatives of the company, there are other innovative Corporate Social Responsibility platforms. One of such platforms is the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF), a Creating Shared Value (CSV) programme aimed at developing and training young, emerging and passionate film talents through experiential filmmaking. Through this social investment programme, MultiChoice develops emerging TV and film professionals while simultaneously promoting the growth of local content in key markets. Launched in May 2018, MTF focuses on three touchpoints discussed below:

The MultiChoice Talent Factory Academy: Located in Lagos, Nigeria, the academy is a 1-year all-expense paid programme aimed at developing 20 talented and passionate young people in film and television production through skills development. MTF partnered with global brands like the New York Film Academy College of Visual & Performing Arts (NYFA), Nihilent, Dolby, AVID and Jasco for international standard knowledge sharing and the Pan-Atlantic University (PAU) one of Nigeria's most respected universities, as its academic partner. Part of the 1-year programme is a 3-month immersion where the students intern on all of MultiChoice's original productions as well as other external productions. The academy flung open its doors to welcome students, the media and dignitaries on the 8th of October, 2018 and is graduating its 2nd set of students on the 6th of April 2021.

The MultiChoice Talent Factory Portal: This is a Pan-African online networking platform for the creative industry that facilitates collaborations across countries and delivers thought-provoking engagements and thought leadership events. Today, the portal has over 13,000 industry professionals from across Africa synergizing and collaborating for the collective growth of the industry.

MultiChoice Talent Factory Masterclass Series: These are industry workshops aimed at upskilling established film and TV professionals in production, cinematography, lighting, sound and scriptwriting among others, to improve the quality of local production and professionalism in the industry. On the 18th of January 2019, the first MasterClass – a Sound MasterClass in partnership with Dolby Institute - was held in Lagos. Since then, over 20 MasterClasses have been hosted in different sectors of the industry.





A Safe Creative Space For Gender Equality, Women Empowerment

By Azeez Disu

The word ‘Ark’ is reminiscent of the historic and religious narrative of Noah’s Ark, a large vessel that saved humanity from being swept away into a deadly flood. According to both biblical and quranic accounts, all animals, including humans were led into the ark in pairs, definitely male and female. For the next forty days and nights and for the 150 days it took for the water to subside enough for Noah’s Ark to rest on Mount Ararat, the Ark was a haven for serenity and safety for both the male and female gender.

In a world that concerns rife on inequality in the workplace, lack of inclusion and different issues affecting women generally and globally, Noah’s Ark has become a metaphor for safety, creativity, innovation and gender equality as well as gender inclusion.

Generally, people are looking for a safe place, literally a ‘Noah’s Ark,’ a place they can explore and achieve the very best in life. That is where gender inclusion and parity in the workplace comes in. Unfortunately, in the workplace globally, women are the most discriminated against with issues such as unequal pay, inability to rise to the top of their career, challenges of breaking the glass ceiling among others.

However, experts are of the view that the elimination of discrimination against women requires deliberate, focused and consistent efforts and policies by all stakeholders concerned over a sustained period of time. More than ever, this is the reason the call for gender equality in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 has been on and brands are now supporting women through empowerment, appointing them to top positions and celebrating them on International Women’s Day.

Within the integrated marketing communication (IMC) landscape in Nigeria, one of the agencies making a difference as regards gender equality and women empowerment and at the same time offering a safe place to work is the Ark Group. Basically the group is a one-stop shop communication group offering full communication services with its independent companies which include: Noah’s Ark Communications Limited (Creative), Integrated Indigo Limited (PR, Events & Experiential), MediaMast Limited (Media Buying), Underdog Productions Limited (Production/Content) and The REDWOLF Company (Digital Agency).

The group, over the years of its operations, has consistently given its women the opportunity to thrive and excel in their chosen careers. The Ark Group operates in a very gender-friendly environment that gives women equal opportunity with their male counterparts to thrive and showcase their skills while rising deservedly through the ranks to various leadership positions. The Ark Group understands some of the challenges women may face and has put together various factors to help women maintain their wellness at work, at home and the society at large.

Commenting on its gender equality policies, the group said, “We run a merit-based system. We believe every member of our team should be given all that it takes for them to perform at their best and rise to wherever their talent can take them. However, we are aware of the fact that women have some peculiarities and our system is built to ensure those circumstances don’t become a barrier to their progress.”

It added that the women in the group are given more opportunities and are rising to the top of their career.

“There is fine balance between the men and women in the middle level. However we have more males in the senior management level. The good thing is we are beginning to see more women rise into senior management roles,” it stated.



Lanre Adisa, Founder/CCO, Noah's Ark

Meet the Ark Group's Leading Women

"Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in our absence." Sheryl Sandberg once said.

The above quote is relatable to the impact women are making in most businesses and today more women are rising to the boardroom, breaking the glass ceiling and truly making a difference. The exciting news is not different in the Ark Group as its women are some of the driving forces helping it to be one of the top players in the IMC industry. Some of its leading women are mentioned below:

Adewumi Owu

Adewumi Owu stands out for her passion and drive. A graduate of Physiology from the University of Ilorin, she joined Noah's Ark as a Personal Assistant to the MD and COO and she has risen through the ranks to become the Head of HR.

Passionate about people growth, management and engagement, she is an Organisational Culture Influencer and an Advocate of Employee Engagement and wellness. She is also certified in Emotional Intelligence and People Management. Adewunmi loves fitness and wellness.

Febechi Archibong

Febechi Archibong has about 14 years' experience in the advertising industry. She started her advertising career as a Management Trainee at DDB Lagos where she rose through the ranks to become a Senior Manager. At TBWA, she was an Account Director and currently with the Noah's Ark team as Group Head Account Management.

Her career spans across various sectors from FMCGs, Financial Services, and Telecoms. She handled the account of brands such as Unilever, MTN, Consolidated Breweries, Fidelity

Bank, Stanbic IBTC to mention a few. She is a mum of 3 boys and loves to play lawn and table tennis and she definitely loves to travel as travel brings with it so much inspiration and knowledge.

Patience Ugbe

Patience joined Noah's Ark Communications as the Personal Assistant to the MD/CEO of the Agency and rose through the ranks to the role of a Senior Executive in the Operations Unit of the agency. She has managed several brand projects ranging from Three Crowns, Heritage Bank, Colgate, Airtel, Maltina, TGI only to mention a few. Prior to joining advertising, Patience worked with Afrinvest West Africa as the front desk executive and was later elevated to the position of an Investment Manager.

She currently serves as the Head of the Operations Unit of the agency.

Omokehinde Thomas

Omokehinde Thomas currently leads the Digital Business of The REDWOLF Company. She is a seasoned marketing communications professional and her experience spans a decade. With a cross-industry experience in sectors such as pay tv, telco, technology, NGO and government, FMCG and other sectors working on various brands such as Three Crowns Milk, Nokia, Maltina, Airtel, GOtv, Payattitude, Maggi and Supa Komando.

She was part of the team that worked on evolving the digital department into a full-fledged agency (The REDWOLF Company). Prior to joining The REDWOLF Company, she was the Assistant Manager (Digital) of Noah's Ark Communications where she rose through the ranks.

Oladunni Elemide Williams

Oladunni Elemide Williams is a Creative Lead at The REDWOLF Company. With over six years of experience in the Marketing Communications industry, she previously worked as a Copy Lead at Noah's Ark Communications Limited, managing the day to day output of works in her team before joining the REDWOLF team.

In the span of years in the industry, she has worked on both international and local brands like Nokia, Airtel, Maltina, Uber, Dulux, FC WAMCO brands and many more. Oladunni is passionate about growing brands and impacting society through her unique storytelling.

Judith Ezeali

Judith Ezeali is an astute Marketing Communications professional, with a passion for excellent Brand and Business Management. A graduate of Mass Communications from the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Judith holds a Diploma in Digital Marketing from the Digital Marketing Institute. Judith is an associate member of APCON (ARPA) as well as a certified IMC professional – CMCIN.

Her advertising journey began with The Communicator (now Brand Communicator) magazine in 2008. She has since then worked with 141 worldwide (now Nitro121), Bi-Courtney Aviation Services Limited and now, Noah's Ark Communications Limited. With over 12 years of cross-industry experience, Judith has worked with several brands across diverse categories – from MMA2 to Gala, Swift Networks, Paga, FC WAMCO (Three Crowns/Peak Milk/IFT), Airtel NG, Boomplay, Law Pavilion, Ajala, to mention a few.

She currently serves as a Group Head in the Business and Brand management unit of Noah's Ark Communications Limited - overseeing Business and Account management of the Airtel portfolio amongst other things.

Adeola Ogunade

With over nine years' experience in advertising and marketing - most of which have been spent in senior roles, Adeola has worked across a wide spectrum of brands like MTN, Airtel, IBEDC, Sovereign Trust International, Peak, Fayrouz and many others across different industries.

Working closely with the Business Director, Adeola currently manages the New Business Development unit at Noah's Ark. Prior to this, she was a Deputy Group Head for account management. She is an avid believer in fostering relationships and how positive relationships can impact positively on client and agency growth.

Jumoke Akinyele

Jumoke Akinyele is an APCON certified marketing communications and brand management professional with over 10 years' experience, working on great brands. She is currently a Deputy Business Director at Noah's Ark Communications Limited. As the business lead, she is responsible for managing business processes and works cross-functionally with the key stakeholders and agency teams to solve marketing problems.

As a brand and business manager, she seeks to understand people and the market for a better experience and this has seen her work on various brands like Maltina, Airtel, Hacey Initiative, PayAttitude, Fayrouz, Indomie, Paga, SWIFT networks, Three Crowns Milk, Peak Milk, Travelstart and Airtel among others.

Jumoke studied English and literature at Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo state and is also a graduate of the Senior Management Programme at Lagos Business School.



Jumoke Akinyele



Judith Ezeali



Omokehinde Thomas



Adewumi Owu



Febechi Archibong



Adeola Ogunade



Patience Ugbe



Oladunni Elemide Williams



Stanbic IBTC

Championing Corporate Inclusiveness & Gender Balance



Demola Sogunle, CEO, Stanbic IBTC

By Jeremiah Agada

In recent times, more women are pulling their weights on the international scene, breaking glass ceilings. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala became the first woman and African to head the World Trade Organisation as Director-General. Amanda Gorman, a young 22-year-old became the first poet to speak at a United States Presidential inauguration, using her beautiful words to inspire people around the world. Whitney Wolfe Herd became the youngest self-made billionaire and youngest female CEO to ever take a company public. And Dr. Özlem Türeci, together with her husband, is the brains behind the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

That is why, for years, the International Women's Day celebrates the social, political and economic achievements of women while focusing global attention on areas requiring further action. International Women's Day is about celebrating female trailblazers who sowed the seeds of change through courage, persistence and fearlessness. The day is a reminder that glass ceilings are meant to be broken; and that women are unstoppable when they are accountable for their own success and are determined to find a way to make the right things happen.

It is also a day that highlights the importance of supporting women and men alike through agile working structures that level the playing field, and empower people to be the very best at what they do, no matter their circumstances, an opportunity to celebrate the achievements that have been made in the past and the present. This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5 or Global Goal 5) which concerns gender equality and is fifth of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in 2015. The official wording of SDG 5 is "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

This year's International Women's Day Hashtag, #ChooseToChallenge, perfectly captures the social changes and feelings witnessed over the last year. Despite the immense difficulties people across the world have faced due to the pandemic, more people than ever have come together to vie for equality and inclusion of all kinds. Choosing to challenge reminds individuals, organisations and nations that we all must play a role to help create a more equal world.

Stanbic IBTC Holdings PLC is one organisation that needs no reminding of the importance of gender inclusion and women empowerment as it is among foremost organisations that have made this a core of its DNA. It comes as no surprise therefore that the financial institution has consistently featured annually among top companies empowering women in Brand Communicator's exclusive March annual list, without fail, for years.

Recall two years back, as part of its commitment to gender equality, the organisation made a bold statement on International Women's Day marked on 08 March by changing the colour of its logos which are predominantly blue, to magenta on most of its digital platforms. Magenta is the colour of the United Nations (UN) Women HeForShe brand.

This symbolism, according to the Stanbic IBTC, reconfirms its commitment to the ideals of the United Nations Women HeForShe initiative which encourages equality in the way and manner people are treated and the opportunities with which they are availed, regardless of gender or race.

Stanbic IBTC Holdings has always been distinguished by its deliberate and painstaking commitment to gender equality. In its

32 years of existence, it is one of the few publicly quoted Nigerian corporations to have had a female Chief Executive in the person of the enigmatic Mrs. Sola David-Borha. In addition, women occupy many strategic roles in the Stanbic IBTC Group. In fact, its female employees constitute roughly half of its workforce, therefore, ensuring that a dedicated focus on gender diversity and women development is a key priority for the Group.

While it has consistently reiterated its commitment to nurturing a great workplace that is founded on merit, a diverse workforce that thrives on equality of opportunity for all, regardless of gender, religion, tribe or race; the financial institution supports the development of its women with several initiatives and programmes such as the Stanbic IBTC Blue Women Network, a platform established to, among other things, provides the women in Stanbic IBTC the opportunity to gain new insights that will enhance their professional skills as well as support their all-round growth through information sharing, best practice and mentorship to help develop their leadership skills and advance their career prospects.

The mission of the platform is to provide the Group's female workforce with opportunities to gain new insights, enhance their professional skills and ultimately, add value to themselves, Stanbic IBTC and the communities to which they belong. Focus is given to improve women development and empowerment to establish high level corporate leadership for better gender equality.

In line with current COVID-19 realities but in firm resolve to continue with its programmes Stanbic IBTC held its very first virtual 2021 Blue Women Network (BWN) Annual Conference. The event was the second to take place in commemoration of this year's IWD. The first event was the Blue Talks with Female Executives which took place on Monday, 08 March 2021.

This event held via Microsoft Teams Live Event had 514 (Five Hundred and Fourteen) members of the Stanbic IBTC Group in attendance. It also had five newly appointed female executives share their #ChooseToChallenge stories with participants.

The keynote speaker, Mrs Olajumoke Adenowo, Principal Architect at AD consulting during the BWN annual conference encouraged participants to continue to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality, celebrate women's achievements and help to create a gender inclusive world.

Besides empowering female members of its workforce, the organisation is also known for its other initiatives and bespoke products aimed at empowering women. One of these products is the Blue Blossom account. The account offers to women better and easy access to business finance. It aims to help bridge the financing gap for women in careers/businesses and promote women economic empowerment in line with the CBN's Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles. In fact, only businesses with 50% or more female ownership structure qualify to use this product. All account signatories must be women.

Earlier this year, Stanbic IBTC entered a strategic partnership with the UN Women Regional Office for West and Central Africa on a five-year \$40m women empowerment in Nigeria to give support to female farmers. The project is currently supporting 2,300 women beneficiary agri-business groups and cooperatives to increase the productivity and profitability of their operations within the rice and shea nut value chains. It will ultimately deliver assistance to 12,500 rural women in the country. The project is supporting 17 women farmers' organisations and agri-business groups and cooperatives in the states of Ebonyi and Niger. It also organization virtual training sessions to help beneficiaries acquire new skills so that they could produce hygiene products, using shea butter-based raw materials, as well as personal protective equipment. This protected them and their communities against the Coronavirus and curtailed its spread.

Additionally, for years, Stanbic IBTC has been supporting the development and growth of women in the integrated Marketing Communications industry in Nigeria. This is through its consistence partnership with the prestigious Women in Marketing & Communication Conference and Awards, WIMCA platform.

Besides the mentioned initiatives, the financial institution maternity policy of three months paid plus one-month unpaid leave, nursing mothers' work time flexibility, special leave for women who wants to take care of their sick children as well as its HMO offerings which includes enhanced immunization for children makes Stanbic IBTC a role model to corporate organisations who wish to embrace gender inclusion and women empowerment into their policies.



Funeka Montjane



Anne Kloppe



Standing left to right; Busola Jejelowo, Ibiyemi Mezu and Sakeenat Bakare and sitting from left to right; Wunmi Ehis-Uzenabor and Emi Agaba-Oloja.



Driving Financial Inclusion & Emancipation For Nigerian Women Through Alternative Banking

By Jeremiah Agada

Perhaps, one of the most ambitious projects on the planet is the attaining of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A project of immense scale and unfathomable impact, it is no surprise that several experts have doubted the possibility of ever attaining them. Why? For one, the SDGs are severely underfunded as the estimated budget is \$USD 5–7 trillion, and so far, the grand rhetoric over the subject matter far outweighs the efforts made towards attaining them. And thus, the need to find innovative ways to optimize resources in the pursuit of realizing the SDGs.

Provision of alternative finance opportunities, financial inclusion and empowerment for women are some of the innovative ways to pursue the attainment of these SDGs. Financial inclusion plays a crucial role in the achievement of at least two of the SDGs that matter a lot to women — Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Poverty Eradication (SDG 1). Deliberately solving financial inclusion for women will have a cascading impact on equality and poverty eradication. This is based on the fact that having access to financial services can enhance women's ability to adequately plan and manage their financial lives.

Melinda Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, once said, "When the government deposits social welfare payments or other subsidies directly into women's digital bank accounts, the impact is amazing: women gain decision-making power in their homes, and with more financial tools at their disposal, they invest in their families' prosperity and help drive broad economic growth." Also, to a large extent, financial inclusion can reduce women's vulnerability by providing an avenue for them to borrow to meet unexpected expenses.

But despite the many importance of this, access to financial services and products remains elusive for women, with about 1 billion women still financially excluded globally. In Nigeria, 20.5 million women—majorly young women and widows, live day to day without a bank account according to EFInA Access to Financial Services in Nigeria Survey 2014. Among the plethora of reasons for this gap in financial inclusion was the dearth of appropriate financial products created specifically for women in the Nigerian banking system.

But today, these gaps are beginning to close even faster as organisations like financial giants, Sterling Alternative Finance have taken vanguard positions to bridge and ultimately eliminate these gaps in financial inclusion. The bank's strong belief that everyone should have a viable and credible Alternative to the conventional banking model has seen it create solutions borne out of a detailed customer value architecture where they create specific offers to assist with financial needs.

Sterling Alternative Finance commenced operation in January 2014 following the granting of Sterling Bank's license to offer non-interest banking (NIB) services as a window by The Central Bank of Nigeria. The bank operates on defining principles such as interest prohibition in debt and exchange contracts, prohibition of uncertainty or speculative behaviour in business transactions and prohibition of any form of gambling. It also prohibits funding of unethical concerns such as, alcohol, tobacco, ammunition manufacturing and adult entertainment institutions. They also engage in partnership contracts, trading contracts, leasing contracts, and other financial services that conform to Islamic commercial jurisprudence. Sterling Alternative Finance believes in the Alternative, where you are not a customer, you are a partner.

Again, through its One-Woman proposition launched over four years ago, the Bank has developed unique value propositions tailored specifically for women. The proposition comprises an array of different value-add offerings to meet financial, business and personal needs of women in Nigeria and to foster support by providing platforms for women to support other women.



Funmilayo Yussuff, HC Business Partner, Sterling Alternative Finance

Some of these offerings include the Sterling Maternal Medical Finance (SMMF) available to women for peculiar medical treatments like fibroid, customized debit cards with a bold feminine touch that would provide cardholders access to discounts for spas, makeover services, and furniture/household items at select outlets; discounts on lending rates of all existing retail loan products (e.g. personal loan, asset acquisition loan and MSME loans) for women and capacity building programme for young women.

Besides inclusion, the bank has also created bespoke products aimed at empowering the Nigerian woman. One such product is the Sterling Women and Youths in Agriculture Finance (SWAY-AgFin). SWAY-AgFin is a single digit product targeted at youths and women who are involved in all levels of the Agric value chain and subsectors generally. They include the smallholder farmers who usually have 1-2hectares, processors, input providers, small scale processors/SMEs whose businesses have been adversely affected by the corona virus pandemic plaguing the world.

The funds will be available till 2023 and will be availed to the beneficiaries at single digit interest rate of 9%. The SWAY-AgFin offering is available to entrepreneurs who are earnestly seeking to scale the output of their agribusiness offerings and will equip beneficiaries with the requisite knowledge and skills in financial management and good agricultural practices while generating direct and indirect employment. The Sterling Women and Youths in Agriculture Finance facility is fully equipped to provide services in line with the Bank's non-Interest banking principles.

Still on empowerment, the bank also has the Sterling Alternative Finance MSME Finance initiative which came to live on the basis of the Bank's belief that a business does not just need financing or an account to keep its funds; but needs wholistic solutions that are created from an in-depth understanding of the business needs. In line with this and in line with its commitment to empowering the Nigerian woman, the Sterling Alternative Finance MSME Finance Initiative awarded a cash prize of N500, 000.00 and access to a single digit facility to one woman-owned business. It also extended the access of a single digit facility to nine additional women-owned businesses in special celebration and commemoration of this year's International Women's Day (IWD).

Beyond empowering women generally, Sterling Bank is big on

the growth of women within its ranks. Over the years, the Bank has proven that it is an equal opportunity employer. It has also shown that gender parity is beyond buzzwords for it and creating a gender balanced work environment for all to thrive regardless of gender is part of its operational values. It therefore comes as no wonder that the Bank boasts of some of the best female professionals in the banking industry, cutting across Board, Executive and Managerial positions in Nigeria.

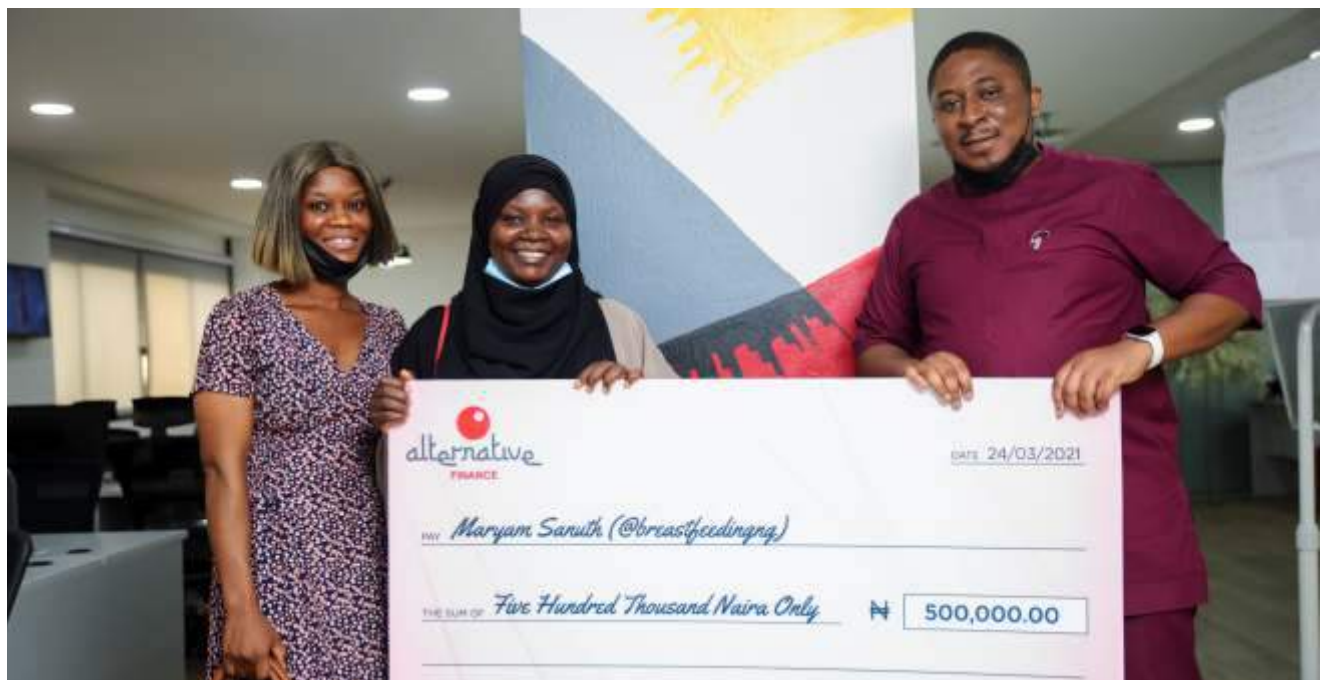
At the Board, the Bank boasts of Amazons such as Mrs. Tairat Tijani, who was appointed a Non-Executive Director in 2014, and has garnered significant experience as an operator in the Capital Market, participating in several landmark transactions which have contributed immensely towards the development of the Nigerian Capital Market. It also boasts of Mrs. Folasade Kilaso who joined the Board of Sterling Bank Plc as a Non-Executive Director in June 2018, and is presently the Principal Partner at Berkeley Legal. She has served on the Board of the Financial Institutions Training Centre (FITC), and on the committees of various institutions such as the Nigeria Inter Bank Settlement Systems (NIBSS), Chartered Institute of Bankers Nigeria (CIBN) and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) – Sub Committee for Women Economic Empowerment. Yet another Amazon at the Board of the Bank is Dr. (Mrs.) Omolara Akanji who was also appointed an Independent Director of Sterling Bank in February 2014. Her early career started with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in 1978 as an Assistant Economist and she rose through the ranks and retired in December 2007 as Director, Trade and Exchange Department. She also served as a Consultant to the CBN between 2008 and 2011.

At the Executive Managerial levels also, the Bank is not lacking in Amazons who have shattered the glass ceilings to attain top positions and make disruptive impacts in their own spaces. Mojisola Bakare, Divisional Head, Corporate Client Coverage; Temitayo Adegoke, Chief Legal Counsel & Company Secretary; Bukola Awosanya, Group Head, Agric, Export Finance & Solid Minerals and Adebimpe Olambiwoonu, Group Head, Finance & Performance Management/ Financial Controller are some of these women.

As part of measures aimed at supporting its female workforce to continually give their best, the Bank periodically beams the spotlight on deserving women within its ranks. As at press time, Funmi Yusuf, HR Business Partner at Sterling Bank, is on the spotlight. Among other things, Funmi drives the annual performance and planning and review (PPR) process (in collaboration with the Performance Management Team), designs and maintains organization structure updates in MS Visio to ensure that reporting structures/job titles/cost centers are correct and current. She analyzes Human Resources key metrics (turnover, exit interviews, days to fill positions, cost per hire) and utilizes data for process improvements, policy changes and/or development and decision making. She also upholds and ensures that business leaders adopt the principles of meritocracy in all talent decisions, including promotions, transfers, compensation adjustments, among others.

You are sure to find Funmi consulting with Heads of departments to assess talent needs and developing strategies to meet those talent needs with both internal and external recruiting efforts, and when the need arises, she is liaising with Business Leaders on the preparation and update of job descriptions for various roles within their departments and working closely with management and employees to improve work relationships, build morale, and increase productivity and retention.

With its many initiatives, it is no surprise that Sterling Alternative Finance has made the exclusive list of Brand Communicator's Brands Empowering Women for this year. Indeed, with a vision to become the financial institution of choice, it is easy to see that the Bank is delivering on its mission to deliver solutions that enhance stakeholders' value, which includes women's.



Mrs. Maryam Sanuth (middle), the winner of Sterling Alternative Finance MSME Finance Initiative receiving her prize.



Fostering Gender Equality, Women Empowerment Through Innovative Solutions

By Azeez Disu

"When women do better, economies do better," Christine Lagarde once said.

From this, it is apparent that women play important roles in the development of any society. However, gender equality is a global challenge that is hindering the success of women.

According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "Worldwide, nearly 1 in 4 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are neither employed nor in education or training—compared to 1 in 10 boys."

Similarly, "Some 1 in 20 girls between the ages of 15 and 19—around 13 million globally—have experienced forced sex in their lifetimes."

To make a difference, United Nations through its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Goal 5 - "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls") targets to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls the world over; eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, among others.

Interestingly, gender equality and women empowerment remain key issues most governments are addressing with various initiatives. In supporting the effort, brands are also making a difference by giving more women the opportunity to rise to top positions and empowering many others to foster economic development.

Also, women are breaking the glass ceiling of gender equality and are scaling the ladder in male-dominated industries and occupations.

More brands are also introducing women-led initiatives than ever, and every International Women's Day, the SDGs goal 5 is evaluated, and the results show that more progress is being recorded.

Excitingly, one of the leading brands championing the course of women is Nigeria's leading innovative financial institution, Wema Bank, pioneers of arguably Nigeria's best digital bank ALAT.

The bank's women empowerment philosophy is steeped on Principle 4 (Women's Economic Empowerment) of the Nigerian Sustainable Development Banking Principle as its area of materiality. This stance emphasizes its commitment and support for the UNEP-FI Principles and is also in alignment with SDGs Goal 5.

Besides, the bank has signed on to the United Nations Women Empowerment Principles (UNWEP)'s Platform. The eight (8) Women Empowerment Principles offer guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace (Wema Women Network), marketplace and community (Sara by Wema). Internally, its women's program is also guided by an internal framework/policy document under governance.

The bank understands that investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human potential on a transformational scale.



Ademola Adebise, MD/CEO, Wema Bank

Female/Women-Centric Products

The bank churned out a series of innovative solutions for its customers. To promote gender equality and women empowerment in the marketplace and community, the bank put a structure to its proposition for women in 2019 called Sara by Wema, a female proposition. Within its Sara by Wema community, the bank has some women-centric products including the Sara Health Scheme, Discounted Financing for women, among others.

The Sara Health Scheme offers access to HMO services and a Hospital cash plan for women. It is targeted at low-income and non-salary earners; it offers beneficiaries the opportunity to access medical care at their preferred hospital and gives cash compensation of N10,000, where the beneficiary is admitted for over 3 days.

"This is because we are mindful that financial losses also accompany ill health, hence besides taking care of the hospital expenses through our HMO, we also offer compensation for income loss," the financial institution in a statement disclosed.

Discounted financing for women allows businesswomen to access loans to enable them to meet short-term needs at 9% p.a without collateral. This is open to new and existing customers who have actively run their accounts for 3 months. Training and advisory services will also be offered to the beneficiaries of these loans.

In addition to these, it also offers business support, finance loan, pharma and Medi-loans for pharmaceutical companies and hospitals respectively, school support loans for schools and vocational institutions which can be accessed without tangible collaterals.

Its employees can also benefit as they have access to personal loans, asset and device acquisition loans, school fees in advance, salary loans, credit cards, among others, all accessible from the comfort of their homes on ALAT.

Its Sara Debit card for women also allows women to enjoy deals and discounts at select stores nationwide.

Women Empowerment Initiatives

The bank promotes gender equality in the workplace through its Wema Women Network, which was established in 2013 as a platform for all female staff of the bank regardless of grade, age, and culture. It promotes activities that improve and promote women's visibility and participation. It has also aided the creation of women-focused policies. Some activities include book and movie reviews, mentorship, capacity building and skill acquisition, networking programmes, etc.

The Sara By Wema community also provides women with solutions that help them take part in, contribute to and fully benefit from the growth opportunities available within the bank. It is designed with the sole purpose of improving the economic and social life of women in society and has a dedicated team that designs products tailored for women. Also, it has defined existing products to become gender inclusive.

Other value propositions under Sara include- Access to finance, mentoring and networking opportunities, access to information, health and wellbeing, and capability building.

Sara by Wema is for every woman including young female professional adult, irrespective of her class or socio-economic status. It is a proposition designed with the sole purpose of improving the financial and social life of women.

The Sara proposition will be of invaluable benefit to women from different walks of life and backgrounds.

Similarly, as part of the efforts by SARA by Wema to build its community for supporting women, Wema Bank is a signatory to United Nations Women Empowerment Principles (WEP). However, it remains committed to making a difference for gender equality and women empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community.

Considering research has shown that women in Nigeria populate the small and medium scale 'SARA by Wema' was launched to give women the opportunity to grow, individually and financially, within a community that supports their needs.

Our relationship with the UN Women Empowerment Principles Platform is a show of commitment from Wema Bank to continually provide opportunities and affiliate with initiatives that aid the growth of women, encourage their financial inclusion, and increase equality in society.





Giving More Creative Women Voice in Advertising Industry

By Azeez Disu

"We need women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamics, reshape the conversation, to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored," Sheryl Sandberg once said.

The above reinforces the call for more women at top positions and ensuring that the voice of the gender is heard. Similarly, listening to women voices is more critical than ever for the success of any brand, considering that women are the most powerful consumers on the planet, making 85% of all purchasing decisions across any sector one can think of – technology, cars, houses, pharmaceuticals – women hold the household purse strings.

Despite their importance, they are woefully underrepresented in creative jobs in advertising across the world. In Nigeria, the dearth of female professionals within the integrated marketing communication (IMC) and creative industry has always been a concern for stakeholders, however, as the International Women's Day (IWD) celebration and other women led initiatives and campaigns constantly call for more women inclusion, the story is fast changing and more women are getting to the top of their career not only in the advertising industry or Nigeria but across the world.

For X3M Ideas, one of Nigeria's most creative agencies, gender inclusion is paramount to its operations. This is evident in the number of female employees it boasts of. Arguably, within the creative advertising landscape in the country, X3M Ideas is one of the few agencies that has more creative and multitalented young women in its operations who are in no small measure helping to grow the organisation. This shows in the level of the concept and excellence piece that the agency churns out in the campaigns it runs for clients.

At X3M Ideas, women are given equal opportunities with their male counterpart and those who have demonstrated more hunger for success in their careers and are often celebrated at given opportunity; and because the reward for good work is more work, they are given higher responsibilities.

Asides giving employees a level playing ground and putting policies in to promote gender parity within the X3M Ideas Group, the creative powerhouse has consistently commemorated the International Women's Day (IWD) with an initiative or campaign. For this year's IWD, X3M Ideas paid for women within the agency to have a wellness check at a specialist hospital.

According to the agency, the wellness check initiative is geared towards ensuring that women in its rank which are a very vital part of the Group's DNA are always in good health. "We paid for a session to a specialist hospital for our women to have a wellness check because we believe good health cannot be over-emphasized and sometimes, we forget to do some basic and important checks from time to time."

Women Empowerment Policies, Philosophies

Women's economic empowerment is central to realising women's rights and gender equality. Also, empowering women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work is vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Revealing the difference it is making, the agency in a statement said "X3M Ideas is an equal opportunity employer and an agency built on the mindset that anyone can lead irrespective of gender, race, religion, color, age, or disability as long as they are fit for the role and are capable. This philosophy drives everything we do through all our processes from recruitment to giving an offer and people's growth within our system.

"We empower our employees, through training and developmental programs designed to provide learning opportunities, which will help them improve on their skill set and prepare them for the future. As an employer, we are big on family and are thoughtful in regards to the needs of all our employees and support staff inclusive. We ensure support (e.g. maternity/paternity leave, casual leave for family commitments, grants for staff, Health Insurance scheme, etc.) is provided for all members of staff irrespective of level or number of years spent with the agency," it



Steve Babaeko, CEO, X3M Ideas, stated.

On how the agency is rewarding diligent women and celebrating the gender, it said "The world has always had a bias on women taking up certain positions within the society because of the traditional culture we grew up in, but we have moved outside that norm and we reward hard work and diligence in women who are exceptional in their art and level of professionalism. In honor of our women at X3M, we put up a statue of a ballerina which depicts the beauty, strength, and agility our women exude, as they are not just pretty faces but people that roll up their sleeves when required."

Leading Female Executives

The strong belief in the ability of women and what they have to bring to the table has seen the X3M Ideas Group elevate women within its ranks to enviable positions which in other businesses and climes are seen as the exclusive preserve of men. This is because it understands leadership as described by Lisa Cash Hanson who once said: "Leadership is the ability to guide others without force into a direction or decision that leaves them still feeling empowered and accomplished."

These women are breaking the glass ceiling and shattering stereotypes in the way and bringing about positive disruptions beyond the advertising landscape and beyond the Nigerian market. The spotlight is beamed on some of these leading women within the X3M Ideas Group, in the following paragraphs:

Adenike Odutola:

Adenike joined the agency's Brand Management team as an Assistant Brand Manager in 2013 and has risen through the ranks over the years. She is a graduate of Mass Communications from the Redeemer's University, Ogun State. She has worked on several notable brands (local and international) throughout her years in the industry. Her grit has made her a force to reckon with, she served on the Grand Jury of the New York Advertising Festival in 2018.

Adenike moved to the Southern African region (covering Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana & Mozambique) in 2018 as the Regional Head to spearhead the Agency's operations there, and currently, she is the General Manager, X3M Ideas Southern Africa.

Temitope Ayeni:

Temitope currently serves as a Group Head & Team Lead in the Brand Management Department of X3M Ideas, where she leads a team of young and vibrant professionals, creating and executing

value-driven creative solutions for clients. Her passion is backed with skills in account and brand management, strategic thinking, consumer insights, production, and selling.

Temitope started off her career as a management trainee in one of Nigeria's topmost agencies in 2009 and has since then accomplished grand slides with experience in managing and launching several award-winning/successful campaigns for both local and global brands across industries such as Oil and Gas, FMCG, Alcoholic, and Non-Alcoholic beverages, Construction, Telecommunications, Broadband services, financial services, Tobacco, PayTV, Government, etc.

In addition to advertising, Temitope has had a brief stint in Experiential marketing where she was the account management lead for The Creative Counsel working on deploying PAN Nigeria activations for brands such as Pepsi, Aquafina, Tecno Mobile, Dano, Nasco, etc.

Vivian Obiano:

Vivian began her career in advertising in 2014 as an intern at X3M Ideas team but her passion for excellence and drive over the years has helped her rise through the ranks. She is currently a Team lead in our Brand Management department with years of experience leading and managing local and Global brands across various sectors which include Banking /Financial Services, FMCG, Telecommunication, Pharmaceuticals, Pay TV, Oil & Gas, etc. She also currently serves as a member of the executive Jury for Gerety Awards 2021.

With a broadened knowledge of brand management and strategy, she has successfully led multiple account wins for the agency. Some of the notable brands she has managed include Globacom, Conoil, Peak Milk/Peak 456, DStv, amongst others.

Oluwadamilola Adu:

Oluwadamilola joined the Agency's Brand Management department as an intern in 2014 and her enthusiasm for Marketing and Advertising has promoted her continuous growth over the years. She currently serves as a Deputy Manager in the Brand Management department with working experience with brands in the Banking & Finance, FMCG, Media & Entertainment, Real Estate, Oil & Gas and E-commerce sectors.

Oluwadamilola is a graduate of Mass Communications from University of Lagos, Nigeria. Some of the brands she has managed include Multichoice, Diamond Bank, Access Bank, La Casera, Ghandour to mention a few. With tenacity, dedication and teamwork, she has pulled many wins for both the Agency and Client on diverse projects.

When she is not at work, Oluwadamilola loves hanging out with family and friends, Photography, Hair styling, traveling, reading and watching Grey's Anatomy.

CSR Initiatives

Of interest is the fact that recent trends in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives by businesses show a shift towards innovative ways for the society's inclusive growth. So, in giving back to the society, most businesses now support women, owing to the understanding that they play key roles in the development of the society and their growth is the growth of the society.

For X3M Ideas, its CSR initiatives focus mainly on education and they said, "We are big on education and equipping the next generation, and as such most of our initiatives back that up. Last year, we started the X3M Ignite program which is aimed at supporting the transition of young, budding talents from their institutions to the workplace where they can put their knowledge and skills to use, support them with resources they will need to grow, and ultimately offer career advancement within the organization.

"We recognize the need for better female representation within the Creative industry and we hope to make a difference by recognizing the talented young ladies who have a keen interest in how the industry works and are ready to put in the work. It is a platform that gives them room to compete in an industry that is mostly dominated by male counterparts."



Adenike Odutola



Temitope Ayeni



Vivian Obiano



Oluwadamilola Adu



Partners Morainbow Down Syndrome Foundation To Celebrate World Down Syndrome Day

As part of its effort in contributing to the society and in fulfillment of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Nimbus Media Limited, an outdoor advertising agency, has partnered with the Morainbow Down Syndrome Foundation to publicize the World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD)-a global awareness day, 21st March which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012.

The partnership according to the company is one of the ways it is supporting campaigns on Down syndrome, using its network of digital advertising screens at shopping malls across Nigeria.

This year's WDSD focused on improving connections to ensure that all people with Down Syndrome can connect and participate on an equal basis with others. Awareness for the event started early in March as Nimbus media showcased models with Down syndrome on digital screens at different shopping malls in 5 states and 8 locations hereby helping to achieve the goals for the year's WDSD.

Speaking on the successful campaign, Tola Makinde, Executive Director, Morainbow Down Syndrome Foundation says, "Nimbus helped in reaching out to literates as well as those in the grassroots area who have down syndrome by showcasing the models which have helped to improve how those with down syndrome feel about themselves, gave them courage and moved them from the stage of denial."

According to Morainbow Down Syndrome Foundation, reviews from parents of persons with Down syndrome have so far shown that they are traumatized, need maximum support, and this CSR by Nimbus Media Limited helped to catch the attention of parents who have been keeping their children isolated because of how they looked and give them another perspective.

The foundation hopes that before the next WDSD in 2022, they would have amplified awareness through their media platform, gained more involvement from the Government, Corporate and private systems to boost outreach through funding, medical support, partnering with UNICEF, USAID, partner with modeling agencies in showcasing down syndrome models, adoption schemes, capacity building and job placement in the communities.

This partnership follows the Nimbus' trend of partnering and promoting charities and social causes. The company hosts an annual event called "Nominate a charity" where members of the public vote for their favourite charity to receive a month worth of exposure on the company's network of digital screens across shopping malls in Nigeria.

The "Nominate a Charity" initiative is also a platform to promote change and support NGOs who show commitment to educating, empowering and inspiring their communities to make the world a better place.

Past winners of the competition which include Strap and Safe Charity, Food Clique Support initiative and Doctors Health Initiative have all given testimonials of the increase in awareness about their causes as beneficiaries of the initiative.

Nimbus Media Trajectory

Basically, Nimbus Media Limited is an indigenous out-of-home advertising company based in Lagos, Nigeria. It specialises in shopping mall and destination advertising. Nimbus Media has the largest network of indoor digital signage screens at shopping malls across the country. It began operations in 2011 and has since expanded from one mall in Lagos to over 10 shopping malls across Nigeria. It also has presence in Ghana offering out-of-home advertising opportunities.

The company is also the publishers of The Shopping Mall Guide, A quarterly publication chronicling the Nigerian and global retail and shopping mall industry.

Interestingly, Nimbus is in the process of building the largest digital signage network at high volume venues in Africa. Its mission is to provide innovative and affordable marketing solutions that produce desired results for clients.

Some of its advertising structures are located across the country, they include: Ikeja City Mall; Festival mall, Festac, Lagos; Novare Mall, Lekki, Lagos; Ilupeju Mall, Ilupeju Lagos; Heritage/Cocoa malls, Dugbe, Ibadan; Jabi lake mall, Abuja; Novare Gateway Mall, Abuja; and Enugu mall, Enugu.

Nimbus Media Limited has serviced various blue chip and multinational clients which include: Google, Smile, Samsung, safeguard, Unilever, Oral-B, Gillette, Interswitch, Maggi, Emirates, PZ Cussons; FrieslandCampina; Wrigley; Nestle; P&G; UBA; Nokia; Orbit; Coca-Coca; Intel; Hennessy; MTN; and BBC.



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Glo's New Enchanting Television Commercials



Storytelling is a strategy increasingly being used by corporate organizations across the globe in their marketing communications endeavour. It entails using a narrative to communicate a message and connect the brand to its consumers. The objective is to capture the attention of the audience, make them feel something and get them inspired enough to want to take the desired action. It is a creative way for brands to highlight shared values between themselves and their customers.

Globacom is one of the brands successfully making use of this strategy. It recently unveiled two delightful television commercials which use storytelling to create a positive buzz around its new products and services.

The first was to showcase the tantalising offerings on the Mega Data plans, while the second centres on the magic number 777, the new opt-in code through which subscribers can access all product and services on the Glo network.

The first television commercial is aptly entitled 'Virtual Party' and features Nigerian comedian and actor Samuel Perry, a.k.a. Broda Shaggi, and Glo Ambassador and Nigerian singer and songwriter, Simisola Kosoko, popularly known as Simi, alongside other artists. It encapsulates the reliability of Glo data and reinforces the effectiveness and utility of the Mega Data plans, sending a message of must-have to subscribers.

The commercial opens with Broda Shaggi dancing smoothly to Simi's music video 'You will see me now, we are just having a good time' playing on his phone. As he glides around the house, dancing and picking his clothes, preparatory to dressing up, a call comes in on his phone from a friend who asks him, "where you dey?" and Shaggi answers instantly 'I dey come now, you go see me now' before terminating the call, to continue his dance session.

As he picks up his shirt, another call comes in, this time

from, a lady, asking the same question, "Where you dey now?" to which he responds the same way, "You go see me now" as he jumps onto his bed laughing heartily.

The dance session continues, just as another friend calls, and it is the same "Where you dey and "You go see me now".

Finally, he is fully dressed and ready for the party. He takes a look at the mirror and acknowledges himself saying, "I fine sha, even me I surprise". Meanwhile two ladies are calling him as well but he is unable to respond as he heads towards the door. This is when the twist in the tale happens. Instead of exiting the house for the party as we expect, he suddenly jumps unto a sofa in the sitting room where he taps his laptop to reveal a number of people waiting online for him. It's a virtual party!

He is welcomed excitedly and Simi fires the first question. "Tell us one truth nobody knows", to which he responds, "I like to dey steal meat from my mama pot". This earns him a slap from his mum who was at the background listening to the conversation. The slap elicits laughter from his friends watching online. The number of his friends having fun in the virtual party shows the power and reliability of Glo Data which seamlessly connects everyone together.

In the second TVC, Magic of 7, the video opens with a magician, Magic Brown, on stage entertaining the crowd with different types of card magic. He brings out a pack of cards with different numbers and calls on individuals in the audience to pick one each. He then tells the volunteers to show the audience the numbers on the cards. Without looking at them, he asks the volunteers to put the cards in their pockets.

After this, the magician snaps his fingers and calls on those who picked the cards earlier to show the numbers on them. The first and second persons' cards have 777 and this is met with a round of applause, while the third person, a lady, has 543 on her card. The magician is loudly booed by the audience who think

his act has failed, but he orders them to calm down, after which he proceeds to check her shoes and brings out another card with 777 written on it. The astonished audience swiftly change their reaction to a standing ovation with the magician rounding off the show with a loud echo of "777 is the magic number".

The TVC highlights the magic of 777, a number which gives subscribers access to the unique world of Glo and its bouquet of lifestyle-changing products and services.

Globacom explained that the 777 code is an all-in-one platform through which subscribers can access products and services on the Glo network. It is aptly tagged 'one code for everything Glo', and with it, the Glo subscriber does not need to memorise different numbers or codes for different offerings. 777 provides him or her access to all the products and services available on the Glo network.

"The objective is to capture the attention of the audience, make them feel something and get them inspired enough to want to take the desired action. It is a creative way for brands to highlight shared values between themselves and their customers."



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A woman wearing a red headwrap and a yellow and black striped turtleneck is sitting cross-legged on a wooden floor, smiling and looking at her smartphone. She is surrounded by several cardboard boxes and colorful shopping bags (red, pink, blue, yellow). On top of the boxes, there is a laptop displaying the altmall website, a straw hat, a pair of high-heeled shoes, a small house-shaped box, and a pair of heart-shaped sunglasses. The background is a white brick wall.

    @altmallng

How PZ Is Building Brand Affinity Through The Cussons Baby Moments Season 7

By Jeremiah Agada

At best, the height of despair for the world in recent years is the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic as it is known for short, led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presented an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic put tens of millions of people at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people increased by up to 132 million by the end of 2020. Millions of enterprises faced an existential threat. Nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion global workforce were at risk of losing their livelihoods. Without the means to earn an income during lockdowns, many were unable to feed themselves and their families. For most, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food.

To cope with the devastating effect of the pandemic, there was need to reach deep within to find reasons for pulling through, reasons for joy. Babies, fortunately, provide reasons to 'keep on keeping on.' This is because babies are like little suns that, in a magical way bring warmth, happiness and light into our lives. In fact, their smiles teach us to be happy without reason. That is why Debasish Mridha, a foremost American physician, philosopher, poet-scer, and author declared, "It is a smile of a baby that makes life worth living!" Another author, Lish McBride adds, "You know what the great thing about babies is? They are like little bundles of hope. Like the future in a basket."

It therefore came as no surprise that foremost baby care brand, Cussons Baby themed the 2021 edition of its trademark competition; Cussons Baby Moments (CBM) competition, 'Reasons for joy.' The idea behind the theme according to the brand- a flagship from the stables of PZ Cussons is to identify joyful moments, most especially in the family unit, as babies are often described as bundles of joy.

This is explained by Head of Marketing, PZ Cussons, Daniel Gyefour who added that the Cussons Baby brand takes great pride in celebrating babies and seeing that it supports their growth process with lovely products designed to care for them, while also capturing all the special moments, excitement, the joy of parenthood. "No matter what the relationship is, we cannot deny nor ignore the joy and happiness babies bring into our lives. Therefore, we sought to act a reminder to all, that even though the pandemic may have altered our way of life and affected us somewhat negatively, there is always something to be grateful for, babies are being born every moment, and as they say "where there is life...there's definitely hope."

"This birthed the 'Reasons for Joy' theme as we sought to encourage the consumers to look on the positive side of life and be a part of joy and rewards the Cussons Baby Moments Competition brings! To have recorded about 9,000 entries and 600,000 votes this season, we believe we achieved our goal. We were able to witness in the end, the joy and celebrations of these families; this for us is a true testament of the brand's positive impact," he concluded.

With this idea, the Cussons Baby Moments which is in its seventh season launched as an improved, diverse, and perceptively fair competition that identifies the challenges and demonstrates as a platform that aims at giving parents and guardians the opportunity to showcase the amazing and amusing moments shared with their bundles of joy. This is in line with the brand owning up to its promise of 'Growing Together Naturally' by crowning a 'Baby of the Year' successfully through the years.

The Cussons Baby Moments competition is an annual competition that celebrates consumers of the Cussons Baby brand, babies as well as their families. The CBM competition was launched eight years ago in Nigeria. It has remained consistent year on year, crowning beautiful babies as 'Baby of the Year' and rewarding families from thousands of entries, via a system of online voting and judging.

The seventh season grand finale held recently amidst pomp, pageantry and funfair. The thrilling finale had ten babies and their families battle it out before three celebrity judges; Ufuoma McDermott, Deyemi Okanlawon and Yemisi Odusanya also known as Sisi Yemmie, having garnered votes from the general public to get to the finale at an event held at the Providence by Mantis Hotel in Ikeja, Lagos. Going down memory lane at the event, Brand Manager, Cussons Baby, Gbenga Akindele summarized the journey of the CBM down till its seventh edition.

"It has been quite a wonderful journey, one filled with loads of beautiful memories and amazing experiences. We had set out from season one to become more intimate with our consumers in order to stay true to our promise of growing naturally with them. At the time we were hopeful but we weren't really prepared for how impactful it would turn out to be, from just barely a thousand entries to over 10,000 entries last season, and even this year, with the fears and concerns around the pandemic, we were still able to pull about 9,000 entries, engaging with beautiful children and families across the country. Seeing the joy Cussons baby brings to their homes is just magical. You see the energy, the zeal and dedication parents put into this competition is just inspiring.

"This season we sought to build on the success of the past 6 seasons to give consumers bigger and more rewarding



opportunities, taking into considerations the unique times we are in, which birthed our theme for this season "Reasons for Joy," inspiring hope and showcasing the joy of parenthood and the awesomeness of our adorable babies," he said.

He added, "We consolidated on these additions from the record-breaking season and returned with our trio celebrity judges and extended the weeks of the competition to 8 weeks giving more opportunities to our bundles of joy to enter the competition. We also increased the rewards quite significantly, with The Baby of the Year walking away with 2 million naira as opposed to the 1 million naira Baby Nathaniel Adeoye walked away with last season and all finalists were rewarded with cash prizes and monthly supply of the Cussons Baby products."

At the end of the thrilling competition, Baby Naomi Essienawan Efana-Okon was crowned the Cussons Baby of the year. She beat about 9,000 other entrants to the biggest prize of the competition yet, as she took away the sum of N2 million as well as a year's supply of Cussons Baby products. Baby Ojelade Daphne also emerged the first runner up, winning N1 million and six months' supply of Cussons Baby products while the Second Runner up, Aliu Ayomide got N500, 000 and 6 months' supply of Cussons Baby products. The Top 7 finalists were not left out as 4th-7th position walked away with N100, 000 and three months' supply of Cussons Baby products each, while others got one month supply of Cussons Baby products.

In the special categories, Chukwubikem Anthony won Best Candid Shot, Williams Adeola was rewarded for Best Concept/Composition, and Victory Chimdindu went home with the award for Best Toothy Smile. Each of these special category winners received N50, 000 and a 3-month supply of Cussons Baby products.

This year's edition witnessed even more rewards for participants both online and offline, as the brand also extended its regional tour to more cities of the federation, including cities such as; Owerri, Kano and Ibadan hosting mini fairs and engaging consumers and families alike.

Hosting an event of this magnitude despite the challenges of COVID-19 is a feat, one worth commending. Head of Personal Care Category, PZ Cussons, Vivian Akindele gave the motivation for this: "We have over the years solidified our status as the quintessential baby competition in the country, a position we do not take for granted. For this reason, we didn't just see the pandemic as a challenge, but more as an opportunity to share joy and bring happiness to homes as we have always done.

"For the past eight years, the Cussons Baby brand has continued to bring joy to families via this CBM competition platform, and we felt that at a time like this, when it seemed all hope was lost, with very little cheer, we sought out to be that inspiration, get people to recognise the little things and moments that bring them joy and the one thing we all cannot deny is the joy these little ones bring, regardless of the situation. Today we are delighted to say we achieved our goal, as we have witnessed the immense impact and success of the campaign," she explained.

For many years, Cussons Baby has provided complete baby-care solutions for Nigerian mums and the skincare needs suited to their babies, building a strong and reliable reputation overtime and in the process, becoming a household name.

An expert in baby skin care providing innovative solutions for mothers in taking care of their babies, the Cussons Baby brand is one of the leading brands with standing heritage of being a trusted brand in the Baby Care Category in Africa. Cussons Baby has been in existence in the African market for more than four decades.



40UNDER40 WOMEN IN MARKETING & COMMUNICATION



40 UNDER 40 WOMEN IN MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Compiled By Brand Communicator Intelligence Unit & Written By Tolulope Egbewumi

The brands and marketing communications landscape in Nigeria is a vibrant well-oiled machine that keeps running smoothly. This is thanks to the army of professionals who work tirelessly round the clock, giving their very best per time. Among these professionals are young Amazons between the ages of 40 and below who have impacted their space as well as created a niche for themselves within the industry. These young women continue to defy all odds in achieving their goals. No wonder, Nancy Pelosi, Vice President of the United States views of women aligns with these young Amazons: "Women are leaders everywhere you look—from the CEO who runs a Fortune 500 company to the housewife who raises her children and heads her household. Our country was built by strong women, and we will continue to break down walls and defy stereotypes." In this exclusive list of Brand Communicator's 40 Under 40 Women In Brands And Marketing Communications Industry, the light is beamed on these women, alphabetically:



ABIGAIL OKALA

Abigail Okala is the Brand Manager for carbonated soft drink brand, Pepsi. With over nine years' experience across Public Relations, brand strategic planning, brand development, advertising, experiential and digital marketing, Abigail Okala demonstrates a recognizable passion of strategic navigation of global and local brands for sustainability.

Since she joined SevenUp Bottling Company two years ago from BHM, Abigail continues to demonstrate consumer marketing excellence delivering results on brand Pepsi with music and football initiatives that capture the hearts and minds of the Nigerian consumer, winning several awards including CSD Brand of the Year and Most Engaging Brand of the Year. Abigail currently manages a number of brands within the business portfolio, not forgetting the recent successful launch of Supa Komando Energy Drink, a new innovation by SBC.

In November 2020, Abigail was conferred with the award for Brand Manager of the year at the Brandcom awards. She holds an MA in Advertising and Marketing from Coventry University UK and recently completed a Strategic Marketing course from Lagos Business School.



ADEDOYIN JAIYESIMI

Adedoyin is the Chief Communications Consultant at The Comms Avenue where she creates capacity building and growth opportunities for communications professionals with a thriving community of over 450 communications professionals from Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, United States, Canada, and so on.

She is an author, a brand expert and a communications advisor who has successfully executed different project for different brands and organisation from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Level One Financial Inclusion Project), Specta by Sterling, Fountain of Life Church, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), Heritage Bank, the W Community, Women in Business, Management and Public Service (WIMBIZ); Leading Ladies Africa, African Philanthropy Forum, amongst others.



ADENIKE ODUTOLA

Adenike is the Regional Head, Brand Management for X3M Ideas Southern Africa. She has over the years worked across consumer marketing, advertising and new business development across markets in Africa. She has led and had the responsibility for driving local/regional business development, client service/consumer brand management, equity driving brand campaigns for clients and revenue growth for the business.

She has been instrumental in the start-up and development of new businesses and has consistently delivered over and above objectives by creating clear concepts and executing them through a shared vision, integrity, with cross functional team management and focus.

Adenike was a 2018 and 2019 juror for the New York Festivals - AME (Advertising and Marketing Effectiveness) Awards Jury for World's Best Advertising and Marketing Effectiveness. She served as a Group Head at X3M Ideas in Nigeria before proceeding to Southern Africa in her current position.



**A Y O D E L E
OTUNJINRIN**

Ayodele is the Head of Marketing, West Africa, Godrej. She is a consummate marketing professional with experience in strategic brand building, idea leadership and digital media management across diverse brand boundaries spanning leading corporate financial services, Food & Beverage, & FMCG brands among others.

With close to 10 years of experience in the communications industry managing brands, interactive digital and non-digital marketing projects for global brands, Ayodele has a passion for conceiving and delivering new ways to use technology to connect with consumers to consistently deliver profit and brand equity.

She has high-level executive programmes in Marketing, Innovation and Creativity from the Harvard Manage Mentor, The Lagos Business School and the Digital marketing Institute Ireland.



**BIDEMI ZAKARIYAU-
AKANDE**

Bidemi Zakariyau-Akande is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of LSF|PR, a full-service public relations agency based in Lagos, Nigeria. Her career trajectory appeared to be headed the courts as she was awarded the Best Law Student during her Business Foundation degree at Brooke House College, Leicestershire, England. Bidemi had gone on to study Law at the University of Sheffield, after which she interned at two top tier law firms in Lagos, Nigeria, before enrolling at the Nigerian Law School.

As fate would have it and fortunately for the industry, it was at the Law School that Bidemi, then 23, founded LSF|PR. She has since then led her team to create innovative and disruptive campaigns for the agency's clients. The Bidemi-led LSF|PR has grown to become a leader in the public relations sector in Nigeria with a client portfolio of some of the best local and global businesses including Godrej, Philips, Unilever, Meristem, Branch, Reckitt-Benckiser, Remy-Cointreau and many more.



BOLUWATIFE ESSIEN

Boluwatife Essien, an astute marketing professional, is the Media Manager, West Africa for Cadbury (Mondelez). She started off her career as a Social Media Executive and grew through the ranks to become the Head of Digital (Account Director) for the Terragon Group. At the Group, Boluwatife has trained and led Social Media Managers, Media Buyers, Account Managers and Digital Strategists who use digital to drive brand growth.

At Cadbury, she has executed very strong/innovative media campaigns which include the partnership with Grow with Google on the Bournvita TechBootcamp project, TomTom Big Brother and recently the Bournvita Mother's Day campaign, among others. She is a Certified Marketing Professional from Simon Page College of Marketing and consults there as a Digital Marketing tutor in addition to consulting for her Alma mater.

BUSOLA ONAMUSI

Meet Busola Onamusi, the Brands and Communication Manager for Vitafoam Nigeria. Busola who oversees the corporate communication function for Vitafoam and its subsidiaries, is a seasoned



marketing communication specialist with over 13 years' experience in brand management, corporate communications and customer service. She cut her teeth working across industries and NGOs including FMCG, Real Estate, and Oil and Gas.

Passionate about brand building and empowering young people, Busola enjoys consulting for SMEs. Some of the brands she has worked on include Dulux, Hempel, Sandtex, Dettol, Honeywell Semolina and Honey wheatmeal, So Klin, Gala, Pfizer, Samsung, UNICEF, Listerine and Fidson.

A student of the Lagos Business School, she holds an MBA in Marketing from the University of Lagos. She is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK), Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and the Advertising Council of Nigeria (APCON) as well as an 'Orange Mind' from Orange Academy.



**CAROLINE ODUKOYA-
IJOGUN**

Caroline Odukoya-Ijogun is the Senior Vice President, Head of Brand & Marketing for Kuda Bank. She has over ten years of brand & marketing strategy experience. Before joining Kuda, Caroline served as the Head, Brand, Marketing Strategy & Communications at FSDH Group, as the Marketing Director of Eat N'Go (Domino's Pizza & Coldstone Creamery) and Marketing Manager, West Africa for Philips Electronics.

Caroline started her career as a Brand & Product Manager at Guarantee Trust Bank and moved on to work as Brand Manager at GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Plc. She holds a Masters of Arts in Advertising from Buckinghamshire New University, Buckinghamshire, UK and a Bachelor of Arts in Government with a minor in Public Relations & Advertising from Oral Roberts University, Oklahoma, USA. She also serves as a director on the boards of the Bimbo Odukoya Foundation and Grace springs Business and Vocational school.



**CHARITY ILEVBARÉ-
ADENIJI**

Charity Ilevbare-Adeniji is a marketer with over 12 years' experience in Sales and Marketing working with established brands, from alcoholic beverages, cold chain dairy, packaged dairy to personal and home care brands which she is currently working on at the moment. She is the Head of Marketing for Life Care Division at Seven-Up Bottling Company Nigeria.

Charity is passionate about people and brands and every day brings her fulfilment as she lives her passion daily via the work she does, managing and building brands to meet the needs of people. She lives by values that guide her as an individual and this is core to her work ethics, her values include Integrity, Authenticity and Excellence and that is what drives her daily.

Charity has a BSc. In Political Science and Administrative studies from the University of Port Harcourt, Professional Certifications from CIM UK, Certificate from Harvard Business School in Leadership Principles and is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, United Kingdom and National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, she is currently doing an MBA with the Warwick Business School, United Kingdom.

EFETURI DOGHUDJE

Efetur Doghudje is the Head of Marketing & Corporate Communications for VFD Group Plc; a position she took up late in 2020. Prior to working at VFD, she was



the Head of Marketing & Corporate Communications at United Capital Plc where she stayed for two years.

Efeturi has over twelve years of experience in marketing, public relations, digital media strategy, branding and management, spanning various industries including broadcast media, advertising, banking and civil service. She is an associate member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON); a global affiliate, Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and a member, International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).



EJIROGHENE VANESSA AHUSIMERE

Ejiroghene Vanessa Ahusimere is a purpose driven marketing professional with about ten years' experience in the marketing field. She is passionate about birthing

brands that become the 'heart brands' of consumers. She is currently the Head of Category, Homecare for PZ Cussons Nigeria where she leads the strategy development, innovations and execution for the category in Nigeria and gives supports on communication to the Ghana and Kenya Team.

Prior to working in PZ Cussons, she started off her career in the Electronic Banking unit of Skye bank Nigeria (Now Polaris bank) back in 2011 and then switched to the FMCG sector with Reckitt Benckiser in 2013. She managed the two successful relaunches of the Morning fresh dishwash liquid brand in Nigeria 2018 and 2020, introduced new products, won several awards internally and externally including Best experience brand PZ Nigeria and Best Dishwash liquid category of the year respectively.

Ejiroghene is a graduate of Mass communication from the University of Lagos and an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM UK with a Merit).



ENITAN KEHINDE

Enitan Kehinde is a Lead Consultant at BHM Group. A member of the CIPR and PRCA, she is a skilled marketing communications professional with over five years' experience, working in

the PR industry. Enitan co-authored the BHM Guide to Public Relations in 2016, worked on The Concept of Virality in 2020 and has worked as lead coordinator for Nigeria PR Report for three years.

She joined BHM in January of 2016 as an intern and worked her way up to become a Lead Consultant on the FMCG portfolio at BHM for over three years, driving the Coca-Cola and Nigerian Breweries accounts and leading a team of 10 consultants across corporate communications, and brand PR. She is set to take on the role of General Manager of BHM's operations in the U.K.

Enitan holds a master's degree in public relations from Sheffield Hallam University and an undergraduate degree in Mass Communication from the Redeemer's University.



FOLAKE STEAZE JOHNSON

Steaze is the Managing Director of 19fifty Media Limited, an integrated marketing firm. She is credited and recognized for designing, landing, and leading creative

transformation at Workforce Group and Silverbird Communications where she held the position of Head, Marketing, Sales & Product Management in both organizations.

With a background in Law and Integrated Marketing, Steaze has worked at different advertising agencies: Centrespread, BBDO West Africa, Creativexone, Noah's Ark and Insight Publicis. She holds a certificate in Creativity, Innovation & Change from the Pennsylvania State University.

A member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK), Steaze periodically shares her knowledge on such platforms as MacTay Consulting, Workforce Group, Orange Academy, Lagos Digital Marketing Training and B-school. She is also the Founder of The FSJ Company, Nigeria's first Pop Culture Consulting & Corporate training firm.



FUNKE ADEKOLA

Funke is a Marketing communications and project management professional with experience in brand building, insights mining and route to market strategic rollout for brands across various categories. She

is currently an Associate Business Director with Dentsu McGarrybowen Lagos, a Dentsu network creative agency.

Funke boasts over a decade of cross-industry experience based on marketing communications related projects and hands-on experience in OEM, FMCG, Pay TV, Alcoholic Beverages, among others. Over the years, she has come to be renowned for working collaboratively with cross functional teams across organisations and managing stakeholders. With a proven track record in helping launch, grow and tell the stories of new and existing brands/businesses. She has worked with brands like Airtel Nigeria, Nokia West Africa, Uber, Peak Milk, Maltina, Indomie, Smirnoff, Orijin, Baileys, Mr Dowells and Gordon Moringa Citrus.



GINIKANWA FRANK-DURUGBOR

Ginkanwa Frank-Durugbor is the Head of Corporate Communications at Lafarge Africa Plc, a member of LafargeHolcim Group. She is a consummate professional

with over 15 years professional experience in corporate communications which cuts across internal and digital communications, crisis communications, brand management, content development, media management and public relations.

Prior joining Lafarge, she was the Marketing and Corporate Communications Manager for Transnational Corporation of Nigeria Plc. At Lafarge, she brought to bear her extensive experience in change communications and culture transformation to projects which involve cross-functional and global teams, specifically, the SAP migration project in Lafarge Africa where she was responsible for managing the change through strategic and effective change communications.

Ginkanwa holds an M.Sc in Media and Communications from the Pan Atlantic University, Lagos, Nigeria and a B.A. (1st Class) in Foreign Languages and Literatures from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.



IFEOLUWA MOLOKWU

Ifeoluwa Molokwu is the Chief Operating Officer of Partner Mobile, she is a visionary with a track record of finding innovative ways to grow revenue and increase margins. She is very versed in presentations, accustomed to

addressing Clients, Vendors, Partners, Shareholders and Corporate board of Directors.

She is a confident leader who seeks to use strong communication skills and shrewd business sense to inspire and lead a Company through expansion period. She combines knowledge of business, regulations, sales strategies, market trends and finance to influence advancement of Company goals.



IFUNANYA OBIAKOR-UGOAGU

Ifunanya is a consummate marketing expert with about 10 years' hands-on experience in brand building. She is the Marketing Manager for Arla Global Dairy Products Limited where she

leads a team of Category Managers primarily responsible for the Brand & Category strategies, P&L management and execution of marketing plans.

Over the years, Ifunanya has actively contributed to the success stories of several multi-national companies within the FMCG sector in Nigeria. She started her Career as a Management Trainee at PZ Cussons in 2011 and rose to the role of Brand Manager in 2014. In 2015, she joined FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria Plc as a Brand Manager beginning her journey in the Dairy industry. In July 2016, she moved to Arla Nigeria as Category Manager and has since been a valuable asset to the fast-growing dairy company.

Under her watch as Marketing Manager, the Arla Dano brand has grown to become a strong number 2 Milk Powder brand in Nigeria, introduced new products, set a Guinness World record for the longest drinks-pouring category in 2018,

introduced new products, won several awards including "dairy brand of the year" two times in a row, and several other outstanding initiatives.



IJEOMABALOGUN

Ijeoma is award-winning lifestyle journalist, Forbes Africa 30 under 30 Honoree and a seasoned media and communications professional with over 10 years of brand building experience working with

Consumer, Lifestyle & Tech brands across mass & niche markets. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Redrick Public Relations.

Her agency's roster of clients boasts big players across sectors and industries including Viber, BAV Consulting (a unit of the WPP Group & Forbes Global 2000), UPDC PLC, OPay, Hayat Kimya Nigeria, Stallion Motors, L'Oreal Group, Moët Hennessey, Heineken and Lagos Fashion Week. The agency is also a recipient of the SABRE Awards EMEA Certificate of Excellence and an Honorable Mention at the Global Content Marketing Awards and has been listed as one of SME100's "100 Most Innovative Female - Owned Businesses in Nigeria."

Ijeoma is an Honours graduate of Global & Integrated Marketing Communications from the American University of Paris, France and holds an Advanced Certificate in CSR & Sustainability from the London School of Public Relations.



IRETIOGO OKE

Iretiogo Oke currently serves as Head of Marketing at Samsung Nigeria. She is a vibrant marketing professional whose marketing strategy is hinged on consumer experience and building bonds between

brands and consumers to create lifetime impressions. She is passionate about brands and her passion is fueled by the desire to build enduring and successful brands in Africa.

Iretiogo is a well-rounded marketing professional, who has in 10 years of her career worn many hats in the marketing communications sphere, having managed global brands, launched new products, developed and executed marketing strategies while also managing trade marketing and consumer activations.



JENNIFER UKOH

Jennifer Ukoh is an astute public relations professional working on one of the most successful brands in Nigeria. She is the Public Relations Manager for GOtv, MultiChoice Nigeria. She is responsible for the

initiation and execution of PR strategies for the GOtv brand in Nigeria. With responsibilities that cover a spectrum including corporate representation, crisis management, stakeholder management for the platform's owned and third-party channels, whilst also building viable content strategies for international and local programming.

She leads publicity for MultiChoice's foreign and local programming, including four seasons of the hugely successful Big Brother Naija franchise while she also drives publicity and stakeholder engagement for GOtv Boxing Night, Africa's premier professional boxing tournament.



JUDITHEZEALI

Judith is a marketing communications professional, with a passion for Brand and Business management. She is currently the Group Head, Business and Brand Management for Noah's Ark

Communications Limited where she's responsible for the leadership and overall business and account management of the Airtel portfolio amongst other things.

Her career journey began with The Communicator (now Brand Communicator) magazine in 2008. After she left the frontline industry publication, she worked with 141 worldwide (now Nitro121), Bi-Courtney Aviation Services Limited before she joined Noah's Ark. Over the years, she has garnered a cross industry experience from working on various brands in diverse categories. Brands such as MMA2, Gala, Swift Networks, Paga, Noor Takaful, Airtel, Three Crowns, Ajala, Law Pavillion, Peak milk, Mr Chef, Boomplay to mention a few.

She is a graduate of mass communication from Olabisi Onabanjo University. She also holds a diploma in digital marketing (DDM) from Digital Marketing Institute. She is an IMC professional (CMCIN certified) and an associate member of APCON (ARPA).



JUMOKE AKINYELE

Jumoke Akinyele is an APCON certified marketing communications and brand management expert with over ten years' experience, working on great brands. She is currently the

Deputy Business Director for Noah's Ark Communications Limited, a leading agency in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa.

As a Business Lead, she is responsible for managing business processes and work cross-functionally with the key stakeholders and agency teams to solve marketing problems.

As a brand and business manager, she her quest to understand people and the market for a better experience has seen her deliver a touch of excellence on various brands she works on including Maltina, Airtel, Hacey Initiative, PayAttitude, Fayrouz, Indomie, Paga, SWIFT networks, Three Crowns Milk, Peak Milk, Travelstart and Airtel.

Jumoke studied English and literature at Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo state and is also a graduate of the Senior Management Programme at Lagos Business School.



KHADIJAH OKUNNU-LAMIDI

Khadija is an entrepreneur, leading media executive, business woman and passionate philanthropist. She is the founder and CEO of Slice Media Solutions Ltd.,

a leading outdoor advertising agency in Lagos.

She served in the Lagos State Government for four years under the Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency, LASAA. During this period, she served under various capacities before she rose to the position of Senior Branch Manager and then to Head, Client Services (Corporate Affairs). After her resignation, she delved further into the foray of Advertising and has since made an indelible name for herself as a seasoned businesswoman.

Khadijah holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and Human Resources Management from the University of Bolton. She also holds a Master's Degree in Strategic Project Management (MSc) from the Heriot-Watt University.



LOLUDESALU

Lolu is a seasoned marketing professional specializing in brand building and strategic partnerships. She is currently the Chief Marketing Officer Non-interest, Banking, Sterling

Bank Plc.

Lolu began her professional career in England working at NPower, Mawi London, TG Worldwide before moving to Incisive Media where she managed the team that delivered some of the most impactful campaigns for the 2012 London Olympics. She then moved to Time Inc. London where she managed marketing and subscriptions for over 60 Time Inc. brands.

Recently, she was recognized by Endeavour Nigeria as one of the top professionals in the country helping entrepreneurs to scale-up, for her work as the Group Head of Marketing for The Filmhouse Group. There, she spearheaded marketing across West Africa for Warner Bros., Times Media and Twentieth Century FOX. Throughout her executive journey, her footsteps have remained indelible in the industry through a trail of successful initiatives like The Film Gala with Moët & Chandon and other high-profile partnerships.

Lolu obtained a BA (Hons) degree in Marketing and PR from the University of Hull, an MSc from Coventry University, UK.



MABEL ALADENUSI – ADETEYE

Mabel Adeteye is the Head, Corporate Communications & Amp-the PR arm for one of Nigeria's

leading broadcast media firms, TVC Communications. A trained corporate communications and public relations expert with over a decade experience covering marketing communication, brand design and management, digital media marketing, Events planning and management, CSR and sustainability.

Mabel is accredited in Public Relations with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) UK and the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), accredited in Digital Marketing, Integrated Communications and Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) UK and certified in Strategy and Sustainability from IESE Business School - Barcelona. She is also a member of Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA), UK.

Mabel is an alumnus of the department of Business Administration of the prestigious Babcock University, Ahmadu Bello University and the Lagos Business School.



MARIAN OGAZ

Marian is an Integrated Marketing Specialist with a demonstrated high performing track record in Investments and Trade Management. She currently

works as the Associate Director, Trading and Investment Management for Mediafuse Dentsu Holding Company. She is tasked with developing the trading arm of AMPLIFI and also serves on the Board of Story Lab Nigeria.

As an intrapreneur her roles have seen her lead the commercial team to various commercial bids through competitive investment offerings for local and multinational clients in various categories spanning across brewed beverage, Financial, Mobile, Diary, FMCG, carbonated drinks, beauty and lifestyle.

She is an alumna of the prestigious London Business school and Lagos Business Schools respectively. She Also hold a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Jos, Nigeria.



NANCY NWACHUKWU

Nancy is a certified marketing professional with over years' work experience in product marketing, media planning and customer experience management (CXM). She's the lead

contributor for end-to-end marketing projects for Transsion's Mobile Internet Centre, which encompasses the software and Mobile Ad operations sector of the mobile manufacturing business.

She expedited rebranding and coordinated growth marketing projects that increased user acquisition for Transsbyte's news product (Scoop) by 97.5% within 2 years. Simultaneously, she readapted Chinese CXM initiatives that stepped up local User Retention Rates by over 65%. Her passion about business-oriented marketing fuels her extended partnership with Google's Launchpad Accelerator Program in Africa. As a result, she collaborated with pan-African SMEs such as Tuteria, Piggybank, Okadabooks, and Babymigo at incubation stages. Nancy ideated 'Polished', a series of workshops that enabled her to boost the acquisition and use of soft skills.



NENE OBICHIE

Nene is a marketing and communications executive who head's Sales and Marketing department for PayAttitude Global, Nigeria's first digital only payment scheme. With over

15 years' experience across multiple organizations and industries which include Wakanow, Zenith Bank and Shell, Nene started her career as a marketing communications executive at Simba Technology before proceeding to Zenith Bank as a Marketing Consultant and Wakanow as the Head of Partnerships & Global Integration.

Nene is a regular speaker at national & international conferences and is a faculty member of The Sales Ruby Academy where she facilitates lectures on Personal and Corporate branding.

Her academic and professional qualifications include a Master's Degree in Media and Communication from the prestigious School of Media & Communication, Pan-Atlantic University, a Bachelors' Degree in Mass Communication from Madonna University and several certifications.



NENGI AKINOLA

Nengi Akinola is a talented marketing professional with over 10 years' experience in Branding, Marketing and Consulting. She is currently the Marketing Manager, OPPO Mobile Nigeria, a

global smartphone company which she has helped build from inception in the Nigerian market, having successfully introduced over 15 smartphones & IOT devices since 2019. She has achieved superior results in terms of Brand recognition, and sustained Brand Equity for the OPPO Brand in relatively remarkable short time. She is also breaking stereotypes and smashing glass ceilings in the male-dominated Smartphone industry.

She started her marketing career in Insight Communications, and her background cuts across multiple disciplines under Marketing; Advertising, Experiential, Media & Digital Marketing, as well as Consulting across multiple industries. Her personal projects include co-running a Security company and a Talent Management company.



NKEM ONWUDIWE

Nkem Onwudiwe is a Communications Consultant with a background in public relations and marketing. She is currently the Head of

Marketing and Corporate Communications for The Tony Elumelu Foundation.

She has a passion for seeing women thrive and passionate about creating exciting events where women can come together, have real meaningful conversations, promote their businesses, sell their brands and build relationships with other women – bridging the gap between women and women. This inspired her to create the Her Network-a global inspirational and lifestyle platform to inspire and encourage all women to stand in their greatness and set real life examples by living their truth, in 2016.

In 2016, Nkem was recognized by Leading Ladies Africa as one of Nigeria's Most Inspiring Women and has gone on to give back through her platform by creating the Annual Her Network Woman of the Year Awards in 2017 which focuses on discovering and celebrating outstanding women of Impact in Nigeria.

She is an alumna of the prestigious University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), having graduated from the department of Marketing in 2007.



OMOKEHINDE THOMAS

Omokehinde is a Digital Marketing Communications professional who specializes in Content and Business Management. She is the Business Lead for the

REDWOLF Company-a Digital/Second Line Agency for Noah's Ark Communications. The young Amazon is responsible for the leadership and the overall Business and account management of the agency.

Omokehinde graduated from Covenant University in 2008 and made an entry into the industry in 2010 as a business executive in Deefrent Communications where she was privileged to have worked on some notable brands like Tejubabyface, Nigezie, NowMusik(Tuface) and a host of others. In 2013, she joined NOVELPOTTA Y&R as an online executive where she worked on the LG brand before she crossed to Noah's Ark Communications where she has built her career over the years. She has worked on various brands such as Three Crowns Milk, Nokia, Maltina, Airtel, GOtv, SIWFT, PeakChocolate, Hypo, Mr Chef, Payattitude, Maggi, Wawool, NestlePureLife, Heritage Bank to mention a few.



OSE OSUNDEKO

Ose Osundeko is the Group Head, Digital Marketing for Fidelity Bank. Her core responsibility at the bank is materialising the value of all its digital marketing activities and growing the bank's digital

influence.

She was previously Head, Digital at Starcom Media Perspectives where she managed digital budgets for the world's largest brands including Mondelez International (Cadbury),

Visa Card & Samsung. She also developed and executed integrated digital strategies and, managed a highly strategic and commercial digital team. Prior to Starcom Media Perspectives, Ose worked as the Digital Centre Manager at Wild Fusion Digital Centre where she was responsible for managing the training centre into existence.

Ose is a proud supporter of the non-profit sector having worked as a Client Account Manager for Listen Fundraising UK, raising funds for various charitable organisations through integrated marketing campaigns. She is currently a mentor at MentorMe4Success and serves on the leadership team at CrossPoint Innovate.

She holds an MSc in Strategic Marketing with Distinction from Durham University Business School and a First-Class BA in Management with emphasis in Marketing and minors in Psychology and Media Communication from Webster University.



PHOEBE DAMI-ASOLO

Phoebe Dami-Asolo is the Customer Marketing and Commercial Manager for Coca-Cola Company, Nigeria. A passionate professional with enviable track records, she commenced her career into the Nigerian IMC industry in 2012 at the Nigerian Breweries as an Assistant Manager for the Amstel Malta and Fayrouz brands. In 2016, she was elevated to the position of Brand Manager, Strongbow Apple Ciders, a position she held till she left to join Reckitt Benckiser in July, same year.

At Reckitt Benckiser, she quickly assumed the position of Brand Manager for one of the company's flagship brands, Dettol. Exactly two years later, following her achievements with the Dettol brand, she was elevated to the position of Brand Manager, West Africa where she was in charge of such brands as Harpic, Dettol, Jik, and Mortein in the West African markets. She was there till she left to occupy her present position.



RONKE BAMISEDUN

Ronke is the Founder of BWL Agency, an award-winning strategic communications agency based in Lagos, Nigeria. She is a highly seasoned PR expert, having consulted for several multinational companies such as Pernod Ricard Nigeria, Universal Music Group Nigeria, Travelstart as well as non-government organizations as United Nations Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Her agency, BWL, was recognized for Best PR Campaign in Western Africa at the SABRE 2018 awards for its work with Jameson Irish Whiskey, awarded a Gold SABRE Awards in the Media, Arts and Entertainment Category at the 2019 SABRE Awards as well as a recognised as one of Business Day's Top 100 Fastest Growing SME's.

She was profiled by Leading Ladies Africa and YNaija as one of 100 Most Inspiring Nigerian Women as well and named by Forbes as one of 30 Most Promising Young Entrepreneurs in Africa. She was also shortlisted as a Finalist for the CNBC All Africa Business Leaders Awards under the Young Business Leader Category and featured in YNaija's Power List under The Business Category.



SINMISOLA HUGHES-OBISESAN

Sinmisola Hughes Obisesan is one of the most decorated Creative Directors in Nigeria. She is currently leading two powerhouse agencies in Nigeria, Insight Publicis and Leo Burnett Lagos as Group Creative Director. Sinmisola is well known in the marcomms industry as an award-winning, creative storyteller. Her proven ability to create deeper experiences between brands and consumers as well as leading teams to create clutter-breaking, impactful marketing campaigns for global and local brands that connect with today's consumer is the magic that sets Sinmisola apart.

Sinmisola is an agile leader whose collaborative style has produced outstanding solutions and return on investment for Clients. Armed with over 14 years industry experience, Sinmisola has delivered successful campaigns for clients in Nigeria and across international markets on brands such as Pepsi, Heineken, Nivea, Cadbury, P&G, Nestlé, Techno Mobile, AXA Mansard, FCMB, Lipton Ice Tea, Leadway Assurance and a plethora of others.



TEGA EDWIN-AJOGUN

Tega Edwin-Ajogun is a Partner and Director, Strategy & Planning for Qlick Digital Agency. She is a performance-oriented and data-driven digital marketing and communications expert with

over eight years' experience delivering value in the Nigerian digital marketing space, creating data-driven campaigns, impacting brands and motivating high-performance teams.

She has worked in multiple agencies in Nigeria like SO&U, Wildfusions & Ringier Nigeria, where she was Head of Agency Relations.

She was a TFAA 2020 nominee, Prize for Intrepreneurship and she is also one of 9to5Chick's Top 100 Career Women In Nigeria for 2021.



TEMI OPHYLLIA IBEKWE

Temi is a Strategic Communications Professional with ten years of hands-on experience in Public relations & Marketing, working with consumer brands, tech, government institutions and

SMEs. She is the Founder of Phyllion and Partners, a PR and marketing consulting firm with a niche in tech.

Temi has worked in leading PR & marketing firms in Nigeria, in strategy and account management capacities, facilitating pitch and project wins. In 2014, she emerged Nigeria's representative in Public Relations, Young Lions Category, at the Cannes Festival of Creativity in France. In 2017, she founded fast-growing Her company has executed PR & Marketing projects for local and international firms in Nigeria.

She has created platforms to support SMEs, fresh graduates and most recently led her team in championing the first Tech PR Conference in Nigeria. In December 2020, she was amongst the three nominees for Rising PR practitioner of the year by the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations.

She had her first degree from Obafemi Awolowo University, a Certificate in Market & Research from Pan Atlantic University Lagos, Event Marketing Training from George Washington University, USA and is a member CIM UK.



TOLA OBI

Tola Obi is the Managing Director of one of the big agencies in the Nigerian market, CentrespreadGREY. Perhaps one of the youngest persons marshalling the affairs of an agency this big,

Tola's rich expertise as an advertising and marketing communications professional began over 10 years ago.

She has worked on and made laudable impact on numerous high-profile brands. She has also been instrumental to the repositioning of CentrespreadGREY and wears yet another hat as the Managing Director of the agency's digital subsidiary, InteractiveCT where she served as part of the founding team of the company.

She also serves as valued board member of Orange Academy and DKK Advertising.'



TOLULOPE OLANIPEKUN

Tolu Olanipekun is the Head of Marketing for Mouka, manufacturers of premium mattress and bedding products. She began her career at Elizade Toyota,

Nigeria. In February 2011, she joined Reckitt Benckiser as a Management Trainee. She was promoted to the position of Assistant Brand Manager responsible for their Healthcare portfolio, where she managed the Strepsils brand and successfully launched Gaviscon and Durex into the Nigerian market. Still, in RB, she joined the fabric and surface care team and was responsible for the Jik and Harpic brands.

After leaving RB, she joined the Infant, Follow-on and Toddler (IFT) Nutrition team of FrieslandCampina where she relaunched the Friso Infant cereals and Peak 123 Growing Up Milk. She also launched the Peak Baby Infant Formula and Peak 456 Growing Up Milk. Afterwards, she moved over to the Peak family milk team, where she managed the Peak Evaporated Milk LUPPs and led the Peak Unstoppable Project/Campaign series,

which won several awards for the Peak brand locally and internationally.



TOLULOPE OLORUNDERO

Tolulope is a strategic public relations and communications consultant as well as Board Advisor, having exceptional skills in crises management and digital communications,

with an intuitive sense for commercial viability. She is the Founder and Principal Consultant at Mosron Communications, and Chairperson of the Association of Nigerian Women in Public Relations.

She has worked with and consulted for several organisations including Landmark Africa, Flying Doctors, Outsource Global, amongst others. She has also facilitated trainings at the Nigerian Publishers Association, African Women in Media Conference as well as the School of Media and Communications, Pan Atlantic University.

She was on the YNaija Powerlist 2020 as one of the Most Powerful Young Professionals in Corporate Nigeria, on the Avance Media list of 2020 100 Most Influential Young Nigerians and she was awarded the Emerging Female Public Relations Professional of the Year award at the 2020 WIMCA.



IMC Industry Grand Reception

APCON Boss Honoured, Reels Out Plans



L-R: Mr. Joshua Ajayi, Publisher, Brand Communicator Magazine; Dr. Lekan Fadolapo, Registrar/Chief Executive, APCON; Alh. Garba Bello Kankarofi, former Registrar, APCON and Mr. Steve Babaeko, Group CEO, X3m Ideas/ President AAAN, at the IMC Industry Grand Reception in honour of Dr. Fadolapo.

By Azeez Disu

Regulating advertising practice globally is a daunting task for most regulatory advertising bodies. In Nigeria, advertising is regulated by the combination of federal, state laws, subsidiary legislation and guidelines. Meanwhile, government agencies play key roles in most cases in regulations.

Amazingly, Advertising Practitioner's Council of Nigeria (APCON) is saddled with the responsibility of regulating advertising practice in the country while the head of the council ensures that the objective of the body is actualised. However, since the retirement of Alhaji Garba Bello Kankarofi as APCON Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), there has not been a substantive registrar until the recent appointment of Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo by the federal government. However, prior to his appointment, Mrs Jedi Iyoha was the acting registrar and CEO. So, the news of the appointment of a substantive registrar came as cheery news for the integrated marketing communications industry after a long call on the government.

According to Brand Communicator research, the fact that the new registrar is an advertising practitioner who understands the industry challenges is also something that delights the industry and calls for celebration. They are equally hopeful that some of the long challenges of the industry will be resolved during his reign. To further show their enthusiasm, the industry rolled out their drums to welcome Dr. Olalekan at a high profile event tagged “IMC Industry Grand Reception” while they called for friendly regulations that would grow the advertising industry.

Interestingly, the event held on Friday, March 5, 2020 at the Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Ikeja, Lagos was organised by multiple award-winning frontline brands and marketing publication, Brand Communicator in collaboration with the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

Throwing light on the collaboration between Brand Communicator and AAAN on the hosting of the event, CEO of Awesome Communications and Publisher of Brand Communicator, Joshua Ajayi said that the reception was necessary because of the years the industry had been in the limbo, following the seeming federal government's apathy towards constitution of the APCON council and lack of a substantive Registrar. “Fadolapo's appointment therefore warrants celebration for the industry. The grand reception also afforded the new APCON boss the platform to formally address the IMC industry.”

Similarly, describing the new registrar Steve Babaeko, AAAN President said “Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo is a reliable and trustworthy individual. A lot of the things that the AAAN has done in the past two decades may not have been done without his contributions and input. And then, he is a man who loves to improve himself a lot. Even as he was with AAAN, it was in that space that he got a doctorate degree. He is a man who never stops, he always gives his all. He never tires. I am excited on his emergence as Registrar and CEO of APCON because I feel that the golden age of APCON is here.”

Until his appointment, Fadolapo, a registered advertising practitioner and fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), was the Executive Secretary of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN).

“APCON is here to regulate and not to kill the industry. We are not regulating to strangle; we are regulating to bring the best out of every one of us.”

The Plans Ahead

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

Some of his plans include industry reform, solving tax related issues, copyright issues, agencies pitching for government communications jobs, among others.

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

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

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

On the industry reform, “Again the industry reform has been a major challenge. The industry reform can create jobs, the industry reform will improve the Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) of APCON and the government, and it will help us stabilise our industry. I spoke to the president of all the sectoral groups and they all agreed we need to go ahead with the industry reform,” he

explained.

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

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

In another vein, he said he is in talks with Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and they plan to set up help desk for advertising industry to listen and ensure that issues that relate to the industry are resolved, adding that some of the issues are double taxation; application of withholding tax and others. He said those that do not practice advertising may not understand the fundamentals, stating that the withholding tax should be applied on the net income.

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

Another issue he pointed out is the issue of copyright the industry is facing. He said the DG of Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) told him that most of the issues of copyright at the court can be resolved at industry level. “Today, APCON is talking to NCC on the possibility of setting up a help desk for agencies that need advice on ownership of copyright and copyright issues. We will be organising a webinar soon and the DG has agreed to speak on this issue.”

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

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

On when APCON council will be inaugurated, he said, “Do not forget it is not that they did not appoint members for the council, but the members that were appointed were not selected in line with the establishment act of APCON, consequently they cannot be inaugurated and as at today the honourable minister has written to the president, the letter is with the chief of staff and am also aware that the presidency is looking into the issue and soon a new council may be announced.”

Some of the heads of sectoral groups including top government officials and key stakeholders from the IMC industry were present at the event and commended Dr. Olalekan for the good job done so far. One after the other from Alhaji Garba Bello Kankarofi, former APCON Registrar/ CEO to Bunmi Adeniba, Acting ADVAN President; Tade Adekunle, EXMAN President; Chairman, Segun McMedal, Lagos Chapter, NIPR; Gboyega Akosile, Chief Press Secretary to the Lagos State Governor, among others urged Dr. Olalekan to uplift the standard of advertising in the country, be fair to all, embark on friendly regulations and help solve some of the challenges confronting the industry.



Dr. Fadolapo delivering his agenda for the industry at the IMC Industry Grand Reception held in his honour.



Mr. Steve Babaeko, President, Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) delivering a welcome address at the event.



Mr. Gboyega Akosile, Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Lagos State (Jide Sanwoolu), delivering his goodwill message at the event.



Alh. Garba Bello Kankarofi, former Registrar/Chief Executive, APCON delivering a speech at the event.



Mr. Olusegun McMedal, Chairman, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR, Lagos Chapter) delivering a goodwill message at the event.



Mr. Tade Adekunle, President, Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) delivering a goodwill message at the event.



Mr. Tade Adekunle, President, Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN) delivering a goodwill message at the event.



Mr. Emeka Okeke, Founder/Chief Executive Officer, Media Fuse Dentsu HoldCo Ltd with Dr. Fadolapo.



Mr. Dozie Mbanefo, CEO, New Crystal Communications with Dr. Fadolapo at the IMC Industry Grand Reception.



Joshua Ajayi, Publisher, Brand Communicator, delivering vote of thanks at the IMC Industry Grand Reception in honour of Dr. Fadolapo.



L-R: Gerald Osguo, Head, Media Planning & Management, 9mobile; Bunmi Adeniba, Marketing Director, Unilever Ghana & Nigeria/ President, Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Dr. Fadolapo and Ediri Ose-Ediale, Executive Secretary Advertisers Association of Nigeria, at the event.



Mr. Ozomena Mbanefo, Founder/Provost, O2 Academy Lagos with Dr. Fadolapo.



L-R: Mr. Ajayi; Mr. Daniel Obi, Brand & Marketing Editor, Businessday Newspaper; Dr. Fadolapo; Alh. Garba Bello Kankarofi, former Registrar, APCON; Mr. Steve Babaeko, Group CEO, X3M Ideas/ President AAAN and Mr. Princewill Ekwujuru, President, Brand Journalists Association of Nigeria (BJAN).



L-R: Mrs. Bunmi Oke, MD Ladybird Communications; Dr. Fadolapo, Registrar/Chief Executive, APCON; Mrs Bunmi Fadolapo; and Mr. Joshua Ajayi, Publisher, Brand Communicator, at the IMC Industry Grand Reception in honour of Dr. Fadolapo.



L-R: Mr. Rasaq Asaju, Marketing & Communication unit, Globacom; Mr Kayode Oluwasona, Executive Vice Chairman, 1201Brandway; Mr Ajayi; Alh. Kankarofi; Mrs Biodun Adefila, COO, SO&U and Mrs Temitope Jemerigbe, Managing Director, DKK Nigeria, at the event.



Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, Registrar/Chief Executive, APCON and Mrs. Bunmi Fadolapo (centre) flanked by APCON Staff at the IMC Industry Grand Reception in honour of Dr. Fadolapo.



Brand Communicator team at the IMC Industry Grand Reception in honour of Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo, Registrar/Chief Executive, APCON.



SAMSUNG Nigeria In Q1 2021

The Family, The Good And The Epic Moments



Due to the negative impact and slow recovery from the pandemic, 2021 began with much skepticism. However, Samsung Nigeria cushioned this impact, by introducing a range of affordable devices, the A series (A72/A52/A32, A12/A02s/A02) and the flagship range, the S series (S21Ultra/S21plus and S21) to its customers, hitting the market with a Bang!

This addressed the needs of Customers; thereby reflecting Samsung's capabilities in providing premium performance devices to customers across a wide range of income earners, without compromising the innovative features like the Expandable Memory on the A series device, Water and Dust resistance on the A72/A52 and the first of its kind feature, the Director's view on the S21 series.

Beyond this, Samsung Nigeria expanded their family with the introduction of two iconic ambassadors, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu aka Ebuka, and Joseph Akinwale Akinfenwa aka

Joeboy. Ebuka to drive brand love, affinity and consumer engagement in the flagship segment and same for Joeboy in the Youth Segment (A series).

Samsung is driven by the philosophy to make a positive impact within the communities in which it operates, using Technology and Innovation as leverage. The unveiling of the Samsung Innovation hub at the Yaba College of Technology was a significant step in encouraging the use of Technology in the Educational sector.

Samsung Nigeria is also committed to impacting the lives of customers through its talent shaping and rewards system. With the Galaxy A-Lyrical Challenge, the goal was to identify an upcoming music talent and provide a platform to launch their musical career while also featuring alongside Joeboy to create the official jingle for the Galaxy A Series which debuted during the A series Product Launch in March. Winner Oluwaseun Ajayi aka Spydermanne, was rewarded with a lifetime

opportunity.

Furthermore, Samsung Nigeria empowered Customers through the 2nd Edition of the Learn to shoot program which focuses on providing a mentoring platform with renowned Photographers, Cinematographers and Content Creators for upcoming talents in these respective fields. This edition was led by TY Bello alongside Yemi Morafa, Sisi Yemmie and Anny Robert. The goal of the program was to provide knowledge and an opportunity for the growth of our customers in their respective fields.

Samsung's commitment in fulfilling their promise of Mobile Innovation and providing needful Technology to the everyday Nigerian is unwavering and the first quarter of the year speaks volume to this. We are looking forward to the rest of 2021 with great anticipation.



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Busola Onamusi Joins Vitafoam As Brands And Communications Manager

Busola Onamusi, a renowned brands and marketing communications expert, has joined the services of Vitafoam Nigeria Plc, a manufacturer of mattresses and bedding products, as its new Brands and Communications Manager. Prior to her appointment, she was the Brand Manager at Dulux owned by CAP PLC (a subsidiary of UAC).

In her new role at Vitafoam, she will be responsible for overseeing the marketing communication strategies and activities of the company. It will also help position the company's brands as industry leaders in the face of competition.

Busola is an experienced marketing communication professional of more than a decade working in FMCG, Real Estate and Oil and Gas industry. She is passionate about building brands and creating beautiful and compelling stories that resonate with the audience and in turn generate profit for the business.

Her professional experience spans through strategic marketing management, brand management and communication, leadership, corporate identity, customer service, research, digital marketing and engagement, PR and media relations, internal communications and stakeholder engagement, partnerships, event management, sponsorships and strategic relationship building, CSR, creative production (print, radio, TV & online) and customer relationship management.



Bolaji Junaid Exits Insight, Joins JustBrandit As Director

Following his exit from Insight Publicis, marketing and brand management professional, Bolaji Junaid has joined the services of JustBrandit as Director, Corporate Strategy & Growth.

Junaid who has over 12 years cumulative experience in the creative industry began his career in 2009 with 'Passion Concepts,' a creative enterprise he founded and grew from a zero capital base to a turnover of over 2 million naira within a year as a student entrepreneur.

To gain more experience, he joined Insight Publicis in 2014 as an Executive Trainee where he learnt the rudiments of Integrated Marketing Communications. He worked on a portfolio of brands, notably Peak milk where he led the 60th Anniversary campaign execution, and launched Nigeria's first growing up Milk, Peak 456. Others include Amstel Malta, Smile, UBA, Vitafoam, Scanfroast and Radix Pensions before leaving as a Senior Account Executive in 2018.

He momentarily took a sabbatical break from the creative industry to explore opportunities in the Events industry where he successfully executed over 10 high profile social and corporate events before he joined Ogilvy Nigeria in 2019 as Account Manager. While there, he led Agency/Client relationship on award winning brands as 5Alive, Golden Penny, SARO Africa and So Klin. He also played a role in the successful relaunch of 5Alive in Nigeria with a record EOY sales.

In 2020, he rejoined Insight Publicis as Team Lead and Ag. Account Director on financial services portfolio to work on the Seven Up Bottling Company account where he developed marketing solutions for the company's CSD brands like Pepsi, 7Up, Mirinda and Lipton iced tea across markets. In addition was the innovation brand launch of 2Sure hand sanitizer and Supa Komando Energy drink.

Ademigbuji Pitches Tent With OCHA As National Public Information Officer



Barely a month after he left the services of the World Food Programme (WFP) where for over four years, he provided communication, advocacy, graphics and multimedia services in the capacity of Communications Associate, Prince Adedji Ademigbuji has pitched his tent with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Ademigbuji joins OCHA as National Public Information Officer. OCHA is a United Nations body established in December 1991 by the General Assembly to strengthen the international response to complex emergencies and natural disasters. It is the successor to the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO). Its mandate among others, include coordinating humanitarian response, policy development and humanitarian advocacy. Its activities include organizing and monitoring humanitarian funding, advocacy, policy-making, and information exchange to facilitate rapid-response teams for emergency relief.



Ibukun Aiyemo Becomes Marketing Coordinator For Burger King

Ibukun Aiyemo, a marketing and brand strategist has joined the services of Allied Food & Confectionary Services Limited, a franchisee of Burger King in Nigeria, as its Marketing Coordinator for Burger King.

Ibukun was formerly with Eat'n'Go Ltd, a quick service restaurant (QSR) brand, before joining the new company. Worth mentioning is the fact that Burger King, an American multinational hamburger fast food chain will commence operations in the Nigerian market by the fourth quarter of 2021.

In her new role, Ibukun will be overseeing the marketing activities of the new brand in the Nigerian market and ensuring that the brand captures a larger share of the country's food industry and the QSR segment.

She started her career in broadcast journalism at Suss Productions where she was a TV reporter before joining Eat'n'Go. At Eat'n'Go, she was the Assistant Executive (Digital Media, Domino's Pizza Nigeria) before her position to Assistant Executive (Digital Media, Pinkberry Yoghurt) and later got elevated to the position of Digital Marketing Executive.

Ibukun is also very involved in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is passionate about advocating for mental health, hunger and gender equality. She also hosts a Podcast which can be heard via www.soundcloud.com/theibkshowpodcast or The IBK Show Podcast on Apple iTunes/Anchor FM.

UAC Appoints New MD, Group Head, Communications & Sustainability To Boost Operations



UAC of Nigeria PLC, a diversified company, has appointed Debola Badejo as the Managing Director of its Quick Service Restaurants (QSR), UAC Restaurants Limited. It also appointed Chinwe Okpala as its new Group Head, Communications and Sustainability.

In his new position, Debola will be expected to lead the company's flagships- Mr Bigg's and Debonairs Pizza- to greater heights in the Nigerian market as well as scale corporate store networks and prioritize technology and delivery capabilities to drive performance for the QSR brands.

Debola is a results-oriented investment professional experienced in advising companies on strategy, corporate finance, and investments. He currently serves as an Investment Executive at UAC of Nigeria Plc (UAC) where he is responsible for managing the Group's interests in the Food and Beverage sector. As such, Debola sits on the Boards of UAC Foods Limited and UAC Restaurants Limited where he represents UAC's interest in the companies.

Debola is also a Principal at Themis Capital Management (Themis), an active investment company focused on concentrating capital, talent and expertise on a select number of long-term investments in companies that will benefit from Africa's demographic trends.

Prior to joining Themis in 2018, Debola spent over 10 years as a Corporate Finance Executive in various leading investment banks, including Standard Bank, where he executed M&A, restructuring and capital raising transactions for leading corporates across Sub-Saharan Africa. Debola began his career as an Investment Banking Analyst at Morgan Stanley in New York, where he worked on multi-billion-dollar transactions for large corporates across North America.



Debola graduated with a B.Sc in Systems Engineering from the University of Virginia in May 2008, and holds MBA degrees from both Columbia Business School and London Business School through the schools' Joint Global Executive MBA program.

Meanwhile, Chinwe Okpala is a seasoned communications and sustainability professional, prior to her appointment, the seasoned leader who has experience and expertise in sustainability programmes as well as corporate marketing and communications, was the Head, Corporate Affairs, Communications and Sustainable Development at the Chemical And Allied Products Plc.

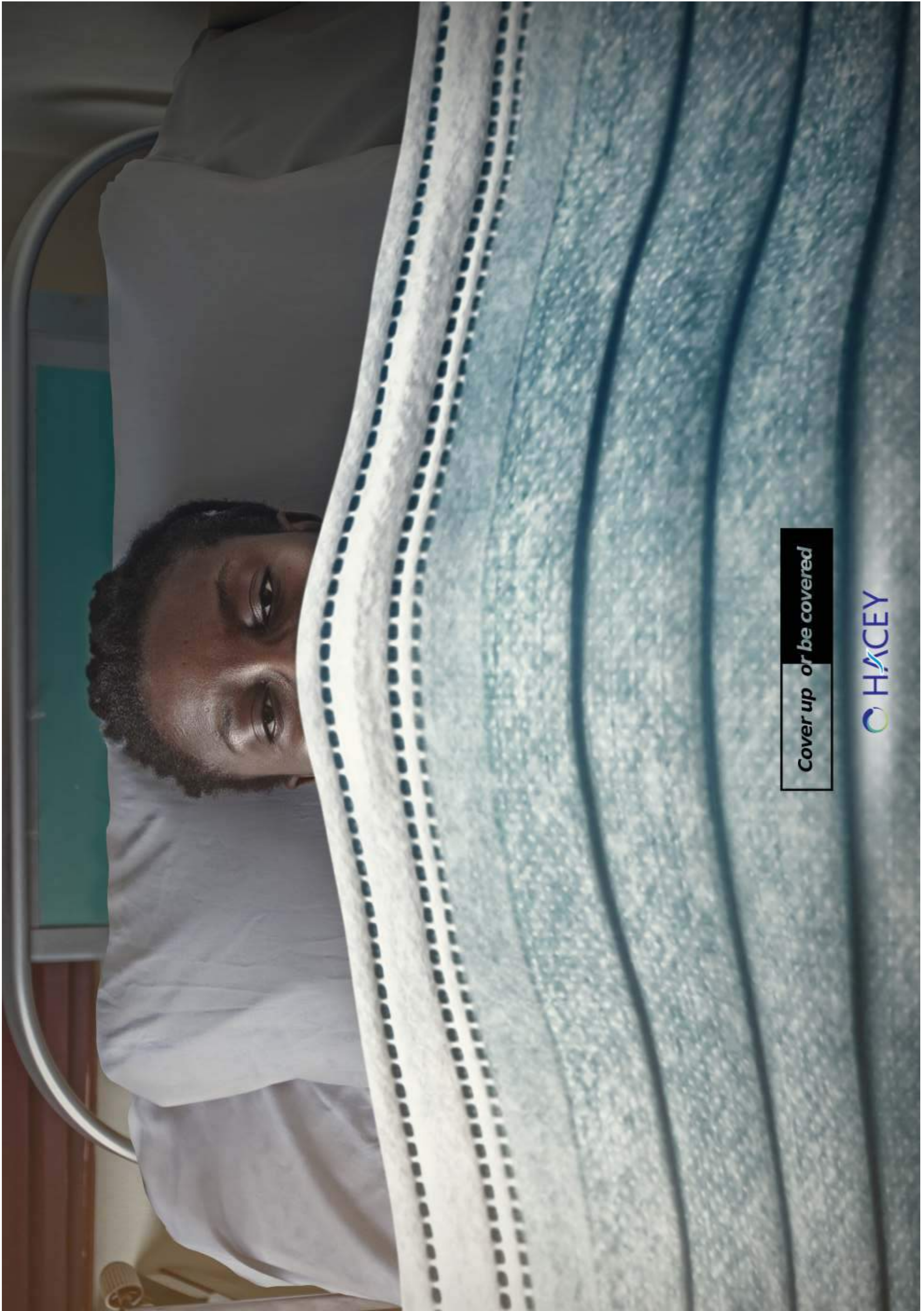
Some of her remarkable works within the sustainability space include: development and execution of a corporate recycling programme for waste management and creation and execution of community support and education intervention initiative.

She started her career at Topbrass Aviation Limited as Finance and Administration and afterward moved to Diamond Bank Plc as Public Relations and Communications Specialist where she was elevated to the position of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility, Corporate Communications Division.

At the bank she was responsible for designing and managing the organizations sustainability framework, sustainability and responsibility policies, and the Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework (ESRMF).

Thereafter, she moved to FBNQuest as Team Lead, Corporate Sustainability and Strategic Projects before joining British American Tobacco. At British American Tobacco she started her career as Head, Corporate Sustainability and Strategic Projects and was later elevated to the position of Internal Communications and Sustainability Manager West Africa and Internal Communications and Sustainability Manager West and Central Africa.

Chinwe holds a B Sc. in Cell Biology and Genetics from the



Cover up or be covered



Just Over A Third Of Consumers Trust Brands, Say Clear Channel And JCDecaux

Brands are facing renewed impetus to rebuild consumer trust following the publication of a damning new survey carried out by OOH media platforms Clear Channel and JCDecaux.

The research found that a scant 34% of 1,000 consumers quizzed had trust in the brands they used, despite 81% averring that trust is a deciding factor in purchase decisions.

Rebuilding trust

So to claw back lost trust from consumers, the research highlights the attributes to which consumers attach the greatest value, namely quality (76%), value for money (72%) and transparency (61%).



Also, brands wishing to curry favour with consumers may also wish to implement fairer pricing and remove hidden costs, with 61% and 60% of consumers singling out these aspects.

By contrast, other links in the product to consumer chain were less valued with social responsibility (56%); environmental sustainability (56%) and ethics (55%) all dropping to the bottom of the top ten list.

On a different note, another factor to consider is the tepid enthusiasm for influencers and public figures depicted in advertising, with just one in five stating that they would be more inclined to trust a brand that employed a familiar face.

Such findings suggest brands would be well advised to weigh up such responses in future advertising and messaging.

On consumer bombarded, warning of the challenges inherent to re-establishing trust in a chaotic media environment, Clear Channel UK's joint MD Richard Bon said: "With most of the western world having spent much of the last twelve months in lockdown, consumers have been bombarded with a seemingly endless stream of news, messaging and advertising..."

"With such volumes of content, it can be hard for consumers and brands alike to understand what works best and what to trust."

Credit: The Drum

Connected TV Advertising Sales Doubled In 2020

Programmatic connected TV advertising sales doubled last year, according to data from ad fraud company Picalate. The global year-on-year growth rate was at least 97% across all four quarters of 2020.

This comes as audiences shifted to digital TV, with WARC Data's latest research estimating that two in five online consumers now have an internet-connected TV. Advertisers are also shifting their media investment in response, with linear TV spend down \$47bn over the last five years and online video up by \$39bn.

Picalate's data finds that the growth in programmatic connected TV ad sales slowed significantly in the second quarter of 2020, when the initial coronavirus outbreak disrupted campaigns.

Latin America recorded the quickest growth in the final quarter of 2020, up 268% year on year. North America proved more resilient and ended the year up 98%.

In comparison, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) saw a steep drop in connected TV ad sales in Q2 2020 and struggled to fully recover

its growth in the second half of the year.

The growth in Asia Pacific was relatively consistent throughout the year, potentially a result of greater emphasis on mobile devices for online video content. A hyper-local approach may help future connected TV growth in Asia.

Although advertising sales are growing rapidly, many advertisers feel they are struggling to leverage connected TV formats effectively.

Credit: WARC



OMD Named Best Performing Global Media Network

In the latest edition of the Network Diagnostics report from the Research Company Evaluating the Media Agency Industry (RECMA), Omnicom Media Group agency OMD has been named the best performing global media network overall, and has also earned the best score in "structure" which looks at the resources of the agency in digitalized and diversified service and client portfolio.

The report evaluates media agencies' strengths and weaknesses across 19 criteria, spanning 700 media agencies in 47 countries. Key evaluative points include new business balance, competitiveness in pitches, specialized experts' capabilities or client portfolio.

The ranking follows a three-year organizational transformation that began with the agency realigning its offer and operations around a brand promise of "Better decisions, faster" – an effort that drove 13 consecutive quarters of new business growth, and fueled OMD's leap to first place in the RECMA Diagnostics Report. As a result, in 2020 OMD was uniquely positioned to quickly pivot to help many of the world's biggest

brands respond to the pandemic, delivering the tools, technology and talent that enabled marketers to not only protect but also grow their businesses in the midst of global disruption.

Across EMEA, OMD has seen a year-on-year improvement in what can only be described as one of the toughest years our industry has seen on record.

Specifically, across Central and Eastern Europe, OMD sits in first place far ahead of its nearest competitor, and across the Nordics, strong growth in Denmark, Finland and Ireland, coupled with Sweden sitting in a dominant position, sees OMD performing at a high level. Russia continues to dominate across Eastern Europe, and for the first time, OMD Italy has ranked number one in the market.

Early in the crisis the agency launched the Fast Start Dashboard (FSD) to help clients quickly learn from and act upon data signals at scale and speed. Underpinned by the Omni marketing operating system, the FSD delivered real-time visibility, on a market-by-market basis, into critical data points around recovery and readiness

– including key market signals on consumer sentiment and the media supply chain – providing an actionable framework for clients to determine when, where and how much to invest.

Housing over 1.5bn data points from more than 35 data partners, the Fast Start Dashboard made real-time data intelligence accessible at a keystroke, providing visibility into where a market sat on the pandemic curve – rising, flattening, or receding – that gave clients the information they needed to quickly identify and leverage emerging trends and available media opportunities and connect with their customers in highly relevant and authentic contexts.

"For the past 12 months, while most of the industry was focused on getting through the crisis, OMD was looking ahead to how we could help our clients win the crisis, and lead in the new normal that will emerge from it," said OMD Worldwide chief executive officer Florian Adamski.

"This ranking – combined with the best-in-class leap in client confidence scores we've seen since the start of the pandemic – affirms that in

2020 OMD delivered performance that mattered, in the year that mattered most."

On the new business front, OMD added \$1.429bn in new billings while also retaining \$578m in existing business, for a combined win total of \$2.02bn – the highest for any media agency in 2020. Continuing its winning streak, since the beginning of the year the agency has added the Home Depot and Dr Scholl's business in the US, the Victorian Government account in Australia and the Lidl business in EMEA.

Credit: The Drum



Weber Shandwick Unites Charities On #AllMenCan Anti-Violence Campaign

As the UK mourned the death of Sarah Everard, a contentious hashtag - #NotAllMen - began circulating, sparking debate about the right or wrong way to approach the issue of male violence against women.

Offering a variation on the controversial hashtag, a collective of charities, organisations and individuals, led by the PR company Weber Shandwick, has united under #AllMenCan.

Encouraging men to be better allies, the initiative reads: "We know all men can learn and teach others to help end violence against women. We know the only way to make that happen is to keep the conversation going."

The campaign points men in the direction of the #AllMenCan website, encouraging them to learn how to do so with some helpful advice. To get the message out, Clear Channel and JCDecaux have donated over 6,000 sites across the UK.

The initiative is supported by a coalition of charities, that include White Ribbon, which works to end male violence by engaging men and boys to take a stand against violence, Our Streets Now, a movement to end public sexual harassment, and Weprotect, a charity creating solutions for those

working to tackle domestic abuse, as well as Help Me Angela, Beyond Equality and Good Night Out.

#AllMenCan joins a number of initiatives that have come to the fore following the outpouring of grief over Sarah Everard's death. Earlier this week, the marketing industry anti-sexual harassment initiative #timeTo issued a statement with a detailed plan for those that want to take action.

Meanwhile, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) is lobbying the UK government, calling on it to amend the HMRC rule that tax taxi expenses. The present rule means if employees jump into a taxi to get home before 9pm, this is viewed as a taxable benefit, which might discourage bosses from keeping employees safe.

The first iteration of the creative appeared via an open letter to businesses in national newspapers this week, with more to follow. Spearheaded by Creature London, 150 ad agencies have signed the letter so far, including BBD Perfect Storm, Carat UK and Ogilvy.

Credit: The Drum





MultiChoice Announces Early Access To BBNaija Season 6 Auditions for DStv, GOtv Customers, N90 M Grand Prize



MultiChoice Nigeria has just announced that it is offering customers on its DStv and GOtv platforms the opportunity to be among the first to be auditioned for the sixth season of the Big Brother Naija reality show.

The popular reality TV show, which makes a return for a sixth season later this year, has already topped previous seasons as MultiChoice Nigeria has also announced a jaw-dropping grand prize of 90 million naira!

BBNaija hopefuls who are 21 years or older and of Nigerian nationality with a valid Nigerian passport, will get an early audition when they pay on either DStv Premium, Compact Plus, Compact, Confam, Yanga package or on GOtv Max or Jolli package between Wednesday, March 24 and Wednesday, March 31, 2021.

Following which they are to send an email to AfricaMagicEvents@ng.multichoice.com with their name and smartcard or IUC number to receive a unique website link to fill out the registration form and complete the audition process. The #BBNaijaEarlyAccess online auditions will also require interested participants to make a two-minute video stating why they should be picked to be a Housemate this season.

Showmax Takes Nigerian Idol, Other Popular Nigerian Series To Viewers Abroad



The African-based streaming service, ShowMax is bringing Nigerian Idol and other Nigerian series and movies to the Diaspora audience.

The array of shows being made available to the Diaspora audience include, the record-breaking reality show I Am LAYCON, starring BBNaija winner Laycon Agbeleshe. I Am LAYCON has been made available on Showmax to Nigerians living in the UK, as well as 25 more countries outside of Africa. Showmax also recently announced that the sixth season of popular music reality show Nigerian Idol which premieres on the 28th of March, 2021 will be streamed live online for viewers in the UK, as well as those in Australia and New Zealand.

From epic historical tales to contemporary stories set in Benin City and Badagry, Nigerians living abroad can now enjoy the best on Nigerian movies and series on the streaming platform.

Popular Nigerian series available on Showmax for those in the Diaspora searching for a taste of home include Riona, an epic series that tells a tale of a kingdom under siege and its power-drunk king, Unmarried, a contemporary Nigerian soap opera that follows three girlfriends as they navigate adulthood, patriarchy, career challenges and friendship. Unmarried delves into the dynamics of relationships among modern Nigerian women, their fights, joys and bond.

VIACOMCBS

ViacomCBS Hails 5G Potential To Revolutionise Media & Entertainment Industry

ViacomCBS Networks International (VCNI) invited mobile networks, technology vendors, brands and agencies to collaborate, partner and innovate around its iconic entertainment brands, in order to harness the full potential of 5G's coming capabilities that will radically transform the entire entertainment industry.

Beyond high-speed video streaming available today, the much-anticipated evolution of 5G will usher in ultra-reliable low latency and mass device connectivity, features which will revolutionise the media value chain from production through to distribution and consumption, unlocking spectacular new immersive and interactive experiences for tv, film, games and live event viewers, audiences and fans.

Launching a new position paper on the topic today, 'Unleash 5G's Full Potential Through Entertainment', VCNI has set out eight key areas where the technology is already having or is expected to have a significant and positive impact across the entertainment supply chain and market. These include areas where VCNI has already been strategically collaborating with industry to date, for example in a 5G-enabled remote production, as well as many areas where it foresees huge 5G potential for live sports, music, major events and gaming.

"Initial 5G launches have brought high-speed streaming to consumers over the last year, but we need to prepare for the real 5G revolution in terms of capabilities that will dramatically impact, disrupt and transform the entire media & entertainment content creation and distribution chain in the next three to five years," said Brendan Yam, Senior Vice President and General Manager, ViacomCBS, Digital Studios International. Yam is participating in the panel discussion, The Revolutionary Role of 5G in the Media Supply Chain, during the 2021 MediaTech 360 Summit on Thursday, March 25.

Airtel Nigeria, Proud Sponsor Of The Voice Nigeria Season 3



Leading telecommunications services provider, Airtel Nigeria, is once again the sponsors of leading international singing competition, 'The Voice Nigeria Season 3', which started on Saturday, March 27, 2021.

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

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

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

Joke Silva, Toyin Abraham, Others Honoured At Eko Star Awards



A total of 65 film and television female practitioners have been honoured by Lagos State Government and Mo Abudu in a ceremony tagged 'Eko Star Film and TV Awards'.

The 65 female practitioners led by Joke Silva, Tai Ajayi Lycett, Sola Sobowale, and Toyin Abraham were presented with awards of recognition for their contributions to the development of Nigeria's film and creative industry.

The award recognition ceremony which is under 'Eko Culture Series', a partnership initiative of Mo Abudu and Lagos State Government held at the EbonyLife Place on Victoria Island with support from Nigerian International Film Institute.

The Lagos State Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture in the State, Uzamat Akinbile-Yussuf extolled the contributions of the female stars in the film industry saying that the female gender in the industry has over the years excelled in areas that were initially dominated by their male counterparts.

Akinbile-Yussuf described the concept of recognising the film and TV stars as a very lofty idea, stressing that celebrating these stakeholders in the creative industry like other professional bodies will serve as a source of encouragement to the award recipients and also inspire the upcoming creative stars.

The 65 stars presented with recognition awards include Taiwo Ajai-Lycett, Joke Silva, Toyin Abraham, Sola Sobowale, Stephanie Linus, Ini Edo, Kate Henshaw, Nse Ikpe-Edim, Zainab Balogun, Funke Akindele-Bello, Iretiola Doyle, Dakore Egbuson-Akande, Shaffy Bello, Omoni Oboli, Ufoma McDermott, Nneka Isaac Moses, Nancy Isime, Uche Jombo Sharon Ooja, Biodun Stephen, Ebele Okaro Tope Oshin, Kemi Adetiba among others.

LG Unveils Rita Dominic As Brand Ambassador



LG Electronics has signed award-winning Nollywood actress, Rita Dominic as its brand ambassador in Nigeria market for all its home appliances products.

The company said the choice of the actress is informed by her inspiring adventures and expeditions in the Nollywood industry.

In the sign on, Rita shared with the audience her thoughts on how to lead a stylish, smart life, what motivates her to be the best in her field, and how LG HOME APPLIANCES personify her lifestyle. With an eye for detail and design, Rita is an epitome of skill, class, style, sophistication, smart, excellence and precision.

Rita Dominic, an actress, producer and Co-Founder of The Audrey Silva Company got her first starring role in the Nollywood hit movie "A time to Kill". She has starred in over 100 Nollywood movies.

Rita is best known for her roles in the ground-breaking films "76", "The Meeting" and "Shattered" for which she won several prestigious Awards. She is the only actress to have won the AMVCAs Best Actress award in both the Drama and Comedy categories. She is also the only West African actress to have won Kenya's Kalasha Awards. Undisputedly one of Africa's biggest movie stars, CNN describes her as a 'Silver screen icon', "embodying a range of colourful characters".

"LG Home Appliance products such as InstaView Refrigerator, Vivace WM, Gas cooker and NeoChef Microwave appeal to me because they are products that augment smart living, said Rita, "the brands state-of-the-art living solutions seamlessly combine the newest technologies and superior design to achieve the ultimate in performance, not willing to settle for second-best particularly at a time like this when majority of the people all over the world work from home"

Debo Adebayo

MR MACARONI



Debo Adebayo, also known as Mr. Macaroni is a Nigeria comedian, social media influencer, actor, content developer and entrepreneur. Popularly known for his 'ooin you're doing well' phrase, Mr Macaroni has been acting for some years, but recently came into limelight after starting a series of comedy skits. In most of his skits, he usually plays the role of a sugar daddy, looking for a side chick. To be honest, the skits are always full of adventures which viewers usually love because of their uniqueness and lessons that they learn from them..

Biography and Educational Background

Mr Macaroni was born in Lagos State, Nigeria into the family of 10. His father is a journalist, while his mother is an educationist. He describes his childhood as 'simple', and always states that he was inspired by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy.

His education wasn't really very rosy as he attended three different universities, before finally graduated from Redeemer's University. According to him, the first admission he got to study law in a private institution was cut short in his 200 level when the news broke out that the law department in the institution wasn't accredited. He left the school after series of meetings with the authority revealed that the school management did not feel concerned about their situation.

Latter he gained admission again into another private institution to study law and everything was going smoothly until he had an issue with one of his lecturers. He was summoned by the

school authorities and eventually told to leave the school for some time, while they come up with a final decision. He wasn't expressly expelled but decided to leave the school for another private institution. It was after a while that his friends informed him that his name came out on the result sheet.

In his third school, he decided to opt for Creative Arts instead of Law. After resuming in the school, one day he was informed by the dean of studies that the institution haven't really started offering Creative Arts, but he can go for English. This got him angry, because he was actually admitted to study Creative Arts and not English. He eventually had to leave after a year.

He eventually gained admission to study Creative Arts at Redeemer's University, Osun State. The university is owned by the Redeemed Christian Church of God. While at the institution, he was bent on leaving a legacy that would make every student an ambassador of the university. He was appointed the president of the student body while in the school he tried his best to make every student happy and comfortable.

Few days before his graduation from Redeemers University, he got expelled over a post he made on his Facebook Page. The University described his Facebook post as offensive, and portraying the university in bad light, an act that constitutes serious misconduct and punishable by expulsion. The case was later settled out of court, and he got his certificate from the institution in 2018.

He completed his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 2020, and was filled with joy looking at the promising years ahead of him.

Career

Mr Macaroni has been featured in a number movies and soap operas before starting the 'Mr Macaroni' series. He stated that at a point in his life, he stopped getting movie roles which made him began to appear as if he didn't know what he was doing.

Following the footsteps of Maraji and Broda Shaggy who usually post their skits on Instagram and other online media for people to enjoy, Mr Macaroni also found delight in this, and as a person who loves acting he swung into action and he began to play the character of an old school teacher.

About how he began the Mr Macaroni series, he stated that the whole story began when a company reached out to one of his producers that they needed someone to make a short YouTube video. He began by first playing the character of an old school teacher, before the 'sugar daddy' character that he is currently playing.

Mr. Macaroni's Net Worth

Mr Macaroni is one of the fastest rising comedians to watch in the coming years, as it is evident that he has grown from a regular Instagram user, to an influencer with 1,300,000 followers. He participated actively in the 'ENDSARS' protest which took place recently, where he led thousands of youths to lend their voices to put an end to police brutality in Nigeria.

His net worth is estimated to be over \$250,000.





Tunji Faleye



Gamification In Marketing For Businesses

Marketing to consumer is becoming tough by the day to the extent that, it's extremely becoming difficult to determine consumer's want with plethora of products available in the market. It has reached a stage where truly, no marketer can confidentially say he or she can hold on to a consumer for a very long time. However, all hope is not lost, as the only remedy to this precarious situation is to consider the power of gamification in marketing for a genuine business survival.

Here are what Richard Robinson says about power of gamification in marketing and how it can boost your business.

Today, it's pretty tough being a marketer. Our audience, their expectations, how, where and when they want to engage with content is changing and we are struggling to adapt. The average person is exposed to up to 10,000 advertising messages in a day. Firstly, how are they supposed to take this all in, and secondly how are we supposed to stand out? Let's face it, it's not only difficult, it is almost impossible.

As marketers we are always searching for the panacea, the magic pill that will solve all of our ills. We currently focus a huge amount of our time and resources around creating a data-driven marketing engine, and rightly so. We all know that data is the lifeblood of our businesses. However, in this rush to a marketing nirvana I can't help feeling that we are leaving something behind.

The fact that our audiences are humans. The way that they act and react comes from deep within their psyche. If we forget how the human brain captures, processes and acts on information then we will absolutely not be able to influence the audiences in the way that we, as marketers, want.

“One powerful approach that builds on the way that our brain works is through the use of game mechanics. Gamification in marketing works so well because it taps into core motivational drivers of human nature.”

Gamification: A Power Tool For Marketers

One powerful approach that builds on the way that our brain works is through the use of game mechanics. Gamification in marketing works so well because it taps into core motivational drivers of human nature; just think how you respond to game mechanics such as being involved in a challenge or competition, receiving rewards, understanding where you place amongst those around you, and of course, having fun. These are all powerful drivers for people to engage and participate in your communications.

The use of game mechanics enables us as marketers to take back control of marketing, allowing us to use the craft and creativity we have, alongside the data we have and collect, to engage audiences in a way that current practices simply can't replicate. It's the human to human connection that still makes marketing impactful.

Gamification is not new, but in marketing we have always had the challenge of scale, speed and cost of implementation. A technology like LeadFamily makes game mechanics accessible and easy to implement for all, and for the first time, allows marketers to inject gamification across all parts of the customer journey in a highly cost and time effective way. Enabling us to get, keep and grow customers — like Coop (39% average increase in spend amongst customers who collected their prize), Masai (50% cost-per-lead reduction), and VERO MODA (10,000 clicks driven to brand website) did — and drive business impact everyday.

Provide What Your Audience Wants

The best thing that marketers can do is create value every day for their audience. Critically, the use of game mechanics helps customers feel that they are choosing to interact with a brand rather than being passively marketed to or being sold to. With gamification, the experience can feel authentic and personalised, which then strengthens the desire to be involved and increases engagement.

As Nicholas Babin, former CEO of Sony Europe and specialist in technology innovation says: “When games are used in a marketing context, the participant remembers the brand from a positive association and unique experience.”

That's the essence of it, isn't it: although marketing approaches change, our audiences don't. As marketers we need to understand what makes them tick and how to engage with them in the most effective way.

Marketers in this clime (Nigeria) should also put it at the back of their mind that gamification and other technology-based marketing strategies are the best thing to do, as no amount of person to person marketing can conveniently have effects on consumer.



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