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Fashion Business Edition

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The Rich List: Dangote takes Steps To Reclaim Lost Status

Find Out The 7 Fatal Errors of Selling!

Gentlemen, You Need a Suitable Work Bag! Find Out Why

Planning A New Business? Here's Where To Start From

Jane Michael Ekanem: The Nigerian Queen of Styling

Nigerian Social Media Entrepreneurs Set To Lose Their Jobs: Find Out Why

The Style Doctor

Uche Nnaji

From Dressing Varsity Students To Dressing The President





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Fashion Is Not just A Business; It's What Every Business Needs



In case you've not noticed already, a look at the cover shows you this September issue is titled the Fashion Business Edition. What this indicates is that we regard fashion as a really big business to have dedicated an entire edition to it. And one of the things we find interesting about the fashion industry is the fact that it is an upscale industry that still admits small-starters and sooner-than-not, helps them rise to big players. Furthermore, it is also a stylistic industry which ensures that you don't have to be a Louis Vuiton or a Chanel to have the President of the United States or the Chairperson of African Union or an Aliko Dangote, as your loyal client. Name is important in this industry, but the appeal of one's style is even much more crucial.

But here's the point I want you to really note: fashion is more a mindset than it is a business. One of the dictionary definitions of the word says "fashion is a manner, a way, or a mode" of doing things. Another word that is closely related to fashion (and sometimes interchangeably used) in the business, is styling. And this is more particular; more individualistic and personal. And these are what your business, venture, or project desperately needs, if you must have an edge in whatever sector you belong to.

Recently I was discussing with a friend of mine, Sandra Ikeji, about a new event her event-management company was planning. According to her the new clients got her information online, as one of the top events-management firms in Nigeria, and called, and that's she got the new job. I was particularly surprised that her firm, Events By SI, could be listed as one of the top events-management firms in the country, considering it

was only launched few months before. So, I queried her about what she does differently. And here was her answer, "If I plan your event, I make you watch the event before the event. My team and I have this package whereby we design the event we're planning in a 3-D format and have it play out before the celebrant or organizer, weeks or days before the event. That way, the client is able to pick or drop what they want or don't want, with the aid of technology and a visual demonstrator". Then she added, "this practice helps eliminate events disasters, adds to our packaging effects, and increases our client's confidence in us". With the above answer, it was easy to see why she rose so quickly in her chosen sector.

This is what every venture (old or new) needs. Be like Sandra. Sharpen your styling and packaging effects. Make your business fashionable! It's the magnate you need to retain old clients and draw in new ones. This is really our message this September at The Entrepreneur Africa, as you join us to access the grass-to-grace story of Uche Nnaji's 'OUCH' clothing line, Jane Michael Ekanem's Jane Michael's Collection, and other entrepreneurial stories that make us your favourite business/entrepreneurship magazine in Africa. Here's a toast to a 'fashionable September.'

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PLANNING A NEW BUSINESS?

Here's Where To Start From

By Derin Fagbure

“The fact that a new business is exposed to both macro and micro economic challenges makes it necessary for governance structures to be put in place from the onset.”

The other day I came across a talented Nigerian designer. There are many out there, but there was something creative and unique about Nelly's pieces. The young lady not only had an attractive Instagram profile, she had a truly bespoke brand. I saw a number of videos of her painstakingly beading Ankara fabrics and also making hand-painted designs on plain cloth. Her styles were creative and her finishing was really good. Given an opportunity to see, feel and touch, I was convinced that the pictures were not photo-shopped. No copyright infringement! I could proudly use the Slogan “buy Nigerian” with respect to Nelly's outfits. The young designer worked from an impressive studio and had the confidence that was needed for an entrepreneur to survive in tough times. I was truly interested in understanding her business model. However, after engaging with the young fashion designer I discovered that she had no idea of her financial and legal requirements. “I hate paperwork”, she said. I told her that the business lacked structure and she replied resignedly, “where do I start from?”

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) typically start with one man or a few people with an idea, in a car boot or a room within the house serving a select clientele. The fact that a new business is exposed to both macro and micro economic challenges makes it necessary for governance structures to be put in place from the onset. The large conglomerates of today once started out as small businesses; therefore

every decision taken by the promoter must be taken with the future in mind. As they say the future starts now.

Incorporation - Lay A Strong Legal Foundation

I explained to the young lady that creating a brand takes more than just willing it into existence and declaring it to the world. Setting up a website and social media accounts for your venture can give the appearance of official business. However, it's a house built on sand without the proper registrations in place. Incorporation legitimizes one's business. Nigerian company law basically recognizes three broad business organizations - Limited Liability Companies, Business Names and Incorporated Trustees (these will be explained in subsequent articles). Registration of businesses under the Act is carried out at The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

Name approval prevents the use of names that are so similar to existing business or company names, as to confuse or mislead people, and it provides a record allowing the public to determine ownership of the company.

Sort Out Your Business Premises

When choosing premises for your business, it is important that you fully understand the terms of the lease. Ask questions such as, “Is the landlord likely to increase the rent?” “Can the landlord increase the rent? If so, by how much, and how often?” Will you find yourself paying ever-increasing service charges? Will you need Urban Planning permission for a change of use? Nobody wants to be served with a demolition notice hence the need to obtain necessary permits and licenses beforehand.

Trademarks and Patents - Protect Your Intellectual Property

Intellectual property (IP) refers to ideas you create and legally own. Example of IP can include inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names and images. Your solicitor can help you protect your designs from competitors who may want to steal your ideas. By owning your designs, you can make money from them by allowing other people/ companies to use them, or at a later date you could sell them to someone else.

Before investing your precious start-up resources and emotions in a brand, the most business savvy and legally sound investment you might make in the future of your company is to invest in a trademark. Without protection of ideas, businesses would not reap the full benefits of their



inventions and maximize profits.

First Directors - Put A board Together

As organizations grow, in line with the entrepreneur's vision, employees with the required skill and competence will be hired. Once this team expands, the founder will find himself in need of some mentorship, introductions to business opportunities and constructive criticism of the financials cum operating performance. These checks and balances come through the board of directors. This is particularly relevant when the promoter lacks managerial experience. Therefore, even before incorporation it is important to give some thought to who the directors of the company would be. Names should not be suggested casually, to minimize the complications of having to replace board members. The investment in an experienced and committed board will repay itself many times over by guiding the company through challenges associated with start-ups.

Labour Laws- Issue Well - Drafted Employment Letters

Most employment disagreements are caused by badly-drafted service contracts or dismissal procedures. Entrepreneurs should ensure that they issue well-drafted employment letters and contracts to minimize or eliminate labour disputes; setting out among other things, maximum hours of work, overtime rates, minimum periods of annual leave, notice of termination, rights and responsibilities of employers and workers employees in the event of retrenchments.

Financing and taxes- Put Your Books in Order

Every entrepreneur must understand the basics of finance. You may also

want to find out what sources of finance are available and what their legal implications are. This can have major legal implications on businesses. Could you be getting a better deal with your bank? Your solicitor will explain these areas and can even help negotiate finance on your behalf. Advice can also be sought on tax issues and the best time to start your financial year.

Goods and services - Draw up Contracts with Suppliers and Wholesalers

Do not leave everything to trust. Document as much as you can. When buying or selling goods and services for example; it is important to know your legal duties. What could contract terms mean for your business? What are the laws relating to product liability? What can you legally say in adverts and promotional materials? Beware that wordings in adverts can be held against you.

Conclusion

I am glad that having advised Nelly on the need to structure her business, she has set the ball rolling. If she can, then you can. Dear entrepreneur, what are you waiting for?

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Derin Fagbure is a corporate lawyer, writer, business/ legal consultant and coach. She can be reached on instagram via; @inblack_and_white.



Cover Story

The Style Doctor

Uche Nnaji

From Dressing Varsity Students, To Dressing The President

By David Agu

He runs the top-rated fashion and lifestyle brand called OUCH. But, while Uche Nnaji's OUCH is popular, his reference within the social, entertainment, and fashion scene, as the Style Doctor seems hell-bent on outweighing his company's brand. Uche's entrepreneurial story is a clear case of a rise from grass to grace. Uche Started OUCH years ago as a small campus hustle, at the university of Lagos, making clothes for few of his fellow students who could only afford meager amounts for his services. Now, ten years down the line, and very young still, both his name and that of his brand have risen to an iconic status within the Nigerian fashion industry, employing more than 30 staffers, and with several offices across Lagos. And what's more, Uche Nnaji was called upon to serve as Nigeria's President Buhari's official dresser during the 2015 presidential election. While serving in that capacity, did something iconic: he got the president to wear a suit, for the first time in more than 30 years. In this lengthy interview with The Entrepreneur Africa, Uche Nnaji these and more. Excerpts.

How were you able to get OUCH to this international level, despite having lived all your life in Nigeria?

Living in Nigeria all my life does not restrict me from having exposure. Right from my undergraduate years before I ever flew out of Nigeria, I had already started thinking global. I started going to the internet to look for magazines. Back then I bought expired magazines from the roadside and I would be looking out for foreign designs and stuff. I drew inspiration from there.

Tell us the story behind OUCH; how did it all start?

Okay! I'll say it's a journey that started from the university days, University of Lagos to be precise. All I wanted was to be able to dress like certain men I looked up to in Church. I wanted to dress well and look different from fellow students. I couldn't afford that lifestyle but I discovered I could go to the Yaba local market in Lagos, to buy fabrics. Then I identified with a certain tailor (Mr. Seyi of blessed memory) who opened up his place to me and encouraged me back then, at Jibowu, Lagos. I started making shirts I wanted to wear. Then fellow students would see them and think they were from one huge UK brand. They liked the shirts and wanted me to make for them, too. At a point, a friend's father who was always in the U.K, noticed I loved to look good, tidy, and dress smart, so he handed over some shirts to me from U.K brands. That spurred me into wearing those kind of shirts.

During my National Youth Service, I continued to render tailoring services. Eventually, by the time I wanted to go for my M.Sc in the U.K, in 2005/2006, I had saved 4,000 pounds from making clothes for people. But I never knew I was going to end up in this business. I had taken it as a means to an end, just to raise funds to continue my studies, but now, the rest is history. I was going to run Masters International diplomacy, haven gotten a degree in Political Science. I wanted to be a diplomat.

Eventually the Masters didn't work out, and as such when the school finally refunded me the school fees, I didn't think about any other thing. I went straight to rent a 12 metre square shop and paid for it. Many thought I was crazy, family members thought something was wrong with me, they were wondering what I want to do with my life. But I was resolute; I was convinced over what I wanted to do and God's grace was upon what I've chosen to do.

So, this creative fashion business of yours was strictly born out of passion, and not due to any special training?

Yeah....passion, and of course developing myself. It was just recently that I took a course in branding and image management at a New York Institution. I still don't know how to sew and I'm not ashamed of it. I'm the architect of this, I'm the one that tells my team of tailors " this is what I want'. And I'll tell the people making the shoes and bags for me, 'this is the leather I want'. So, I am the head, the visionary, and the person with the creative ingenuity. I see my team as the pencil/pen to use and bring my dream to fruition. Just recently, I went back to school to study image Consulting. After dressing up the Number one citizen of Nigeria and

I'm the architect of this, I'm the one that tells my team of tailors " this is what I want'. So, I am the visionary, and the person with the creative ingenuity.



A man with a shaved head and glasses, wearing a light blue traditional African outfit (a long tunic and trousers) and black sandals, stands in front of a dark wooden door. To his left is a light blue wall with a framed sign that reads "We Sartorially WELCOME you to our YARD" with a small bow tie icon below. A large potted plant is visible behind him.

We
Sartorially
WELCOME
you to our
YARD
👔

“...OUCH started
from rock-bottom
but today things
are different...”

...Mr. President's body build is unique... So, it wasn't easy working for him, especially when he was to wear a suit. I remember him telling me that the last time he wore a suit was when he was still in the military.

he eventually won the election, I just felt it was time to move to something else. The experiences and challenges I had dressing him, is not the kind of experience an ordinary fashion entrepreneur can handle very well.

So between a tailor and a fashion designer, what is the difference? Must one necessarily be a tailor in order to be a fashion designer?

I don't think so but there's a relationship. A career fashion designer designs. All they do is to design, which is not all I do. To be honest with you, I think it will be important for them to know some aspects of tailoring. If nothing, at least cutting. Tailors are not designers. They are the army, the designer is more like the general.

Compare the OUCH of yesteryears and OUCH of now; how would you describe the journey so far?

OUCH started from rock-bottom but today things are different, although not deep-pocketed yet. OUCH is laid on principles such as 'delayed gratification', just like Warren Buffet, Warren, whom I started reading early about. I always say delay gratification because I noticed it is alien and I have to say it so that people will hear it.

There is something I learnt from my father; you can't eat your business seed and expect friends and family to sow into that business. These principles helped OUCH grow. What we used to do was, for instance, after 6 months, 1 year, or thereabout, if we made any profit, say N10, after the running cost, maybe we put the N10 back into the business, instead of using it to, for instance, buy a new car.

You mentioned dressing the President. How did that come about?

I was called upon by my good friends from Red media, the State Craft team. I think I was traveling between Rome and somewhere when that message came, saying they needed me for that. I believed in what they were about to achieve, and as a professional I accepted it.

Tell us about the experience.

Mr. President's body build is unique. He's an ectomorph in body structure. So, it wasn't easy working for him, especially when he was to wear a suit. I remember him telling me that the last time he wore a suit was when he was still in the military. So he said, "you're the one that wants to put me in a suit, oya do the magic let's see". It was challenging but because of the experience I had acquired, I was able to take his body structure into cognizance and we did the right fittings with the help of Adebola Williams. It was an interesting experience.

So, how has OUCH been able to leverage on that milestone?



We have not been able to leverage on it. It's a shame. A lot of people have told me in the past two years that I ought to be on papers with his pictures and all that. I guess it's about me being conservative about it and understanding the sensitivity of his office. Aside that, our work has been getting us referrals from certain offices as well including the number one state offices as well. So, we'd rather continue that way.

What makes OUCH stand out?

It is the OUCH experience. This experience is a good feeling. For instance, somebody is getting married but based in the UK and because of numerous stories he has heard about the brand and the pictures he had seen about the brand, he wants to have a taste, he would want us to be with him on his special day to wear an OUCH. Maybe he's going from an officer to a manager level and he wants to make it special by wearing OUCH. Whenever they dress that way, they get complimented. The image is what we are selling; the good feeling – that is the brand's DNA. For instance, when I sit down to check fabric, decisions are carefully made, like how the lapel size of a jacket should be; either 4 inches, 3 inches, 3¾ inches, etc. And when it comes to pocket size, should the pocket be slanted, ticket pocket, slanted ticket pocket? We are detailed even down to the buttons; one or two buttons, dotted button, etc. The goal is to change the look of the end user which is the customer and they'll be glad to carry that look. All those are infused into the brand's DNA, in the creation process, whether



it's a shoe, a shirt, or any other product.

How do you see the Nigerian Fashion Market or Fashion industry?

It's untapped. It's still an industry that is joking. It has refused to be united and have a common goal. So it's untapped. There is still opportunity for foreigners to come in and clean out since those of us here are not seeing the importance of being united and all.

Aba is the biggest fashion business market in West Africa, but it's yet to gain international recognition or standard. What would you say is not being done right?

I'm from Abia State and I've been in Aba twice this year without any government invitation and without anybody sponsoring it. I can tell you, ten years after I began this business, nothing has changed about Aba. It's disheartening for me. Those that have produced results in this industry should be called into it. It's not about the number two or number three man saying what he's wearing is made in Aba. People that have been in Aba or probably started in Aba and then went international, like myself should be given an opportunity to give that place a face-lift. Each time I travel to Aba, in my hotel in the evening, there are always ten to twelve young men trying to see me because we're the ones they look up to. So, who are the people the government wants to use to make people buy made in Aba? Who are their poster boys in Aba? Who are their poster ladies and brands in Aba? But then, let's leave the poster and talk about infrastructure. Modern machines are not even there. I'm talking about a computerized machine that have the capacity to make 5,000 shirts per day, nobody has it in Aba. How about machines that make



sleeves on suits? How about the machines that fix collar and sleeves on shirts? Nobody has it in Aba. We're talking about machines of N2million or thereabout but nobody has it in Aba. The governments are not yet engaging to technocrats and knowledgeable people in that field. I believe the 'made in Aba' mantra is being politicized.

So, you're pushing the blame to the government?

Yes; because the whole 'made in Aba thing' is sponsored by the government. It's the government of the state that is spear heading it.

But you believe there's potential in Aba?

Yes, I believe there are lots of potentials in Aba. I believe Aba has the combined potential of Istanbul, Turkey, Italy, Japan, South Korea and China, as per fashion industry.

So, are all your products at OUCH made abroad?

No, of course.

So, how much of your fashion items are made abroad?

About 60% of the clothes are made abroad. All our foot-wears are made abroad. I've looked around to see if we can make it here but the challenge is that there are no standard machine, so the finishing becomes an issue.

What's the staff strength of OUCH?

Oh sorry, I can't reveal the exact number, but we are over 30.

Would you describe OUCH products as luxury?

(General Laughter).....that's a very tricky question. In Nigeria, Yes, OUCH is luxury, but we rather chose to be identified as a premium brand. Overseas, in New York for example, or even in London or Dubai, OUCH won't be seen as luxury.

How much is an average OUCH suit?

An average OUCH suit is N150,000. I must tell you that when I say this in our factory in Europe, where our suits are made, they always complain and ask how I make profit, considering the quality of wool and other materials we use? But we're looking at building a brand that is global, institutional, and eventually generational.

Which of the international fashion brands inspires you?

Two of the famous brands that inspire me every time, every day, since my university days is the Inditex Group. They own Zara and such other brands. And it's owned by one man. One other of my most favourite brands is Zafra. I remember my first time in Dubai some years ago; every day, I would leave the hotel to go out and sit at Zafra's store where I would be receiving life (general laughter).

For relaxation, what do you do?

When I'm not working, I'm running back home to go and play with little Ophelia. Yes! I'm rushing home to go play with my little girl..... (a shared laughter). Which other play would you want me to play? (Laughs)





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By Bunmi Jembola

As salesmen, our duty is to get the product in the hands of customers and earn some cool cash for the organization. Sometimes though; a few selling errors make that a lot more difficult than it already is. Let me share with you what I consider seven of the most important selling errors. This is, by no means, an exhaustive list; you may please add your own:

1. Claiming Positional Leadership. If I walked up to you and said for instance that I am Africa's number 1 sales coach I'd expect you to at least ask who conducted the exams for Africa sales coaches. And to be frank; my position in the industry might not necessarily solve your problem. What a customer wants and desperately need is a solution. That may not have much to do with the fact you are number one or number two. Secondly, claiming position is a sure argument starter; and when you set off an argument you get the prospect in the defense mode and they're less likely to buy. In my early days selling banking services I made this error quite frequently and almost in all instances we just have a good debate without me making sales. Far from what I wanted!

2. Selling The Offer. As sales people what we sell is solution not product features. But in a desperate attempt to prove that our solution is better than the alternative(s) which might be preferred by the customer; we tend to shift all focus to product features; meanwhile stating the features would not convince the customer. In a bid to keep your focus on selling the solution focus substantial attention on the problem. After you have demonstrated an accurate understanding of the problem that's when you go on and state how this product solves that problem. If you look very well at the guys who sell pharmaceutical products in molue in Lagos in those days, this is often their approach. Some of them even demonstrate the health challenges. Little wonder why even the literate folks are often drawn by their strategy and almost everyone in the bus end up buying.

3. Referring Customer To Your Boss. I made this error in my early days in sales. And very easily the customer would not close any deals until he had spoken to my boss. What I actually wanted was just to have the customer talk to another senior officer so he could have additional comfort but it often backfired. Do not get me wrong, you might need your superior to close a few big ticket sales. But until it gets to such critical moments of concessioning it might be bad strategy to quickly run to your boss. It often backfires. Very soon the customer will stop buying from you, always insisting on speaking to your boss. For a salesman that's not a good reputation. You must take particular ownership of your own customers.

4. Selling Through A Go-Between. There is nothing more frustrating than selling through a go-between. My personal experience tells me that 95% of the time the salesman would not close the deal. This is why B2B sales guys must ascertain at first contact whether they're talking to the right guy. Now, you might be talking to the CEO and still not be talking to the right guy. The right guy is not necessarily the most powerful. In structured organizations the recommendations of direct-responsibility managers carry a lot of weight. Be sure you're talking to the manager who has direct responsibility for the purchase of that product. That's not to say you cannot get leads from some other persons, of course you can. But you should sell to the right person, not necessarily your introducer.

5. Not Understanding The Problem. This can be very tricky; especially for a startup. In the NYT best-selling book "The Lean Startup"; Eric Ries illustrated this with his experimentation while creating a startup company called IMVU an instant messaging (IM) application. They were going to create an IM add-on and it seemed pretty obvious to Ries and his team that what customers wanted was specifically the IM add-on with the belief that having to learn a new programming language for a standalone IM product was a huge barrier customers are unwilling to cross. That proved fatally wrong! Customers were in fact; using multiple IM programming languages and that wasn't any barrier. What they wanted was actually a stand-alone IM application. If you do not understand the REAL customer's problem at the most elemental level you can't sell. This is made a lot more complicated by the fact that sometimes the only thing the customer can recognize is the solution

(and that is when it is made). In many instances the customer cannot even articulate the problem quite precisely. So, the salesman is not just describing solutions he will also be required to describe the problem.

6. Telling. There is a huge difference between selling and telling. The most important part of your sales activity is listening. You can NEVER win in Sales just reading out your own prepared scripts. What's best is often to let the customer read out their own prepared script and sometimes; oft-stated objections, then you can ask vital questions that pits holes in those objections. In selling if you must keep one rule that rule is "Listen more than you talk". Tellers are always talking; sellers listen a lot more.

7. Always Thinking Cheaper. This is where management often quarrels with the sales team. Sometimes it is necessary to make downward price reviews but the salesman must understand that a cut in prices does not always solve demand problems. Price has to necessarily reflect costs and beyond that if you are always selling to the wrong people your product will always be very costly. And so you understand; when someone says "your products are too expensive" what they're basically saying is I cannot see as much value in this solution as you are charging for it. Again; the wrong customer will never see substantial value in a product. Imagine selling alsatian dog food to a village dog keeper. You can never persuade him to pay the value.

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Bunmi Jembola is Nigeria's leading sales coach, trainer and consultant. He has over a decade experience in B2B and retail selling that spans four industries including I.T, Banking, FMCG and Consulting. In those years he earned over N12Billion in aggregate sales value. He is the CEO of Sales Ruby Ltd and Venture Starter Ltd. He is the Convener of Founders Conference and Africa Startup Festival. He can be reached via email: bunmi@venturestarter.ng or LinkedIn: Bunmijembola.

“...In selling if you must keep one rule that rule is “Listen more than you talk”. Tellers are always talking; sellers listen a lot more...”

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Keep Your Eyes Open For The By-Product

One New Thing Leads To Another...

By Strive Masiyiwa

Every Month, on this column, we bring you words of wisdom from this proven, world renowned business leader, Strive Masiyiwa. Strive is Zimbabwe's richest man and founder of Econet, Kwese TV, etc. Enjoy!

You never know what's possible unless you try! I remember in 1993 sitting down to develop my first business plan for mobile phones. I was trying to borrow money from a local bank...

All we knew at the time was that we were trying to replace the fixed line phone with a mobile phone, so the only change we could see was the "mobility," which was itself revolutionary!

I know this sounds funny, but the common wisdom at the time was that most people would keep their phones switched off, and would only switch them on when they needed to make calls. There were newspaper articles in which people complained about how rude it was for people to answer their mobile phones in public!

As mobile operators we saw Voice Mail as being very important, but the challenge was: How would people know if they had a call when the phone was switched off?

So someone came up with the idea of a "short message" to inform people that they had a missed call... that's all it was meant to be!

SMS began to evolve until people used it to send messages to each other, and it evolved further and further... until it gave birth to the email in the age of the Internet!

Today most mobile operators generate more revenue from what we call data or broadband than from voice calls!

What's the moral of the story today?

In whatever business you are in, there is an "SMS type" by-product just waiting for you to discover it, and which could become the mainstay of your business in the future.

It almost always begins as something small and seemingly inconsequential. Your job is to spot it... and to do so before others do!

I haven't asked you this lately, but you've heard me say it time and again: What do you SEE? You don't have to tell us here, just keep those eyes open for by-products and more...



BRICKWALL CITY

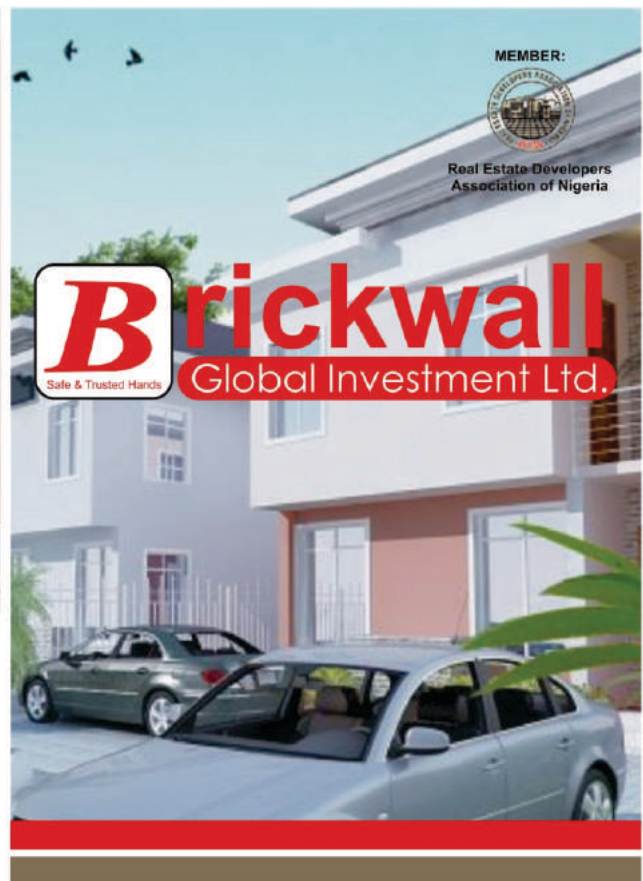
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When Luxe Met Modest at the Launch O' Feyi By #LuxuryByFeyi

By Esther Ijeoma Ogbuka

Oriental Hotel, Lagos, had never been as luxurious as it was on the evening of Sunday, 3rd August, 2017, when Feyisola Adeyemi, CEO of Luxury By Feyi (a top Nigerian-international luxury fashion brand) brought together some of Africa's biggest fashion icons at the hotel, for the launch of her beautiful collection, Feyi. The event was also held in honour of a fashion icon, Madam Abba Folawiyo, who turned 75 recently. Some of the famous names who attended the event include: Sen. Florence Ita Giwa, Zbaba's wife, Mrs Annie Idibia, Denrele Edun, etc. And The Entrepreneur Africa was there to bring you pictures.



Amirah Ibrahim



Ifan Ifeanyi Michael



Annie Idibia & Kids



Feyisola Adeyemi, Madam Abba Folawiyo & Friends



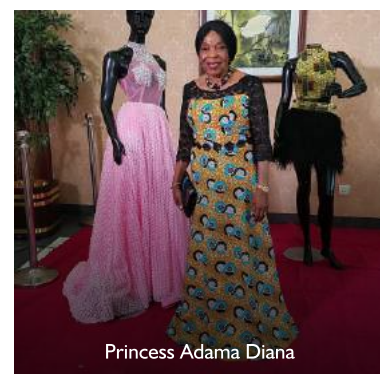
Sen. Ita Giwa



Muslim Themed Ushers



Denrele Edun



Princess Adama Diana



Nigerian Social Media Entrepreneurs Set to Lose Their Jobs. Why?

THEIR PRESIDENT IS BACK!

By Mary Jane Nwankwo

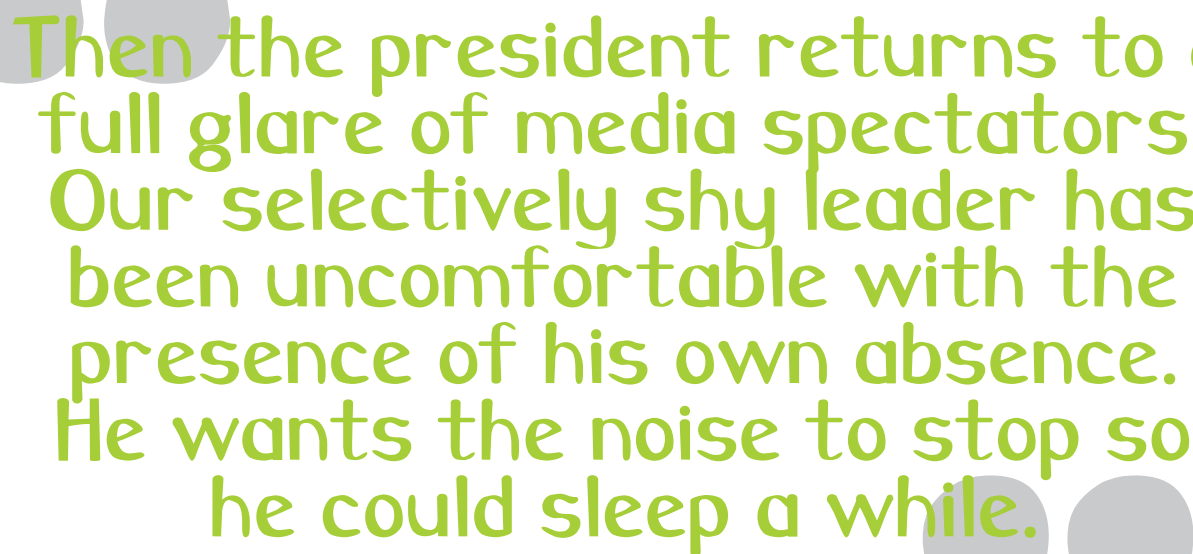
The world used to be small. Now it is tiny with the advent of social media and the rest of its entourage. People drive in, sometimes causing traffic and creating wrecks. Other times, they save the day with helpful information, leading to mass orientation and even global transformation. These people are the people who change the world from the screen. They are social media entrepreneurs.

The Nigerian social media atmosphere has been lively with avid display of national issues as the country's over one hundred and fifty million multitalented dancers strut to the stage all at once, the loud drums of unemployment, bad governance and a failed economy playing in the background. Bloggers and a host of other entertainers struggle with the competition on our vast dance floor of national issues. They try to learn new moves and maintain stability of movement as the rest of the world watches on. All that happens from the casket of politics takes life on our screens as the ghosts of Aso Rock haunt our national consciousness. Those dancers have entertained the masses to a reasonable level. When their performance thrilled the public, they are sprinkled with some online traffic. They pocket a few nods of agreement and are rewarded with attention. They make some money. They become entrepreneurs. Then, out of sheer authenticity, they joined the dance of the spirits and stepped on many toes hiding in our oil-based shoes. The music started to crack a

bit as some bigger dancers noticed the flexible and popular dancers in the yard.

Then the president returns to a full glare of media spectators. Our selectively shy leader has been uncomfortable with the presence of his own absence. He wants the noise to stop so he could sleep a while. He has not been home for months and he deserves some quiet to recover from the original hits he inspired with his long hide and seek leadership. These social media entrepreneurs cum entertainers could have played him a lullaby to help him sleep. Instead they rocked his return with claims of reality as they put him in a bad light with their honest appraisals. The president felt judged. He rose, for the first time to the mantle of authority and ordered that the music be stopped. And he is the president of both music and musician.

Our stage is crowded with too many dancers. I do not blame the president because we have to stop making too much noise. We are like a child whose parents are asleep while the house is on fire. We could have waked up our parents and keep putting off the fire until we burn up. It is nearly impossible to wake up parents who pretend to be asleep when the house is on fire. But the president frowns at our last resort to calling on neighbours from the window of social media to our plight. We



Then the president returns to a full glare of media spectators. Our selectively shy leader has been uncomfortable with the presence of his own absence. He wants the noise to stop so he could sleep a while.

do not understand the privacy of family life, especially as it affects adversity. He expects that we die in our burning house, even if the leaders pretend to be asleep, waiting till the fire gets to the roof, so they vanish with their magic wands of stolen funds and private public assets. He does not want the world to see our buttocks as we bath in the common river of technology. He glues tattered fabric of patriotism on our buttocks, so our nakedness is hidden from other bathers who walk into the river to take careless dives because theirs glow from the lotion of good governance and justice. Nigeria is ours. Our nakedness and we have spread our dirty undergarments on the river bank for too long. It dries and gets wet with each passing season, yet our parents have been pretending to sleep to a point they forget they are pretending to sleep. They begin to look dead to us, so we remove the ancient undergarment and take it up the noses of the world so they can smell and offer us some sympathetic visas to come sleep over for a while. The true spirit of nationality betrays us all as we want our leaders to wake up and put out the fire. There is actually no place like home. So we join the original social media entrepreneurs to cloud our weed-infested stage. This does not sit right with the president. He wants to stop the music.

I am not even angry. I am disappointed. It does not mean that I am surprised. Nigeria has done nothing over the years since our infamous adoption than to act like a foster home. The leaders do not really care about the burning house. They only care about their bedside catching fire. They mount extinguisher round their bedside and ignore the cackling from the rest of the house. When the flames roar them awake from their wakeful sleep, they whisper lullabies on national TV. They put us back to sleep as the raging fire fires on. What do you expect when they hear that we have woken up and screaming on the window for a help that will forever regard the presence of national guardians. They are not disturbed that we are disturbed. They are afraid the world will think them incapable of responsibility. They want us to stop shouting so they can go back to fanning their egos from our coals of disappointment.

But the offering is not the taking. They have offered threats in place of true repentance. The demons Aso Rock do not understand the spirit of Nigerians. They do not understand that our stubbornness was forged

from the pit of patriotism. We want our home brewing with the sparks of creativity and a healthy competition with the rest of the world. We want a better deal than the 'No Hate Speech' campaign. We want progress. We are not abashed of our deplorable sitting room. They want to host the world. If social media 'offenders' are trailed for offending the sensibilities of our elites, it will be newsworthy. We would like to report that. Our business must thrive. The presidential team of fragile sensibilities might need stronger armour of oppression to put out the fire of determination their gross recklessness has resulted in. The king cannot defecate on the village square and expect that royalty eradicates the stench of his faeces. The government has not only defecated shamelessly on our faces. They have used our tongues to wipe their raunchy buttocks. We have to wash our mouths in the open now, so the world will not think we have swallowed shit without a fight.

My problem is not that the president has threatened to arrest people who make anti-government statements on social media. My problem is that they have tried to stop entrepreneurship, the driving force of the world. They are like a jealous boss, turning a blind eye to young potential, and sending dogs to bite not the youth's legs but his pants, so he could not be seen walking gloriously into a room full of investors. That would be witchcraft and sinfulness.

Social media entrepreneurs have perfected their trade and since they are privately owned, they do not have a boss who doubles as president. They contribute to our national income and they are local manufacturers of everyday reality. They are employers of labour and dispensers of bitter truths. And as the whole country burns more than ever from ethnic resentment and diminishing commonsense, the pretentious disrespectful at the corridor of power could start twitching, at least from heat. They should wake and save us all from our gnawing hopelessness and familiar animosity. They should not stop to throw blames across the ruins of our blazing furniture. They should ignore the urge to return to the comfort of ignorance, and either turn off the fire or, humbly evacuate the building. The government should live with the sacrificial beauty of technology or, in this case of emergency, truly change.

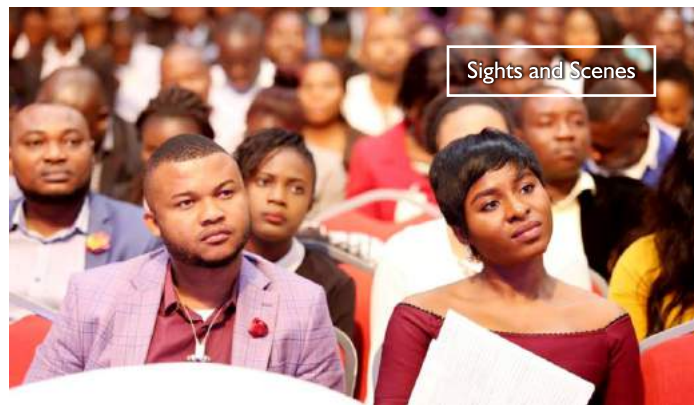
Day UACHD Shut Down Lagos With 'RESETSSION' SEMINAR

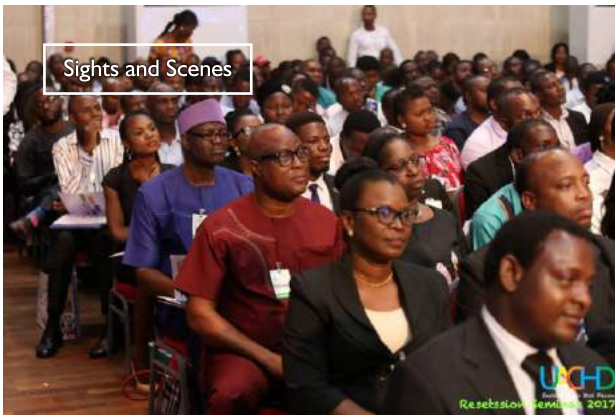
By Kimberly Edokpaye

On the 23rd of August, 2017, the Uche Ahubelem Centre For Human Development (UACHD) held the bustling city of Lagos to a stand-still as the organization convened its annual seminar series, Titled 'Resetssion' (Succeeding in Recession). This year's edition which has been described as the biggest and most impactful business/leadership event in recent time in Nigeria, held at the Shell Hall of Muson Centre, Lagos, with more than 1,200 people in attendance. On ground to inspire the attendees were top business/leadership personalities, including Prof Pat Utomi, Prof Charles Soludo, the convener, Mr. Uche Ahubelem, Mr. Lanre Olusola, Ini Abimbola, Abimbola Jimi-Adebakin, And Gbadebo Adejana. Comedian, Okey Bakasi, and Actress, Monalisa Chinda anchored it.

The epoch-making seminar centered on the key principles and practices for winning in business and life in times of recession. It was, indeed, a huge success. And, of course, your favourite magazine, the Entrepreneur Africa was there to bring you pictures.









Self-Made Woman

Jane Michael Ekanem

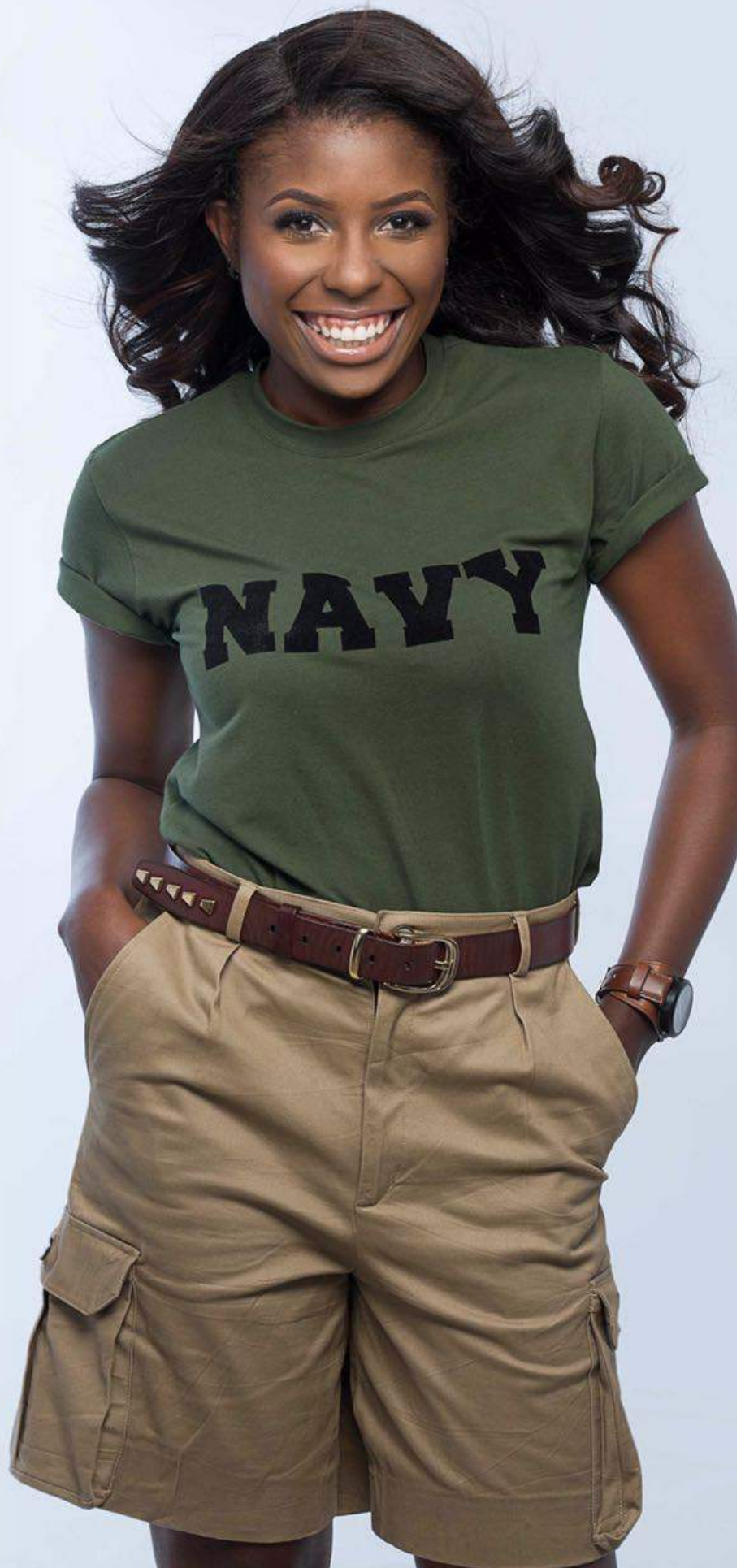
The Nigerian Queen Of Styling

"My Brand Belongs To Top 30, And We're Just Getting Started"

By David Agu

She began as a dancer, before she answered the call of styling. Now, Jane Michael Ekanem runs a fashion and designing/styling outfit which, in her own words, belong among the top 30 fashion companies in Nigeria. And with top names in the Nigerian entertainment industry and business sector currently on her clientele, including the Africa-renowned music reality show, Project Fame, it is safe to call her the country's queen of styling. In this interview with The Entrepreneur Africa, Jane opens up about the fashion business, and how she got to this respectable place in the industry.

Excerpts.





What's the history behind the Jane Michael Collection?

The history for me has always been a process of working up to the right time to successfully begin the venture, because I had had the vision for a design brand for a long time even as a stylist. I always wanted to build a brand with the name Jane Michael, a fusion of my name and my dad's and so I started on that dream with a small business and built on it. To adequately kick start my career as a designer, I wanted to build a reputation for my brand and of course be able to handle the expectations as well. I can say I am well on my way and really pleased with what we are doing.

Did you study styling as a course, or was it simply an outcome of passion?

Styling was an outcome of passion, I never had any formal education regarding it. At the time I started styling, there were very few stylists in the country and there was no institution teaching people how to style so it was a case on learning on the job.

It seems you're strictly into lady's clothing. In a nutshell, what are the fashion items/services offered by your firm?

I am strictly into styling ladies but versatile in designing for men, women, and kids. The Jane Michael brand offers consultation, styling, designing, branding, stocking, and personal shopping services.

In your opinion, between brands that offer female clothing and those that cater for the males', who makes more money in the Nigerian/African fashion industry.

I would say it all depends on different factors because different brands have different categories of clients, so you could never say who makes more, really. But I would say the male designers or fashion brands for

men have it a bit easier than the female counterparts as men have more general sizes than women because most women have different body aesthetics.

Give us an insight into how you make your fashion items. How much of them are homemade?

All my fashion items are made with expert care here in Nigeria, and moreso, unlike some designers who outsource, I do not outsource my supplies or creations because these pieces are my babies. I have to look through every production of any Jane Michael piece to make sure it comes out perfect.

We see out-of-the-box creativity in your designs; what influences/inspires your styling?

I honestly do not have an answer to that, because I never see myself the way you – and maybe others as well – see me, so I would say my inspiration is from God.

Does the Aba phenomenon play any role in your fashion business?

It hasn't started yet, but it will. This is because I see Aba as the "Turkey" and 'China' of Nigeria. I am yet to, but will explore that angle for sure.

What do you have to say about the Aba phenomenon vis a vis the need for growth of Nigerian fashion industry?

I think if the government puts in more investments and infrastructure, it would definitely be better. The merchants also need to be educated and willing to learn about growing their internet presence and generating online sales, so they can reach more people. We cannot also put aside the need for better quality of goods and services. So, it would be a case

“...The type of people I design my pieces for are fashionable women who understand the value of quality... I have had the privilege, and still do, to dress top notch clients...”



Jane Michael at work on a popular client, Linda Ikeji



of every person putting in their effort to assist in making the Aba phenomenon a worldwide trade.

If you're asked to rate your brand, out of hundred top fashion brands in Nigeria, what number is Jane Michael's Collections?

I would say Top 30. But first, you need to remember the designing brand started less than a year ago, and the competition is stiff because we do have a lot of good brands out there. Also, the economy does not help much. I would say where I am at right now, is a good start.

If you were promised N1.5million regular monthly salary, would you dump entrepreneurship for a 9-5 job?

I don't think I could give up my entrepreneurial pursuits for a 9-5; but I could do a regular job while running my business on the side, just to gain more ground financially to fund my business comfortably. If I had to choose however, I would choose my business - of course.

If you were to sell your firm today, how much would it be worth, objectively?

My firm is worth over 50million Naira.

If you were not a fashion entrepreneur, what would you've been?

I would have probably been a dancer. I was a dancer for a little time before I took up styling.

What kind of people wear your clothes? Can you name a few top clients.

The type of people I design my pieces for are fashionable women who understand the value of quality and I do my best to represent working women with a true sense of self. I do not know how comfortable my clients would be about mentioning names, but I can tell you I have had the privilege, and still do, to dress top notch clients.

At what point would you say you had the big break, and what changed?

My first big break came during the early days of my styling career when I got the contract to style the female contestants and co-host of MTN Project fame. After that, I think people began to take notice of my self-honed skill and you can rightly deduce that things slowly but steadily took off from there.

Name any instances when you nearly gave up on this venture over the years.

I cannot remember any instance off the top of my head, but like any other aspect of life, there have been those times; and when that happens, I remember how I started and get motivated to begin again or keep moving.

“The right mix of creativity and originality keeps a brand relevant and sought after.”



In 5 points, what does an aspiring fashion entrepreneur need, to consider in order to succeed?

- Fashion. The business of fashion is extensive hence knowledge, passion and skill in fashion are important.
- Consistency. If you want to succeed, you have to keep at it, and evolve but never consider quitting.
- Creative originality. The right mix of creativity and originality keeps a brand relevant and sought after.
- Never hold back. Be willing to take risks.
- Ask questions. Including questions about the market situations at all times and how to improve your business.

How do you spend your time outside of work?

I spend time with friends and family, attend some events I get invited to and enjoy life the best I can.

Owerri, here I come...



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His First Store Was in A Toilet;

Now He Runs One Of The Biggest Building Materials Companies in West Africa

The Grass-to-grace Story of Chief Amaobi Ike, (CEO, Sweet Homes)

By Esther Ogbuka & Ojeh Godwin

Chief Amaobi Ike is not the regular degree-holding/corporate entrepreneur whose story you expect to encounter on The Entrepreneur Africa. No, he's not, because, truly he's not a degree holder, and secondly he's originally a trader. But this is a different kind of trader; the kind that will give Harvard-educated professionals a run for their money any day, as far as business management and growth are concerned. With little education acquired, and while still a teenager, Chief Amaobi left his native home of Nnewi in Eastern Nigeria and ventured into Lagos in 1991 to serve as an apprentice in a building materials dealership shop at a Lagos market. All he had were his dreams and a determination to succeed. It was this



determination that kept him going despite daunting challenges that fate threw his way, including the humiliating experience of having to set up his first store in an abandoned toilet. But with only N6,000 startup capital, Chief Amaobi has now built his company, SWEET HOMES, into an international multimillion Naira building materials outfit, with headquarters in Lagos. He recently shared his inspiring, grass-to-grace, story with The Entrepreneur Africa. Excerpts.

Your brand, Sweet Home, is known today as a leading name in the home-appliances industry in West Africa. Tell us how it all started.

I started from nowhere, and with nothing. I first learnt the business from one of my brothers, while serving as his apprentice, in 1991. That was after I finished secondary school in 1989 and travelled down to Lagos from my village at Nnewi. But when I was done with the apprenticeship, there was no money to set up my own. So I began to hustle within the market where I had learnt the trade.

By God's help I began to make little money, which at that stage of my life I valued so much because I had no form of assistance from anyone. Back then I used to eat breakfast by 12 noon so as to make it serve as lunch as well. After hustling for a while, God intervened and blessed me.

I carried out a business deal in 1992 and got N6,000 in bulk. I used the money to secure a small shop from a Yoruba at a Lagos building materials market called Oduade market. I paid for the shop and there was no money left in my hands anymore. The shop was actually an abandoned toilet, which nobody was using. I said to myself, "if I tell this Landlord to convert this toilet to a shop since no one was using it, he won't agree. So, I went to the man to explain my ordeals and he asked me to pay N6,000 which was the rent for one year. But before six months elapsed, I made about N20,000 one of my brothers advised me to pay the money over to one of my town's men, Chike Umeh. Chike was importing goods from England and co. About 80% of his goods was from Italy & England. That's how I began to deal on mostly England products. Then he would supply to me and I would sell the products and pay over his own share of the income back to him. I always deposit his share of the money back to him. That was how, gradually, but steadily, I started and made it in this business. And now, because I started from the scratch, I know so much about building materials and the business sides to them.

Even now, running a well-established brand, are there still challenges you encounter in this line of trade?

Challenges at this level mostly have to do with government policies, sea ports, forex, and unnecessary taxes. But the major challenge is forex, because our currency is not stable. And it's really our major problem.

So how have you been able to handle these challenges and keep your business profitable still?

It's good name earned through consistency in the trade of quality products. For instance, in 2016 and this year, I spent so much money buying quality products. But the good thing is that good products are easy to sell, no matter the price. And I'm sure anyone that buys it will get satisfaction and will definitely recommend my products to other people. I tell my business associates that the secret to trade success is having quality products. Be honest, always tell your customer the truth and you won't have any problem.

Speaking of quality, people complain of the dangers of buying or using inferior building material products. How can a layman distinguish the superior from the inferior products in the market?

Erm... I will tell you the truth, even I can be confused because at times when they come up with the fake. For instance, in the case of the forceps tap used in hand-wash basin, the original one is made of brass but people use other inferior material to make it. They would make hole inside the tap and put some heavy objects, then use aluminum or other very cheap material to coat it. When you lift it, it would be very heavy. And normally, when it's heavy, people assume the quantity of brass in it is enough. But by the time you open it, you'll discover it's another material that is inside not the brass. So, once you start using it, after a short period of time rusting begins. That's why some taps keep dropping water, even after locking them. Now for ceramics, that is the toilet seats, you'll discover that there are some cities or countries that have the clay. There are processes these ceramics need to undergo for 48 hours, but some of these Chinese companies will just allow the processes to be completed in few hours, thereby making it inferior. And that's why incidences of WC breakage occurs and even injures people. To avoid buying inferior



products, one should always go for an established brand name because anyone that has a brand will always protect his or her brand.

Do you sell only your brand or do you sell other products or brands different from yours?

Whatever you see in my showroom is branded 'Sweet Home'. Whatever I deal on must be my brand. If I buy any product that is not my brand, it'll be very difficult for me to sell because everyone expects to buy my brand once they step into my showrooms. My customers already know my brand is topnotch compared to others in the market. So, whatever I want to showcase in my showroom must be nothing other than my brand.

Where are your brand's products made?

I outsource the manufacturing of my products to factories in Thailand, Singapore, China and now, I want to extend my tentacles to the United States of America. My brand name came from Thailand because most of my products are from there. But they can't produce all I need for my innumerable customers. I currently have more than 600 products. So, as I kept expanding, I told them I want to equally contract other good factories, and we came to terms and agreed.

Do you have any plans to venture into any other line of business other than building materials?

Yes; I'm actually extending my scope to electronics. Right now, we have water dispensers, water purifier and we are looking into refrigerators and air conditioners. All these are branded 'Sweet Home'.

Apprenticeship, which you took part in, used to be a popular business culture. But it is gradually becoming a thing of history. What do you think is the cause of this?

The truth is that all fingers are not equal. Some further their education, while others, for one reason or the other, don't. Most people who didn't get substantial education must start their life by serving or being an apprentice before they get established. You can hardly see someone that graduated from a higher institution, stooping low to learn a trade for 5, 6, or even 10 years. Nowadays, at the age of 22, 23 years, most people are already graduates and ready to venture into one career or the other. It's those that were not privileged to acquire higher education that resort to apprenticeship. I have 7 boys currently learning the trade under my tutelage. So, it all depends strictly on opportunities and privileges.

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Looking Good is Good Business

Gentlemen, You Need A Suitable Work Bag!

Find Out Why

By Drusilla I.B.O

Gentlemen, let's get one thing straight: You need a bag. Every career professional needs a reliable work bag — for your papers, your electronics, your wallet, your umbrella, or your snacks even.

And that is why in this Fashion Business Edition of The Entrepreneur Africa, with great help from Business Insider, we've compiled this work on the best bags for men to carry to office, and why. We're not talking the nylon laptop bag you've had since college, or the bulky black briefcase your dad lugged to work (yeah, you know the one). We're talking stylish, professional and practical work bags.

And with sales of men's bags on the rise, these handy accessories won't be going anywhere anytime soon.



The Briefcase

A briefcase is the most popular of all work bags, and for a good reason, too. Its classic shape, sturdy build, and polished appearance are a sure-fire way to look the part



The Messenger Bag

The messenger bag is the briefcase's younger, cooler brother. It will hold just as many documents (and a laptop, too), but with a shoulder strap and some pretty stylish design options out there, it's the go-to for today's trendy work force.

The Backpack

The backpack is making a comeback, and how could it not? It's easy to throw over your shoulders, and if you were able to stuff 10 textbooks into one in college, you'll definitely be able to get good use out of one now. Note: Do not use your college backpack.



The Tote

Perhaps the most basic of all the bags, totes do just about everything you need them to. Work papers? Check. Bagged lunch? Check. Umbrella? Check. And even better, they'll double as the perfect weekend bag

The Tech Bag

We understand if you don't want to lug around a huge bag, or if you just aren't ready to jump on the briefcase train. Thankfully, there are tech cases made solely for your tablet, laptop, and smartphone — or if you're a true techie, all three.

Get more style inspiration from the pros.



10

Ways To Send Your Money To Work While You Sleep

By Ojeh Godwin

We're warned to be careful about being in debt because interest never stops charging us; interest never sleeps, never takes a day off, and never goes on a vacation. Well the reverse is true, as well. Your money can be making money while you sleep. This has even become more feasible since we started living in the age of the internet. Thus, below are the 10 ways to make this your reality:

I. Start a blog.

Perhaps the most popular way to earn a passive income is by launching your own blog. It only takes a couple of minutes to set up and is cheap to start - just purchase your domain name and pay for hosting.

After that, start creating amazing content that people would be interested in reading or sharing. For example, if you're an accountant that has helped small business owners with their taxes, then that could be your blog. I personally have my invoicing blog to help customers know everything there is to know about invoicing. This draws thousands of signups a month.

Make sure the topics you write about are popular. If you still love your pet rock, I doubt there would be enough people visiting your our site to monetize it. But, you never know.

Once you've gained a following, you can start making money from of your blog by:

Earning commissions as an affiliate. This is where you push other people's products or services on your site. Make sure these products or services are relevant to your blog. For example, that accounting blog could become an affiliate for accounting or invoicing software. Once you find an affiliate partner you'll be given a unique code so that whenever a visitor clicks that link on your site you'll earn your commission.

Sell advertising. If your site has the traffic to become an affiliate, then it may also be good enough for advertisers to purchase ads on your site. You may start off small, like making under \$20 per ad. But, you may eventually be able to charge triple digits. Again, your site must be quality. Find sponsors. This is slightly different from just selling ads on your site.

Sponsorships may be a one-off piece of sponsored content or permanent logo embedded in your footer.

2. Sell your own information product.

If you're knowledgeable in a certain area, then you can start creating products, such as eBooks or videos, and selling them on your blog. It may take a lot of work to create and market your products, but once all the leg work is over, you can just set back and collect the proceeds.

3. Earn royalties.

If you're a talented musician, actor, or author, then you could earn royalties from your work. In other words people will pay you for using your work or creative assets.

If you aren't talented enough, but still interested in earning royalties, then you can use the services of content providers, and still own the copyright. It's a marketplace where you can buy and sell royalties.

4. Create a membership community.

If you've proven yourself to be a authority figure, then you can create a membership community where you pay a monthly fee to receive additional high-quality content and information that's not available to non-members.

A favorite examples is Timothy Sykes who makes more than \$100,000 per month in passive income through his membership community which discusses how people can make money in trading penny stocks.

5. Flip Websites.

If you've put in the time and effort in building a website and you have gained a lot of traffic, then you may be able to sell it to an interested party by listing on online marketplaces known for that, like Flippa. A lot of money are made every day via this type of transaction.

6. Sell Physical Products.

Just like with a blogging site, there are several ways to earn a passive income by selling physical products. Probably one of the best known

ways is by selling your old junk on eBay. But even if you don't have anything left to sell you can start drop shopping. This is where you sell products for a company on eBay or Amazon and they'll take care of the rest -- including shipping.

You can also launch your own eCommerce store by using popular online malls. They literally give you everything you need to sell products online from a complete online shop to including buy buttons on your social media channels.

7. Invest in Stocks or Shares.

When you invest in stocks you become a stakeholder. That entitles you to a share of their profits. Investing in stocks has been a popular way to earn a passive income for years, and thanks to the internet, it's easier than ever to research and invest in stocks on your own.

8. Peer-to-Peer Lending.

Find out Companies that are into organizing of peer-to-peer lending schemes. Such firms have created a new industry where anyone can become a lender. They will then match you with a consumer who either prefers or has trouble securing a loan from a bank. You can earn a higher interest rates on the loans you issued since you're dealing directly with the borrower.

9. Rent Out Property.

In countries wherethe likes of Airbnb operate, you can rent out your home while on vacation or your vacation home when not in use. You can also rent out your garage, parking space, or unused office space. It's a nice supplemental income without really doing anything except placing an ad.

10. Hire a Middleman.

This is also known as arbitrage and is basically where you have someone else do the work for you. For example, you could start a dog walking service or web design firm, but outsource the actual dog walking or coding to someone else. You're much better doing anything except being the middleman who is in charge of marketing these services.





Many young men, and even some older ones, who haven't found the right people to ask, are curious about morning erections. Most people who have a penis have the experience, with some regularity, of waking up in the morning with an erection. Why this topic is important is that a good sexual life boosts the confidence of a man and the otherwise can deflate a man's ego and make him less productive at work/business. As you're building your conglomerate, don't despise the importance of being healthy and the wonders it does your work life.

What Is Morning Erection?

Morning erection, colloquially referred to as "morning wood" and scientifically defined as nocturnal penile tumescence (NPT) is a healthy and predictable physiological response that most men experience. Morning erections would be better described as the tail end of a series of night time erections, as they are just the last erection in a series. On average a healthy person with a penis will have between three and five erections in a full night sleep, with each erection lasting between 25 -35 minutes.

How Erections Works

Funny as it sounds, young boys spend a lot of time trying to make them go away, while older men spend a lot of money trying to get them to come back. Sometimes, the first step is a hard one. Erectile dysfunction (ED) affects 1 in 5 men. So... let's dig into the woodshed and discuss the nuts and bolts of pitching a tent.

You can think of the penis like a tire. A tire can inflate by pumping it up with air or deflate by letting the air out. Erections work the same way but with blood instead of air. How the blood gets there and is regulated is a pretty impressive biological process. The penis contains two cylindrical chambers (called corpora cavernosa) that run down the length of the shaft and are composed of spongy tissue capable of filling with blood. The penis also contains an outer sheath (called atunica) that surrounds the two chambers. The tunica tightens as blood flows into the penis, making the organ more rigid. When most people read the word

Healthy Entrepreneur

MALE ERECTILE ISSUES

**Truths That Can Help
Boost Men's Confidence
and Lead To Business
Productivity**

By Esther Ijeoma Ogbuka

"erection," they probably think, specifically, of a hard penis.

Penile erections are, without a doubt, the most talked-about erections in the body, and below you can learn just how a male erection works. However, it's worth knowing that a penis isn't the only part of the body that gets erect. Any part of the body that has erectile tissue can become erect. Erectile tissue, as it sounds, is a tissue that can become erect or get hard, usually because blood flows into the tissue and stays there for a period of time, keeping the tissue, and subsequently the body part, erect. Other body parts with erectile tissue include the clitoris, the urethral sponge, and the ears.

In most societies, there is such focus on the penis itself that most of us (including all of us who don't have them) don't realize that getting an erection is really a team effort of body and mind. Getting and maintaining an erection is a complex and fluid event (pardon the pun), more like a symphony than a simple tune. It involves the nerves, blood, hormones, and muscles, and often our thoughts and feelings, too. Few things that happen in the body occur in clear-cut stages, but for ease of explanation we can think of the making of an erection as involving a few stages from beginning to end.

Of course, the above description is very general. The way erections do, and sometimes don't, work in each individual body will depend on many factors. Because erections involve so many bodily systems, and happen as a result of a delicate balance of factors, When men begin having difficulty getting erections, it can be an early sign of something else going on in the body. While occasional difficulty getting erections is completely expected for men of any age, consistent erectile problems are a good reason to get a check-up and talk with your doctor.

Most erections begin with stimulation. The stimulation may be physical (as per you or someone else touching a part of your body), and it might be stimulation of the penis or of any part of the body. The stimulation may also be mental or psychological, such as when you have sexual thoughts or feelings. Erections can happen as a result of either of the aforementioned. Most men will also get what are called spontaneous or reflex erections; meaning you get an erection even when you aren't being touched or thinking sexual thoughts. But here we're talking about erections that were meant to happen.

The stimulation then triggers multiple responses in the body. It may trigger messages from nerve endings, it may trigger chemicals in the brain, or it may be both. In any case, messages from inside the body are sent to parts of the penis (called smooth muscle) with the message that they should relax.

As the smooth muscle relaxes, the arteries that supply blood to the penis open wider, which allows more blood to begin flowing into the penis. As blood flows into the penis, it becomes hard and an erection occurs. As the penis becomes engorged with blood, the veins that usually direct blood out of the penis are compressed, which prevents the blood that flows in from leaving the penis. The blood stays in there, which is what maintains an erection.

Once a man ejaculates, the blood flows out of the penis and the erection goes away. After this, there is a period of time called the refractory period, during which it is difficult for a man to have another erection.

Causes of Morning Erections

It is a common myth that morning erections are caused by a full bladder. While we know that having a full bladder can lead to an erection in someone who is awake (we know this through research with men with spinal cord injuries) it's not clear that this does cause erections throughout the night.

Morning erections have been connected to the hormones testosterone and norepinephrine. We do know that the erections are closely associated with REM sleep (the time in the night when you dream and brain activity changes). These erections are also associated with an

“...Some suggest that morning erections are a way for your body to make sure everything is in working order.”

increase in heart rate.

Some suggest that morning erections are a way for your body to make sure everything is in working order.

Lack of Morning Erections

Early research on morning erections did not find a difference in the morning erections of older men when compared to those of younger men. More recent research has shown a gradual decline in morning erections (some show just a decrease in the rigidity and length of time of an erection and not the frequency of getting erections).

If you cannot get an erection to your satisfaction during sexual activities, one of the first things a doctor will determine is whether or not you are getting full erections during the night and in the morning. If a lack of morning erections is accompanied by a lack of overall erections it suggests a physical over a psychological cause. If you are concerned about a noticeable change in your morning erections it's something you may want to talk about with your doctor.

Erectile Dysfunction, Medications, and Morning Erections

Medications used for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED) including sildenafil (Viagra) and tadalafil (Cialis), can have an impact on morning erections. Both medications, if taken the night before prior to sexual activities, can result in morning erections, although morning erections occur more often when tadalafil is used.

Of course there is no reason to take a medication simply to get a morning erection, as morning erections, while they may be related to overall erectile function, are not necessarily a total indicator of function or dysfunction. However there are a variety of other factors that influence morning erections (including length and quality of sleep) and a change in morning erections doesn't always indicate a serious problem.

Symptoms and Causes of Erectile Dysfunction in Men.

The symptoms of erectile dysfunction include persistent:

- a. Trouble getting an erection
- b. Trouble keeping an erection
- c. Reduced sexual desire

Male sexual arousal is a complex process that involves the brain, hormones, emotions, nerves, muscles and blood vessels. Erectile dysfunction can result from a problem with any of these. Likewise, stress



and mental health concerns can cause or worsen erectile dysfunction. Sometimes a combination of physical and psychological issues causes erectile dysfunction. For instance, a minor physical condition that slows your sexual response might cause anxiety about maintaining an erection. The resulting anxiety can lead to or worsen erectile dysfunction.

Physical Causes of Erectile Dysfunction

In many cases, erectile dysfunction is caused by something physical. Common causes include:

- Heart disease
- Clogged blood vessels (atherosclerosis)
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Metabolic syndrome — a condition involving increased blood pressure, high insulin levels, body fat around the waist and high cholesterol
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Certain prescription medications
- Tobacco use
- Peyronie's disease — development of scar tissue inside the penis
- Alcoholism and other forms of substance abuse
- Sleep disorders
- Treatments for prostate cancer or enlarged prostate
- Surgeries or injuries that affect the pelvic area or spinal cord

Psychological Causes of Erectile Dysfunction

The brain plays a key role in triggering the series of physical events that cause an erection, starting with feelings of sexual excitement. A number of things can interfere with sexual feelings and cause or worsen erectile dysfunction. These include:

- Depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions
- Stress
- Relationship problems due to stress, poor communication or other concerns
- Risk factors

As you get older, erections might take longer to develop and might not be as firm. You might need more direct touch to your penis to get and keep an erection. Various risk factors can contribute to erectile dysfunction, including:

1. Medical conditions, particularly diabetes or heart conditions.
2. Tobacco use, which restricts blood flow to veins and arteries, can — over time — cause chronic health conditions that lead to erectile dysfunction.
3. Being overweight, especially in a case of obesity.
4. Certain medical treatments, such as prostate surgery or radiation treatment for cancer. Injuries, particularly if they damage the nerves or arteries that control erections
5. Medications, including antidepressants, antihistamines and medications to treat high blood pressure, pain or prostate conditions.
6. Psychological conditions, such as stress, anxiety or depression.
7. Drug and alcohol use, especially if you're a long-term drug user or heavy drinker.

Complications

Complications resulting from erectile dysfunction can include:

- An unsatisfactory sex life
- Stress or anxiety
- Embarrassment or low self-esteem
- Relationship problems
- The inability to get your partner pregnant

When to see your Doctor

A family doctor is a good place to start when you have erectile problems. See your doctor if:

- a. You have concerns about your erections or you're experiencing other sexual problems such as premature or delayed ejaculation.
- b. You have diabetes, heart disease or another known health condition that might be linked to erectile dysfunction.
- c. You have other symptoms along with erectile dysfunction.

Visit your Doctor immediately. Don't delay.

Dangote Takes Steps To Reclaim Lost Status With A \$547.7million Varsity Project



Following fall of Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, from the list of top 100 richest people in the world in the 2017 Forbes Rich List, the Nigerian cement mogul seems not to be resting on his oars at all, as he has taken some drastic investment steps which could be interpreted as being aimed at reclaiming his lost position. To this effect, Mr. Dangote, through his foundation, the Dangote Foundation, has set aside \$547.7million (N200 billion) to establish a world-class university in Abuja, Nigeria's capital. Considering that most of those who booted Mr. Dangote out of his erstwhile leading positions on the world's rich list are mostly those in tech businesses, Dangote has now announced that the proposed university will be strictly a university of technology. Thus, one would be right to say Mr. Dangote is all braced up to give the tech billionaires a run for their money. A former Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC), Julius Okojie, who is the chairman of the technical team for the establishment of the university, said the foundation intends to drive technology and research in stimulating economic growth.

Mr. Okojie, who led his team to the current Executive Secretary of the commission, Abubakar Rasheed, said the proposed university is meant to be technology-driven and asked for the cooperation and support of the NUC towards the realisation of the goal.

The team, accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer, CEO of the foundation, Zouera Yousouffou, disclosed that Mr. Dangote's desire was to float a unique university of technology with all the necessary infrastructure and best faculty members from across the globe.

Mr. Rasheed, who applauded the bold step, promised to offer all the needed assistance for the success of the project.

He asked the team to consult widely and look at the universities in Nigeria and abroad with a view to creating a unique university that would be different in terms of quality in all its operations.

In her remarks, Mrs. Yousouffou said the foundation was ready to make the dream a reality with the sum of N200 billion already earmarked for the project.

She said the land was purchased and preliminary measures were in place for the headquarters of the university at the nation's capital city of Abuja.

Nigeria's Dangote is a serial entrepreneur cum billionaire, with major stakes in cement and commodity manufacturing. He owns the Dangote Group, which has interests in diverse economies of Nigeria and other African nations.

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